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Princess Palatine, Protectress of Animals

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Of all the trades on display at Versailles, "defender of animals" was iconoclastic, to say the least, yet this avant-garde stance went down in history.

Pets were plentiful at the court of the French kings. They livened up the royal apartments, never hesitating to catch a nap on a lady's coat or Louis XVI's commode. They were entitled to regal treatment. This aspect of life in Versailles is revisited through the eyes of Louis XIV's sister-in-law, Princess Palatine. In her letters, she describes the court with witty affection. Her attitude gives evidence of a sensibility opposed to Descartes' animal-machine theory, which the Princess mischievously dismantles: "When you are jealous, are you machine or man? For save you, I know of no one more jealous than my dogs?"
