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### ASCENDANCY OF FRANCE UNDER LOUIS XIV AND CONTRIBUTION OF MAZARIN AND COLBERT (1643-1715)

After the death of Cardinal Richelieu on 4 February 1642, Louis XIII, the Emperor of France appointed Cardinal Mazarin to the post of Prime Minister but he did not survive for a long time. Just about a year and four months later Louis XIII also expired. At the time of the death of Louis XIII, his son and successor Louis XIV was merely a child of five years. Hence the mother of the minor child became the regent and the Prime Minister was declared the guardian of the child emperor. He worked on this significant post from 1643 to 1661. After the death of his Prime Minister, Louis XIV himself took over the reins of the Empire and started ruling over France in his own right. A. J. Grant writes, "His (Richelieu's) death in December 1642 was soon followed by that of his royal master, Louis XIII, in May 1643. The removal of these two great figures left the field open for renewed intrigues on the part of the nobility; for Louis XIV was a child of only five years, and it did not at first seem that Richelieu had any capable successor."

Hays writes, "The minority of Louis XIV might have been disastrous to France and to the royal power had not the strong policies of Richelieu been maintained by another remarkable minister and cardinal, Mazarin."

The reins of the French Government passed into the hands of queen mother, Anne of Austria, who entirely lacked the character and talents essential for subduing the turbulent nobles and other elements. But the appointment of Cardinal Mazarin to the post of Prime Minister proved to be a boon for the people of France as he handled the affairs of France quite tactfully.

Cardinal Mazarin was born in 1602 in an ordinary family of Italy. After getting religious education at Rome and Madrid, he was appointed Cardinal in Paris by the grace of Richelieu. Had he not met Richelieu, his life would have passed as a religious man in the Church. Just after his meeting with the Cardinal Richelieu, Mazarin started taking part in the politics of France and soon he became a competent politician. Seeing his ability and capability Louis XIII appointed him as his Prime Minister and

he continued to serve on the post during the reign of the successor of Louis XIII. As he was very close to the queen mother, Anne of Austria, some of the historians have cast doubt on his relations with the Anne of Austria. However, it is a fact, Mazarin was an able and capable Prime Minister and he handled the affairs of France in internal and external spheres so nicely that he would always be remembered as a successful Prime Minister by the posterity.

#### Home Policy of Mazarin

Mazarin was a true disciple of Richelieu and he followed the policy of his guide, friend and philosopher in toto as regards the internal and external policy of France. He had a complete faith in the absolute aristocracy of the Emperor, so by all means he endeavoured to crush the power of the nobility in order to enhance the power and prestige of the Emperor of France. In order to achieve his objects, Mazarin had to face various difficulties. As he lacked courage, originality and patience, he contributed to the multiplication of his own difficulties. It is essential for a shrewd politician and statesman, that he must resort to all means whether fair or foul in order to achieve his objects. Unfortunately, Mazarin had no such quality, therefore, he had to face various problems just after his taking over charge of the post of the Prime Minister.

Mazarin wanted to establish absolute and powerful monarchy in France. He believed in the autocracy of the Emperor. Like his predecessor Richelieu, he also supported the Catholics of France and granted religious freedom to the Protestants. He also supported the Protestants in the foreign lands because Thirty Years' War was going on during this period in which the Protestants of the other countries were fighting against the Hapsburg dynasty. So Mazarin also supported the Protestants of the other countries because he also wanted to crush the supremacy of the Hapsburg dynasty.

After taking over the charge of the government Mazarin introduced some liberal policies while following the stern administrative policy of his teacher. He released most of the culprits and criminals from imprisonment and permitted some of the emigrants to come back to France. He actually wanted to complete the incomplete work of his predecessor. In spite of his all shortcomings he continued to handle the internal and external policy of France for nineteen years. His greatest weakness was that he appointed several of his relatives on significant posts. He was also accused of hoarding money in the name of his relatives or in his own name.

#### Imposed New Taxes

The economic condition of France was quite deplorable at the time of the appointment of Mazarin. At this time France was involved in the Thirty Years' War and the coffers of France had become empty. The reforms of Sully had got undone and the economic condition of France was deteriorating day by day. De Emeri was in charge of the finance department during the tenure of the Prime Minister. The Parliament of Paris decided to impose import tax on all the articles. It was the need of



the day and there was no fault in it. But unfortunately this tax proved to be so unpopular that it was rejected by the Parliament. Mazarin was not as strong as his master Richelieu, so he had to bow down before the Parliament and some other taxes were imposed on the people. It offended the people of France, hence they joined hands with the nobles and raised the banner of revolt.

#### **Fronde Civil War : Its Causes and Consequences**

A fierce Civil War broke out in France in 1648 which was chiefly known as Fronde Civil War. It lasted for five years, i.e., up to 1652. All anti-government elements took part in the Civil War, who can be divided into three categories :

(a) The nobles and aristocrats who were greatly dissatisfied, being deprived of their privileges.

(b) The Parliament of Paris (The Supreme Court) which was weakened a lot during the regime of Richelieu.

(c) The general masses who faced innumerable hardships due to heavy taxes and wanted to check the absolutism and aristocracy of the Emperor by supporting the nobles.

**Causes of Civil War.** The following factors contributed to the outbreak of Fronde Civil War :

1. As a huge amount was spent on the Thirty Years' War, the government had to impose heavy taxes which offended the people very much. The people who were already groaning under the burden of taxes, were forced to revolt because of the stern policy of the government.

2. The rights of the aristocracy were reduced ; therefore they opposed the government.

3. The Parliament of Paris was deprived of its traditional rights.

4. Mazarin belonged to Italy and he had appointed some people of his country on high and lucrative posts. It annoyed the people of France and they decided to raise a standard of revolt against him.

5. People had a doubt that being the favourite of the queen mother, he had gathered wealth and property.

6. At that time a civil war was going on in England between the armies of the King and the Parliament. It also helped in spreading discontent against the absolutism of the King.

7. The revolts of Naples and Portugal also inspired the nobles to revolt in France.

**Beginning of Civil War.** The Civil War was started by the Parliament of Paris (The Supreme Court). It was a very significant and powerful institution in the beginning and had the right to refuse the registration of the laws of the King but Richelieu who wanted to strengthen the monarchy made it quite weak. After the death of Richelieu in 1644 the Parliament again started demanding its previous rights. In 1644 the Parliament refused to register the finance ordinances of Mazarin and started opposing him. It put the following demands before Mazarin, the Prime Minister, in order to strengthen itself :

1. No tax should be imposed on the people of Paris without the prior approval of the Parliament.

2. New posts should also not be created.

3. The posts of royal agents or *intendants* should be abolished.

4. No person should be put in judicial lockup without trial, for more than 24 hours.

5. Investigation be made about the illegal realisation of taxes by the contractors and the culprits must be punished forthwith.

**Attempts of Mazarin to Pacify the Leaders of Civil War.** The demands of the Parliament of Paris were quite genuine and people supported them wholeheartedly. At that time the royal army of France was in Germany, hence being forced by the circumstances Mazarin accepted some of these demands. He abolished the posts of *intendants* and promised an enquiry into the irregularities of the Finance department. He also assured that illegal realisation of taxes by the contractors would also be investigated. It pacified the Civil War but as soon as the royal army came back from Germany after attaining victory Mazarin again endeavoured to take back the rights which were offered to the Parliament with the help and support of his army. Consequently, once again the Civil War broke out. It continued up to 1649 and ended only after the treaty was concluded, in which the rights of the Parliament were confirmed once again.

#### **Second Revolt of Fronde (1650-52)**

The second Fronde revolt is also known as the revolt of the Princes because Dukes, Counts and Marquises took part in it. It was directed mainly against Mazarin because the royal princes wanted to get high lucrative posts by crushing the power of Mazarin whom they considered their great rival, as the general people did not take part in it. The second revolt of Fronde broke out in 1650 when Gondee, an influential leader of the Parliament of Paris instigated the people against Mazarin and he ordered for the arrest of Conde, the commander of the army and some very significant leaders of the rebels. Owing to it the flames of revolt spread across Paris and the adjacent towns. Soon the revolt became so militant that the rebels established their control on Paris and Mazarin had to migrate to Brule. After this in order to resolve this problem he released Conde and two other leaders from jail. However, the nobles continued the Civil War for their own selfish ends but the general masses withdrew their co-operation. The rebels endeavoured to seek the support of the Spanish Governor Joseph but Mazarin purchased his support. After this Mazarin crushed the rebels with the help of his army. Conde, the leader of the rebels had to take shelter in Spain and Civil War was completely crushed in 1652.

#### **Causes of the Success of Mazarin**

The Fronde Civil War lasted for five years and ended in the total victory of Mazarin mainly due to two reasons :

1. The Parliament of Paris was not the natural rallying point for the French in a constitutional struggle. It did not furnish more than a



half-hearted leadership and soon the control of the movement slipped into the hands of the nobles.

2. Actually, the turbulent nobility did not care at all either for the people or the citizens. Rather than see the return of the feudal disorder, the people rallied once more around the throne. The people selected the king and supported him.

Scheville writes, "The Fronde turned out to be the last rising of the nobles against the Crown. Henceforth they accepted the loss of their power as a class with traditional political rights."

#### Results of Fronde Civil War

The following were the significant results of the Fronde War :

1. Now all the hurdles in the way of establishment of absolute monarchy were removed from the path of Louis XIV.
2. The prestige of Mazarin was re-established.
3. The rights of the Parliament of Paris were reduced all the more. It was restricted to taking part in the political and financial matters and its duty was limited only up to judicial matters.
4. Paris was disarmed and its rights pertaining to the elections of the Municipal Board were abolished.
5. It strengthened the power of monarchy all the more.
6. The honour of the Parliament of Paris was reduced.
7. Mazarin had assured the youthful Emperor that the absolute monarchy was the best government. R. Lodge, a prominent historian has remarked, "One prominent result the war had; it made a profound impression on the mind of the young king and rendered him resolutely hostile throughout his life to all ideas of constitutional government."

#### Foreign Policy of Mazarin

Once the peace and order were established at home, the French monarch paid his attention to the foreign policy. Cardinal Mazarin followed the policy of his predecessor Richelieu in toto. He also desired to put an end to the supremacy of Hapsburg dynasty of Austria and Spain and to enhance the power and prestige of France in the international arena. Actually, he wanted to establish the supremacy of France in Europe by extending the frontiers of France. Hence Mazarin took active part in the Thirty Years' War for five successive years up to 1648. In the beginning of his career the Spanish armies were defeated by the French armies at various places and they established control over some states like Grovelin, Ipress, Dunkirk and Roussollin. The Thirty Years' War came to an end with the treaty of Westphalia. France was greatly benefitted by this treaty.

Even after the treaty of Westphalia, the war continued between France and Spain up to 1659. Taking the advantage of the Fronde Civil War, Spain once again conquered her lost territory. But as soon as the Civil War came to an end in France, Mazarin again sought the help of the Emperor of England and defeated the Spanish army at Dunes. In fact by this time both countries were completely exhausted and at the same time

became financially bankrupt to carry on the war anymore. The internal condition of Spain was far from satisfactory. She too could not afford a war with France and both were willing for a peace. As a result of their negotiations, the treaty of Pyrenees was concluded on 7 November 1569. According to the terms of this treaty France got Roussollin, province of Artois and some fortified towns from Spain. In order to make this treaty stable, Mazarin arranged a marriage between Infanta Maria Theresa, the daughter of Emperor Philip IV of Spain and Louis XIV, the young ruler of France. Philip IV was not in favour of this matrimonial alliance but he was forced under the circumstances to give his consent for this marriage. It was also decided in this treaty that Spain would give a huge amount of wealth to France in the form of dowry and in return, Infanta Maria Theresa and her offspring would give up their claims to the throne of Spain. Owing to her weak economic condition Spain could not pay the huge amount in the form of dowry to France, hence making it a pretext Louis XIV jumped into the War of Spanish Succession and succeeded in placing his son Louis XV on the throne of Spain. Thus it is evident that Mazarin fully succeeded in his objective and completed the work of Richelieu.

#### Estimate of Mazarin

Mazarin was a capable diplomat and a great patriot. Although he was an Italian, he devoted himself fully to the good of France. He had decided to complete the work of Richelieu under all circumstances but he did not possess ability and capability like that of Richelieu.

Mazarin was a clever but an unstable conspirator. There was no originality in his actions. He had certain weaknesses in his character. Owing to his greed he had collected a lot of wealth through foul means. He left a huge amount of wealth and property for his successors after his death. He appointed his relatives to high and lucrative posts. The nobles criticised and condemned this act of Mazarin. However, his ideals were exemplary. He had decided to crush the supremacy of the Hapsburg dynasty and establish the supremacy of France in Europe.

He concluded the treaty of Westphalia and Pyrenees for the good of the people of France. No other ruler of the world could conclude such beneficial treaties for his country, as he had done. These treaties added to the power and prestige of France. In fact, it was very difficult to break the supremacy of Spain or Austria in Europe as they had already strengthened and consolidated their position in Europe but Mazarin fully succeeded in his objective by prolonged wars. Actually, by mitigating the prestige of Spain and Austria in Europe, he paved a path of progress for Louis XIV and prepared the background for his imperialist policy, taking the country's power to its climax.

His internal policy also proved successful to some extent. He sternly suppressed the revolts of the nobles and limited the powers of the Parliament of Paris (The Supreme Court) and also laid the foundation of a powerful, absolute monarchy in France. It was essential for the existence of France that a powerful monarchy should be established there. Actually,



the circumstances for the establishment of democracy in France were not favourable.

If we compare the policy of Richelieu with that of Mazarin, we would find that the policy of Mazarin was totally contrary to that of Richelieu. He had no virtues to influence the others, whereas Richelieu got his work done by power and pressure. Mazarin fulfilled his aims by requests and tacts. He continued to be a great diplomat throughout his life whereas Richelieu was a shrewd politician and statesman and handled the affairs of the country by dint of his courage and enthusiasm.

Mazarin died on 19 March 1661. By this time France had reached the climax of her power and his influence was established all around. By establishing his control over the new territory France had become a powerful and great nation. It was the greatest contribution of Mazarin to France. He paved the path of greatness for Louis XIV in Europe by his efforts. A. J. Grant writes about it, "The death of Mazarin in 1661 opened a new epoch in the history of Europe and marked the ascendancy of France in the continental politics under the capable directions of Louis XIV."

The money which was left by Mazarin was utilized in founding a college. R. Lodge, the prominent historian writes that "this college was opened for the inhabitants of those provinces which were either incorporated in France by Richelieu or by Mazarin himself. These provinces were Roussollin, Alsace, Artois and Pinerolo. Thus the work of union was completed. The children of ensuing posterity would study in Paris and after going to their provinces, spread the culture of France in their provinces."

After the death of Mazarin a new chapter began in the history of Europe and France was well set on the path of progress and development under the leadership of Louis XIV.

#### HOME AND FOREIGN POLICY OF LOUIS XIV

Louis XIV was born in 1638. When his father Louis XIII died in 1643, he was only five years old. Mazarin, therefore, worked as his guardian throughout his life-time (1661) and held the reins of the empire very effectively. Though Mazarin worked as his Prime Minister, he advised his master at the time of his death that in future he should not appoint any one to be his Prime Minister; rather he should hold the reins of empire in his own hands. At the time of the death of Mazarin Louis XIV had attained the age of 23. Now he was fully capable of holding the reins of empire; hence he decided to be his own master and to concentrate all domestic and foreign policy in his own hands. He, therefore, did not appoint anyone to the post of Mazarin and ordered his ministers, provincial governors and high administrative officers to take directives from him directly.

The period 1661-1715 is known as an Age of Louis XIV because tremendous progress and development took place in the political, economic and social life of France. Art and literature also flourished during his period and all this progress influenced the other countries of

Europe tremendously. Lord Acton has remarked, 'Louis XIV was by far the ablest man who was born in modern times on the steps of a throne.'

Actually, Louis XIV was lucky enough to get an empire in legacy which was completely free from all domestic problems. It was organised, disciplined and having no religious conflict. The people of France were patriots and the Estates General had no rights. Harvey Robinson and Richard write about it, "When Mazarin died in 1661, he left the young monarch with a kingdom such as no previous French king had enjoyed. The nobles who for centuries had disputed the power with the king were no longer Feudal lords but only courtiers.....Richelieu and Mazarin had successfully taken a hand in Thirty Years' War and France had come out of it with enlarged territory and increased importance in European affairs."

Besides the contribution of Richelieu, Mazarin and Louis XIV in leading France towards ascendancy, the circumstances of the contemporary period were also favourable. The honour of Austria and Spain had already been tarnished. Charles II, the ruler of England did not exercise any influence in the politics of Europe because his own position was not sound in his own empire. Hence there was no hurdle before France in attaining the ascendancy in Europe. Thus the place and position so far occupied by Richelieu and Mazarin was now taken up by the king himself and he handled the affairs of the empire very effectively and tactfully.

#### Establishment of Powerful Monarchy and Theory of Kingship of Louis XIV

Louis IV was an absolute monarch and he wanted to establish an absolute and powerful monarchy in France by all means. He considered this type of monarchy in the interest of the people of the country, otherwise the feudals would create problems in the empire. He believed in the theory of the Divine Right of Kings. He used to say that the king was the representative of God on earth. His powers were unlimited and it was the uppermost duty of the people to obey the commands of the king without any ifs and buts. In case, anybody dared violate the orders of the king, he was liable to be punished. The king was never responsible to the public. Bossuet, the teacher of Louis XV defined this principle very elaborately. As Louis XIV had deep faith in this theory of 'divine right', he used to say that 'I am the state' instead of saying that I am the emperor. It indicates his deep faith in the theory of absolute monarchy. Scheville writes, "Louis XIV even if never employed the exact phrase, it expresses admirably the spirit of his reign, for he held himself to be the absolute head of the state, source of every authority exercised throughout the country. No wonder that even his ministers were in his view no better than clerks who met with him in various councils to receive his orders."

Harvey Robinson and Richard have also written about the theory of kingship of Louis XIV, "Louis XIV had the same idea of kingship that James I had tried in vain to induce the English people to accept. God had given kings to men, and it was His will that monarchs should be regarded as His lieutenants, that all those subject to them should obey them,



absolutely, without asking any question or making any criticism.....if the king were good and wise, his subjects should thank God, if he proved foolish, cruel or perverse, they must accept their evil ruler as a punishment which God had sent them for their sins. But in no case might they limit his power or rise against him."

Following all these principles referred to above, Louis XIV established a powerful and absolute monarchy in France. He did not summon the meeting of the Estates General and it was reduced to a state of complete insignificance. He put restrictions on the rights of the provincial administrative officers and the Municipal Boards, nor did he appoint anyone to the post of Prime Minister after the death of Mazarin. The King himself looked after the different departments, appointed ministers of his own choice and they completely followed his commands. During his reign the influence of the feudals had completely diminished. Scheville writes about his absolute monarchy, "Absolutism, that is, monarchy strengthened by the ruin of the feudal powers had existed in France and Europe long before Louis XIV, so had the theory of divine right, which had been invoked by sovereigns as far back as the Middle Age. Nevertheless, divine right acquired a new glamour when, as happened under Louis, the sovereign carried his absolutism to a completeness never before attained." Scheville also writes about him, "He wanted to reign supreme as the absolute head of the Government, He himself was to be the sole director of the State policy."

#### **Despotic Rule of Louis XIV**

Louis XIV being a despotic ruler centralised all powers of the empire in his hands. He made heads of different departments to be his subordinates only. All the policies were framed by the King. The ministers were required simply to execute his orders. No doubt, the Ministers and the provincial governors ran the administrations in their respective spheres but they were required to inform the King about each and every happening in due course of time, failing which they were liable to be punished. The method was of his own making and the most successful one. In fact, his main aim was to establish a centralised government. He was fully aware of the conditions of France and Europe, hence he handled the situation very successfully. Johnson writes, "Louis XIV will go down in history with Solomon and Augustus as the ideal of a great king and he was certainly a despot. He was a superlatively conscientious king."

#### **Religious Policy of Louis XIV**

In the beginning of his career Louis XIV had no faith in any religion, therefore he wanted to be absolute in the religious matters as well. He removed all the religious obstacles and made himself absolute and powerful. He did this just to weaken the power of the Church for which he had to wage a war against the Pope as he compelled the Church to obey his orders. Hayes writes about his religious policy, "He wanted to control the Church and to establish religious unity. When the Pope opposed his motives he did not hesitate in picking up a quarrel with the Pope."

Besides his political sovereignty, Louis XIV wanted to establish his supremacy in the religious sphere also, so he issued Gallican Liberties ordinance in 1682. According to this ordinance it was announced that the power of Pope was limited only to the religious field and he had no right to issue any order against the King or the public. In no way were the powers of the King subordinate to the Pope nor was the Pope authorised to remove any ruler from the throne. The Pope was also not permitted to issue commands to the people for disobeying the commands of the Emperor. The order of the Pope would be final in the matters of religion, provided it was approved by the council of the French Church. The Pope opposed this ordinance but he was powerless against Louis XIV. This tug of war between the Pope and the Emperor came to an end in 1693 when the new Pope assumed the Papacy after Pope Innocent IX. He concluded a pact with Louis XIV and the Emperor took back the ordinance. It was the victory of Pope outwardly but in fact by this pact Louis XIV succeeded in establishing control over the Gallican Church (National Church).

**Suppression of the Protestants.** Louis XIV was a staunch Catholic ruler. Although the Protestants had not opposed him at all, Louis suppressed them due to his own religious fanaticism. His repressive policy towards the Protestants not only shook the roots of the Empire but also harmed the power of the Emperor very much. The Protestants had enhanced their power during the reign of Henry IV and Richelieu but their position was adversely affected in the reign of Louis XIV. Throwing light on the contemporary condition of the Protestants, a Protestant scholar has written that their number had decreased and their social prestige ended although they did nothing against the spirit of patriotism. Mostly, they were among those who had devoted all of their energies to their trade and no other class except this had helped Colbert so much as they.

In the beginning of his reign Louis XIV did not interfere in the system of worship of the Protestants but later on he was very much influenced by Madam de Maintenon who was the Governess of his illegitimate offspring and became his wife after the death of queen Maria Theresa. He considered them to be atheists and their activities anti-absolute government, hence he decided to crush them. First of all, he put some restrictions on the Protestants; later on, he started confiscating their property and that of the Protestant churches. He closed their schools and churches just to crush their religious independence. He also enacted an Act that no Protestant was to be appointed in Government service.

**Cancellation of the Edict of Nantes.** In 1685 Louis XIV declared that now most of the Protestants had embraced Catholicism. In the present position the ruler was not forced to act according to the Edict of Nantes, so he revoked the declaration and thus their independent system of worship was crushed. As a result of this cancellation of the Edict of Nantes, thousands of French Protestants went to Switzerland, Holland, England and Prussia for settling there and France was deprived of large percentage of its population. They were skilled artisans and literary



persons and their escape to foreign lands affected the development of industry and culture adversely. Moreover, wherever they settled, they preached about the repression inflicted upon them by the French Government. Frederick William by giving them land around Berlin for settling, founded such a great town which ultimately harmed France very much. It hurt the prestige of France abroad and the foreigners began to hate the Protestant France. W. Stubbs writes, "The Protestants who left France and settled in other countries made a common cause with the Hapsburgs to curb the ambition of Louis XIV."

Hayes also writes about it, "It was the abandonment of Richelieu's policy of religious toleration that proved disastrous to Louis XIV."

Actually, in the age of religious fanaticism Louis XIV committed a blunder by turning Protestants out of France. As a result, France had to face severe consequences in the long run. H. A. L. Fisher has also written about it, "Richelieu had made France great by uniting the Protestant States of Europe against the Hapsburgs. Louis, on the other hand, by attacking the Dutch Protestants and by revoking the Edict of Nantes, made the Protestant powers his enemies and so they now united with his enemies in a coalition to hold France in check."

Throwing light on the consequences of the stern religious policy of Louis XIV, Hayes has also indicated, "It was the abandonment of Richelieu's policy of religious toleration that proved disastrous to Louis XIV."

#### **Splendour of Versailles**

Louis XIV was a glorious Emperor but he had seen the turbulent nobles and bloody civil war in Paris during his childhood. Therefore, about 14 miles away from Paris, he constructed a marvellous palace and building complex at Versailles. It took about thirteen years (1669-1682) to complete it. It was unique of its kind and people from far and near came to see its beauty and splendour, its pomp and show. Nobles, aristocrats, great men of letters and artists also lived here. The Hall of Mirrors was the most wonderful part of this grand palace. This palace was not only a symbol of Louis XIV's love for architecture but also expressed his devotion to painting, sculpture, music and other fine arts. Thetcher writes, "Intellect and birth, genius and beauty, culture and statesmanship, and art all were marshalled in his court in an admirable way but all these were glorified with a reflected light illuminated by the rays of the king." In 1682 Louis XIV transferred his court to Versailles and this added to its glory and prestige.

#### **Patron of Art and Literature**

Louis XIV was a great patron of Art and Literature. Various institutions pertaining to science, painting and music were established for the cultural development of the country. Corneille (1606-1684), Moliere (1623-1673), Racine (1639-1690), La Fontaine (1621-1695), Bossuet etc. were significant authors who added to development of French literature. The famous scientist, Pascal was also the product of Louis XIV's period. Besides the above-mentioned various sculptors and painters, musicians

and lovers of fine arts were given shelter in the court of Louis XIV. Hayes writes, "His court became the model of European Courts. Versailles set the fashion to the civilised world. French manners, French dress, French art and French literature became the models of civilised Europe."

The author of *Cambridge Modern History* writes, "The splendour of Louis' Court was matched by the brilliancy of French literature in his reign. Louis knew well how to associate the monarchy with the artistic and intellectual triumph of the Age."

#### **Foreign Policy of Louis XIV**

Louis XIV was an ambitious ruler, hence he resorted to imperialist and expansionist policy in the field of foreign affairs. He wanted to establish supremacy of France in Europe, by crushing the power and prestige of the Hapsburg dynasty of Austria and Spain. He intended to enhance the power and glory of France by the policy of war and conquests. In order to achieve his mission he sought the services of capable persons like Colbert. His reforms made France into a very prosperous and wealthy country and he made the Empire mighty and organised. He appointed Louvois to the post of Minister of Defence. He won various military victories. He also had famous commanders like Conde and Turenne who were considered unique in the art of warfare. Scheville praises his military skill in these words, "By drilling and uniforming the soldiers and by creating a system of arsenals and depots of supplies under government management he raised the national preparedness far above that of his country's neighbours and rivals. Military historians are agreed that Louvois created the European standing army in its elaborate modern form."

The contemporary political circumstances were also in favour of Louis XIV. The significance of Austria and Spain had diminished as a result of the Thirty Years' War and Germany was completely devastated. The influence of France was also established in Germany as a result of the treaty of Westphalia. At that time Charles II of England had no sway in his own country and in the politics of Europe. He was afraid of his own parliament. He himself wanted to seek economic help from Louis XIV of France. Russia was also involved in her own problems. Austria too was entangled in her domestic conflicts and the revolt of Hungary. Moreover, Austria was very much afraid of the attacks of Ottoman Turks. Besides the above-mentioned powerful and big nations, there were some small countries like Holland, Sweden and Brandenburg which were also busy sorting out their own problems, hence they did not take any active part in the European politics. Owing to the Thirty Years' War some small states emerged on the frontier of France which were not in a position to safeguard themselves from the foreign attacks.

Taking advantage of these circumstances and in order to execute his expansionist and imperialist policy, Louis XIV invented the Theory of Natural Frontiers. He stressed that the frontier of every country should be decided by its rivers, oceans or hills. In this way France declared her boundary up to Pyrenees, Alps, River Rhine and to the sea. In order to



attain it every country was to remove the obstacle by force if there was any.

In fact, Louis XIV was a fortunate ruler because he had at his disposal the services of competent persons like Colbert and Louvois. The former proved useful in strengthening the financial position of France but the latter was the bravest of the generals. With their help and co-operation he continued the foreign policy of his predecessors. A. J. Grant writes, "Thus the King was admirably served by great statesmen, diplomatists, and soldiers. In addition to Colbert there were such men as Turenne and Conde, the great soldiers; Vauban, the great Engineer; Lionne, the diplomatist; Louvois, the organizer of war."

Louis XIV had to fight the following wars to execute his policy into practice. They were also a part of his foreign policy.

**The War of Devolution (1667-1668).** Philip IV, the ruler of Spain expired on 17 September 1665 and was succeeded by the half-imbecile Charles II, the brother of Louis XIV's queen, Maria Theresa. At the time of the marriage of Louis XIV with Infanta Maria Theresa, it was decided that he would not assert any claims to the Spanish inheritance which might come to him through his wife. But when the opportunity occurred he did not keep his words and without real justification claimed a large portion of the Spanish Netherlands. It was a very ancient law of the Feudal Age, that the offspring of the first wife used to inherit more provinces than the offspring of the second queen. For sixteen months he continued to make efforts to achieve his rights through rightful political means but at last he was forced to declare war against Flanders in 1671. The people of Spain were not prepared for war, hence they went on being defeated and ultimately surrendered. The success of France gave rise to jealousy of the people of other countries. Spain concluded a treaty with Holland and a fresh Triple Alliance was concluded among Holland, England and Sweden. According to the terms of this alliance, they decided to help Spain.

The Triple Alliance of England, Holland and Sweden terrified Louis XIV, the ruler of France, and now he began to fear the possibility of a European war, hence in order to avoid it he concluded treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle with Spain. According to the terms of this treaty France established her control over Lille, Turnne, Sharlway situated on the boundary of Spanish Netherlands but he had to vacate the rest of the Spanish Netherlands. Thus, this battle checked the expansionist policy of Louis XIV and balance of power could be established in Europe. A. J. Grant writes, "It was not a very important campaign, but it gives us on a small scale the characteristic of his whole reign. We see an aggression on the territory of his neighbour resisted by a European coalition. Aggression and coalitions followed one another, until his reign ended in exhaustion and defeat."

**Dutch War (1672-1678).** The people of Holland are known as Dutch. In the beginning Louis XIV followed the path shown by Richelieu and Mazarin and did not pay attention to the religious policy but later on

he endeavoured to crush the Protestants who were popular in France by the name of Huguenots and a large number of them had taken shelter in Holland. Louis did not like it, hence he decided to defeat Holland in the Dutch War. Besides the religious causes, Louis XIV was annoyed with Holland on account of some political reasons also. He had a complaint, "Why should a merchants' country like Holland interfere in the matters of the rulers?" Commercial and colonial competition between France and Holland also made the outbreak of the war inevitable. A. J. Grant writes, "Holland had taken a leading part in resisting him and it was upon Holland that the next blow fell. Louis XIV hated Holland as a republic, a trade rival, and as the supporter of Protestantism and freedom of thought. Almost without the pretence of an excuse, the French armies invaded the country in 1672, and at first carried all before them."

Louis XIV was a great diplomat. He alienated Holland from her friends, and concluded a secret treaty with Charles V, the ruler of England in 1670. According to this treaty Louis XIV gave a huge amount to Charles V and got a pledge from him that he would remain isolated in the impending war between France and Holland. In the same way he made friendship with Sweden. Thus, the Triple Alliance was broken.

**Events of War.** Being secured from all sides France declared war on Holland in 1672. It continued for six years. The French army advanced rapidly towards Holland under the efficient commanders like Conde and Turenne and established control over Lorraine and reached near Amsterdam which was the capital of Holland. Being afraid of the swift advance of the French army, the Dutch ruler De Witt sued for peace with Louis XIV which annoyed the Dutch people much and they assassinated De Witt. After his death the responsibility of the safety of Holland was given to Prince William of Lorraine. To check the advance of the rival army William cut the dykes which waterlogged the country. That checked the advance of the French army and they failed to conquer Amsterdam. Being perturbed at this situation, the French army had no alternative but to retreat. The increasing power of France gave rise to jealousy of other countries; rather they were afraid of the constantly increasing power of France. Prince William, therefore, made a confederation against France in collaboration with Austria, Spain, Brandenburg (Prussia), Denmark and Holland. Charles II of England also had to withdraw his co-operation from Louis XIV because of the opposition of the Parliament. He concluded a treaty with Holland. Scheville also writes, "Moreover, the fear of France had by now become general and, before many months had passed, Spain, as well as the Emperor and a large number of German Princes had rallied to the cause of the Dutch. In the year 1674 the position of Louis was still further weakened. In that year the angry state of English feeling forced Charles II to abandon Louis and to make peace with the Dutch."

However, the battle continued for some time more. The French army defeated the ruler of Austria and the Emperor of German confederation. The ruler of Brandenburg was also crushed. Ultimately, the countries of Europe intervened in the Dutch War and the treaty of



Nimwegen was concluded between France and Holland in 1678. According to the terms of this treaty Holland had to accept the supremacy over some parts of the Spanish Netherlands. Lorraine was also given to France. The treaty also proved beneficial for France from the point of view of enhancement of her power and prestige. Commenting on the treaty of Nimwegen Scheville writes, "Although the superiority of the French army both in organisation and leadership enabled it to win every pitched battle with its foes, the ruler of France was glad enough to end the war when peace was offered." In fact, the war proved to be a disaster for France from the economic point of view.

**The War of the League of Augsburg (1688-1697).** The earlier two battles proved useful for France but that did not pacify the imperialist and expansionist hunger of Louis XIV. He established the court known as Chamber of Reunion to execute his expansionist policy. The judges of these courts were appointed by Louis XIV himself, and naturally it decided the cases as desired by the Emperor. France had got some part of Alsace and Lorraine according to the terms of the treaty of Westphalia. The Chamber of Reunion decided according to the will of Louis XIV that besides Strassburg and Luxembourg twenty other states should be under the control of France. The ruler of Germany was engaged in war against Turkey during this period, so he could not oppose the ambitions of Louis XIV who established his control over Strassburg and Luxembourg in 1684. He also started fortification of Strassburg in 1685. It annoyed the countries of Europe. In the meantime he deprived the Protestants of their religious rights. By revoking the Edict of Nantes he inflicted innumerable tortures on the Protestants. As a result thereof, a large number of Protestants migrated from France and they took shelter in other countries of Europe where they related the sad stories of the atrocities of Louis XIV which they had to face in France, hence the European countries were greatly annoyed with him.

In order to check the increasing power of Louis XIV, his staunch opponent William of Orange organised a confederation known as the League of Augsburg in 1786, which consisted of Spain, Austria, Sweden and Holland. In 1685 the Elector of Palatinate had breathed his last. His sister was married to the younger brother of Louis XIV. Hence Louis XIV staked his claim on the basis of his relation with the ruler of Palatinate. On the other hand, the German Emperor Leopold II also supported the claim of Joseph Clement. The Pope of Rome was appointed arbitrator for the solution of this problem. In his decision the Pope declared Joseph Clement to be the legitimate successor of Palatinate and the claim of Louis XIV was declared null and void. Louis XIV owing to his impertinence refused to accept the decision of the Pope, hence the Catholic rulers of Europe were annoyed with Louis XIV because he did not act according to the decision of the Pope, the head of the Roman Catholics. In 1688 when the German armies tried to establish their control over Palatinate, Louis XIV opposed it and war broke out. At the same time one other Elector of Coloune died. Louis also put forth his claim over it which was declared illegitimate by the Pope. As a result of it the

war broke out between France and members of the League of Augsburg on the issue of Palatinate and Coloune.

In 1688 Glorious Revolution broke out in England and James II of England was forced to leave the throne by the British Parliament on account of religious and political reasons. James II, therefore, took shelter in Ireland and later on, ran to France. His daughter Mary was married to King William of Holland, hence both William and Mary were invited to get the throne of England. They accepted the invitation. After becoming the ruler of England William assumed the title of William III and after this he also included England in the League of Augsburg. Hence when war broke out between France and the League of Augsburg, England, Holland, Savoy, Palatinate, Sweden, Austria and some states of Germany were included in it. France was all alone having no friend or support for all the European nations were annoyed and against her because of her quarrelsome nature and imperialist policy. The war continued up to 1797 and pitched battles were fought at different places between the armies of France and the armies of the League of Augsburg. France achieved some insignificant victories over Savoy and Nice but these wars emptied her royal coffers and ultimately France was badly defeated at sea in the battle of La Hogue. Moreover, the question of succession in Spain was also alarming the nations of Europe as the ruler of Spain was on his death bed and he had no son to succeed him. Therefore, Louis XIV concluded the treaty of Ryswick on 20 September 1697 with the League of Augsburg. The following were the significant provisions of the Treaty of Ryswick :

1. Louis XIV had to return all the states except Strassburg which he had occupied after the treaty of Nimwegen with the help of the Chamber of Reunion.
2. Holland was authorised to fortify the fortresses which were situated between France and Spanish Netherlands.
3. Louis also signed a commercial treaty with the Dutch of Holland.
4. Louis had to give up all his claims over Palatinate.
5. France had to return Lorraine to Duke.
6. Louis XIV recognised William III to be the ruler of England and he promised that in future, he would not support the claim of James II for the throne of England.
7. The authority of Louis XIV was accepted on the entire Alsace.

**Significance of the Treaty of Ryswick.** The progress of France was checked by the treaty of Ryswick. The pride of Louis was crushed and the economy of France was shattered due to excessive wars. The prestige of Louis XIV was dashed to pieces as William III was recognised as the King of England. H. A. L. Fisher has thus explained the significance of the Treaty of Ryswick, "The peace of Ryswick was a serious blow not merely to the pride of Louis XIV but to his power. It for the first time set a limit to his agreement and compelled him to give up some of his ill-gotten gains."



In the same way Hayes also comments, "Henceforth, the personal duel between Louis and William was changed into a national duel between England and France."

A. J. Grant writes, "The French troops still showed their former high military qualities, and, although Turenne and Conde were both dead, their generals still proved themselves the best in Europe. But though France could win battle on land, she was in the end defeated at sea and in Ireland. Her finances were utterly exhausted and her financial system ruined."

Thatcher mentions, "The war of the League of Augsburg was the first war by which France gained nothing. It was a clear evidence of the increasing exhaustion of France."

**Spanish War of Succession (1702-1713).** Charles II was the ruler of Spain. He died in A. D. 1700 without any successor. Three rulers put up their claim for succession to the throne of Spain. They were :

- (i) Philip, son of Louis XIV, the Emperor of France.
- (ii) Joseph Ferdinand, ruler of Bavaria.
- (iii) German Emperor Leopold I.

Among these three claimants Louis XIV was the most powerful, so he made out a plan to enthrone his son in Spain by force. The rulers of Europe were already afraid of Louis XIV and his increasing power. They wanted to check his increasing power and formed a confederation which consisted of England, Holland, Sweden, Brandenburg, Palatinate etc. It came to be known as Grand Alliance. All the members of Grand Alliance promised to help one another. On the other hand, Bavaria, Spain, Cologne etc. were in favour of Louis XIV. The Spanish War of Succession broke out between these two groups. This war continued for about 12 years. At last Louis XIV signed the treaty of Utrecht with England in 1713. By this treaty the power of France was weakened. Louis XIV who had already grown quite old, could not bear this insult and breathed his last in 1715. After him he left a France which had become almost bankrupt and its splendour and glory had diminished. A prominent historian has remarked, "Thus due to these four wars the country was completely ruined and its financial position was badly shattered. It rather brought to ground the financial edifice which was constructed with great pain by Colbert."

A. J. Grant mentions, "France thus lost surprisingly little at the peace, but she had suffered terribly during the war. Louis XIV died in 1715, and with his death France, although potentially still a great power sank for more than half a century from the position of European predominance which she had held for a century and half."

#### THE SPANISH WAR OF SUCCESSION

Charles II, the Emperor of Spain died in 1700 and his death gave rise to a great international problem in Europe. During his reign Spain was a vast empire and Spain, Netherlands, Milan, Naples and Sicily were the parts of his empire in Europe and outside Europe, Mexico,

Philippines, West Indies etc. were the colonies of Spain. Unfortunately, Charles II, ruler of such a vast empire of Spain died without a successor. During this period Spain had matrimonial relations with France, Bavaria and Germany, hence all the three future successors were interested in the War of Spanish Succession. On this issue of succession an international war broke out in Europe which continued from 1702 to 1714.

#### Question of Succession

The following three rulers put forth their claims to be the successors in Spain :

1. **Louis XIV, the Ruler of France.** Maria Theresa, the sister of Charles II was married to Louis XIV, hence he wanted to enthrone his son or grandson in Spain.

2. **Joseph Ferdinand, the Ruler of Bavaria.** He was related with Austrian ruling family due to his mother. His mother, Margaret Theresa was the princess of Spain and was married to the grandfather of Leopold I, the ruler of Austria. Hence Joseph considered himself to be the successor in Spain.

3. **Leopold I, the Ruler of Germany.** Ferdinand III, the father of Leopold I was also married to a Spanish princess, hence he considered himself a candidate for the Spanish throne. A. J. Grant writes, "There were three claimants, the royal house of France, the imperial house, and the electoral house of Bavaria. All three stood at about the same distance of relationship from the dying King but while the union between Spain and France or Spain and the Empire would wholly upset the European balance of power the union between Bavaria and Spain would cause no such serious difficulty."

Thus, there were three candidates for succession to the throne of Spain. Before his death Charles II, the Emperor of Spain had nominated Philip, the son of Louis XIV to be his successor. Hence just after his death Louis XIV endeavoured to establish his control over Spain and declared with great pride, 'Now Pyrenees hill cannot separate Spain and France from each other.' In case, France had succeeded in getting her control established over Spain she would have become the most powerful country of Europe. The other European countries were not prepared to tolerate it, hence they declared it an issue of the continent.

#### Significance of the War of Succession

This was a very significant issue in the eyes of European countries. Thatcher writes about it, "It was not a personal question but one of European importance. It involved political, commercial and colonial questions."

On this issue there were sharp differences of opinion between the countries of Europe but according to the principle of balance of power the countries of Europe were not prepared to hand over the throne of Spain to any such as could become the most powerful in Europe. The son and grandson of Louis XIV were the successors in France, hence the European rulers did not wish that the throne of France and Spain should be given to one who might become the most powerful in Europe. In the



same way the son of Leopold I was the successor of Austrian Empire and hence the throne of Spain should not be provided to him also.

Keeping in view the problem of succession and the balance of power, it can be said that the position of the grandson of Louis XIV from legal point of view, of Charles, the son of Leopold from political point of view and of Prince Ferdinand of Bavaria from the point of view of ancient matrimonial alliances could be recognised as the most appropriate one in the present circumstances. But England and Holland were against the succession of France from political and commercial points of view respectively. From the point of view of balance of power, the countries of Europe supported the claim of the Prince of Bavaria, as his political ambitions were quite limited.

#### **Treaties of Partition of Spain**

A prominent historian Hayes writes about it, "To avert a general European war, Louis XIV and William III of England agreed to arrange in advance some partition of Spanish territories among the different claimants."

During his life-time Charles II, the ruler of Spain had concluded a treaty with William III, the ruler of England and Louis XIV, the Emperor of France and Holland for the partition of Spain, according to which it was decided that Joseph Ferdinand of Bavaria would get his American colonies and Netherlands and the remaining part of Spanish empire would be divided between Philip, the second grandson of Louis XIV and Charles II, the second son of Leopold, the Emperor of Austria. According to this treaty Charles would get Luxembourg and Milan; and Sicily and Naples would be given to Philip, the grandson of Louis XIV but this treaty could not be executed because in the ensuing year 1699 Joseph Ferdinand died. By this time Charles II, the Emperor of Spain was alive. As this scheme was chalked out without his consent, so he did not relish it.

After the death of Ferdinand a fresh treaty was concluded between Louis XIV and William III, the rulers of France and England respectively. According to this treaty it was decided that Spain and its colonies and Netherlands would be given to Charles; and Milan, Naples and Sicily to the grandson of Louis XIV.

At the same time Charles II, the ruler of Spain before his death in 1700 declared Prince Philip the son of Louis XIV to be his successor as he was immensely displeased with the rulers of Europe for making partition of Spain without his consent. Louis XIV at once declared his grandson Philip to be the Emperor of entire Spain. England and Holland opposed this attitude of Louis XIV and Austria was also not prepared to accept this announcement of Louis XIV.

#### **Formation of Grand Alliance Against Louis XIV (1701)**

The rulers of England and Holland founded a Grand Alliance against Louis XIV including Palatinate, German states, Hanover and Bavaria. The aim of this Grand Alliance was just to maintain the balance of power and to safeguard the rights of the member states. Hayes has written about the formation of Grand Alliance, "Blunder of Louis XIV

helped William to form the Grand Alliance to break the French supremacy, to restore the barrier forts to the Dutch, protect the English and the Dutch commerce and above all, to prevent the union of France and Spain."

#### **Events of War**

**Duke of Salisbury and the Spanish War of Succession.** England took an active part in the war of succession. She sent her army under the command of the Duke of Salisbury. He was a great General and efficient administrator. He used to make his strategy according to time and opportunity. Owing to this he always stood victorious. William III was himself very well acquainted with his ability and capability, so he directed Queen Anne before his death that there was no commander more efficient than Lord Salisbury, so he was appointed commander to take part in the Spanish War of Succession from the side of England.

**Development of War and Chief Events (War of Blenheim).** The allied countries appointed the Duke of Marlborough to be the commander-in-chief of the allied forces. Austria sent her armies under the command of Prince Eugene of Savoy and he was appointed assistant to Marlborough. A. J. Grant writes in this context, "Marlborough, the English Commander, was perhaps the greatest of all English soldiers, and Prince Eugene, the commander of the imperial troops, worked with Marlborough throughout in cordial co-operation. Bavaria irritated with the Empire, was the ally of France, and the Bavarian alliance offered her the best chance of success in the great struggle." In 1704 the condition of the ally became quite precarious. The situation of Vienna, the capital of Austria became very intricate from the point of view of Bavaria and Hungary and it seemed that the Emperor would be forced to conclude a treaty. In this critical situation only Marlborough could be a saviour and unfortunately at that time he was busy in safeguarding the sea coast of the Dutch, hundreds of miles away from this place and the Dutch considered his stay there the most essential. At the same time France made an invasion against Vienna. As soon as Marlborough got this information he rapidly marched towards Austria and crushing the enemy-country reached Vienna. In 1704 he badly crushed the armies of France and Bavaria in the battle of Blenheim. Thus he saved Austria. A. J. Grant writes, "After the battle of Blenheim the fortunes of war ran continuously against France. It was only in Spain that the allies met with serious defeats." It is estimated that about 25 thousand soldiers were killed in this battle and the French commander was imprisoned. The defeat shattered the power and prestige of France and Marlborough and Prince Eugene came to be known as the best commanders of the contemporary period.

After this the British commander George Rooke occupied Gibraltar, the famous port of Spain which strengthened the position of England in the Mediterranean. In 1706 Prince Eugene badly defeated the army of France in Italy. After this in the same year Marlborough crushed the army of France in the battle of Ramillies and got success in ousting the French from Netherlands. Consequently, France also had to vacate the portion of Belgium which she had already occupied.



**War Against Spain.** In order to avenge his earlier defeat Louis XIV and his grandson endeavoured to turn out the English forces from Spain. The declaration of Austria had created discontent in Spain. Charles II, the ex-ruler of Spain had nominated Philip to be his successor and the people of Spain had regarded him to be the ruler of their own race. Gradually he attained the sympathy of all the classes in Spain. In 1707 the forces of the allies were defeated in the battle of Almanza and the English had to give up several forts in Netherlands. In the battles of 1708 and 1709 the French forces were badly defeated by Marlborough. It terrified Louis XIV and he began to think of establishing peace by giving up his claims over Spain. But the allied nations put a condition before Louis XIV that he should co-operate with them in ousting Prince Philip from Spain but this condition was not acceptable to Louis XIV.

After this some significant change occurred in England which helped in the ending of the war. In 1710 the government of Tory party came into power in place of the Whig government. The Tory (Conservative) party wanted to end the war because the war had been continuing since long. The government, unfortunately, dismissed Marlborough and began to withdraw its support from the war. On the other hand, the Emperor Leopold II died in 1711 and the Archduke Charles succeeded to the throne of Austria and the Holy Roman Empire. Now the allied nations considered it a folly to continue the war in the interest of Austria because it would have also harmed the balance of power in Europe. Moreover, Louis XIV had become quite fed up with the prolonged war as he failed to attain the desired victory. Ultimately, the war with England ended with the treaty of Utrecht in 1713 but the war continued between Austria and France up to 1714. It ended when the treaty of Rastadt had been concluded between the two. In the treaty of Rastadt, mostly the terms of the treaty of Utrecht were revised. A. J. Grant also affirms, "The war went on until 1713 with cruel loss to France. Her finances were utterly exhausted, her government discredited; only her soldiers still showed themselves to be brave and even in defeat, worthy of respect. Because of the overthrow of the Whigs in England, and the appointment of a Tory ministry favourable to peace, the English army was withdrawn from the struggle. Austria fought on a little longer, but in 1713 the long contest ended in the peace of Utrecht."

#### Provisions of the Treaty of Utrecht and its Importance

1. Philip V was accepted as the ruler of Spain with the condition that France and Spain would not be incorporated into one and no one person would be the ruler of both the countries.
2. Milan, Sardinia and Naples, the parts of Spanish empire in Italy, were given to Austria.
3. Belgium was given to Austria, so in 1713-1797 it continued to be known as Austrian Netherlands.
4. Holland was authorised to keep armies in the forts for the safety of her boundary line and oppose the expansionist policy of France.
5. Holland was granted various commercial concessions.

6. England got Gibraltar from Spain and Newfoundland and Hudson's Bay from France.
7. France promised that in future she would not support the Stuart dynasty for succession in England.
8. All the countries of Europe agreed to the declaration that after the death of Queen Anne, the ruler of Hanover dynasty would succeed to the throne of England.
9. Excepting Strassburg and Alsace, France returned all the provinces which she had conquered.
10. The Elector of Brandenburg was confirmed in his new title of 'King of Prussia'. Thus, Hohenzollern dynasty received prominence.
11. The Duke of Savoy, who had come over to the alliance during the course of the war, gained Sicily from Spain.

#### Significance of the Treaty of Utrecht

As a result of the treaty of Utrecht, all the ambitions of Louis XIV came to an end. Scheville writes about it, "The treaty of Utrecht checked the ambitions of France, it restored the balance of power and ensured the colonial and commercial supremacy of England."

The prolonged enmity between France and Spain came to an end as the rule of the Bourbon dynasty was established in both the nations. This treaty proved beneficial for England. It made England the greatest power on sea. This treaty proved helpful in establishing the balance of power in Europe as France was crippled on account of the loss of various colonies. Thetcher has thus thrown light on the significance of this treaty of Utrecht, "A new epoch was opened in Europe. It marked the end of the seventeenth century and ushered a new era of new political principles and motives."

To sum up, we may quote Scheville who remarks, "The material prosperity of his early years had vanished and in its place his failing eyes rested upon a famished peasantry, and impoverished middle class, and a government breaking down under its burden of debt. The disastrous end was the answer of fate to an excessive ambition. When his little five-year old successor, his great grandson was brought to his bedside, the dying man said to him with great seriousness: "Do not imitate me in my taste for war."

#### REFORMS OF COLBERT

When Louis XIV held the reins of the empire, France had reached the zenith of her progress and development. No country of Europe could dare face her alone. Actually, at that time France was capable of settling different issues herself very successfully but the problem was that the economic position of France was very weak. Although the Finance Minister Fouquet collected some wealth during the previous war, his resources were not extensive. However, his position in the country was so powerful and consolidated that it was not possible to remove him from the post. Ultimately, the Emperor hatched an intrigue and dismissed him



from the post of Finance Minister. A suit was also filed against Fouquet and on its basis he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Louis XIV had a special characteristic that he could pick the efficient officials from the crowd. Thetcher has also praised his quality saying, "He was very clever in the art of making friends."

In the beginning of Louis XIV's political career Prime Minister Mazarin trained him in the field of administration and furthered his ability and capability. In 1661 when Mazarin died and Louis XIV took the reins of the empire in his hands, he put Fouquet behind the bars and appointed Colbert on the post of Finance Minister. He was an expert and capable Finance Minister and a great reformer. A. J. Grant has written about him, "In Colbert Louis XIV found a very able administrator and great Finance Minister."

A prominent author has remarked, "The first thing that Louis XIV did after his accession to the throne of France was that he paid his attention towards the internal reforms. France had for the first time come out of misrule and revolution. Therefore, these reforms were very essential. John Colbert was the main person who helped Louis in giving a real shape to those reforms."

Pointing out to the ability of Colbert, A. J. Grant writes, "His name was very significant during this period and there was no man more patriotic and able than Colbert in France. Colbert was the contemporary of Mazarin who had recommended his name to be his successor to the Emperor."

#### Early Career of Colbert

Colbert was born in a middle-class family. Even being son of a merchant, he got government service with the grace of Mazarin but he made great progress due to his own ability, devotion, labour and honesty. After the death of Mazarin, he worked on different posts, such as, Superintendent of Public Works Department, Chief Accountant in Finance Department, Minister of Navy, Foreign Trade and Agriculture Department. He made significant reforms in these departments from 1661-1683 but he was specially known for his reforms in the Finance Department. He had the complete knowledge of this department and it would not be a folly to call him a great economist. He was possessed of great patriotism, devotion and dutifulness towards his country. He wanted to remove all the corruption, exploitation and inefficiency rampant in the Finance Department so that France could be a very rich and prosperous country. He knew it well that France would not be able to become a great country, in case, she was unable to amass a lot of wealth.

Richelieu and Mazarin had strengthened the autocracy but they did not pay much attention to the reforms in the Finance Department. At that time France was involved in Thirty Years' War and Civil War, hence the royal treasury was being emptied rapidly. The realization of taxes was the responsibility of the contractors during that time; they used to cheat the government for their own benefit. They collected too much amount from

the peasants but deposited only the fixed amount in the royal treasury and embezzled the rest.

After the dismissal of Fouquet when Colbert took over charge as Minister of Finance, he made the following significant reforms in the Finance Department :

#### Reforms of Colbert

Colbert, the Finance Minister of Louis XIV, was not only a far-sighted reformer but also an administrator of the first water, who injected new life and vigour into France by his reforms.

**Economic Reforms.** First of all, John Colbert paid his attention to the economic reforms in France. At that time the taxation system of France was very defective and corruption was prevalent in its collection. It was only with great difficulty that half of the revenue could reach the royal treasury as the collectors of the revenue embezzled a great part of it. Theoretically, Colbert introduced no change in the system of collection nor did he impose any other new tax but he kept a close eye on the tax collectors so that they might not line their pockets. Colbert punished all those collectors of revenue who were found guilty of misusing the government money. Thus, on the one hand, he relieved the peasants from the realization of too much money from them and on the other, strengthened the economic condition of the country checking the corruption of the tax collectors. Colbert also introduced some reforms in the revenue department. He abolished a number of insignificant posts and thus curtailed the undue expenditure from the royal treasury. He stressed the payment of legal taxes. He reduced the burden of direct taxes and imposed a number of indirect taxes. He also imposed taxes on those people who were so far exempted from the payment of taxes. Scheville writes, "He began by eliminating the prevailing graft and establishing a system of strict accounting. By these simple measures he succeeded, without the aid of new taxes, in freeing the government of its burden of debt and in actually accumulating a surplus. The minister might even have proceeded to reduce taxation, if after a few years of a welcome peace, the country had not been plunged again into war." Robert Lodge also comments about it, "The partisans were again in full activity; of the taxes levied less than half found their way to the treasury; the annual expenditure exceeded the revenue by 22 million francs. The measures taken to remedy these abuses were in the highest degree arbitrary but effective."

Without caring for his promise made with the people, Colbert reduced the rate of interest by 5%. By reducing expenditure and increasing income-tax Colbert turned the national loss into saving. He enhanced tax on all those articles which were mostly used by the wealthy people and earned the sympathy of the general masses by imposing no tax on the articles which were used by the ordinary people. Actually, his revenue policy was based on the principle that the richer the man the greater the taxes. Scheville writes, "By lowering the direct taxes and increasing the customs and other direct taxes he forced the privileged classes to contribute more to the public revenue."



He further comments, "Much more than a capable minister of finance, Colbert was also an economic thinker and planner. With a science of political economy not yet in existence, Colbert took an important step toward its creation when he decided that the question of revenues was inseparably tied up with the whole problems of production."

**Trade and Commercial Enhancement.** Colbert being a great economic thinker and planner thought it worthwhile that it was necessary to increase the production for the increase of national wealth. So far, France was not counted among the commercial countries. He had to depend on the neighbouring countries for her needs. After making reforms in the revenue system, Colbert paid his attention to the trade and commerce. He invited foreign experts and lured them to settle in his country. Besides, he established various trades and industries with their co-operation and help. He imposed heavy tax on the goods imported into France so that the articles manufactured in France could be sold easily in the market.

The author of *Cambridge Modern History* writes: "By lowering the direct taxes and increasing the customs and other direct taxes he forced the privileged classes to contribute more to the public revenue." Colbert paid his attention to the development of national wealth by encouraging the production of the country. His policy is called the policy of protection in which the domestic trade was safeguarded against the foreign competition. A prominent historian has written about it, "By increasing the Tariff Duty on foreign goods he discouraged people from using such things. With the help of the foreign technicians and experts he started new factories and mills in France. He also got constructed new roads, etc. for the free and quick flow of the goods. All these, no doubt, encouraged the trade and commerce."

Lodge writes, "He gave incentive to the local traders and bribed the foreign traders to settle in France. He also imposed heavy import duty and gave various facilities to the people of France."

Thus, he sacrificed the interests of producers. They were told that instead of depending on themselves, they should depend on the country.

**Trading Companies.** John Colbert gave great encouragement to the trading countries. So far all the sea trade was in the control of England and Holland. These countries had their trade relations with the other countries through the medium of their trading companies. Colbert thought over it and decided that such companies should be established in France for the development of trade. Soon he executed his thought into action and some companies were established to have trade relations through Baltic Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Indian Sea and America and attained remarkable success.

**Colonial Policy.** Besides the above-mentioned reforms he also introduced certain changes in the colonial policy of the country and thereby consolidated it. Scheville writes, "Moreover, aware of the value for merchants and farmers of easy communications, he gave France an excellent system of roads and canals. Finally, he unfolded a considerable colonial activity in Canada, India and the West Indies."

John Colbert very well organized the Navy of France and created a powerful fleet and he stood himself in competition against the naval power of England and Holland. It was Colbert who infused a new vigour into the French Navy. He also established three shipyards at Calais, Brest and Herve. His companies established trade relations with India, Africa and America. He inspired young enthusiastic persons to go and settle in the colonies like Indies, Africa etc. Colbert also wanted that the Navy of France should be powerful enough to face Holland and England's naval power. W. Stubbs throwing light on the significance of its trade and colonial aspect has remarked, "Colbert was a vigorous colonial minister and displayed great zeal for naval development and overseas expansion."

**Administrative Reforms.** Besides the economic reforms, John Colbert paid his attention to the administrative reforms. First of all, he formed an efficient police department. In order to enhance its efficiency and capability, Colbert trained the policemen in a new style.

Corruption was rampant in the judicial department. He tried his best for the codification of law because so far it was neither clear nor had harmony. He introduced reforms in the judicial field in order to remove the corruption. He also helped a lot in making the Emperor absolute. For this he limited the rights of the Estates General and the Parliament of Paris but he never oppressed the people for it. Actually, he was the saviour of the interests of the people. He performed many deeds for the welfare of the people. During his administrative reforms, he succeeded in establishing law and order.

Colbert's codification of law helped the judges and others for providing justice to all. He carried out reforms in different departments of the administration and organised them afresh.

**Other Reforms.** Besides being a capable and efficient Finance Minister, Colbert also had a special aptitude for art and literature. He paid his best attention towards the development of art, literature and science. Scholars like Pascal, Mliere and Descartes wrote various significant books. Academies were also established for the progress and advancement of learning in the country.

#### Estimate of Reforms

As a result of the reforms of Colbert the royal coffers of France were again filled up and Louis XIV continued to spend money like a spend-thrift for his utopian schemes. A prominent historian has written that there were two chief characteristics of his reign. First, he fought wars throughout his life and secondly, he founded a splendid court and he could attain success in both of his schemes because of co-operation and reforms of Colbert.

In spite of all this his reforms could not be permanent because they did not encourage free trade nor friendly alliance with the countries. Scheville writes, "Colbert's rigid control shifted enterprise and French traders were taught to rely upon support instead of upon their own energies."



In fact, Colbert maintained the atmosphere of prosperity, law and order and solidarity in the country. A. J. Grant mentions, "His measures contributed to the general development of France, brought prosperity to the people and gave plenty to the king."

Besides the various merits there were certain demerits in the policy of John Colbert. His economic reforms, no doubt, gave a new shape to trade and commerce of France. His policy made France happy and prosperous but there were certain evils also, hence the people of France felt it to be unbearable. The policy of protection proved fatal for France. Too much centralization and too much supervision also created doubt in the minds of the officials.

Colbert only effected reforms in trade and commerce and did not care for the development of agriculture. It made the condition of peasants all the more deplorable while the middle class which dealt in trade amassed a lot of wealth. Thus, the policy of Colbert gave rise to unnecessary groupism and disparity in the society. Colbert collected a lot of wealth but it was lavishly spent on wars by Louis XIV and brought France on the verge of bankruptcy. Therefore, it has been aptly remarked that but for Colbert, Louis XIV would not have been what he was.

To sum up Louis XIV, we may quote A. J. Grant who writes, "Louis' death marks an epoch in European history. France had led European civilization for nearly a century, and nearly all states looked up to her as an example, not only in the arts of peace and war but also in the methods of government. The financial exhaustion caused by the last war, and the miserable government under which she was soon to fall, degraded her from that high position and left the European area free for other combatants."

#### SERVICES OF RICHELIEU, MAZARIN AND COLBERT

Louis XIV appointed Richelieu to the post of Prime Minister in 1624 after taking over charge of the empire from his mother who was so far working as regent. At that time the country was struggling against chaos and confusion but he safeguarded her in all spheres. Hayes writes about it, "It was Richelieu and his capacity that came to the aid of France as God sent remedy for the national calamity."

##### Richelieu

Richelieu was an efficient politician and capable minister. He worked for eighteen years and rendered yeoman service to his country. A. J. Grant mentions about him, "From 1624 to 1642 it was Richelieu who remained the most conspicuous and notable figure in the history of Europe."

The policy of Richelieu was motivated by two objects. First, raising the monarchy to a high pinnacle he wanted to establish powerful central government to strengthen the absolute monarchy. Secondly, he wanted to crush the supremacy of any other country in Europe and intended to establish the supremacy of France in the continent. Thatcher has thus described the aims of Richelieu, "Richelieu desired to establish the King's supremacy within France and he desired at the same time to make France as a supreme power in Europe."

As a result of the labour of this great man and finance minister, France flourished and prospered rapidly. The age of Louis XIII was, in fact, an age of the internal and external policies of Richelieu. The working of Richelieu proved the greatness of Louis XIII.

**Religious Policy.** Richelieu was a follower of the Roman Catholic religion but he did not suppress the Huguenots owing to his fanaticism but because of his political circumstances and because of his being a shrewd politician, he was not against any religion but was the most obedient servant of his King and wanted to follow his command in every situation. No doubt, he granted religious freedom to Protestants but he did not permit them to establish their separate political institution to enjoy political rights at all costs.

**His Behaviour Towards Nobles.** The nobles had special privileges in France. Richelieu decided to crush the power of these nobles and enhance the power of the Emperor. He established a powerful spy system and kept a close eye on the activities of the nobles. In 1626 he demolished the fortifications of the fortresses of the nobles.

**Centralization of Administration.** In order to establish control over nobles and bureaucracy, he appointed royal agents. He centralized the powers of the nobles in the hands of the king and stopped summoning the meetings of the Estates General. Thus, Richelieu established the supremacy of France in Europe. On account of these reasons Richelieu is called the founder of the absolutism in France. Hayes writes, "Richelieu is rightly called the creator of absolute monarchy of France."

**Foreign Policy.** Richelieu wanted to make France the most powerful and effective nation of Europe. He wanted to establish the supremacy of the Bourbon dynasty in place of the Hapsburg dynasty in Europe. Austria and Spain were hurdles in his achievements. Richelieu having freed the country from the foreign influence, resorted to the policy of expansion.

He made the King powerful and added to his absolutism. Like an effective politician he removed all the obstacles in the way of France by hook or by crook. He sternly suppressed the Huguenots, nobles and all other opponents of the Emperor. H. A. L. Fisher has thus praised him, "Richelieu mitigated the spirit of conspiracies through fear and terror. He made the King an absolute ruler by strengthening the central administration. He enhanced the power and prestige of France abroad. He supported the Protestants even though himself being a Roman Catholic."

##### Mazarin

After the death of Richelieu in 1642, Mazarin succeeded him. He remained on the post of Prime Minister up to 1661. He followed the internal policy of his predecessor but he did not have the diplomacy and cunningness to attain success like his predecessor. He appointed his relatives on high and lucrative posts. However, he enhanced the influence of France at home and abroad by his wisdom. He took part in the Thirty Years' War and added to the prestige of France by concluding treaty of Westphalia with the vanquished.



**Internal Policy of Mazarin.** Some anarchical events took place in France in the time of Mazarin, the main reason being that the discontentment emerged among the nobles due to the autocratic rule of Mazarin. The people were overburdened with taxes and the nobles were aspiring to acquire their lost prestige. Being a foreigner, Mazarin failed to check them from revolts inspired by the civil war of England. Mazarin took stern measures to suppress these revolts and granted economic concessions to the people but at last he was forced to recognise the rights of the Parliament due to its opposition.

**Foreign Policy of Mazarin.** Mazarin also followed the policy of Richelieu in the foreign sphere. France was greatly benefitted by the treaty of Westphalia. France defeated Spain in the war in 1659 and forced her to sign the treaty of Pyrenees. According to the terms of the treaty of Pyrenees, France got Roussollin. Fisher writes that the treaty of Pyrenees was a great success of Mazarin and a humiliating defeat for France because consequent to this treaty, the northern territory of Spain was incorporated into the French empire."

As a result of the foreign policy successes of Mazarin France reached the climax of progress by weakening the power of Hapsburg dynasty of Austria and Spain, thus increasing the influence of the Bourbon dynasty.

In short, Mazarin worked for about 19 years as Prime Minister. He established internal peace and enhanced the King's absolutism abroad. He extended the territory of France due to his diplomacy. He did not give birth to any new policy or original principles. A prominent historian remarks, "Richelieu gave birth to and established a policy but it was left to Mazarin to develop and continue this policy."

In short, like Richelieu Mazarin increased his own power and prestige by adding to the supremacy of France and the Emperor at home and abroad. Really, he was a true disciple of Richelieu.

#### **Colbert**

In 1661 when Louis XIV took over the reins of France from his mother, who was his regent, he appointed Colbert to the post of Finance Minister. Colbert was an able and capable economist and reformer. A. J. Grant has thus praised him, "In Colbert Louis XIV found a very able administrator and a great finance minister."

**Economic Reforms.** First of all, Colbert endeavoured to remove the economic disorder prevailing in the country. During this time the economic condition of France was very weak. He did away with various unwanted offices, decided the salaries of the officials, dismissed the corrupt officers and maintained the accounts of the country in a fair manner. He realized heavy direct and indirect taxes from the rich people and the poor continued to pay less taxes.

**Trade and Colonial Expansion.** After making some effective reforms in the economic field, Colbert paid his attention towards the development of trade and colonies. He resorted to the policy of protection in the field of trade. He abolished various provincial taxes for the progress of trade. In order to develop the trade and industry in

Europe Colbert invited various experts from the foreign countries and settled them in France. New roads and canals were built for the development of trade and industry. Thus, Colbert put in every effort for the development of trade and commerce.

Colbert was also an effective and successful colonial minister. For enhancing the naval power of France he built a large fleet and also built shipyards like Calais, Brest and Herve and established French colonies in Canada, West Indies, Africa and India. W. Stubbs has remarked about his commercial development, "Colbert was a vigorous colonial minister and displayed great zeal for naval development and overseas expansion."

**His Cultural Achievements.** Colbert contributed to the progress and development of literature, art and science. Various universities were established in France during his period. The Court of Louis XIV was the centre of artists and men of letters. French literature also developed remarkably during his regime and therefore historians have named his period to be the golden age of the French Literature.

**Administrative Reforms.** Colbert endeavoured his best to make some significant reforms in the administration of the country. He made special arrangements for the recruitment and training of the police. He reorganised the judicial department and made some essential reforms in the codification of law. He dismissed a large number of corrupt officers to reform the administrative system. He loved his people very much and always looked after their well-being. To achieve this aim he initiated the programme of reforms. He succeeded in establishing peace and tranquillity in the country by his reforms.

#### **Significance of the Reforms**

As a result of all these reforms of Colbert the empty coffers of France were once again filled up and Louis XIV could use this money for the fulfilment of his ambitions which otherwise would not have been possible.

In spite of his best efforts, his reforms did not prove stable because Colbert's reforms neither encouraged the people for free trade nor were they based on friendly alliances with foreign countries. Scheville writes about it, "Colbert's rigid control stifled enterprise and French traders were taught to rely upon support instead of upon their own energies."

A. J. Grant also praises Colbert for the prosperity of France and good organising capability, "His measures contributed to the general development of France, brought prosperity to the people and gave plenty to the king."

To sum up, we may say that had Louis XIV not been blessed with such an efficient Finance Minister as Colbert, perhaps he would not have attained as much popularity as he achieved due to him.