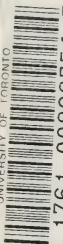


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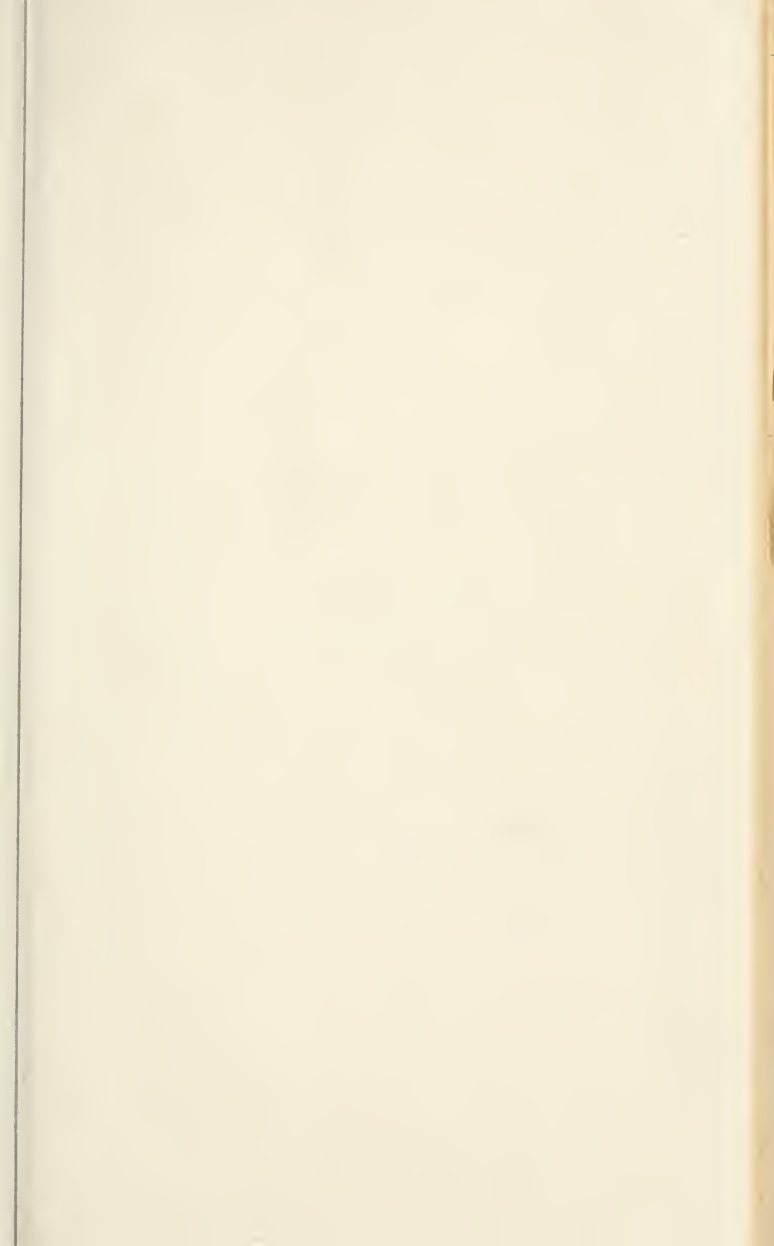


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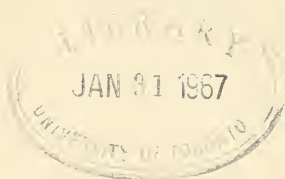
*IN TWO VOLUMES—VOLUME I*

*ILLUSTRATED WITH A SERIES OF ETCHINGS BY  
ED. HEDOUIN, AND TWO PORTRAITS*

*PRIVATELY PRINTED*

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*THE CONFESSIONS*  
*OF*  
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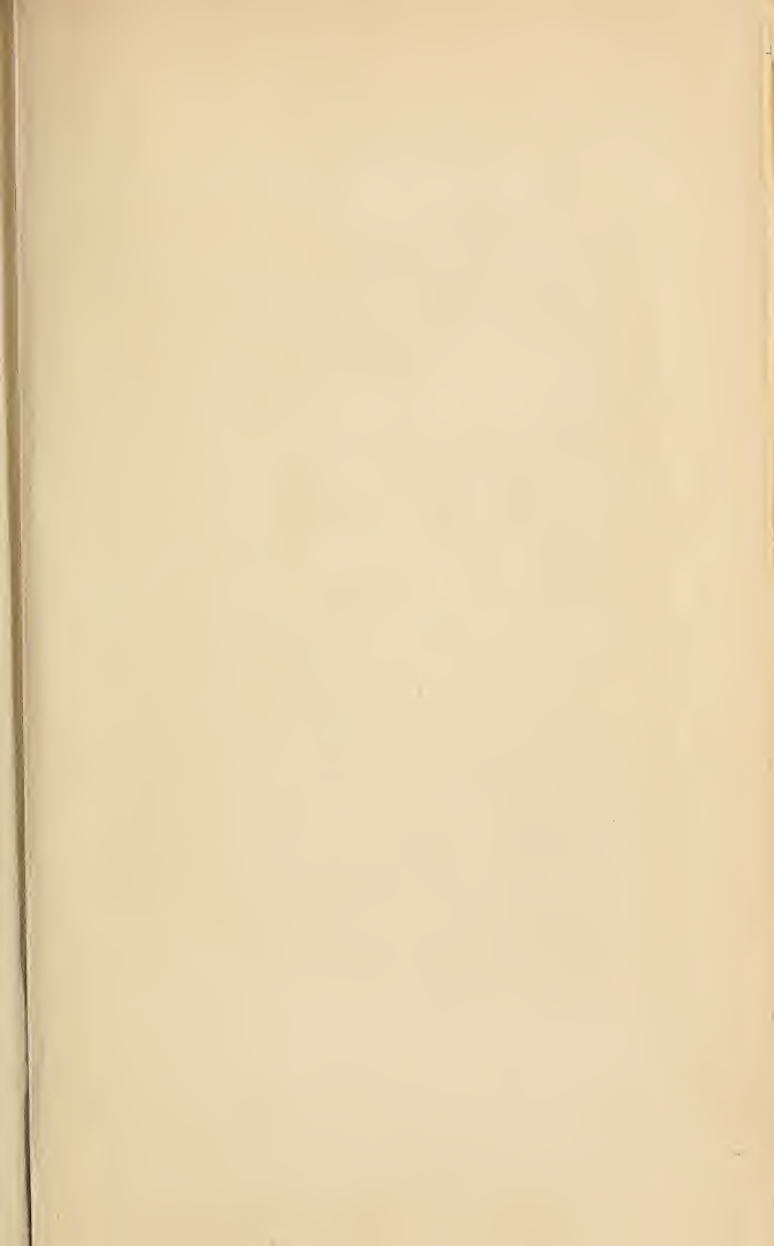
HERE the self-torturing sophist, wild Rousseau,  
The apostle of affliction, he who threw  
Enchantment over passion, and from woe  
Wrung overwhelming eloquence, first drew  
The breath which made him wretched; yet he knew  
How to make madness beautiful, and cast  
O'er erring deeds and thoughts a heavenly hue  
Of words, like sunbeams, dazzling as they pass'd  
The eyes, which o'er them shed tears feelingly and fast.

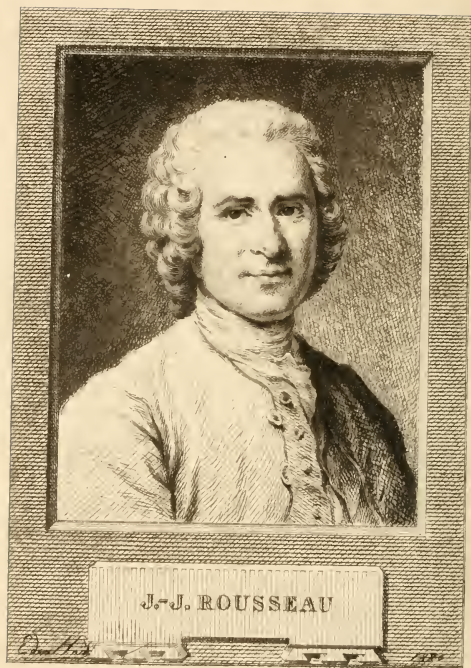
His love was passion's essence—as a tree  
On fire by lightning: with ethereal flame  
Kindled he was, and blasted: for to be  
Thus, and enamour'd, were in him the same.  
But his was not the love of living dame,  
Nor of the dead who rise upon our dreams,  
But of ideal beauty, which became  
In him existence, and o'erflowing teems  
Along his burning page, distemper'd though it seems.

His life was one long war with self-sought foes,  
Or friends by him self-banish'd: for his mind  
Had grown Suspicion's sanctuary, and chose  
For its own cruel sacrifice the kind,  
'Gainst whom he raged with fury strange and blind.  
But he was frenzied—wherefore, who may know?  
Since cause might be which skill could never find:  
But he was frenzied by disease or woe  
To that worst pitch of all, which wears a reasoning show.

BYRON.—*Childe Harold.*







After the pastel by Latour

## PREFATORY NOTICE

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THE "Confessions," which is the principal authority for the first fifty-three years of Rousseau's life, comes to an end with the year 1765.

It may be useful to give a succinct biographical sketch of that period, and of the thirteen succeeding years up to the time of his death in 1778.

Jean Jacques Rousseau was born at Geneva, on the 28th of June, 1712. He was descended from a Parisian family which had settled there since 1554. His father was a watchmaker, who, in consequence of a quarrel with a captain in the French army, was obliged to leave Geneva, and Jean Jacques was sent by his uncle, together with his cousin, to be educated at the house of a Protestant minister named Lamercier. At first he lived there happily enough; but, having been unjustly accused of breaking a comb, he became restless and dissatisfied, and returned to Geneva, where he remained two or three years with his uncle. Even at that early age his morbid fancy for women began to show itself. After lengthy deliberation, it was finally decided to put him with the town-clerk, to be brought up as an attorney; but he was found so stupid that he was sent away in disgrace. He was next apprenticed to an engraver, who treated him with great brutality, and, in spite of his liking for the trade itself, he became utterly disgusted and

demoralised. On his return from a walk with his fellow-apprentices, he found the city gates shut. This had happened twice before, and his dread of the punishment that awaited him the third time made him resolve not to return to his master. After wandering about the neighbourhood for some days, he arrived at Confignon, in Savoy, where he called upon the *curé*, who gave him a good dinner, and sent him on to Annecy, with a letter of introduction to Madame de Warens, the curious person with whom he afterwards entered upon the extraordinary relations fully described in the "Confessions." In consequence of a suggestion made by M. Sabran, who was dining with her, he was sent to the hospice for catechumens at Turin, to be converted to Catholicism. After having publicly abjured the Protestant faith, he was turned out to shift for himself, with twenty francs in his pocket. Through his landlady, a rough but good-natured woman, he secured the post of lackey to the Comtesse de Vercellis, but was thrown out of employment by her death. It was at her house that the well-known incident of the theft of the ribbon occurred (p. 84). The Comte de la Roque, Madame de Vercellis's nephew, procured him a similar situation with the Comte de Gouvion, Chief Equerry to the Queen of Sardinia, where he might have improved his position; but, in one of his fits of "madness," as he himself calls them, he suddenly ran away, intending to lead a vagabond life with a young Genevese, named Bâcle. When their resources were exhausted, they parted, and Rousseau returned to Madame de Warens, who received him kindly, and took him to lodge at her house. He took lessons in Latin, and studied for the priesthood; but he was sent back to Madame de Warens as not clever enough even for a priest. About this time his passion for music began to develop itself. On his return from Lyons, where he had been sent in the

company of M. le Maître, a Parisian organist (whom, by the way, he shamefully deserted in the public streets when attacked by a fit), he found that Madame de Warens had left Annecy. During her absence, he went to see his father at Nyon, and set up as a teacher of music at Lausanne, the duties of which he was utterly incompetent to perform. Finding himself unable to gain a livelihood, he went to Neufchâtel, where he was more fortunate in the matter of pupils. In the neighbourhood of this place, he made the acquaintance of a Greek prelate, who was collecting funds for the restoration of the Holy Sepulchre. With his usual impetuosity, he engaged himself to him as secretary and interpreter, and started off on his way to Jerusalem. He did not, however, get beyond Soleure, where he was detained by the French Ambassador, who persuaded him to desert the Archimandrite, and wait and see whether something better could not be found for him. Finding little immediate prospect of advancement, he set out for Paris, the first sight of which greatly disappointed him. Hearing that Madame de Warens was at Chambéry, he returned to her, and for a short time held a Government appointment under the King of Sardinia, which, however, he resigned in order to devote himself to music. After about ten years' intimate relationship with Madame de Warens, who treated him with the greatest kindness, which, in spite of his protestations of affection, he does not seem to have repaid as he should have done, he finally left her, and became tutor at Lyons to the children of M. de Mably. But finding himself, as he confesses, unfit for the post, he made a last attempt to reinstate himself with Madame de Warens, but as this proved unsuccessful, he again went to Paris, with a new system of musical notation, which he imagined was going to make his fortune. But it was unfavourably received by the Academy of Sciences ; and, being unable

to obtain pupils, he accepted the post of secretary to M. de Montaigne, the French Ambassador at Venice. After about eighteen months, he threw up this post and returned to Paris in 1745. At the Hôtel St. Quentin, where he lived for a time, he formed a connection with a servant named Thérèse le Vasseur, which lasted for the rest of his life. He had five children by her, who were all deposited at the Foundling Hospital. He was for a short time clerk in the office of M. Dupin, Farmer-General of Taxes. In 1748, he became acquainted with Madame d'Epinay, who became one of his best friends, and at her house he became acquainted with d'Alembert, Diderot, and Condillac, who engaged him to write articles for the "Encyclopédie."

In 1749, the Academy of Dijon offered a prize on the question: "Whether the progress of the Arts and Sciences has contributed more to the deterioration or improvement of Morals?" Rousseau supported the first view, obtained the prize, and became famous. M. de Francueil, Madame Dupin's son-in-law, gave him a post in the Receiver-General's office, which he resigned. He took up music-copying again, and earned a scanty livelihood. An opera composed by him, *Le Devin du Village*, was played before Louis XV. at Fontainebleau. In 1753, he wrote a letter on "French Music"; his next publication was a letter to d'Alembert, *Sur les Spectacles*, an attack on Voltaire, d'Alembert, and the theatre generally. He also wrote a discourse upon the "Origin of Inequality amongst Mankind." In 1754, he paid a visit to his old love, Madame de Warens, whom he found in very reduced circumstances. He also turned Protestant again, in order to make himself eligible for the freedom of Geneva.

In April, 1756, at the invitation of Madame d'Epinay, he took up his residence at her country-house, called the

Hermitage, near Montmorency, where he began to write "Julie, or La Nouvelle Héloïse," which was finished in 1759. This work was inspired by his passion for Madame d'Houdetot, sister-in-law of Madame d'Épinay. Owing to a quarrel between himself, Diderot, and Grimm, he left the Hermitage in the winter, and went to live at Montlouis, in the neighbourhood. "La Nouvelle Héloïse" appeared in 1760; the "Contrat Social," and "Émile," in 1762. Owing to the doctrines contained in his works, he equally offended the government, the clerical and philosophical parties. On the 11th of June, 1762, "Émile" was condemned by the Parliament of Paris, proscribed by the States-General of Holland, and publicly burnt by order of the Council of Geneva. Rousseau was warned by the Prince de Conti and Madame de Luxembourg that his arrest was intended. He, therefore, went to Yverdon, but was ordered by the Senate of Berne to quit the territory of the Republic. He then removed to Motiers in Neuchâtel, of which Marshal Keith was governor for Frederick II., King of Prussia, to whom it then belonged. While at Motiers he wrote his "Lettres de la Montagne," which caused such irritation against him that, in alarm, he migrated to the Island of St. Pierre in the Lake of Bienne, where he assumed the Armenian costume. Being again ordered by the Senate of Berne to leave, he accepted an invitation from Hume to go to England, where he arrived in January, 1766. After a stay of two months in the capital—where he was made much of, although men like Johnson entertained but a poor opinion of him—he went to the country-house of Mr. Davenport, at Wootton, in Staffordshire. Here he wrote the first six books of his "Confessions." But he soon quarrelled with both Hume and Davenport, and suddenly returned to France. A letter had appeared in the newspapers, with the signature of the King of



Prussia, attacking Rousseau's morality. The latter accused Hume of having written it, and, in spite of his denial, accused him of the basest treachery against him. The letter was really written by Horace Walpole, who afterwards acknowledged it.

In May, 1767, he visited Amiens, and, in the following month, repaired to the Château of Trye, which belonged to the Prince de Conti, where he lived some time under the name of Renou, and went on with his "Confessions." From there he went to Grenoble, capital of the ancient province of Dauphiné; soon becoming tired of the place and its inhabitants, he went to Bourgoin. It is said that at this time he contemplated returning to Wootton, or a journey to the Balearic Islands. Finding Bourgoin unhealthy, he moved in 1769 to Monquin, where he wrote the tenth book of the "Confessions." Thence he went to Lyons, where he amused himself by botanising on the banks of the Saône. At last, he went back to Paris, where permission was granted him to reside, on condition that he wrote nothing against the Government or Religion. He resumed his music-copying, and mixed in the society of people of note, such as Sophie Arnould, Madame de Genlis, Bernardin de St. Pierre, and others. In May, 1778, he removed to a cottage at Ermenonville, belonging to the Comte de Girardin, where he died suddenly on the 3rd of July. Some, amongst them Madame de Staël, are of opinion that he committed suicide; others believe that he succumbed to a fit of apoplexy.

He was buried, by his own request, in the island of poplars in the lake in the park of Ermenonville. In 1794, his body was transported, by decree of the Convention, to the Panthéon at Paris, where also lie the remains of Voltaire. Two streets in Paris preserve his memory; the old Rue Plâtrière, afterwards called Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau,



where he lived on his return from Dauphiné, and the Rue du Contrat Social. A bronze statue has been erected by the town of Geneva, on the little island where the Rhône issues from the lake.

The best edition of Rousseau's works is that by Musset-Pathay in twenty-three volumes; and the best biography, in English or any other language, that by Mr. John Morley, in two volumes (Macmillan). The present is the only complete and unexpurgated translation into English of the "Confessions."

This edition has been translated from the original, and every effort has been made to give even more faithfully both the letter and the spirit of that original. This step has been rendered necessary by the many inaccuracies and omissions which disfigure all previous English translations of the "Confessions"—entire paragraphs being struck out at the caprice of the adaptor. In the present edition not the slightest abridgment has been permitted, and the attempt is everywhere made to render the thought and the expression of the author as closely as the genius of our language will allow.



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*Mais rien ne peut compenser à  
Francien*

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a year, a child was born to both, after which they were again obliged to separate.

My uncle Bernard was an engineer. He took service in the Empire and in Hungary, under Prince Eugène. He distinguished himself at the siege and battle of Belgrade. My father, after the birth of my only brother, set out for Constantinople, whither he was summoned to undertake the post of watchmaker to the Sultan. During his absence, my mother's beauty, intellect and talents gained for her the devotion of numerous admirers.<sup>1</sup> M. de la Closure, the French Resident, was one of the most eager to offer his. His passion must have been great, for, thirty years later, I saw him greatly affected when speaking to me of her. To enable her to resist such advances, my mother had more than her virtue: she loved her husband tenderly. She pressed him to return; he left all, and returned. I was the unhappy fruit of this return. Ten months later I was born, a weak and ailing child; I cost my mother her life, and my birth was the first of my misfortunes.

I have never heard how my father bore this loss, but I know that he was inconsolable. He believed that he saw his wife again in me, without being able to forget that it was I who had robbed him of her; he never embraced me without my perceiving, by his sighs and the convulsive manner in which he clasped me to his breast, that a bitter regret was mingled with his caresses, which were on that account only the more tender. When he said to me, "Jean Jacques, let us talk of your mother," I used to answer, "Well, then, my father, we will weep!"—and this word alone was sufficient to move him to tears.

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<sup>1</sup> Her talents were too brilliant for her position, since her father, the minister, who worshipped her, had educated her with great care. She drew, sang, accompanied herself on the *téorbe*\*; she read much, and wrote tolerable verses. During the absence of her husband and her brother, while walking with her sister-in-law and their two children, she delivered the following impromptu, when someone happened to mention them

Ces deux messieurs, qui sont absents,  
 Nous sont chers de bien des manières :  
 Ce sont nos amis, nos amants :  
 Ce sont nos maris et nos frères,  
 Et les pères de ces enfants.

\* A stringed instrument, resembling a lute.

"Ah!" said he, with a sigh, "give her back to me, console me for her loss, fill the void which she has left in my soul. Should I love you as I do, if you were only my son?" Forty years after he had lost her, he died in the arms of a second wife, but the name of the first was on his lips and her image at the bottom of his heart.

Such were the authors of my existence. Of all the gifts which Heaven had bestowed upon them, a sensitive heart is the only one they bequeathed to me; it had been the source of their happiness, but for me it proved the source of all the misfortunes of my life.

I was brought into the world in an almost dying condition; little hope was entertained of saving my life. I carried within me the germs of a complaint which the course of time has strengthened, and which at times allows me a respite only to make me suffer more cruelly in another manner. One of my father's sisters, an amiable and virtuous young woman, took such care of me that she saved my life. At this moment, while I am writing, she is still alive, at the age of eighty, nursing a husband younger than herself, but exhausted by excessive drinking. Dear aunt, I forgive you for having preserved my life; and I deeply regret that, at the end of your days, I am unable to repay the tender care which you lavished upon me at the beginning of my own.<sup>1</sup> My dear old nurse Jacqueline is also still alive, healthy and robust. The hands which opened my eyes at my birth will be able to close them for me at my death.

I felt before I thought: this is the common lot of humanity. I experienced it more than others. I do not know what I did until I was five or six years old. I do not know how I learned to read; I only remember my earliest reading, and the effect it had upon me; from that time I date my uninterrupted self-consciousness. My mother had left some romances behind her, which my father and I began to read after supper. At first it was only a question of practising me in reading, by the aid of amusing books; but soon the interest became so lively, that we used to read in turns without stopping, and spent whole nights in this

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<sup>1</sup> The name of this aunt was Madame Gonceru. In March, 1767, Rousseau settled upon her an income of one hundred livres, and, even in the time of his greatest distress, always paid it with scrupulous exactitude.

occupation. We were unable to leave off until the volume was finished. Sometimes, my father, hearing the swallows begin to twitter in the early morning, would say, quite ashamed, "Let us go to bed; I am more of a child than yourself."

In a short time I acquired, by this dangerous method, not only extreme facility in reading and understanding what I read, but a knowledge of the passions that was unique in a child of my age. I had no idea of things in themselves, although all the feelings of actual life were already known to me. I had conceived nothing, but felt everything. These confused emotions, which I felt one after the other, certainly did not warp the reasoning powers which I did not as yet possess; but they shaped them in me of a peculiar stamp, and gave me odd and romantic notions of human life, of which experience and reflection have never been able wholly to cure me.

[1719-1723.]—The romances came to an end in the summer of 1719. The following winter brought us something different. My mother's library being exhausted, we had recourse to the share of her father's which had fallen to us. Luckily, there were some good books in it; in fact, it could hardly have been otherwise, for the library had been collected by a minister, who was even a learned man according to the fashion of the day, and was at the same time a man of taste and intellect. The "History of the Empire and the Church," by Le Sueur; Bossuet's "Treatise upon Universal History"; Plutarch's "Lives of Famous Men"; Nani's "History of Venice"; Ovid's "Metamorphoses"; "La Bruyère"; Fontenelle's "Worlds"; his "Dialogues of the Dead"; and some volumes of Molière—all these were brought over into my father's room, and I read to him out of them while he worked. I conceived a taste for them that was rare and perhaps unique at my age. Plutarch, especially, became my favourite author. The pleasure I took in reading him over and over again cured me a little of my taste for romance, and I soon preferred Agesilaus, Brutus and Aristides to Orondates, Artamenes, and Juba. This interesting reading, and the conversations between my father and myself to which it gave rise, formed in me the free and republican spirit, the proud and indomitable character unable to endure slavery or servitude, which has tormented me throughout my life in situations the least

fitted to afford it scope. Unceasingly occupied with thoughts of Rome and Athens, living as it were amongst their great men, myself by birth the citizen of a republic and the son of a father whose patriotism was his strongest passion, I was fired by his example; I believed myself a Greek or a Roman; I lost my identity in that of the individual whose life I was reading; the recitals of the qualities of endurance and intrepidity which arrested my attention made my eyes glisten and strengthened my voice. One day, while I was relating the history of Scaevola at table, those present were alarmed to see me come forward and hold my hand over a chafing-dish, to illustrate his action.

I had a brother seven years older than myself, who was learning my father's trade. The excessive affection which was lavished upon myself caused him to be somewhat neglected, which treatment I cannot approve of. His education felt the consequences of this neglect. He took to evil courses before he was old enough to be a regular profligate. He was put with another master, from whom he was continually running away, as he had done from home. I hardly ever saw him; I can scarcely say that I knew him; but I never ceased to love him tenderly, and he loved me as much as a vagabond can love anything. I remember that, on one occasion, when my father was chastising him harshly and in anger, I threw myself impetuously between them and embraced him closely. In this manner I covered his body with mine, and received the blows which were aimed at him; I so obstinately maintained my position that at last my father was obliged to leave off, being either disarmed by my cries and tears, or afraid of hurting me more than him. At last, my brother turned out so badly that he ran away and disappeared altogether. Some time afterwards we heard that he was in Germany. He never once wrote to us. From that time nothing more has been heard of him, and thus I have remained an only son.

4 If this poor boy was carelessly brought up, this was not the case with his brother; the children of kings could not be more carefully looked after than I was during my early years—worshipped by all around me, and, which is far less common, treated as a beloved, never as a spoiled child. Till I left my

father's house, I was never once allowed to run about the streets by myself with the other children; in my case no one ever had to satisfy or check any of those fantastic whims which are attributed to Nature, but are all in reality the result of education. I had the faults of my age: I was a chatterbox, a glutton, and, sometimes, a liar. I would have stolen fruits, bonbons, or eatables; but I have never found pleasure in doing harm or damage, in accusing others, or in tormenting poor dumb animals. I remember, however, that I once made water in a saucepan belonging to one of our neighbours, Madame Clot, while she was at church. I declare that, even now, the recollection of this makes me laugh, because Madame Clot, a good woman in other respects, was the most confirmed old grumbler I have ever known. Such is the brief and true story of all my childish offences.

How could I become wicked, when I had nothing but examples of gentleness before my eyes, and none around me but the best people in the world? My father, my aunt, my nurse, my relations, our friends, our neighbours, all who surrounded me, did not, it is true, obey me, but they loved me; and I loved them in return. My wishes were so little excited and so little opposed, that it did not occur to me to have any. I can swear that, until I served under a master, I never knew what a fancy was. Except during the time I spent in reading or writing in my father's company, or when my nurse took me for a walk, I was always with my aunt, sitting or standing by her side, watching her at her embroidery or listening to her singing; and I was content. Her cheerfulness, her gentleness and her pleasant face have stamped so deep and lively an impression on my mind that I can still see her manner, look, and attitude; I remember her affectionate language: I could describe what clothes she wore and how her head was dressed, not forgetting the two little curls of black hair on her temples, which she wore in accordance with the fashion of the time.

I am convinced that it is to her I owe the taste, or rather passion, for music, which only became fully developed in me a long time afterwards. She knew a prodigious number of tunes and songs which she used to sing in a very thin, gentle voice. This excellent woman's cheerfulness of soul banished dreaminess and melancholy from herself and all around her. The attrac-





began to form or display itself in me that heart at once so proud and tender, that character so effeminate but yet indomitable, which, ever wavering between timidity and courage, weakness and self-control, has throughout my life made me inconsistent, and has caused abstinence and enjoyment, pleasure and prudence equally to elude my grasp.

This course of education was interrupted by an accident, the consequences of which have exercised an influence upon the remainder of my life. My father had a quarrel with a captain in the French army, named Gautier, who was connected with some of the members of the Common Council. This Gautier, a cowardly and insolent fellow (whose nose happened to bleed during the affray), in order to avenge himself, accused my father of having drawn his sword within the city walls. My father, whom they wanted to send to prison, persisted that, in accordance with the law, the accuser ought to be imprisoned as well as himself. Being unable to have his way in this, he preferred to quit Geneva and expatriate himself for the rest of his life, than to give way on a point in which honour and liberty appeared to him to be compromised.

I remained under the care of my uncle Bernard, who was at the time employed upon the fortifications of Geneva. His eldest daughter was dead, but he had a son of the same age as myself. We were sent together to Bossey, to board with the Protestant minister Lamercier, in order to learn, together with Latin, all the sorry trash which is included under the name of education.

Two years spent in the village in some degree softened my Roman roughness and made me a child again. At Geneva, where no tasks were imposed upon me, I loved reading and study, which were almost my only amusements; at Bossey, my tasks made me love the games which formed a break in them. The country was so new to me, that my enjoyment of it never palled. I conceived so lively an affection for it, that it has never since died out. The remembrance of the happy days I have spent there filled me with regretful longing for its pleasures, at all periods of my life, until the day which has brought me back to it. M. Lamercier was a very intelligent person, who, without neglecting our education, never imposed excessive tasks upon us. The fact that, in spite of

my dislike to restraint, I have never recalled my hours of study with any feeling of disgust—and also that, even if I did not learn much from him, I learnt without difficulty what I did learn and never forgot it—is sufficient proof that his system of instruction was a good one.

The simplicity of this country life was of inestimable value to me, in that it opened my heart to friendship. Up to that time I had only known lofty, but imaginary sentiments. The habit of living peacefully together with my cousin Bernard drew us together in tender bonds of union. In a short time, my feelings towards him became more affectionate than those with which I had regarded my brother, and they have never been effaced. He was a tall, lanky, weakly boy, as gentle in disposition as he was feeble in body, who never abused the preference which was shown to him in the house as the son of my guardian. Our tasks, our amusements, our tastes were the same: we were alone, we were of the same age, each of us needed a companion: separation was to us, in a manner, annihilation. Although we had few opportunities of proving our mutual attachment, it was very great; not only were we unable to live an instant apart, but we did not imagine it possible that we could ever be separated. Being, both of us, ready to yield to tenderness, and docile, provided compulsion was not used, we always agreed in everything. If, in the presence of those who looked after us, he had some advantage over me in consequence of the favour with which they regarded him, when we were alone I had an advantage over him which restored the equilibrium. When we were saying our lessons, I prompted him if he hesitated; when I had finished my exercise, I helped him with his; and in our amusements, my more active mind always led the way. In short, our two characters harmonised so well, and the friendship which united us was so sincere, that, in the five years and more, during which, whether at Bossey or Geneva, we were almost inseparable, although I confess that we often fought, it was never necessary to separate us, none of our quarrels ever lasted longer than a quarter of an hour, and neither of us ever made any accusation against the other. These observations are, if you will, childish, but they furnish an example which, since the time that there have been children, is perhaps unique.

The life which I led at Bossey suited me so well that, had it only lasted longer, it would have completely decided my character. ✓ Tender, affectionate and gentle feelings formed its foundation. I believe that no individual of our species was naturally more free from vanity than myself. I raised myself by fits and starts to lofty flights, but immediately fell down again into my natural languor. My liveliest desire was to be loved by all who came near me. I was of a gentle disposition; my cousin and our guardians were the same. During two whole years I was neither the witness nor the victim of any violent feeling. Everything nourished in my heart those tendencies which it received from Nature. I knew no higher happiness than to see all the world satisfied with me and with everything. I shall never forget how, if I happened to hesitate when saying my catechism in church, nothing troubled me more than to observe signs of restlessness and dissatisfaction on Mademoiselle Lambercier's face. That alone troubled me more than the disgrace of failing in public, which, nevertheless, affected me greatly: for, although little susceptible to praise, I felt shame keenly; and I may say here that the thought of Mademoiselle's reproaches caused me less uneasiness than the fear of offending her.

When it was necessary, however, neither she nor her brother were wanting in severity; but, since this severity was nearly always just, and never passionate, it pained me without making me insubordinate. Failure to please grieved me more than punishment, and signs of dissatisfaction hurt me more than corporal chastisement. It is somewhat embarrassing to explain myself more clearly, but, nevertheless, I must do so. How differently would one deal with youth, if one could more clearly see the remote effects of the usual method of treatment, which is employed always without discrimination, frequently without discretion! The important lesson which may be drawn from an example as common as it is fatal makes me decide to mention it.

As Mademoiselle Lambercier had the affection of a mother for us, she also exercised the authority of one, and sometimes carried it so far as to inflict upon us the punishment of children when we had deserved it. For some time she was content with threats, and this threat of a punishment that was quite new to me

appeared very terrible ; but, after it had been carried out, I found the reality less terrible than the expectation ; and, what was still more strange, this chastisement made me still more devoted to her who had inflicted it. It needed all the strength of this devotion and all my natural docility to keep myself from doing something which would have deservedly brought upon me a repetition of it ; for I had found in the pain, even in the disgrace, a mixture of sensuality which had left me less afraid than desirous of experiencing it again from the same hand. No doubt some precocious sexual instinct was mingled with this feeling, for the same chastisement inflicted by her brother would not have seemed to me at all pleasant. But, considering his disposition, there was little cause to fear the substitution ; and if I kept myself from deserving punishment, it was solely for fear of displeasing *Made-moiselle Lambercier* ; for, so great is the power exercised over me by kindness, even by that which is due to the senses, that it has always controlled the latter in my heart.

The repetition of the offence, which I avoided without being afraid of it, occurred without any fault of mine, that is to say, of my will, and I may say that I profited by it without any qualms of conscience. But this second time was also the last ; for *Made-moiselle Lambercier*, who had no doubt noticed something which convinced her that the punishment did not have the desired effect, declared that it tired her too much, and that she would abandon it. Until then we had slept in her room, sometimes even in her bed during the winter. Two days afterwards we were put to sleep in another room, and from that time I had the honour, which I would gladly have dispensed with, of being treated by her as a big boy.

Who would believe that this childish punishment, inflicted upon me when only eight years old by a young woman of thirty, disposed of my tastes, my desires, my passions, and my own self for the remainder of my life, and that in a manner exactly contrary to that which should have been the natural result ? When my feelings were once inflamed, my desires so went astray that, limited to what I had already felt, they did not trouble themselves to look for anything else. In spite of my hot blood, which has been inflamed with sensuality almost from my birth, I kept myself

free from every taint until the age when the coldest and most sluggish temperaments begin to develop. In torments for a long time, without knowing why, I devoured with burning glances all the pretty women I met; my imagination unceasingly recalled them to me, only to make use of them in my own fashion, and to make of them so many *Mlles. Lambercier*.

Even after I had reached years of maturity, this curious taste, always abiding with me and carried to depravity and even frenzy, preserved my morality, which it might naturally have been expected to destroy. If ever a bringing-up was chaste and modest, assuredly mine was. My three aunts were not only models of propriety, but reserved to a degree which has long since been unknown amongst women. My father, a man of pleasure, but a gallant of the old school, never said a word, even in the presence of women whom he loved more than others, which would have brought a blush to a maiden's cheek; and the respect due to children has never been so much insisted upon as in my family and in my presence. In this respect I found *M. Lambercier* equally careful; and an excellent servant was dismissed for having used a somewhat too free expression in our presence. Until I was a young man, I not only had no distinct idea of the union of the sexes, but the confused notion which I had regarding it never presented itself to me except in a hateful and disgusting form. For common prostitutes I felt a loathing which has never been effaced: the sight of a profligate always filled me with contempt, even with affright. My horror of debauchery became thus pronounced ever since the day when, walking to Little Sacconex by a hollow way, I saw on both sides holes in the ground, where I was told that these creatures carried on their intercourse. The thought of the one always brought back to my mind the copulation of dogs, and the bare recollection was sufficient to disgust me.

This tendency of my bringing-up, in itself adapted to delay the first outbreaks of an inflammable temperament, was assisted, as I have already said, by the direction which the first indications of sensuality took in my case. Only busying my imagination with what I had actually felt, in spite of most uncomfortable effervescence of blood, I only knew how to turn my desires in the direction of that kind of pleasure with which I was acquainted, without

ever going as far as that which had been made hateful to me, and which, without my having the least suspicion of it, was so closely related to the other. In my foolish fancies, in my erotic frenzies, in the extravagant acts to which they sometimes led me, I had recourse in my imagination to the assistance of the other sex, without ever thinking that it was serviceable for any purpose than that for which I was burning to make use of it.

In this manner, then, in spite of an ardent, lascivious and precocious temperament, I passed the age of puberty without desiring, even without knowing of any other sensual pleasures than those of which Mademoiselle Lambercier had most innocently given me the idea; and when, in course of time, I became a man, that which should have destroyed me again preserved me. My old childish taste, instead of disappearing, became so associated with the other, that I could never banish it from the desires kindled by my senses; and this madness, joined to my natural shyness, has always made me very unenterprising with women, for want of courage to say all or power to do all. The kind of enjoyment, of which the other was only for me the final consummation, could neither be appropriated by him who longed for it, nor guessed by her who was able to bestow it. Thus I have spent my life in idle longing, without saying a word, in the presence of those whom I loved most. Too bashful to declare my taste, I at least satisfied it in situations which had reference to it and kept up the idea of it. To lie at the feet of an imperious mistress, to obey her commands, to ask her forgiveness—this was for me a sweet enjoyment; and, the more my lively imagination heated my blood, the more I presented the appearance of a bashful lover. It may be easily imagined that this manner of making love does not lead to very speedy results, and is not very dangerous to the virtue of those who are its object. For this reason I have rarely possessed, but have none the less enjoyed myself in my own way—that is to say, in imagination. Thus it has happened that my senses, in harmony with my timid disposition and my romantic spirit, have kept my sentiments pure and my morals blameless, owing to the very tastes which, combined with a little more impudence, might have plunged me into the most brutal sensuality.

I have taken the first and most difficult step in the dark and



dirty labyrinth of my confessions. It is easier to admit that which is criminal than that which is ridiculous and makes a man feel ashamed. Henceforth I am sure of myself; after having ventured to say so much, I can shrink from nothing. One may judge what such confessions have cost me, from the fact that, during the whole course of my life, I have never dared to declare my folly to those whom I loved with the frenzy of a passion which deprived me of sight and hearing, which robbed me of my senses and caused me to tremble all over with a convulsive movement. I have never brought myself, even when on most intimate terms, to ask women to grant me the only favour of all which was wanting. This never happened to me but once—in my childhood, with a girl of my own age; even then, it was she who first proposed it.

While thus going back to the first traces of my inner life, I find elements which sometimes appear incompatible, and yet have united in order to produce with vigour a simple and uniform effect; and I find others which, although apparently the same, have formed combinations so different, owing to the co-operation of certain circumstances, that one would never imagine that these elements were in any way connected. Who, for instance, would believe that one of the most powerful movements of my soul was tempered in the same spring from which a stream of sensuality and effeminacy has entered my blood? Without leaving the subject of which I have just spoken, I shall produce by means of it a very different impression.

One day I was learning my lesson by myself in the room next to the kitchen. The servant had put Mademoiselle Lambercier's combs in front of the fire-place to dry. When she came back to fetch them, she found one with a whole row of teeth broken. Who was to blame for the damage? No one except myself had entered the room. On being questioned, I denied that I had touched the comb. M. and Mademoiselle Lambercier both began to admonish, to press, and to threaten me; I obstinately persisted in my denial; but the evidence was too strong, and outweighed all my protestations, although it was the first time that I had been found to lie so boldly. The matter was re-

garded as serious, as in fact it deserved to be. The mischievousness, the falsehood, the obstinacy appeared equally deserving of punishment; but this time it was not by Mademoiselle Lambercier that chastisement was inflicted. My uncle Bernard was written to, and he came. My poor cousin was accused of another equally grave offence; we were involved in the same punishment. It was terrible. Had they wished to look for the remedy in the evil itself and to deaden for ever my depraved senses, they could not have set to work better, and for a long time my senses left me undisturbed.

They could not draw from me the desired confession. Although I was several times brought up before them and reduced to a pitiable condition, I remained unshaken. I would have endured death, and made up my mind to do so. Force was obliged to yield to the diabolical obstinacy of a child—as they called my firmness. At last I emerged from this cruel trial, utterly broken, but triumphant.

It is now nearly fifty years since this incident took place, and I have no fear of being punished again for the same thing. Well, then, I declare in the sight of heaven that I was innocent of the offence, that I neither broke nor touched the comb, that I never went near the fire-place, and had never even thought of doing so. It would be useless to ask me how the damage was done: I do not know, and I cannot understand; all that I know for certain is, that I had nothing to do with it.

Imagine a child, shy and obedient in ordinary life, but fiery, proud, and unruly in his passions: a child who had always been led by the voice of reason and always treated with gentleness, justice, and consideration, who had not even a notion of injustice, and who for the first time becomes acquainted with so terrible an example of it on the part of the very people whom he most loves and respects! What an upset of ideas! what a disturbance of feelings! what revolution in his heart, in his brain, in the whole of his little intellectual and moral being! Imagine all this, I say, if possible. As for myself, I feel incapable of disentangling and following up the least trace of what then took place within me.

I had not yet sense enough to feel how much appearances were against me, and to put myself in the place of the others. I



kept to my own place, and all that I felt was the harshness of a frightful punishment for an offence which I had not committed. The bodily pain, although severe, I felt but little: all I felt was indignation, rage, despair. My cousin, whose case was almost the same, and who had been punished for an involuntary mistake as if it had been a premeditated act, following my example, flew into a rage, and worked himself up to the same pitch of excitement as myself. Both in the same bed, we embraced each other with convulsive transports: we felt suffocated; and when at length our young hearts, somewhat relieved, were able to vent their wrath, we sat upright in bed and began to shout, times without number, with all our might: *Carnifex! carnifex! carnifex!*<sup>1</sup>

While I write these words, I feel that my pulse beats faster; those moments will always be present to me though I should live a hundred thousand years. That first feeling of violence and injustice has remained so deeply graven on my soul, that all the ideas connected with it bring back to me my first emotion; and this feeling, which, in its origin, had reference only to myself, has become so strong in itself and so completely detached from all personal interest, that, when I see or hear of any act of injustice—whoever is the victim of it, and wherever it is committed—my heart kindles with rage, as if the effect of it recoiled upon myself. When I read of the cruelties of a ferocious tyrant, the crafty atrocities of a rascally priest, I would gladly set out to plunge a dagger into the heart of such wretches, although I had to die for it a hundred times. I have often put myself in a perspiration, pursuing or stoning a cock, a cow, a dog, or any animal which I saw tormenting another merely because it felt itself the stronger. This impulse may be natural to me, and I believe that it is; but the profound impression left upon me by the first injustice I suffered was too long and too strongly connected with it, not to have greatly strengthened it.

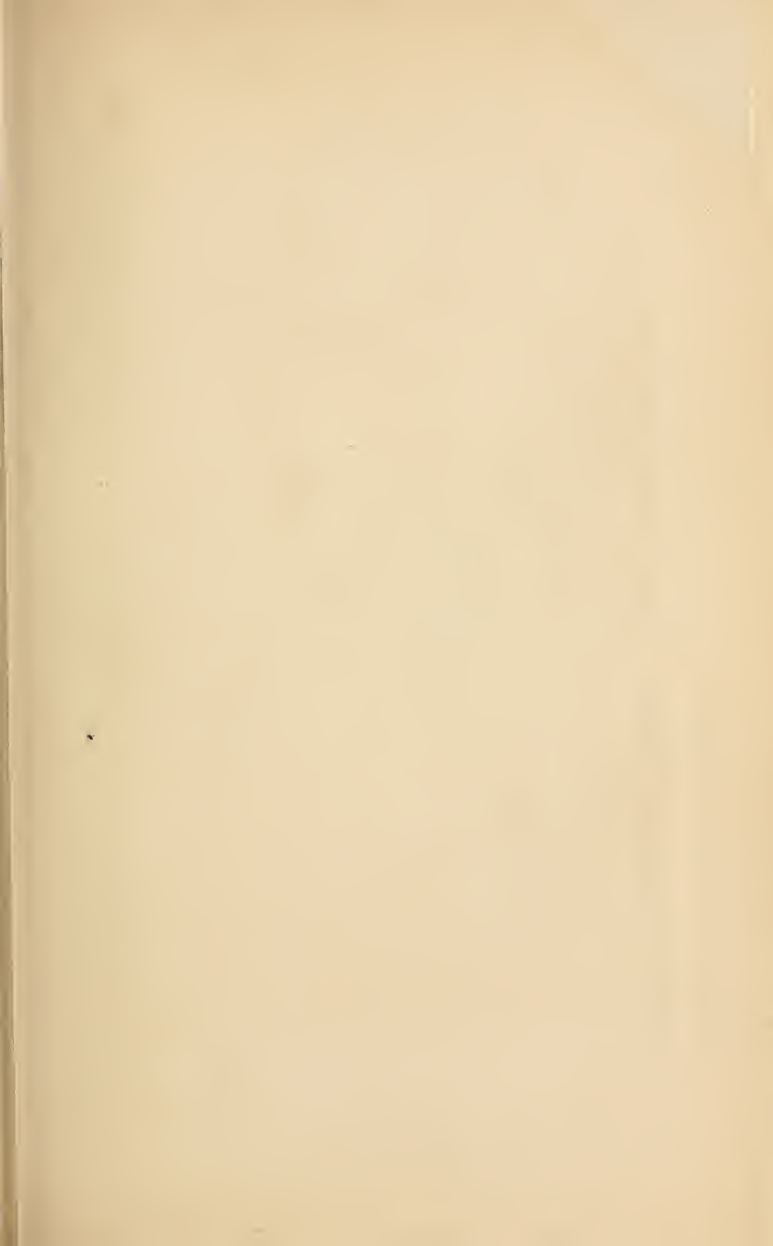
With the above incident the tranquillity of my childish life was over. From that moment I ceased to enjoy a pure happiness, and even at the present day I feel that the recollection of the charms of my childhood ceases there. We remained a few months longer at

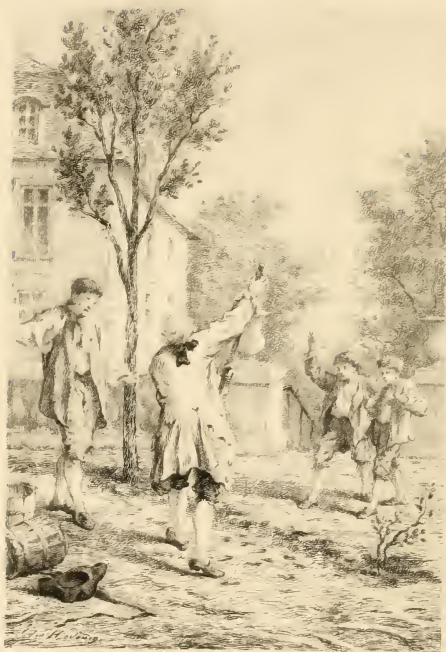
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<sup>1</sup> Executioner, torturer.

Bossey. We were there, as the first man is represented to us—still in the earthly paradise, but we no longer enjoyed it; in appearance our condition was the same, in reality it was quite a different manner of existence. Attachment, respect, intimacy, and confidence no longer united pupils and guides: we no longer regarded them as gods, who were able to read in our hearts; we became less ashamed of doing wrong and more afraid of being accused; we began to dissemble, to be insubordinate, to lie. All the vices of our age corrupted our innocence and threw a veil of ugliness over our amusements. Even the country lost in our eyes that charm of gentleness and simplicity which goes to the heart. It appeared to us lonely and sombre: it seemed as it were covered with a veil which concealed its beauties from our eyes. We ceased to cultivate our little gardens, our plants, our flowers. We no longer scratched up the ground gently, or cried with joy when we saw the seed which we had sown beginning to sprout. We were disgusted with the life, and others were disgusted with us; my uncle took us away, and we separated from M. and Mademoiselle Lambercier, having had enough of each other, and feeling but little regret at the separation.

Nearly thirty years have passed since I left Bossey, without my recalling to mind my stay there with any connected and pleasurable recollections; but, now that I have passed the prime of life and am approaching old age, I feel these same recollections springing up again while others disappear; they stamp themselves upon my memory with features, the charm and strength of which increase daily, as if, feeling life already slipping away, I were endeavouring to grasp it again by its commencement. The most trifling incidents of that time please me, simply because they belong to that period. I remember all the details of place, persons, and time. I see the maid or the manservant busy in the room, a swallow darting through the window, a fly settling on my hand while I was saying my lesson: I see the whole arrangement of the room in which we used to live; M. Lambercier's study on the right, a copperplate engraving of all the Popes, a barometer, a large almanack hanging on the wall, the raspberry bushes which, growing in a garden situated on very high ground facing the back of the house, shaded the window and sometimes forced their way through





W. H. Stanger, del. & sc.

THE AQUEDUCT  
Book I

No sooner had the first pail of water been poured out, than we saw some of it running into our basin. At this sight, our prudence deserted us: we began to utter cries of joy which made M. Lambercier turn round; this was a pity, for he took great delight in seeing how good the soil of the walnut-tree was, and how greedily it absorbed the water. Astonished at seeing it distribute itself into two basins, he cried out in his turn, looked, perceived the trick, ordered a pickaxe to be brought, and, with one blow, broke off two or three pieces from our planks; then, crying loudly, "An aqueduct, an aqueduct!" he dealt merciless blows in every direction, each of which went straight to our hearts. In a moment planks, conduit, basin, willow, everything was destroyed and uprooted, without his having uttered a single word, during this terrible work of destruction, except the exclamation which he incessantly repeated. "An aqueduct!" he cried, while demolishing everything, "an aqueduct, an aqueduct!"

It will naturally be imagined that the adventure turned out badly for the little architects: that would be a mistake: it was all over. M. Lambercier never uttered a single word of reproach, or looked upon us with displeasure, and said nothing more about it; shortly afterwards, we even heard him laughing loudly with his sister, for his laughter could be heard a long way off; and what was still more astonishing, when the first fright was over, we ourselves were not much troubled about the matter. We planted another tree somewhere else, and often reminded ourselves of the disaster that overtook the first, by repeating with emphasis, "An aqueduct, an aqueduct!" Hitherto I had had intermittent attacks of pride, when I was Aristides or Brutus; then it was that I felt the first well-defined promptings of vanity. To have been able to construct an aqueduct with our own hands, to have put a cutting in competition with a large tree, appeared to me the height of glory. At ten years of age I was a better judge on this point than Caesar at thirty.

The thought of this walnut-tree and the little history connected with it has remained so vivid in my memory, or returned to it, that one of the plans which gave me the greatest pleasure, on my journey to Geneva, in 1754, was to go to Bossey and revisit the memorials of my boyish amusements, above all, the dear walnut-

tree, which by that time must have been a third of a century old; but I was so continually occupied, so little my own master, that I could never find the moment to afford myself this satisfaction. There is little prospect of the opportunity ever occurring again: yet the wish has not disappeared with the hope; and I am almost certain that, if ever I should return to those beloved spots and find my dear walnut-tree still alive, I should water it with my tears.

After my return to Geneva, I lived for two or three years with my uncle, waiting until my friends had decided what was to be done with me. As he intended his own son to be an engineer, he made him learn a little drawing and taught him the elements of Euclid. I learned these subjects together with him, and acquired a taste for them, especially for drawing. In the meantime, it was debated whether I should be a watchmaker, an attorney, or a minister. My own preference was for the last, for preaching seemed to me to be a very fine thing; but the small income from my mother's property, which had to be divided between my brother and myself, was not sufficient to allow me to prosecute my studies. As, considering my age at that time, there was no immediate need to decide, I remained for the present with my uncle, making little use of my time and, in addition, as was only fair, paying a tolerably large sum for my board. My uncle, a man of pleasure like my father, was unable, like him, to tie himself down to his duties, and troubled himself little enough about us. My aunt was somewhat of a pietist, and preferred to sing psalms rather than attend to our education. We were allowed almost absolute freedom, which we never abused. Always inseparable, we were quite contented with our own society; and, having no temptation to make companions of the street boys of our own age, we learned none of the dissolute habits into which idleness might have led us. I am even wrong in saying that we were idle, for we were never less so in our lives; and the most fortunate thing was, that all the ways of amusing ourselves, with which we successively became infatuated, kept us together busy in the house, without our being even tempted to go out into the street. We made cages, flutes, shuttlecocks, drums, houses, squirts,<sup>1</sup> and cross-

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<sup>1</sup> *Équiffes*. According to a note in the Firmin-Didot edition, this word is the Genevese equivalent of *canonnière*, "a pop-gun," but Littré explains it as a "squirt."

bows. We spoilt my good old grandfather's tools in trying to using watches as he did. We had a special taste for wasting paper, drawing, painting in water-colours, illuminating, and spoiling colours. An Italian showman, named Gamba-Corta, came to Geneva; we went to see him once and never wanted to go again. But he had a marionette-show, and we proceeded to make marionettes; his marionettes played comedies and we composed comedies for ours. For want of a squeaker, we imitated Punch's voice in our throat, in order to play the charming comedies, which our poor and kind relations had the patience to sit and listen to. But, my uncle Bernard having one day read aloud in the family circle a very fine sermon which he had composed himself, we abandoned comedy and began to write sermons. These details are not very interesting, I confess, but they show how exceedingly well-conducted our early education must have been, seeing that we, almost masters of our time and ourselves at so tender an age, were so little tempted to abuse our opportunities. We had so little need of making companions, that we even neglected the chances of doing so. When we went for a walk, we looked at their amusements as we passed by without the slightest desire, or even the idea of taking part in them. Our friendship so completely filled our hearts, that it was enough for us to be together to make the simplest amusements a delight.

Being thus inseparable, we began to attract attention: the more so as, my cousin being very tall while I was very short, we made an oddly-assorted couple. His long, slim figure, his little face like a boiled apple, his gentle manner, and his slovenly walk excited the children's ridicule. In the *patois* of the district he was nicknamed Barna Bredanna, and, directly we went out, we heard nothing but "Barna Bredanna!" all round us. He endured it more quietly than I did: I lost my temper and wanted to fight. This was just what the little rascals desired. I fought and was beaten. My poor cousin helped me as well as he could; but he was weak, and a single blow of the fist knocked him down. Then I became furious. However, although I received blows in abundance, I was not the real object of attack, but Barna Bredanna; but my obstinate anger made matters so much worse, that, in future, we



tree, ventured to go out during school-hours, for fear of being hooted and followed.

Behold me already a redresser of wrongs! In order to be a regular Paladin I only wanted a lady; I had two. From time to time I went to see my father at Nyon, a little town in the Vaud country, where he had settled. He was very much liked, and his son felt the effects of his popularity. During the short time I stayed with him, friends vied with each other in making me welcome. A certain Madame de Vulson, especially, bestowed a thousand caresses upon me, and, to crown all, her daughter took me for her lover. It is easy to understand the meaning of a lover eleven years old for a girl of twenty-two. But all these roguish young women are so ready to put little puppets in front in order to hide larger ones, or to tempt them with the idea of an amusement which they know how to render attractive! As for myself, I saw no incongruity between us and took the matter seriously; I abandoned myself with all my heart, or rather with all my head—for it was only in that part of me that I was in love, although madly—and my transports, excitement and frenzy produced scenes enough to make anyone split his sides with laughing.

I am acquainted with two very distinct and very real kinds of love, which have scarcely anything in common, although both are very fervent, and which both differ from tender friendship. The whole course of my life has been divided between these two kinds of love, essentially so different, and I have even felt them both at the same time; for instance, at the time of which I am speaking, while I took possession of Mademoiselle de Vulson so openly and so tyrannically that I could not endure that any man should approach her, I had several meetings, brief but lively, with a certain little Mademoiselle Goton, in which she deigned to play the schoolmistress, and that was all; but this all, which was really all for me, seemed to me the height of happiness; and, already feeling the value of the mystery, although I only knew how to make use of it as a child, I paid Mademoiselle de Vulson, who had scarcely any suspicion of it, in the same coin, for the assiduity with which she made use of me to conceal other amours. But, to my great regret, my secret was discovered, or not so well kept on the part of my little schoolmistress as on my own; we were soon separated; and,



some time afterwards, on my return to Geneva, while passing through Coutance, I heard some little girls cry, in an undertone, "Goton tic-tac Rousseau!"

This little Mademoiselle Goton was really a singular person. Without being pretty, she had a face which was not easy to forget, and which I still recall to mind, often too tenderly for an old fool. Neither her form, nor her manner, nor, above all, her eyes were in keeping with her age. She had a proud and commanding air, which suited her part admirably, and which in fact had suggested the first idea of it to us. But the oddest thing about her was a mixture of impudence and reserve which it was difficult to comprehend. She took the greatest liberties with me, but never allowed me to take any with her. She treated me just like a child, which makes me believe, either that she was no longer one herself, or that, on the contrary, she was still childish enough to see nothing but an amusement in the danger to which she exposed herself.

I belonged entirely, so to say, to each of these two persons, and so completely, that, when I was with one, I never thought of the other. In other respects, there was not the slightest similarity between the feelings with which they inspired me. I could have spent all my life with Mademoiselle de Vulson, without ever thinking of leaving her; but, when I approached her, my joy was tranquil and free from emotion. I loved her above all in fashionable society; the witty sallies, railleries, and even the petty jealousies attracted and interested me; I felt a pride and glory in the marks of preference she bestowed upon me in the presence of grown up rivals whom she appeared to treat with disdain. I was tormented, but I loved the torment. The applause, encouragement, and laughter warmed and inspirited me. I had fits of passion and broke out into audacious sallies. In society, I was transported with love; in a *tête-à-tête* I should have been constrained, cold, perhaps wearied. However, I felt a real tenderness for her; I suffered when she was ill; I would have given my own health to restore her own, and, observe! I knew very well from experience the meaning of illness and health. When absent from her, I thought of her and missed her; when I was by her side, her caresses reached my heart—not my senses. I was intimate with her with impunity; my imagination demanded no

more than she granted ; yet I could not have endured to see her do even as much for others. I loved her as a brother, but I was as jealous of her as a lover.

I should have been as jealous of Mademoiselle Goton as a Turk, a madman, or a tiger, if I had once imagined that she could accord the same treatment to another as to myself ; for even that was a favour which I had to ask on my knees. I approached Mademoiselle de Vulson with lively pleasure, but without emotion ; whereas, if I only saw Mademoiselle Goton, I saw nothing else, all my senses were bewildered. With the former I was familiar without familiarity ; while on the contrary, in the presence of the latter, I was as bashful as I was excited, even in the midst of our greatest familiarities. I believe that, if I had remained with her long, I should have died ; the throbbings of my heart would have suffocated me. I was equally afraid of displeasing either ; but I was more attentive to the one and more obedient to the other. Nothing in the world would have made me annoy Mademoiselle de Vulson ; but if Mademoiselle Goton had ordered me to throw myself into the flames, I believe I should have obeyed her immediately.

My amour, or rather my meetings, with the latter, continued only for a short time—happily for both of us. Although my relations with Mademoiselle de Vulson had not the same danger, they were not without their catastrophe, after they had lasted a little longer. The end of all such connections should always be somewhat romantic, and furnish occasion for exclamations of sorrow. Although my connection with Mademoiselle de Vulson was less lively, it was perhaps closer. We never separated without tears, and it is remarkable into what an overwhelming void I felt myself plunged as soon as I had left her. I could speak and think of nothing but her ; my regret was genuine and lively ; but I believe that, at bottom, this heroic regret was not felt altogether for her, and that, without my perceiving it, the amusements, of which she was the centre, played their part in it. To moderate the pangs of absence, we wrote letters to each other, pathetic enough to melt the heart of a stone. At last I triumphed ; she could endure it no longer, and came to Geneva to see me. This time my head was completely turned ; I was drunk and mad during the two days she

remained. When she left I wanted to throw myself in the water after her, and the air resounded with my screams. Eight days afterwards she sent me some bonbons and gloves, which I should have considered a great compliment, if I had not learnt at the same time that she was married, and that the visit with which she had been pleased to honour me was really made in order to buy her wedding-dress. I will not attempt to describe my fury; it may be imagined. In my noble rage I swore that I would never see the faithless one again, being unable to imagine a more terrible punishment for her. She did not, however, die of it; for, twenty years afterwards, when on a visit to my father, while rowing with him on the lake, I asked who the ladies were whom I saw in a boat not far from ours. "What!" said my father with a smile, "does not your heart tell you? it is your old love, Mademoiselle de Vulson that was, now Madame Cristin." I started at the almost forgotten name, but I told the boatmen to change their course. Although I had a fine opportunity of avenging myself at that moment, I did not think it worth while to perjure myself and to renew a quarrel, twenty years old, with a woman of forty.

[1723-1728].—Thus the most valuable time of my boyhood was wasted in follies, before my future career had been decided upon. After long deliberation as to the bent of my natural inclination, a profession was determined upon for which I had the least taste; I was put with M. Masseron, the town clerk, in order to learn, under his tuition, the useful trade of a *fee-grabber*.<sup>1</sup> This nickname was extremely distasteful to me; the hope of gaining a number of crowns in a somewhat sordid business by no means flattered my pride; the occupation itself appeared to me wearisome and unendurable; the constant application, the feeling of servitude completed my dislike, and I never entered the office without a feeling of horror, which daily increased in intensity. M. Masseron, on his part, was dissatisfied with me, and treated me with contempt; he continually reproached me with my dulness and stupidity, dinning into my ears every day that my uncle had told him that I knew something, whereas, in reality, I knew nothing; that he had promised him a sharp lad, and had given him a jackass. At last I was dismissed

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<sup>1</sup> *Grapignan*: a slang term for a lawyer.

from the office in disgrace as being utterly incapable, and M. Masseron's clerks declared that I was good for nothing except to handle a file.

My calling being thus settled, I was apprenticed, not, however, to a watchmaker, but to an engraver. The contempt with which I had been treated by M. Masseron had made me very humble, and I obeyed without a murmur. My new master, M. Ducommun, was a rough and violent young man, who in a short time succeeded in tarnishing all the brightness of my childhood, stupefying my loving and lively nature, and reducing me, in mind as well as in position, to a real state of apprenticeship. My Latin, my antiquities, my history, were all for a long time forgotten; I did not even remember that there had ever been any Romans in the world. My father, when I went to see him, no longer found in me his idol; for the ladies I was no longer the gallant Jean Jacques; and I felt so certain myself that the Lamberciers would not have recognised their pupil in me, that I was ashamed to pay them a visit, and have never seen them since. The vilest tastes, the lowest street-blackguardism took the place of my simple amusements and effaced even the remembrance of them. I must, in spite of a most upright training, have had a great propensity to degenerate; for the change took place with great rapidity, without the least trouble, and never did so precocious a Caesar so rapidly become a Laridon.<sup>1</sup>

The trade in itself was not disagreeable to me; I had a decided taste for drawing; the handling of a graving-tool amused me; and as the claims upon the skill of a watchmaker's engraver were limited, I hoped to attain perfection. I should, perhaps, have done so, had not my master's brutality and excessive restraint disgusted me with my work. I stole some of my working hours to devote to similar occupations, but which had for me the charm of freedom. I engraved medals for an order of knighthood for myself and my companions. My master surprised me at this contraband occupation, and gave me a sound thrashing, declaring that I was training for a coiner, because our medals bore the arms of the

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<sup>1</sup> The name given by La Fontaine, in the fable, called "l'Éducation," to degenerate dogs: "Oh! combien de Césars deviendront Laridons."

Republic. I can swear that I had no idea at all of bad, and only a very faint one of good, money. I knew better how the Roman *As* was made than our three-sou pieces.

My master's tyranny at length made the work, of which I should have been very fond, altogether unbearable, and filled me with vices which I should otherwise have hated, such as lying, idleness and thieving. The recollection of the alteration produced in me by that period of my life has taught me, better than anything else, the difference between filial dependence and abject servitude. Naturally shy and timid, no fault was more foreign to my disposition than impudence; but I had enjoyed an honourable liberty, which hitherto had only been gradually restrained, and at length disappeared altogether. I was bold with my father, unrestrained with M. Lambercier, and modest with my uncle; I became timid with my master, and from that moment I was a lost child. Accustomed to perfect equality in my intercourse with my superiors, knowing no pleasure which was not within my reach, seeing no dish of which I could not have a share, having no desire which I could not have openly expressed, and carrying my heart upon my lips—it is easy to judge what I was bound to become, in a house in which I did not venture to open my mouth, where I was obliged to leave the table before the meal was half over, and the room as soon as I had nothing more to do there; where, incessantly fettered to my work, I saw only objects of enjoyment for others and of privation for myself; where the sight of the liberty enjoyed by my master and companions increased the weight of my servitude; where, in disputes about matters as to which I was best informed, I did not venture to open my mouth; where, in short, everything that I saw became for my heart an object of longing, simply because I was deprived of all. From that time my ease of manner, my gaiety, the happy expressions which, in former times, when I had done something wrong, had gained me immunity from punishment—all were gone. I cannot help laughing when I remember how, one evening, at my father's house, having been sent to bed without any supper for some piece of roguery, I passed through the kitchen with my melancholy piece of bread, and, seeing the joint turning on the spit, sniffed at it. All the household was standing round the hearth, and, in passing, I was obliged to say good-night to everybody. When I

had gone the round, I winked at the joint, which looked so nice and smelt so good, and could not help bowing to it as well, and saying in a mournful voice, "Good-night, roast beef!" This naïvely amused them so much that they made me stop to supper. Perhaps it might have had the same effect with my master, but I am sure that it would never have occurred to me, and that I should not have had the courage, to say it in his presence.

In this manner I learnt to covet in silence, to dissemble, to lie, and, lastly, to steal—an idea which, up to that time, had never even entered my mind, and of which since then I have never been able to cure myself completely. Covetousness and weakness always lead in that direction. This explains why all servants are rogues, and why all apprentices ought to be; but the latter, in a peaceful state of equality, where all that they see is within their reach, lose, as they grow up, this disgraceful propensity. Not having had the same advantages, I have not been able to reap the same benefits.

It is nearly always good, but badly-directed principles, that make a child take the first step towards evil. In spite of continual privations and temptations, I had been more than a year with my master without being able to make up my mind to take anything, even eatables. My first theft was a matter of obliging some one else, but it opened the door to others, the motive of which was not so praiseworthy.

My master had a journeyman, named M. Verrat, whose house was in the neighbourhood, and had a garden some way off which produced very fine asparagus. M. Verrat, who was not too well supplied with money, conceived the idea of stealing some of his mother's young asparagus and selling it in order to provide himself with two or three good breakfasts. As he was unwilling to run the risk himself, and was not very active, he selected me for the expedition. After some preliminary cajoleries, which the more easily succeeded with me as I did not see their aim, he proposed it to me as an idea that had struck him on the spur of the moment. I strongly opposed it; he persisted. I have never been able to resist flattery: I gave in. I went every morning to gather a crop of the finest asparagus, and carried it to the Molard, where some good woman, who saw that I had just stolen it, told me so to my face in order to get it cheaper. In my fright I took whatever



she chose to offer me, and took it to Verrat. The amount was immediately converted into a breakfast, of which I was the purveyor, and which he shared with another companion; I myself was quite satisfied with a few scraps, and never even touched their wine.

This little arrangement continued several days, without its even occurring to me to rob the robber, and to levy my tithe of the proceeds of M. Verrat's asparagus. I performed my part in the transaction with the greatest loyalty; my only motive was to please him who prompted me to carry it out. And yet, if I had been caught, what blows, abuse and cruel treatment should I have had to endure, while the wretch, who would have been sure to give me the lie, would have been believed on his word, and I should have suffered double punishment for having had the impudence to accuse him, seeing that he was a journeyman, while I was only an apprentice! So true it is that, in every condition of life, the strong man who is guilty saves himself at the expense of the innocent who is weak.

In this manner I learned that stealing was not so terrible a thing as I had imagined, and I soon knew how to make such good use of my discovery, that nothing I desired, if it was within my reach, was safe from me. I was not absolutely ill-fed, and abstinence was only rendered difficult to me from seeing that my master observed it so ill himself. The custom of sending young people from the table when the most appetising dishes are brought on appears to me admirably adapted to make them gluttons as well as thieves. In a short time I became both the one and the other; and, as a rule, I came off very well; occasionally, when I was caught, very badly.

I shudder, and at the same time laugh, when I remember an apple-hunt which cost me dear. These apples were at the bottom of a store-room, which was lighted from the kitchen by means of a high grating. One day, when I was alone in the house, I climbed upon the kneading-trough, in order to look at the precious fruit in the garden of the Hesperides, which was out of my reach. I went to fetch the spit to see if I could touch the apples; it was too short. To make it longer, I tied on to it another little spit which was used for small game, for my master was very fond of sport. I thrust

several times without success; at last, to my great delight, I felt that I had secured an apple. I pulled very gently; the apple was close to the grating; I was ready to catch hold of it. But who can describe my grief, when I found that it was too large to pass through the bars? How many expedients I tried, to get it through! I had to find supports to keep the spit in its place, a knife long enough to divide the apple, a lath to hold it up. At last I managed to divide it, and hoped to be able to pull the pieces towards me one after the other; but no sooner were they separated than they both fell into the store-room. Compassionate reader share my affliction!

I by no means lost courage; but I had lost considerable time. I was afraid of being surprised. I put off a more lucky attempt till the following day, and returned to my work as quietly as if I had done nothing, without thinking of the two tell-tale witnesses in the store-room.

The next day, finding the opportunity favourable, I made a fresh attempt. I climbed upon my stool, lengthened the spit, adjusted it, and was ready to make a lunge . . . but, unfortunately, the dragon was not asleep; all at once the door of the store-room opened, my master came out, folded his arms, looked at me, and said, "Courage!" . . . the pen falls from my hand.

In consequence of continuous ill-treatment I soon became less sensitive to it, and regarded it as a kind of compensation for theft, which gave me the right to continue the latter. Instead of looking back and considering the punishment, I looked forward and thought of revenge. I considered that, if I were beaten as a rogue, I was entitled to behave like one. I found that stealing and a flogging went together, and constituted a sort of bargain, and that, if I performed my part, I could safely leave my master to carry out his own. With this idea, I began to steal more quietly than before. I said to myself: "What will be the result? I shall be flogged. Never mind; I am made to be flogged."

I am fond of eating, but am not greedy; I am sensual, but not a gourmand; too many other tastes prevent that. I have never troubled myself about my food except when my heart has been unoccupied: and that has so seldom been the case during my life,



that I have scarcely had time to think about dainties. For this reason I did not long confine my thievish propensities to eatables, but soon extended them to everything which tempted me ; and, if I did not become a regular thief, it was because I have never been much tempted by money. Leading out of the common workshop was a private room belonging to my master, the door of which I found means to open and shut without being noticed. There I laid under contribution his best tools, drawings, proofs—in fact, everything which attracted me and which he purposely kept out of my reach. At bottom, these thefts were quite innocent, being only committed to serve him ; but I was transported with joy at having these trifles in my power ; I thought that I was robbing him of his talent together with its productions. Besides, I found boxes containing gold and silver filings, little trinkets, valuables and coins. When I had four or five sous in my pocket, I thought I was rich ; and yet, far from touching anything of what I found there, I do not even remember that I ever cast longing eyes upon it. I looked upon it with more affright than pleasure. I believe that this horror of stealing money and valuables was in great part the result of my bringing-up. With it were combined secret thoughts of disgrace, prison, punishment and the gallows, which would have made me shudder if I had been tempted ; whereas my tricks only appeared to me in the light of pieces of mischief, and in fact were nothing else. They could lead to nothing but a sound flogging from my master, and I prepared myself for that beforehand.

But, I repeat, I never felt sufficient longing to need to control myself ; I had nothing to contend with. A single sheet of fine drawing-paper tempted me more than money enough to buy a ream of it. This singularity is connected with one of the peculiarities of my character ; it has exercised such great influence upon my conduct that it is worth while to explain it.

I am a man of very strong passions, and, while I am stirred by them, nothing can equal my impetuosity ; I forget all discretion, all feelings of respect, fear and decency ; I am cynical, impudent, violent and fearless ; no feeling of shame keeps me back, no danger frightens me ; with the exception of the single object which occupies my thoughts, the universe is nothing to me. But all this lasts only for a moment, and the following moment plunges me into complete

annihilation. In my calmer moments I am indolence and timidity itself; everything frightens and discourages me; a fly, buzzing past, alarms me; a word which I have to say, a gesture which I have to make, terrifies my idleness; fear and shame overpower me to such an extent that I would gladly hide myself from the sight of my fellow-creatures. If I have to act, I do not know what to do; if I have to speak, I do not know what to say; if anyone looks at me, I am put out of countenance. When I am strongly moved I sometimes know how to find the right words, but in ordinary conversation I can find absolutely nothing, and my condition is unbearable for the simple reason that I am obliged to speak.

Add to this, that none of my prevailing tastes centre in things that can be bought. I want nothing but unadulterated pleasures, and money poisons all. For instance, I am fond of the pleasures of the table; but, as I cannot endure either the constraint of good society or the drunkenness of the tavern, I can only enjoy them with a friend; alone, I cannot do so, for my imagination then occupies itself with other things, and eating affords me no pleasure. If my heated blood longs for women, my excited heart longs still more for affection. Women who could be bought for money would lose for me all their charms; I even doubt whether it would be in me to make use of them. I find it the same with all pleasures within my reach; unless they cost me nothing, I find them insipid. I only love those enjoyments which belong to no one but the first man who knows how to enjoy them.

Money has never appeared to me as valuable as it is generally considered. More than that, it has never even appeared to me particularly convenient. It is good for nothing in itself; it has to be changed before it can be enjoyed; one is obliged to buy, to bargain, to be often cheated, to pay dearly, to be badly served. I should like something which is good in quality; with my money I am sure to get it bad. If I pay a high price for a fresh egg, it is stale; for a nice piece of fruit, it is unripe; for a girl, she is spoilt. I am fond of good wine, but where am I to get it? At a wine merchant's? Whatever I do, he is sure to poison me. If I really wish to be well served, what trouble and embarrassment it entails! I must have friends, correspondents, give commissions, write, go backwards and forwards, wait, and in the end be often deceived! What trouble

with my money ! my fear of it is greater than my fondness for good wine.

Times without number, during my apprenticeship and afterwards, I have gone out with the intention of buying some delicacy. Coming to a pastrycook's shop, I notice some women at the counter ; I think I can already see them laughing amongst themselves at the little glutton. I go on to a fruiterer's ; I eye the fine pears ; their smell tempts me. Two or three young people close by me look at me ; a man who knows me is standing in front of his shop ; I see a girl approaching in the distance : is it the housemaid ? My shortsightedness causes all kinds of illusions. I take all the passers-by for acquaintances ; everywhere I am intimidated, restrained by some obstacle ; my desire increases with my shame, and at last I return home like a fool, consumed with longing, having in my pocket the means of satisfying it, and yet not having had the courage to buy anything.

I should enter into the most insipid details if, in relating how my money was spent by myself or others, I were to describe the embarrassment, the shame, the repugnance, the inconvenience, the annoyances of all kinds which I have always experienced. In proportion as the reader, following the course of my life, becomes acquainted with my real temperament, he will understand all this, without my taking the trouble to tell him.

This being understood, it will be easy to comprehend one of my apparent inconsistencies—the union of an almost sordid avarice with the greatest contempt for money. It is a piece of furniture in which I find so little convenience, that it never enters my mind to long for it when I have not got it, and that, when I have got it, I keep it for a long time without spending it, for want of knowing how to make use of it in a way to please myself ; but if a convenient and agreeable opportunity presents itself, I make such good use of it that my purse is empty before I know it. Besides this, one need not expect to find in me that curious characteristic of misers—that of spending for the sake of ostentation ; on the contrary, I spend in secret for the sake of enjoyment ; far from glorying in my expenditure, I conceal it. I feel so strongly that money is of no use to me, that I am almost ashamed to have any, still more to make use of it. If I had ever had an income sufficient to live comfortably upon,

I am certain that I should never have been tempted to be a miser. I should have spent it all, without attempting to increase it; but my precarious circumstances make me careful. I worship freedom; I abhor restraint, trouble, dependence. As long as the money in my purse lasts, it assures my independence; it relieves me of the trouble of finding expedients to replenish it, a necessity which always inspired me with dread; but the fear of seeing it exhausted makes me hoard it carefully. The money which a man possesses is the instrument of freedom; that which we eagerly pursue is the instrument of slavery. Therefore I hold fast to that which I have, and desire nothing.

My disinterestedness is, therefore, nothing but idleness; the pleasure of possession is not worth the trouble of acquisition. In like manner, my extravagance is nothing but idleness; when the opportunity of spending agreeably presents itself, it cannot be too profitably employed. Money tempts me less than things, because between money and the possession of the desired object there is always an intermediary, whereas between the thing itself and the enjoyment of it there is none. If I see the thing, it tempts me; if I only see the means of gaining possession of it, it does not. For this reason I have committed thefts, and even now I sometimes pilfer trifles which tempt me, and which I prefer to take rather than to ask for; but neither when a child nor a grown-up man do I ever remember to have robbed anyone of a farthing, except on one occasion, fifteen years ago, when I stole seven *livres ten sous*. The incident is worth recording, for it contains a most extraordinary mixture of folly and impudence, which I should have found difficulty in believing if it concerned anyone but myself.

It took place at Paris. I was walking with M. de Franceuil in the Palais-Royal about five o'clock. He pulled out his watch, looked at it, and said: "Let us go to the Opera." I agreed; we went. He took two tickets for the amphitheatre, gave me one, and went on in front with the other. I followed him; he went in. Entering after him, I found the door blocked. I looked, and seeing everybody standing up, thought it would be easy to lose myself in the crowd, or at any rate to make M. de Franceuil believe that I had lost myself. I went out, took back my check, then my money, and went off, without thinking that as soon as I had reached the

door everybody had taken their seats, and that M. de Franceuil clearly saw that I was no longer there.<sup>1</sup>

As nothing was ever more foreign to my disposition than such behaviour, I mention it in order to show that there are moments of semi-delirium during which men must not be judged by their actions. I did not exactly want to steal the money, I wanted to steal the employment of it; the less of a theft it was, the greater its disgracefulness.

I should never finish these details if I were to follow all the paths along which, during my apprenticeship, I descended from the sublimity of heroism to the depths of worthlessness. And yet, although I adopted the vices of my position, I could not altogether acquire a taste for them. I wearied of the amusements of my companions; and when excessive restraint had rendered work unendurable to me, I grew tired of everything. This renewed my taste for reading, which I had for some time lost. This reading, for which I stole time from my work, became a new offence which brought new punishment upon me. The taste for it, provoked by constraint, became a passion, and soon a regular madness. La Tribu, a well-known lender of books, provided me with all kinds of literature. Good or bad, all were alike to me; I had no choice, and read everything with equal avidity. I read at the work-table, I read on my errands, I read in the wardrobe, and forgot myself for hours together; my head became giddy with reading; I could do nothing else. My master watched me, surprised me, beat me, took away my books. How many volumes were torn, burnt, and thrown out of the window! how many works were left in odd volumes in La Tribu's stock! When I had no more money to pay her, I gave her my shirts, neckties and clothes; my three sous of pocket-money were regularly taken to her every Sunday.

Well, then, I shall be told, money had become necessary to me. That is true; but it was not until my passion for reading had deprived me of all activity. Completely devoted to my new hobby, I did nothing but read, and no longer stole. Here again is one of my characteristic peculiarities. [ In the midst of a certain attachment to any manner of life, a mere trifle distracts me, alters me,

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<sup>1</sup> According to George Sand, in her "*Histoire de ma Vie*," M. de Franceuil, who was her grandfather, has always absolutely denied the truth of this story.

rivets my attention, and finally becomes a passion. Then everything is forgotten; I no longer think of anything except the new object which engrosses my attention. My heart beat with impatience to turn over the leaves of the new book which I had in my pocket; I pulled it out as soon as I was alone, and thought no more of rummaging my master's work-room. I can hardly believe that I should have stolen even if I had had more expensive tastes. Limited to the present, it was not in my way to make preparations in this manner for the future. La Tribu gave me credit, the payments on account were small, and, as soon as I had my book in my pocket, I forgot everything else. The money which came to me honestly passed in the same manner into the hands of this woman; and, when she pressed me, nothing was easier to dispose of than my own property. It required too much foresight to steal in advance, and I was not even tempted to steal in order to pay.

In consequence of quarrels, blows, and secret and ill-chosen reading, my disposition became savage and taciturn; my mind became altogether perverted, and I lived like a misanthrope. However, if my good taste did not keep me from silly and insipid books, my good fortune preserved me from such as were filthy and licentious; not that La Tribu, a woman in all respects most accommodating, would have made any scruple about lending them to me; but, in order to increase their importance, she always mentioned them to me with an air of mystery which had just the effect of making me refuse them, as much from disgust as from shame; and chance aided my modest disposition so well, that I was more than thirty years old before I set eyes upon any of those dangerous books which a fine lady finds inconvenient because they can only be read with one hand.

In less than a year I exhausted La Tribu's little stock, and want of occupation, during my spare time, became painful to me. I had been cured of my childish and knavish propensities by my passion for reading, and even by the books I read, which, although ill-chosen and frequently bad, filled my heart with nobler sentiments than those with which my sphere of life had inspired me. Disgusted with everything that was within my reach, and feeling that everything which might have tempted me was too far removed from me, I saw nothing possible which might have flattered



my heart. My excited senses had long clamoured for an enjoyment, the object of which I could not even imagine. I was as far removed from actual enjoyment as if I had been sexless; and, already fully developed and sensitive, I sometimes thought of my crazes, but saw nothing beyond them. In this strange situation, my restless imagination entered upon an occupation which saved me from myself and calmed my growing sensuality. This consisted in feeding myself upon the situations which had interested me in the course of my reading, in recalling them, in varying them, in combining them, in making them so truly my own that I became one of the persons who filled my imagination, and always saw myself in the situations most agreeable to my taste; and that, finally, the fictitious state in which I succeeded in putting myself made me forget my actual state with which I was so dissatisfied. This love of imaginary objects, and the readiness with which I occupied myself with them, ended by disgusting me with everything around me, and decided that liking for solitude which has never left me. In the sequel we shall see more than once the curious effects of this disposition, apparently so gloomy and misanthropic, but which is really due to a too affectionate, too loving and too tender heart, which, being unable to find any in existence resembling it, is obliged to nourish itself with fancies. For the present, it is sufficient for me to have defined the origin and first cause of a propensity which has inodified all my passions, and which, restraining them by means of themselves, has always made me slow to act, owing to my excessive impetuosity in desire.

In this manner I reached my sixteenth year, restless, dissatisfied with myself and everything, without any of the tastes of my condition of life, without any of the pleasures of my age, consumed by desires of the object of which I was ignorant, weeping without any cause for tears, sighing without knowing why—in short, tenderly caressing my chimeras, since I saw nothing around me which counterbalanced them. On Sundays, my fellow-apprentices came to fetch me after service to go and amuse myself with them. I would gladly have escaped from them if I had been able; but, once engaged in their amusements, I became more excited and went further than any of them; it was as difficult to set me going as to stop me. Such was always my disposition. During our walks

outside the city I always went further than any of them without thinking about my return, unless others thought of it for me. Twice I was caught: the gates were shut before I could get back. The next day I was treated as may be imagined; the second time I was promised such a reception if it ever happened again, that I resolved not to run the risk of it; yet this third time, so dreaded, came to pass. My watchfulness was rendered useless by a confounded Captain Minutoli, who always shut the gate at which he was on guard half-an-hour before the others. I was returning with two companions. About half a league from the city I heard the retreat sounded: I doubled my pace; I heard the tattoo beat, and ran with all my might. I arrived out of breath and bathed in perspiration; my heart beat; from a distance I saw the soldiers at their posts; I rushed up and cried out with a voice half-choked. It was too late! Twenty paces from the outposts, I saw the first bridge raised. I shuddered when I saw those terrible horns rising in the air—a sinister and fatal omen of the destiny which that moment was opening for me.

In the first violence of my grief I threw myself on the *glacis* and bit the ground. My companions, laughing at their misfortune, immediately made up their minds what to do. I did the same, but my resolution was different from theirs. On the spot I swore never to return to my master; and the next morning, when they entered the city after the gates were opened, I said good-bye to them for ever, only begging them secretly to inform my cousin Bernard of the resolution I had taken, and of the place where he might be able to see me once more.

After I had entered upon my apprenticeship I saw less of him. For some time we used to meet on Sunday, but gradually each of us adopted other habits, and we saw one another less frequently. I am convinced that his mother had much to do with this change. He was a child of the upper city;<sup>1</sup> I, a poor apprentice, was only a child of Saint-Gervais. In spite of our relationship, there was no longer any equality between us; it was derogatory to him to associate with me. However, relations were not entirely broken off

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<sup>1</sup> *Enfant du haut*—i.e., of the upper, more fashionable part of the city; while Saint-Gervais, on the right bank of the Rhône, was the quarter inhabited by the poorer population.



between us, and, as he was a good-natured lad, he sometimes followed the dictates of his heart instead of his mother's instructions. When he was informed of my resolution, he hastened to me, not to try and dissuade me from it or to share it, but to lessen the inconveniences of my flight by some small presents, since my own resources could not take me very far. Amongst other things he gave me a small sword, which had taken my fancy exceedingly, and which I carried as far as Turin, where necessity obliged me to dispose of it, and where, as the saying is, I passed it through my body. The more I have since reflected upon the manner in which he behaved towards me at this critical moment, the more I have felt convinced that he followed the instructions of his mother, and perhaps of his father; for it is inconceivable that, left to himself, he would not have made some effort to keep me back, or would not have been tempted to follow; but, no! he rather encouraged me in my plan than tried to dissuade me; and, when he saw me quite determined, he left me without shedding many tears. We have never corresponded or seen each other since. It is a pity: his character was essentially good; we were made to love each other.

Before I abandon myself to the fatality of my lot, allow me to turn my eyes for a moment upon the destiny which, in the nature of things, would have awaited me if I had fallen into the hands of a better master. Nothing was more suitable to my disposition or better adapted to make me happy than the quiet and obscure lot of a respectable artisan, especially of a certain class such as that of the engravers of Geneva. Such a position, sufficiently lucrative to afford a comfortable livelihood, but not sufficiently so to lead to fortune, would have limited my ambition for the rest of my days, and, leaving me an honourable leisure to cultivate modest tastes, would have confined me within my own sphere, without offering me the means of getting out of it. My imaginative powers were rich enough to beautify all callings with their chimeras, and strong enough to transport me, so to speak, at will from one to another; so it would have been immaterial to me in what position I actually found myself. It could not have been so far from the place where I was to my first castle in the air, that I could not have taken up my abode there without any difficulty. From this alone it followed

that the simplest vocation, that which involved the least trouble and anxiety, that which allowed the greatest mental freedom, was the one which suited me best: and that was exactly my own. I should have passed a peaceful and quiet life, such as my disposition required, in the bosom of my religion, my country, my family and my friends, in the monotony of a profession that suited my taste, and in a society after my own heart. I should have been a good Christian, a good citizen, a good father of a family, a good friend, a good workman, a good man in every relation of life. I should have loved my position in life, perhaps honoured it; and, having spent a life—simple, indeed, and obscure, but calm and serene—I should have died peacefully in the bosom of my family. Though, doubtless, soon forgotten, I should at least have been regretted as long as anyone remembered me.

Instead of that—what picture am I going to draw? Let us not anticipate the sorrows of my life; I shall occupy my readers more than enough with this melancholy subject.

## BOOK II

[1728-1731.]

HOWEVER mournful the moment, when terror suggested to me the idea of flight, had appeared—the moment when I carried it into execution appeared equally delightful. While still a child, to leave my country, my parents, my means of support, my resources; to give up an apprenticeship half-served, without a sufficient knowledge of my trade to earn my livelihood; to abandon myself to the horrors of want, without any means of saving myself from it; to expose myself, at the age of innocence and weakness, to all the temptations of vice and despair; to seek, in the distance, suffering, error, snares, servitude, and death, beneath a yoke far more unbending than that which I had been unable to endure—this was what I was going to do, this was the prospect which I ought to have considered. How different was that which my fancy painted! The independence which I believed I had gained was the only feeling which moved me. Free, and my own master, I believed I could do everything, attain to everything; I had only to launch myself forth, to mount and fly through the air. I entered the vast world with a feeling of security; it was to be filled with the fame of my achievements; at every step I was to find festivities, treasures, adventures, friends ready to serve me, mistresses eager to please me; I had only to show myself, to engage the attention of the whole world—and yet not the whole world; to a certain extent I could dispense with it, and did not want so much. Charming society was enough for me, without troubling myself about the rest. In my modesty I limited myself to a narrow, but delightfully select circle, in which my sovereignty was assured. A single castle was the limit of my ambition. As the favourite of the lord and the lady, as the lover of the daughter, as the friend of the son and protector of the neighbours, I was content—I wanted no more.

*Must be 1728-1731.*

In the expectation of this modest future, I wandered for some days round the city, lodging with some peasants whom I knew, who all received me with greater kindness than any of the inhabitants of the city would have done. They took me in, lodged me, and fed me with too much kindness to make a merit of it. It could not be called charity; they did not bestow it with a sufficient air of superiority.

Travelling and roaming about in this manner, I reached Conignon, in the district of Savoy, two leagues from Geneva. The name of the *curé* was M. de Pontverre. This name, famous in the history of the Republic, arrested my attention. I was curious to see what the descendants of the Knights of the Spoon<sup>1</sup> looked like.

I called upon M. de Pontverre. He received me kindly, talked about the heresy of Geneva, the authority of the Holy Mother Church, and invited me to dinner. I found little to reply to arguments which ended in this manner, and I formed the opinion that *curés* who dined so well were at least as good as our ministers. I was certainly more learned than M. de Pontverre, in spite of his birth; but I was too good a guest to be as good a theologian, and his Frangi wine, which appeared to me excellent, argued so triumphantly in his favour that I should have been ashamed to stop the mouth of so admirable a host. I therefore gave in, or at least offered no open resistance. To see the carefulness I exhibited, one would have believed me false; but that would have been a mistake. I only behaved with common courtesy, that is certain. Flattery, or rather condescension, is not always a vice; it is more often a virtue, especially in young people. The kindness with which a person treats us endears him to us; we give in to him, not in order to abuse his kindness, but to avoid annoying him, or returning him evil for good. What interest had M. de Pontverre in receiving me, treating me kindly, or trying to convince me? No other than my own; my young heart told me that. I was moved

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<sup>1</sup> These Catholic knights, subjects of the Duke of Savoy, formed a league against the Genevese in the time of the Reformation, and were so called because they boasted of having "eaten their enemies with a spoon," and carried a spoon hung round their necks. They were headed by a De Pontverre.

with gratitude and respect for the good priest. I felt my superiority; I did not wish to overwhelm him with it as the reward of his hospitality. In this attitude there was nothing hypocritical; I never thought of changing my religion; and, far from familiarising myself so rapidly with this idea, I only regarded it with a feeling of horror which was destined to keep it away from me for a long time; my only wish was to avoid annoying those who treated me kindly with the object of converting me; I wished to cultivate their goodwill, and to leave them the hope of success, by appearing less completely armed than I really was. My fault in that respect resembled the coquetry of respectable women, who sometimes, in order to attain their object, without allowing or promising anything, know how to excite greater hopes than they mean to fulfil.

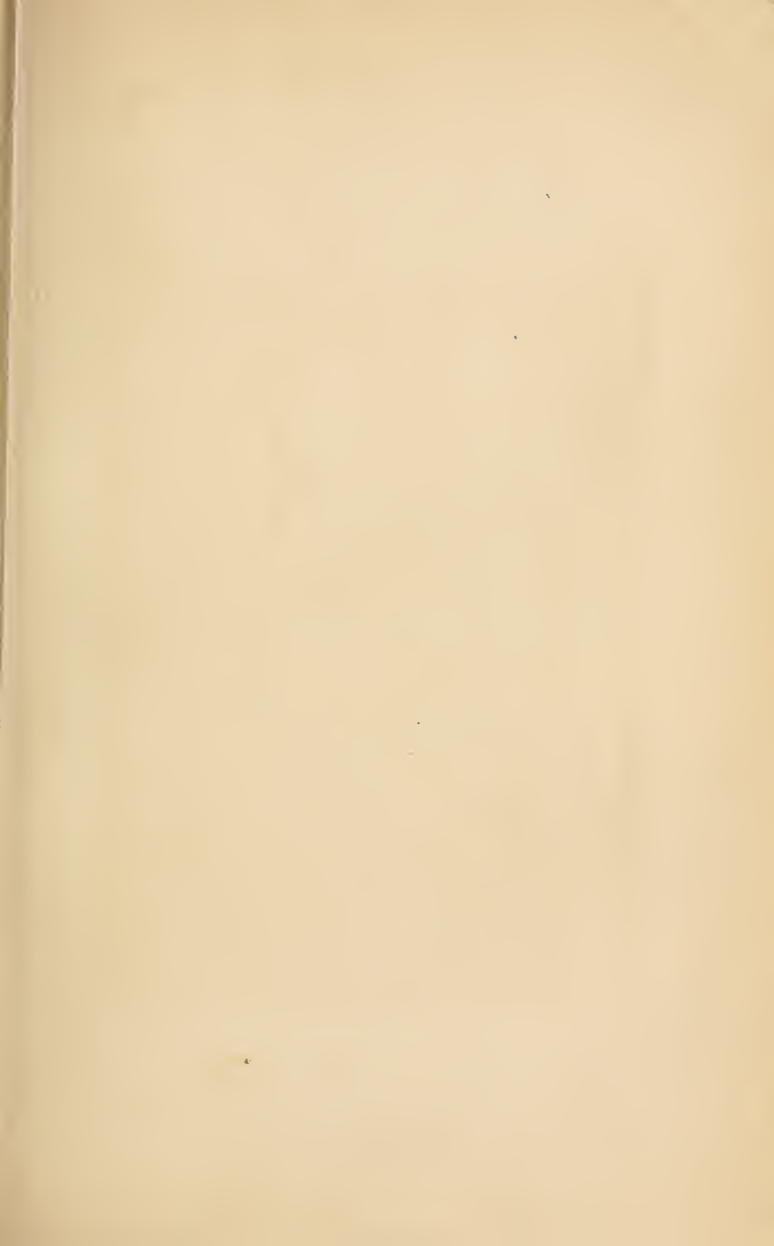
Reason, pity, and regard for discipline required that, far from assisting my folly, people should have saved me from the ruin which I ran to meet and sent me back to my family. That is what every truly virtuous man would have done or attempted to do. But, although M. de Pontverre was a good man, he was certainly not a virtuous man; on the contrary, he was an enthusiast, who knew no other virtue except worshipping images and telling his beads—a kind of missionary who could think of nothing better for the good of the faith than writing libels against the ministers of Geneva. Far from thinking of sending me back to my home, he took advantage of the desire I felt to get away from it, to make it impossible for me to return even though I should wish to do so. It was any odds that he was sending me to perish in misery or to become a worthless scamp. But that was not what he looked at; he only saw a soul saved from heresy and restored to the Church. Honest man or scamp—what did it matter, provided I went to mass? One must not, however, believe that this way of thinking is peculiar to Catholics; it is common to all dogmatic religions in which faith, not works, is considered the principal thing.

“God calls you,” said M. de Pontverre; “go to Annecy; there you will find a good and charitable lady, whom the King’s kindness has placed in a position to rescue other souls from the error from which she herself has been delivered.” The lady in question was Madame de Warens, a new convert, who in reality had been forced

by the priests to share, with the rabble which came to sell its faith, a pension of two thousand francs which she received from the King of Sardinia. I felt very humiliated at requiring the assistance of a good and charitable lady. I was very desirous of having my wants supplied, but not of receiving alms, and a devotee did not sound very attractive to me. However, urged by M. de Pontverre, and hard pressed by hunger and pleased at the idea of making a journey with a definite object, I made up my mind, although with some difficulty, and set out for Annecy. I could easily have reached the place in one day; but, as I did not hurry, it took three. I never saw a *château* on the right or left without going in search of the adventure which I felt sure awaited me there. I did not dare to enter the *château* or knock at the door, being naturally very shy; but I sang under the window which looked most promising from outside, and, after having tired out my lungs by continued efforts, was surprised that I beheld neither ladies nor maidens attracted by the beauty of my voice or the spirit of my songs, seeing that I knew some admirable compositions which my companions had taught me and which I sang in a manner equally admirable.

At last I arrived; I saw Madame de Warens. That epoch of my life decided my character; I cannot bring myself to pass lightly over it. I was in the middle of my sixteenth year. Without being what is called a handsome lad, I was well set up, I had a pretty foot, a fine leg, an easy manner, lively features, a pretty little mouth, black hair and eyebrows, small and even sunken eyes, which, however, vigorously darted forth the fire with which my blood was kindled. Unhappily, I knew nothing of that, and it has never occurred to me during my life to think about my personal appearance except when it was too late to profit by it. With the timidity of my age was united that of a very loving disposition, always troubled by the fear of displeasing. Besides, although my mind was tolerably well formed, I had never seen the world, and was entirely wanting in manners, and my knowledge, far from supplementing this defect, only served to intimidate me still more by making me feel how sadly I needed them.

Fearing, therefore, that my first appearance would not prejudice Madame de Warens in my favour, I had recourse to other expedients. I composed a beautiful letter in oratorical style, in







Ed. Hedderley sc.

FIRST MEETING WITH M<sup>RS</sup> DE WARENS  
Book II.



which, intermingling phrases out of books with the language of an apprentice, I displayed all my eloquence in order to gain her goodwill. I enclosed M. de Pontverre's letter in my owl, and set out for the dreaded interview. Madame de Warens was not at home. I was told that she had just gone to church. It was Palm-Sunday in 1728. I ran after her. I saw her; I overtook her; I addressed her. I ought to remember the spot. Since then I have often wetted it with my tears and covered it with my kisses. I should like to surround this happy spot with a railing of gold. I should like to draw upon it the homage of the world. Whoever loves to honour the monuments of the salvation of men should only approach them on his knees.

It was in a passage behind her house, leading between a brook on the right, which separated the house from the garden, and the court-wall on the left, through a back-gate to the Franciscan<sup>1</sup> church. Just as she was going to enter, Madame de Warens, hearing my voice, turned round. How did the sight of her strike me! I had pictured to myself an old, grim, religious enthusiast; in my opinion, M. de Pontverre's pious lady could be nothing else. Instead, I beheld a face full of charm, beautiful blue eyes—full of gentleness—a dazzling complexion, the outlines of an enchanting throat. Nothing escaped the rapid glance of the young proselyte—for at that moment I became hers, feeling convinced that a religion preached by such apostles must inevitably lead to paradise. With a smile, she took the letter which I presented to her with a trembling hand, opened it, glanced at that of M. de Pontverre, returned to mine, read it through, and would have read it again, had not her servant reminded her that it was time to go in. "Well, my child," she said to me in a tone which made me tremble, "so you are wandering about the country at your age; that is indeed a pity." Then, without waiting for me to answer, she added, "Go and wait for me; tell them to give you some breakfast. After mass I will come and talk to you."

Louise Éléonore de Warens was a young lady who belonged to the house of La Tour de Pil, an ancient and noble family of Vévai,

<sup>1</sup> *Les Cordeliers*: a religious order, founded by St. Francis of Assisi in 1223. The name was afterwards also given to a club founded in 1790 by Danton, Marat, and Desmoulins, which held its meetings in the old Franciscan convent at Paris.

a town in the canton of Vaud. When very young she had married M. de Warens, of the house of Loys, the eldest son of M. de Villardin, of Lausanne. This marriage, which proved childless, was not a happy one, and Madame de Warens, driven by some domestic grief, seized the opportunity of the presence of King Victor Amadeus at Évian to cross the lake and throw herself at the feet of this prince, thus abandoning her husband, her family and her country through a piece of folly which much resembled mine, and which she, like myself, has had ample time to lament. The King, who was fond of posing as a zealous Catholic, took her under his protection, and settled on her an annuity of 1,500 Piedmontese livres, a tolerably large sum for a prince who, as a rule, was little inclined to be generous. Afterwards, finding that he was reported to be in love with her in consequence of the manner in which he had received her, he sent her to Annecy under the escort of a detachment of his guards, where, under the spiritual guidance of Michel-Gabriel de Bernex, titular Bishop of Geneva, she renounced the Protestant faith in the Convent of the Visitation.

She had been six years in Annecy when I arrived there, and was twenty-eight years of age, having been born with the century. Her beauty was of the kind which lasts, consisting rather in the expression than the features; besides, hers was still in its first brilliancy. She had a caressing and tender air, a gentle look, an angelic smile, a mouth like my own, ashen-grey hair of rare beauty, which she wore in a careless fashion, which gave her a very piquant appearance. She was small of stature, even short—somewhat dumpy, although not disagreeably so; but a more beautiful head and bosom, more beautiful hands and arms, could not have been seen.

Her education had been very peculiar. Like myself, she had lost her mother at her birth, and, receiving instruction indiscriminately, just as it happened to offer itself, she had learnt a little from her governess, a little from her father, a little from her masters, and a great deal from her lovers, especially from one M. de Tavel, who, being a man of taste and learning, adorned the object of his affections with his own excellences. But so many different kinds of instruction impeded each other, and, as she pursued her studies without any regular system, her naturally sound understanding was by no means improved. Thus, although she knew something about the principles of philosophy and physics, she still

preserved her father's taste for empirical medicine and alchemy; she prepared elixirs, tinctures, balsams, and magisteries.<sup>1</sup> She claimed to possess secret remedies. Quacks, profiting by her weakness, got hold of her, pestered her, ruined her, and, in the midst of crucibles and drugs, squandered her intellect, her talents, and her charms, with which she might have graced the highest society.

But, although vile rascals abused her ill-directed education, in order to obscure the light of her reason, her excellent heart stood the test and always remained the same; her loving and gentle character, her sympathy with the unfortunate, her inexhaustible goodness, her cheerful, frank, and open disposition never changed; and, even when old age came upon her, surrounded by want, suffering, and calamities of all kinds, the calmness of her beautiful soul preserved for her to the end of her life all the gaiety of her happiest days.

Her errors were due to an inexhaustible fund of activity which needed incessant occupation. She wanted no intrigues like other women, but enterprises to direct and carry out. She was born to take part in important affairs. In her place, Madame de Longueville would have been a mere intriguer; in the place of Madame de Longueville, she would have governed the State. Her talents were misplaced, and that which would have brought fame to her in a more exalted position proved her ruin in that in which she lived. In everything which was within the reach of her mental capacity, she always enlarged her plan in her head and saw its object magnified, the result of this being that she employed means better proportioned to her views than her strength; she failed through the fault of others; and, when her project failed to succeed, she was ruined, where others would scarcely have lost anything. This eagerness for business, which did her so much harm, was at least of great service to her in her monastic retreat, in that it prevented her from settling there for the rest of her life as she had intended. The regular and simple life of the nuns, the idle gossip of the parlour, could not possibly be agreeable to a mind which was continually in movement, and which, inventing new systems every day, required freedom in order to devote itself to them. The

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1 A powder to which sovereign virtues were formerly attributed.

good Bishop of Bernex, though not so clever as François de Sales,<sup>1</sup> resembled him in many points; and Madame de Warens, whom he called his daughter, and who resembled Madame de Chantal<sup>2</sup> in many other points, might have resembled her even in her retirement, had not the idle life of a convent been distasteful to her. It was not from want of zeal that this amiable woman did not devote herself to the trifling exercises of devotion, which appeared suitable to a new convert living under the guidance of a prelate. Whatever may have been the motive that induced her to change her religion, she was certainly sincere in that which she had embraced. She may have repented of having taken the step; certainly she never wished to retrace it. She not only died a good Catholic; she proved herself one during her lifetime; and I, who believe that I have read her inmost soul, dare to affirm that it was solely owing to a horror of affectation that she never played the devotee in public; her piety was too genuine for her to make a show of devotion. But this is not the place to discuss her principles; I shall have other opportunities of speaking of them.

Those who deny the sympathy of souls may explain, if they can, how, from the first interview, from the first word, from the first look, Madame de Warens inspired me, not only with the liveliest feelings of attachment, but with a perfect confidence which has never belied itself. Granted that my sentiments for her were really love, which will at least appear doubtful to those who follow the history of our relations, how came it that this passion was from the outset accompanied by the feelings which it least inspires—peace of heart, calm, cheerfulness, confidence, trust? How was it that, when for the first time I approached an amiable, refined, and dazzlingly beautiful woman, a lady of higher position than my own, the like of whom I had never addressed, upon whom my destiny in a manner depended, according as she interested herself more or less on my behalf—how came it, I repeat, that, in spite of all this, I immediately felt as free and completely at my ease as if I had been perfectly certain of pleasing her? How was it that I did not for a single moment experience a feeling of embarrassment, timidity, or awkwardness? Naturally bashful and easily put

<sup>1</sup> Bishop of Geneva (1567-1622).

<sup>2</sup> A lady, distinguished for her great piety, the foundress of the Order of the Visitation; she was canonized by Clement XIII.

out of countenance, knowing nothing of the world, how was it that from the first day, from the first moment, I was able to assume with her the easy manners, the tender language, the familiar tone which prevailed between us ten years later, when our close intimacy had made it natural? Is it possible to love, I do not say without desires, for those I had, but without jealousy? Does not one at least wish to learn from the object of one's affection whether one is loved in return? It has no more occurred to me in the course of my life ever to ask her this question than to ask myself whether I loved her; and she has never shown greater curiosity in regard to myself. There was certainly something singular in my feelings for this charming woman, and, in the course of the narrative, the reader will find unexpected singularities.

It was a question what was to become of me; and, in order to discuss my future more at leisure, she kept me to dinner. It was the first meal in my life at which my appetite failed me; and her maid, who waited upon us, said that I was the first traveller of my age and class that she had ever seen in such a condition. This remark, which did me no harm in the eyes of her mistress, struck home to a great lout who was dining with us, and who devoured by himself quite a respectable dinner for six. As for myself, I was in a state of rapture which did not allow me to eat. My heart fed upon an entirely new feeling, with which my whole being was filled, and which left me no inclination for doing anything else.

Madame de Warens wanted to know the details of my little history; and in relating them I recovered all the fire and vivacity which I had lost during my apprenticeship. The more I interested this excellent soul in my favour, the more she lamented the lot to which I intended to expose myself. She did not venture to advise me to return to Geneva; in her position that would have been an act of treason to the Catholic faith; and she knew only too well how she was watched and how her words were weighed. But she spoke to me so touchingly of my father's affliction, that it was easy to see that she would have approved of my going to console him. She did not know how strongly, without knowing it, she was pleading against herself. I think I have already said that my mind was made up; the more eloquent and persuasive her words, the more they went to my heart, the less I was able to make up my

mind to separate from her. I felt that to return to Geneva would be to put an almost insurmountable barrier between herself and me, unless I again took the step which I had already taken, and by which it was better to abide once and for all. I accordingly remained firm. Madame de Warens, seeing that her efforts were unavailing, did not persist in them, to avoid compromising herself, but she said to me, with a look of compassion, "Poor little one, you must go where God calls you; but when you are grown up, you will think of me." I believe she herself had no idea how cruelly this prediction was to be fulfilled.

The difficulty was great. How was I, young as I was, to find a livelihood so far from home? Having served scarcely half my apprenticeship, I was very far from knowing my trade. Even if I had known it, I should have been unable to earn a living by it in Savoy, for the country was too poor to support the arts. The lout who was eating our dinners for us, being obliged to stop to give his jaws a rest, made a proposal which he declared was inspired by heaven, but which, to judge from its results, was rather inspired by the opposite place. This proposal was that I should go to Turin, where I should find spiritual and bodily support in a hospice established for the instruction of catechumens, until, after I had been received into the bosom of the Church, I should find suitable employment by the kindness of the charitable. "As to the expenses of his journey," continued my friend, "his lordship the bishop will no doubt be kind enough to provide for them, if Madame suggests this holy work to him, and, doubtless, Madame la Baronne," he added, bending over his plate, "who is so charitable, will also be eager to contribute towards them." I found the idea of so much charity very distasteful; I was sick at heart, and said nothing. Madame de Warens, without embracing the suggestion as eagerly as it was offered, contented herself with replying that everyone ought to do good to the best of his power, and that she would speak to the bishop about it; but my confounded friend, who had a little interest of his own in the matter, and was afraid that she might not speak of it exactly as he wished, hastened to warn the almoners, and worked upon the good priests so cleverly that, when Madame de Warens, who feared the journey for me, wished to speak about it to the bishop, she found that



everything had been arranged, and he immediately handed her over the money destined for my humble travelling expenses. She did not venture to insist upon my remaining, for I was approaching an age when a woman of her own years could not with propriety express a desire to keep a young man with her.

My journey being thus arranged by those who took charge of me, I was obliged to submit, and I even did so without much reluctance. Although Turin was further than Geneva, I judged that, being the capital, it was more closely connected with Annecy than a town of different faith and in a foreign land; and, besides, as I was setting out in obedience to Madame de Warens, I considered myself as remaining under her guidance, and that was more than living in her neighbourhood. Lastly, the idea of a long journey flattered my fondness for roaming, which was already beginning to declare itself. It appeared to me a fine thing to cross mountains at my age, and to elevate myself above my comrades by the whole height of the Alps. There is a charm in seeing different countries which a Genevese can scarcely ever resist; I, therefore, gave my consent. My lout intended to set out in two days with his wife, and I was intrusted to their care. My funds, which Madame de Warens had augmented, were handed over to them. She also gave me privately a little pocket-money, and much good advice; and, on the Wednesday in Passion week, we set out on our journey.

On the day after I left Annecy my father arrived, having followed on my track with his friend, M. Rival, a watchmaker like himself, a talented and even a witty man, who wrote better verses than La Motte, and was almost as good a speaker; in addition, he was a thoroughly good fellow; but his misplaced taste for literature led to no other result than sending one of his sons on the stage.

These gentlemen saw Madame de Warens, and contented themselves with lamenting my lot, instead of following and overtaking me, as they could easily have done, since they were on horseback while I was on foot. My uncle Bernard had done the same; he had gone as far as Confignon, whence he returned to Geneva, after he heard that I was at Annecy. It seemed as if my relations were in league with my unlucky star to hand me over to the destiny which awaited me. My brother had been lost through

similar negligence, and so completely, that it has never been known what became of him.

My father was not only a man of honour, he was a man of proved uprightness, and he had one of those strong souls which are capable of great virtues; in addition to which, he was a good father, especially towards myself. He loved me very tenderly, but he also loved his pleasures, and, since I had lived apart from him, other tastes had rendered his paternal affection somewhat lukewarm. He had married again at Nyon; and although his wife was no longer of an age to present me with brothers, she had relations. This created another family, other aims, a new establishment, which no longer so frequently recalled the memory of myself. My father was growing old, and had nothing to live upon; but my brother and myself had a small property from our mother, the interest of which could be claimed by my father during our absence. This idea did not present itself to him directly, and by no means prevented him from doing his duty; but it exercised a secret influence without his being aware of it, and sometimes moderated his zeal, which he would have pushed further had it not been for that. That, I believe, was the reason why, having originally gone to Annecy to find me out, he did not follow me as far as Chambéry, where he would have been morally certain to find me. That again was the reason why, when I went to pay him a visit, as I frequently did after my flight, he always received me with the caresses of a father, but without making any serious efforts to keep me with him.

✓ This behaviour on the part of a father, whose tenderness and uprightness I knew so well, led me to reflections upon myself, which have in no small degree contributed to keep my heart in a healthy condition. From these I have drawn the great moral lesson, perhaps the only one of any practical value, to avoid those situations of life which bring our duties into conflict with our interests, and which show us our own advantage in the misfortunes of others; for it is certain that, in such situations, however sincere our love of virtue, we must, sooner or later, inevitably grow weak without perceiving it, and become unjust and wicked in act, without having ceased to be just and good in our hearts.

This principle, deeply imprinted on the bottom of my heart, which, although somewhat late, in practice guided my whole con-



duct, is one of those which have caused me to appear a very strange and foolish creature in the eyes of the world, and, above all, amongst my acquaintances. I have been reproached with wanting to pose as an original, and different from others. In reality, I have never troubled about acting like other people or differently from them. I sincerely desired to do what was right. I withdrew, as far as it lay in my power, from situations which opposed my interests to those of others, and might, consequently, inspire me with a secret, though involuntary, desire of injuring them.

Two years ago my Lord Marshal wanted to put my name in his will; I strongly opposed this. I told him that I would not for the world know that my name was down in anyone's will, least of all in his. He gave in; but insisted upon bestowing upon me a pension for life, to which I offered no opposition. It will be said that I gain by this alteration; that may be so, but I know, oh! father and benefactor, that, if I unhappily survive you, in losing you I have everything to lose and nothing to gain.

That, in my opinion, is the true philosophy, the only philosophy which is really suited for the human heart. I am more impressed every day by its profound solidity, and in all my recent writings I have presented it under various aspects; but the public is superficial, and has not known how to recognise it. If, after I have finished my present task, I live long enough to undertake another, I propose to give, in the sequel to "*Émile*,"<sup>1</sup> so attractive and striking an example of this maxim, that the reader will be compelled to notice it. But enough reflections for a traveller; it is time to continue my journey!

I found it more agreeable than I had expected, and my lout was not so sulky as he looked. He was a man of middle age, who wore his black hair, which was beginning to grow grey, in a *queue*; he looked like a grenadier, had a strong voice, was pretty cheerful, could walk well and eat better, and practised all sorts of trades, for want of knowing any. I believe he had proposed to establish some kind of manufactory at Annecy, and Madame de Warens had not failed to approve of the idea. It was in order to make the

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<sup>1</sup> See the "*New Héloïse*," Part III., letter xx.

attempt to gain the minister's approval also, that, well furnished with money, he was making the journey to Turin. Our friend possessed a talent for intrigue, always making himself agreeable to the priests; and, while showing great eagerness to serve them, he had caught from their school a certain pious jargon of which he made incessant use, and boasted of being a great preacher. He even knew one passage of the Bible in Latin; and, as he repeated it a thousand times a day, it was as if he had known a thousand. He was seldom short of money, when he knew that others had any in their purse. He was rather clever than a rogue, and, when he recited his *capucinades*<sup>1</sup> in the tone of a recruiting officer, he resembled Peter the Hermit preaching the Crusade sword in hand.

As for his wife, Madame Sabran, she was a good woman enough, who was quieter during the day than at night. As I always slept in their room, her noisy sleeplessness often woke me, and would have kept me awake still more, if I had known the reason of it; but I had not the least suspicion; and my stupidity on this point left the duty of instructing me to nature alone.

I proceeded gaily on my way with my pious guide and his lively companion. No mishap disturbed my journey; I was happier, in body and mind, than I have ever been in my life. Young, vigorous, in perfect health, without a care, full of confidence in myself and others, I was enjoying that short but precious moment of life when its expansive fulness, so to speak, enlarges our being in all our sensations, and beautifies in our eyes the whole aspect of nature by the charm of our existence. My pleasant restlessness had an object which restrained it and steadied my imagination. I looked upon myself as the work, the pupil, the friend, almost as the lover of Madame de Warens. The polite things she had said to me, the little caresses which she had bestowed upon me, the tender interest which she had seemed to take in me, her friendly looks, which appeared to me full of love, since they inspired me with that feeling—all this occupied my thoughts during the journey, and plunged me in delicious reveries, undisturbed by any fear or doubt concerning my future. I con-

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<sup>1</sup>: Insipid discourses upon religious matters, like those of the Capucin friars.

sidered that, in sending me to Turin, they had undertaken to support me there, and to find me a suitable situation. I felt that I need not trouble further about myself; others had undertaken the charge. So I went on my way with light step, freed from this burden; youthful desires, enchanting hopes, brilliant plans filled my soul. Everything that I saw appeared to assure my early happiness. [In the houses I pictured to myself rustic festivities; in the meadows, playful romps; on the banks of the rivers, baths, walks, fishing; on the trees, delicious fruit; under their shade, loving *tête-à-têtes*; on the mountains, pails full of milk and cream, a charming idleness, peace, simplicity, and the pleasure of going I knew not where. In short, nothing met my eyes without conveying to my heart some attraction of enjoyment. The grandeur, the variety, the real beauty of the sight around me rendered this attraction worthy of reason; even vanity claimed its share. It appeared to me an honour beyond my years to visit Italy while still so young, to have already seen so much of the world, to follow Hannibal across the mountains.] Besides this, we frequently halted at good inns; I had a good appetite and plenty to satisfy it; for it was really not worth while to deny myself anything, since my own meals were nothing in comparison with those of M. Sabran.

During the whole course of my life, I never remember a time when I have been so completely free from care and trouble as during the seven or eight days of our journey; for Madame Sabran's rate of travelling, by which we were obliged to regulate our own, made it nothing but a long walk. This recollection has left me the liveliest taste for everything connected with it, especially for mountains and walks. I have never journeyed on foot except in my younger days, and then always with the greatest pleasure. Duties, business, luggage, soon obliged me to play the gentleman and take a carriage; gnawing cares, perplexities, and discomfort got in with me, and from that moment, instead of feeling, as before, nothing but the pleasure of travelling, my only anxiety was to reach the end of my journey. For a long time I endeavoured to find in Paris two companions of the same tastes as myself willing to spend fifty *louis* of their money and a year of their time upon a walking tour through Italy with me, with only a single lad to carry

our travelling-bags. Many appeared enchanted with the idea, but in reality considered it as nothing but a castle in the air, only fit to talk about without any idea of putting it into execution. I remember that Diderot and Grimm, with whom I once discussed the idea with enthusiasm, at last became enamoured of it. Once I thought the matter settled, but it all ended in their wanting to make a journey on paper, in which Grimm found nothing so delightful as making Diderot commit a number of impieties and handing me over to the inquisition in his stead.

My regret at arriving so soon at Turin was lessened by the pleasure of seeing a large city, and by the hope of soon playing a part worthy of myself; for already the fumes of ambition were mounting to my brain; already I regarded myself as infinitely raised above my former condition of apprentice, and I was far from suspecting that, in a short time, I was destined to fall far below it.

\* Before I continue, I must excuse or justify myself to the reader for the trivial details into which I have already entered, or into which I shall enter in the course of my narrative, and which in his eyes can have no interest. The task which I have undertaken, of showing myself completely without reserve to the public, requires that nothing that concerns myself shall remain obscure or hidden; that I shall keep myself continually before its eyes; that it shall accompany me in all the errors of my heart, into all the secret corners of my life; that it shall not lose sight of me for a single instant, for fear that, if it finds in my narrative the least gap, the least blank, it may ask, What was he doing during that time? and accuse me of unwillingness to tell all. My writings expose me sufficiently to the spite of mankind, without my exposing myself to it still more by my silence.

My little pocket-money was gone. I had chattered, and my guides were not slow to take advantage of my indiscretion. Madame Sabran managed to get everything from me, even a small piece of ribbon covered with silver, which Madame de Warens had given me for my little sword, and which I regretted more than anything else. The sword itself would have remained in their hands if I had resisted less firmly. They had faithfully defrayed my expenses during the journey, but they had left me nothing. I reached Turin without clothes, without money, without linen, and was obliged to

leave entirely to my merits the honour of the fortune I was going to make.

I had some letters. I presented them, and was immediately conducted to the hospice for catechumens, to be instructed in the religion with which I was to purchase my livelihood. On my arrival, I beheld a large gate with iron bars, which was double-locked behind me as soon as I had passed through it. This introduction struck me as more imposing than agreeable, and was beginning to afford me food for reflection, when I was conducted into a tolerably large room. All its furniture consisted of a wooden altar, surmounted by a large crucifix, at the end of the room, in front of which stood four or five chairs, also made of wood, which looked as if they had been polished, but in reality had become shiny merely from constant use and rubbing. In this assembly-room were four or five frightful villains—my fellow-students—who seemed to be rather the devil's constables than aspirants to the honour of sons of God. Two of these rascals were Slavonians, who called themselves Jews or Moors, and, as they confessed to me, spent their life in wandering through Spain and Italy, embracing Christianity and submitting to be baptised where they found it worth their while. Another iron door was then thrown open, which divided into two a large balcony running along the courtyard. Through this door our sisters entered, catechumens who, like myself, were to be born again, not by means of baptism, but by a solemn abjuration of their faith. They were certainly the greatest sluts and the most disgusting vagabonds who ever contaminated the sheepfold of the Lord. Only one appeared to me pretty and attractive; she was about my own age, perhaps two or three years older. She had roguish eyes, which sometimes met mine. This inspired me with a desire to make her acquaintance; but, during nearly two months, which she spent in the house after my arrival—she had already been there three months—I found it absolutely impossible to speak to her, so strictly had she been recommended to the care of our old jaileress, and so carefully was she watched by the holy missionary, who laboured with more zeal than diligence to convert her. She must have been extremely dull, although she did not appear so, for never did tuition require so long a time. The holy man always found her unfit for the act of

abjuration; but she grew weary of her confinement, and declared that she wanted to leave—Christian or no Christian. They were obliged to take her at her word, while she still showed herself ready to become one, for fear she might become refractory and refuse.

The little community was assembled in honour of the new-comer. A short address was delivered to us, in which I was exhorted to consent to respond to the favour which God extended to me, while the others were invited to pray for me and edify me by their example. After this, our virgins returned to their seclusion, and I had time to meditate with astonishment upon my own situation to my heart's content.

Next morning we were again assembled to receive instruction; and then, for the first time, I began to reflect upon the step I was going to take, and upon the circumstances which had led me to do so.

I have said—I repeat it, and shall, perhaps, repeat it again, as I am daily more convinced of its truth—that, if ever a child received a sensible and sound education, it was myself. I belonged to a family which was distinguished by its manners from the common people; from all my relations I had learnt nothing but lessons of wisdom, and had had honourable examples before my eyes. My father, although fond of pleasure, was not only a man of strict integrity but of considerable religious feeling. A man of gallantry in the world and a Christian at heart, he had early instilled into me the sentiments which he felt. Of my three aunts, who were all prudent and virtuous, the two eldest were pious; the youngest, a girl full of grace, talent and good sense, was perhaps even more pious, although she made less show of it. From the bosom of this estimable family I went to M. Lambercier, who, though a churchman and preacher, was at heart a believer, and nearly always practised what he preached. He and his sister, by gentle and judicious training, cultivated the principles of piety which they found in my heart. These worthy people, with this object, employed means so sincere, so prudent and so sensible that, far from being wearied by their preaching, I always felt deeply affected by it and formed the best resolutions, which I rarely forgot to carry out when I thought of them. In the case of my aunt Bernard, her



piety was somewhat more distasteful to me, because she made a trade of it. While serving my apprenticeship I scarcely thought of it, without, however, changing my views. I never came into contact with any young people who might have corrupted me; I became vagabond, but not dissipated.

I consequently knew as much about religion as was possible for a child of my age. I even knew more, for why should I conceal my thoughts? My childhood was not that of a child; I always felt and thought as a man. It was only when I grew up that I re-entered the class of ordinary individuals; as a child I did not belong to it. The reader will laugh to find me modestly representing myself as a prodigy. So be it; but when he has laughed sufficiently, let him find a child who, in his sixth year, is so attracted, interested and carried away by romances as to shed hot tears over them; then I shall feel that my vanity is ridiculous, and will confess that I am wrong.

If I have said that we ought not to speak about religion to children, if we wish them to possess any, and, further, that they are incapable of knowing God, even according to our ideas, I have drawn this conviction from my observations, not from my own experience, for I knew that no conclusion could be drawn from it in regard to others. Find me Jean Jacques Rousseaus of six years old, and speak to *them* of God when they are seven; I will guarantee that you run no risk.

I think it will be admitted that, in the case of a child, and even of a man, to have religion means to follow that in which he is born. This faith is sometimes lessened, rarely enlarged; dogmatic belief is one of the fruits of education. Besides this general principle which attached me to the religious creed of my fathers, I had the aversion for Catholicism peculiar to our village, which represented it as a frightful idolatry, and painted its priests in the blackest colours. This feeling was so strong in me, that at first I never looked into the inside of a church, never met a priest in a surplice, never heard the processional bell, without a shudder of terror and alarm, which soon left me in the towns, but has often come upon me again in country parishes, more like those where I had first felt it. It is true that this impression contrasted singularly with the recollections of the caresses which the priests

of the environs of Geneva were fond of bestowing upon the children of the city. While the bell announcing supreme unction alarmed me, the bell for mass and vespers reminded me of breakfast, collation, fresh butter, fruit, and milk-food. M. de Pontverre's good dinner still produced a great effect. Thus I had easily driven all such thoughts out of my mind. Seeing papism only in its connection with amusement and good living, I had readily accustomed myself to the idea of living in its midst; but the idea of solemnly going over to the Church of Rome had only presented itself to me for a moment, as possible in a distant future. At the present moment it was no longer possible to deceive myself; I saw with horror the kind of consent which I had given, and its inevitable consequences. The future neophytes around me were not calculated to sustain my courage by their example, and I could not conceal from myself that the holy work, which I intended to carry out, was in the main the action of a bandit; for, young as I was, I felt that, whatever religion might be the true one, I was going to sell my own, and that, even though I made a good choice, in the bottom of my heart I should lie to the Holy Spirit and deserve the contempt of men. The more I thought of it, the more indignant I became with myself; and I sighed over the destiny which had brought me to this pass, as if this destiny had not been my own work. There were moments when these reflections became so strong, that, if I had found the door open for a moment, I should certainly have run away; but this was impossible, and my resolution was not strong enough. Too many secret desires combated it not to overcome it. Besides, my fixed determination not to return to Geneva, shame, the difficulty of crossing the mountains again, the embarrassment of finding myself far from my country, without friends and without resources—all these feelings combined to make me regard my prickings of conscience as a too tardy repentance; I pretended to reproach myself for what I had done, in order to excuse what I was going to do. While aggravating the errors of the past, I regarded the future as their necessary result. Instead of saying to myself, "Nothing is done yet, and you can be innocent if you wish," I said, "Sigh for the crime of which you have made yourself guilty, and which you have made it necessary for yourself to carry out."



In fact, what uncommon strength of mind would have been necessary, at my age, in order to recall everything that I had hitherto promised or given hopes of, to break the bonds which I had placed upon myself, to declare boldly that I desired at all risks to continue in the religion of my fathers! Such vigour was not natural to one of my age, and it is not very probable that it would have succeeded. Things had gone too far for them not to feel ashamed if they did not succeed; and, the greater my resistance, the more they would have felt themselves bound, by some means or other, to overcome it.

The sophism which ruined me, is that common to most men who complain of want of strength when it is already too late to make use of it. Virtue only becomes difficult by our own fault; if we could always be prudent, we should rarely need to be virtuous. But inclinations, easily surmountable, hurry us along without resistance; we yield to trifling temptations, the danger of which we despise. Imperceptibly we fall into perilous situations, from which we could easily have protected ourselves, but from which we can no longer extricate ourselves without heroic efforts which appal us; and at last we fall into the abyss, reproaching God, "Why hast Thou made me so weak?" But, in spite of ourselves, He replies to our consciences, "I have made you too weak to save yourself from the abyss, because I made you strong enough not to fall into it."

I did not exactly resolve to become a Catholic; but, seeing the time still far off, I profited by the occasion to accustom myself gradually to the idea, and in the meantime I hoped for some unforeseen circumstance which would get me out of the difficulty. In order to gain time, I resolved to make the best defence of which I was capable. But soon my vanity relieved me from thinking of my resolution; and, as soon as I observed that I sometimes embarrassed those who desired to instruct me, that was sufficient to make me endeavour to floor them altogether. I even exhibited ridiculous eagerness in this undertaking; for, while they were working upon me, I wanted to work upon them. I honestly believed that I had only to convince them, to make them turn Protestants.

Consequently, they did not find in me nearly as much tract-

ability as they had expected, either in regard to my knowledge or good will. Protestants are generally better instructed than Catholics. This is only natural; the doctrine of the one requires discussion, that of the other submission. The Catholic is obliged to embrace the decision that is put before him; the Protestant must learn to decide for himself. This was well known; but no great difficulties were expected for persons of experience from one of my age and position. Besides, I had not yet received my first Communion, nor received the instructions connected with it; that, too, was known. But what they did not know was that, to make up for this, I had been well taught at M. Lambercier's, and that, in addition, I had by me a little store-house, very inconvenient for these gentlemen, in the history of the Church and the Empire, which, while living with my father, I had learnt almost by heart, and since then almost forgotten, but which came back to me in proportion as the dispute grew warmer.

A little, old, but somewhat venerable priest held the first meeting of all of us together. For my companions this meeting was rather a catechism than a discussion, and he had more to do with instructing them than with removing their objections. In my own case it was different. When my turn came, I stopped him at every point, and spared him no single difficulty which I was able to throw in his way. This protracted the meeting, and made it very tedious for those who were present. My old priest spoke much, grew excited, wandered from his subject, and got himself out of the difficulty by declaring that he did not know French well. The next day, for fear that my indiscreet objections might give offence to my companions, I was put into another room with another priest, who was younger and a good speaker—that is to say, a coiner of fine phrases—and satisfied with himself, if ever a teacher was. I did not, however, allow myself to be too much cowed by his imposing manner; and feeling that, after all, I was able to hold my own, I proceeded to answer him with tolerable confidence, and to press him on all sides to the best of my ability. He thought to overwhelm me with St. Augustine, St. Gregory, and the other fathers, but found, to his incredible surprise, that I handled all the fathers nearly as readily as he did; not that I had

ever read them, as neither perhaps had he, but I remembered several passages out of my "Le Sueur"; and, as soon as he quoted one, without stopping to dispute it, I answered it by another from the same Father, which frequently caused him considerable embarrassment. However, in the end he gained the victory, for two reasons. In the first place, he was the stronger, and, feeling that I was, so to speak, at his mercy, I correctly judged, young as I was, that it would not do to press him—to drive him to extremities; for I saw clearly enough that the little old priest had conceived no great affection for myself or my learning. In the second place, the young priest was an educated man, while I was not. This caused him to employ in his manner of argument a method which I was unable to follow, and, as soon as he felt himself pushed by some unforeseen objection, he put it off until the next day, declaring that I was wandering from the point. Sometimes he even refused to accept my quotations, declaring that they were false; and, offering to go and fetch the book for me, defied me to find them. He felt that he did not risk much, and that, with all my borrowed learning, I was not sufficiently experienced in handling books, and did not know enough Latin to find a passage in a large volume, even though I might be certain that it was there. I even suspected him of making use of the same dishonesty of which he accused our ministers, and of sometimes inventing passages, in order to extricate himself from a difficulty which embarrassed him.

While these petty disputes about trifles lasted, and the time was spent in arguing, mumbling prayers, and doing nothing, a disgusting little adventure happened to me, which very nearly turned out very badly for me.

There is no soul so vile, no heart so barbarous, that it is not susceptible of some kind of attachment. One of the two vagabonds who called themselves Moors conceived an affection for me. He was fond of accosting me, talked to me in his jargon, rendered me slight services, sometimes gave me part of his food, and frequently kissed me with an ardour which was very annoying to me. In spite of the natural alarm which I felt at his gingerbread face decorated with a long scar, and his inflamed countenance which appeared more furious than tender, I endured his kisses, saying to myself:

"The poor fellow has conceived a lively friendship for me. I should be wrong to repulse him." He gradually began to take greater liberties, and sometimes made such curious proposals to me, that I thought he was mad. One night, he wanted to sleep with me. I refused, saying that my bed was too small. He pressed me to go to his, but I again refused, for the wretch was so dirty and stunk so strongly of chewed tobacco, that he made me quite sick.

Early on the following morning, we were both alone in the assembly-room. He recommenced his caresses, but with such violent movements, that it became quite alarming. At last, he wanted to take the most disgusting liberties with me, and, taking hold of my hand, tried to make me take the same with him. I uttered a loud cry, and, jumping back, freed myself from him; and, without exhibiting anger or indignation, for I had not the least idea what it was all about, I expressed my surprise and disgust so energetically, that he left me where I was; but, while he was finishing his efforts, I saw something white, like glue, shoot towards the fireplace and fall upon the ground, which turned my stomach. I rushed upon the balcony, more moved, more troubled, more frightened than I had ever been in my life, and prepared to find myself ill.

I could not understand what had been the matter with the wretch. I believed that he was attacked by epilepsy, or some other madness even more terrible; and in truth, I know nothing more hideous for any cool-blooded person to see than such filthy and dirty behaviour, and a frightful countenance inflamed by brutal lust. I have never seen another man in a similar condition; but if we are like it when we are with women, their looks must certainly be bewitched, for them not to feel disgusted at us.

I was in a great hurry to go and tell everyone what had just happened to me. Our old intendant bade me hold my tongue; but I saw that my story had greatly affected her, and I heard her mutter: *Can maledet! brutta bestia!*<sup>1</sup>

Not understanding why I ought to hold my tongue, I went my own way in spite of her prohibition, and I talked so much that, the next day, one of the governors came at an early hour to

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1 Cursed dog! brute beast!

administer a sharp reproof to me, accusing me of compromising the honour of a holy house, and of making a great fuss about a trifle.

He spun out his lecture by explaining to me many things of which I was ignorant, but which he did not believe he was teaching me, for he was convinced that I had defended myself because I was unwilling to consent, not because I did not know what the Moor wanted from me. He told me gravely that it was an action forbidden as highly immoral, the desire of which, however, was not an affront to the person who was the object of it, and that there was no need to be so annoyed at having been considered worthy of affection. He told me plainly that he himself, during his youth, had had the same honour paid to him, and that, having been surprised when he was not in a condition to offer any resistance, he had not found it particularly painful. He was so shameless as to make use of plain language; and, imagining that the reason of my resistance was the fear of pain, he assured me that I need have no fear, and that I ought not to be alarmed where there was no reason for it.

I listened to this wretch with an astonishment which was increased by the fact that he did not speak for himself, but only appeared to be instructing me for my good. The subject appeared to him so simple, that he did not even attempt to ensure privacy; and our conversation was heard by a third party in the person of an ecclesiastic who seemed no more frightened by it than himself. This air of naturalness so imposed upon me, that I was convinced that it was no doubt a custom recognised in the world, as to which I had not had the opportunity of being instructed sooner. This made me listen without anger, but not without disgust. The image of what had happened to me, but above all of what I had seen, remained so deeply impressed upon my memory that, when I thought of it, I still felt disgusted. Without knowing any more about it, my aversion for the thing itself extended to its apologist; and I could not restrain myself sufficiently to prevent him seeing the bad effect of his lessons. He cast a glance at me that was by no means affectionate and from that time spared no efforts to make my stay in the hospice disagreeable. He succeeded so well that, seeing that there was only one way of getting away, I hastened to

take it with as much eagerness as I had up till then exhibited in order to keep away from it.

This adventure assured me for the future against the attempts of the "Knights of the Cuff"<sup>1</sup>; and the sight of people who were supposed to belong to their order, by recalling to my mind the appearance and gestures of my frightful Moor, always inspired me with such horror, that I had difficulty in concealing it. On the other hand, women, to my mind, gained much by comparison; it appeared to me that I owed them tender feelings and personal homage by way of reparation for the insults of my sex; and the ugliest strumpet became in my eyes an object of adoration, when I remembered the false African.<sup>1</sup>

As for him, I do not know what may have been said to him; it did not appear to me that anybody, with the exception of mistress Lorenza, looked upon him less favourably than before. However, he neither accosted nor spoke to me again. Eight days afterwards, he was baptised with great solemnity, dressed in white from head to foot, in token of the purity of his regenerated soul. The next day he left the hospice, and I have never seen him since.

My turn came a month later; for it required all that time to procure for the directors of my conscience the honour of a difficult conversion, and I was obliged to examine and go through all the dogmas, in order that my new docility might be triumphantly paraded.

At last, sufficiently instructed and sufficiently prepared to satisfy my masters, I was conducted in solemn procession to the metropolitan church of St. John, to make a public abjuration of faith, and to receive the accessories of baptism, although I was not really rebaptised; but, as the ceremonies are almost the same, it serves to delude the people with the idea that Protestants are not Christians. I was clothed in a grey coat adorned with white frogs,<sup>2</sup> which was used on such occasions. Two men, before and behind me, carried copper basins, which they beat with a key, and into which each threw his alms in proportion to his piety or the interest which he took in the new convert. Briefly, nothing of the pomp of

<sup>1</sup> *Chevaliers de la manchette*: Paederasts.

<sup>2</sup> *Brandebourgs*: espèce d'ornement de broderie ou de galon qui entoure les boutonnières de certains habits (Littre).

the Catholic Church was omitted, in order to render the ceremony at once more edifying to the people, and more humiliating for myself. Only the white robe was wanting, which would have been very useful to me, and which was not given to me as to the Moor, seeing that I had not the honour to be a Jew.

This was not all. I was next obliged to go to the Inquisition to receive absolution from the crime of heresy, and to re-enter the bosom of the Church with the ceremony to which Henry IV. was subjected in the person of his ambassador. The behaviour and look of the reverend father inquisitor were not calculated to remove the secret terror which had seized upon me when I entered the house. After several questions about my belief, my position, and my family, he abruptly asked me whether my mother was damned. Fright caused me to repress the first movement of my indignation. I contented myself with answering that I ventured to hope that she was not, and that God might have enlightened her at her last hour. The monk was silent, but made a grimace which by no means appeared to me a sign of approval.

When all was over, at the moment when I expected to be provided for in accordance with my hopes, I was put out of doors with a little more than twenty francs in small money—the result of the collection made for me. I was recommended to live as a good Christian, to remain true to grace; they wished me good luck, shut the door upon me, and I saw no more of them.

Thus, in an instant, all my great expectations disappeared, and the only result of the self-seeking step that I had just taken, was the consciousness of having been an apostate and a dupe at the same time. It may be easily imagined what a sudden revolution took place in my ideas, when I saw myself dashed down from my brilliant dreams of fortune into utter misery, and when, after having deliberated in the morning upon the choice of the palace I should inhabit, I found myself in the evening obliged to go to bed in the street. It will be imagined that I began by abandoning myself to a feeling of despair, the more cruel in proportion as regret for my errors was aggravated by the reproach that all my misfortune was my own work. Nothing of the kind. For the first time in my life, I had just been shut up for more than two months. My first sensation was one of joy at the recovery of my liberty.



After a long period of slavery, again master of myself and my actions, I beheld myself in the midst of a large city, abounding in resources, full of persons of distinction, by whom I could not fail to be welcomed in consequence of my good qualities and my talents as soon as I became known. Besides, I had plenty of time to wait, and the twenty francs, which I had in my pocket, appeared to me an inexhaustible treasure. I could spend them as I pleased, without being accountable to anybody. It was the first time that I had ever been so well off. Far from becoming disheartened or shedding tears, I only changed my hopes, and my *amour-propre* lost nothing by the exchange. I had never felt so confident and secure; I believed my fortune already made, and I considered it a fine thing to have no one but myself to thank for it.

The first thing I did was to satisfy my curiosity by going round the city, if only to enjoy the sweets of liberty. I went to see the soldiers mount guard; the military music pleased me exceedingly. I followed processions; I delighted in the church-music of the priests. I went to see the King's palace; I approached it with awe; but, seeing others go in, I did the same without being stopped. Perhaps I owed this favour to the little parcel which I carried under my arm. Anyhow, I began to entertain a high opinion of myself when I found myself in this palace; I already began to consider myself a resident in it. At last, I grew tired of going backwards and forwards; I was hungry; it was hot; I went into a milk-shop; I bought some *giunca*<sup>1</sup> and sour milk; and with two slices<sup>2</sup> of the excellent Piedmontese bread, which I prefer to any other, for my five or six *sous* I had one of the best meals I have ever had in my life.

I was obliged to look for a lodging. As I already knew enough Piedmontese to make myself understood it was easy to find one, and I was prudent enough to make my choice more in accordance with my means than my taste. I was told of a soldier's wife in the Rue du Pô who took in servants out of employment for a *sou* a night. She had a bed empty, and I took it. She was young and recently married, although she already had five or six children. We all slept in the same room, mother, children, and lodgers, and

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<sup>1</sup> Fresh cheese and cream brought to market on rushes.

<sup>2</sup> *Grilles*: sorte de pain très friable en forme de baguette.



continued to do so as long as I remained with her. In other respects she was a good woman, who swore like a carter, whose breast was always exposed and her hair untidy, but kind-hearted and obliging; she took a liking to me, and was even useful to me.

I spent several days in abandoning myself solely to the delights of independence and curiosity. I wandered about inside and outside the city, prying everywhere, looking at everything which appeared to me new or curious; and this was the case with everything to a young man who had just left his shell, and had never seen a capital. I was above all very regular in going to court, and was particular in my attendance every morning at the royal mass. I thought it a fine thing to be in the same chapel as the prince and his suite; but my passion for music, which was beginning to make itself felt, had more to do with my regular appearance than the pomp of the court, which, soon seen and always the same, soon loses the charm of novelty. The King of Sardinia at that time had the best choir in Europe. Somis, Desjardins, the Bezuzzi, were successively its brilliant ornaments. This was more than sufficient to attract a young man whom the sound of the most wretched instrument, if only correctly played, was enough to enchant. Besides, the admiration I felt for the magnificence which dazzled my eyes was senseless and aroused no envy. The only thing which interested me in all the brilliancy of the court was to see whether there was not some young princess, worthy of my homage, with whom I might carry on a romance.

I was nearly commencing one in a less brilliant circle, but one in which, if I had carried it out, I should have found pleasures a thousand times more delicious.

Although I lived most economically, my purse was gradually becoming exhausted. Besides, my economy was not so much the effect of prudence as of a simplicity of taste which, even at the present day, familiarity with the tables of the great has not changed. I did not know, and do not know even now, better cheer than a country meal. Anyone may feel sure of entertaining me handsomely with milk-food, eggs, vegetables, cheese, black bread, and tolerable wine; my excellent appetite will do the rest; while a *maitre-d'hôtel* and footmen about me with their troublesome officiousness can never satisfy me. At that time I made far

better meals at a cost of six or seven *sous*, than I have made since for six or seven francs. I was temperate, because I had no temptation to be otherwise; and yet I am wrong to say I was temperate, for I had at the same time all possible sensual enjoyments. My pears, my *giunca*, my cheese, my slices of bread, and a few glasses of a full-bodied Montferrat wine, which could have been cut into slices, made me the happiest of gourmands. And yet, in spite of all that, the end of my twenty francs was visible. This I became more sensibly aware of every day; and, in spite of the thoughtlessness of my years, my uneasiness regarding the future soon became real alarm. Of all my castles in the air nothing remained to me but the necessity of finding a means of livelihood, which was by no means easy to procure. I thought of my old trade, but I did not know enough of it to work for a master, and, besides, there were not many masters in Turin. While waiting for something better, I took to going from shop to shop to offer my services for engraving figures or coats-of-arms on silver, hoping to tempt customers by my cheapness, since I left the amount of payment to them. This plan did not prove very successful. I was generally shown the door; and the work I got was so little, that I scarcely earned enough to pay for two or three meals. One day, however, as I was walking at an early hour through the *Contrada nova*, I saw through a shop window a young woman of so kindly and attractive an appearance, that, in spite of my shyness with women, I entered without hesitation and placed my humble talents at her disposal. She did not repulse me, but made me sit down and tell her my little history, pitied me, bade me cheer up, since assuredly good Christians would not desert me, and, having sent to a neighbouring goldsmith for the tools which I told her I wanted, she went into the kitchen and fetched me some breakfast with her own hands. This beginning appeared to me to promise well; the result did not give the lie to it. She appeared satisfied with my bit of work, and still more with my humble chatter, when I was a little more at my ease; for she was brilliant and handsomely dressed, and, in spite of her gracious manner, her appearance had inspired me with awe. But her kindly reception, her compassionate voice, her gentle and caressing manners, soon put me at my ease. I saw that I was successful, and this increased my success. But, although she was an Italian and

too pretty not to be somewhat of a coquette, she was at the same time so modest, and I was so shy, that it was difficult for it to lead to anything further. We were not allowed time to finish the adventure. I remember with the greater rapture the brief moments which I spent by her side, and I can declare that in their first beginnings I tasted the sweetest and purest joys of love.

She was an extremely piquant brunette, whose liveliness was rendered somewhat touching by the expression of good nature on her pretty face. Her name was Madame Basile. Her husband, who was older than herself and somewhat jealous, left her, while he was travelling, under the care of a clerk, who appeared too disagreeable to be seductive, and yet was not without pretensions of his own, which he only showed by his bad temper. This he visited upon me, although I was very fond of hearing him play the flute, on which he was a tolerably good performer. This new Aegisthus grumbled whenever he saw me enter the place, and treated me with a contempt which his mistress returned in full. It even seemed as if it delighted her to caress me in his presence, in order to plague him; and this kind of revenge, although very much to my taste, would have been still more agreeable in a *tête-à-tête*. But she never pushed matters to that extent, or, at least, not in the same manner. Whether it was that she found me too young, or did not know how to make advances, or really intended to be discreet, she exhibited at that time a kind of reserve, which, while not repellent, intimidated me without my knowing the reason why. Although I did not feel for her the real and tender respect that I felt for Madame de Warens, I was more timid and less familiar with her. I was embarrassed and confused; I did not venture to look at her or to breathe by her side; and yet I dreaded to leave her worse than death. I devoured with a greedy eye everything I could look at without being observed: the flowers in her dress, the tips of her pretty feet, the glimpse of a firm white arm which I caught between her glove and her cuff, and of her bosom, which was sometimes visible between her tucker and her neckerchief. Each object strengthened the impression made by the rest. From looking at what I could see, and even further than that, my eyes became troubled, my breast felt

oppressed; my respiration became every moment more choked, I could scarcely breathe, and all I could do was to heave a succession of noiseless sighs, which were very embarrassing in the complete stillness in which we often found ourselves. Luckily, Madame Basile, busy with her work, did not notice it, as far as I could see. However, I sometimes saw the bosom of her dress heave as if in sympathy. This dangerous sight made me lose my head completely; but, when I was ready to give way to my transports, she quietly said something to me which immediately brought me to my senses again.

I saw her several times alone in this manner, without a word, or gesture, or even a too expressive look indicating the least understanding between us. This state of things, very tormenting for myself, was nevertheless extremely delightful, and in the simplicity of my heart I could scarcely understand why I felt so tormented. It appeared that these little *tête-à-têtes* were not unpleasant to her either; at any rate, she provided opportunity for them pretty frequently—certainly a very harmless endeavour on her part, for all the use which she made of them herself, or allowed me to make.

One day, tired of the clerk's silly conversation, she had gone upstairs to her room. I hastily finished my little task in the room behind the shop, and followed her. The door of her room was half-open. I entered without being seen. She was working at her embroidery near a window, with her back turned towards the door. She could neither see me nor hear me come in, owing to the noise of the carriages in the street. She was always well dressed; on that day her toilet was almost coquettish. Her attitude was graceful; her head, slightly bent, allowed the whiteness of her neck to be seen; her hair, elegantly fastened up, was ornamented with flowers. Over her whole form was spread a charm, which I had time to consider, and which made me beside myself. I threw myself on my knees on the threshold, stretching out my arms towards her with passionate movement, feeling certain that she could not hear me, and not thinking it possible that she could see me; but over the mantelpiece was a looking-glass, which betrayed me. I do not know what effect my attack of madness produced upon her; she neither looked at me, nor said a word; but, half-turning her

head, with a simple movement of her finger she pointed to the mat at her feet. To tremble, to utter a cry, to fling myself down on the spot she had indicated, was for me the work of a moment; but it will scarcely be believed that, in this position, I did not venture to attempt anything further, to say a single word, to lift my eyes to her, or even to touch her, in my uncomfortable attitude, to support myself for an instant upon her knees. Although unable to speak or move, I was certainly not tranquil; everything about me betrayed my agitation, my joy, my gratitude, my ardent desires, which, without definite aim or object, were restrained by the fear of displeasing, in regard to which my youthful heart could not make itself easy.

She appeared no less moved and no less shy than myself. Disturbed at seeing me there, disconcerted at having drawn me thither, and beginning to feel the full consequences of a sign which she had no doubt made without due reflection, she neither drew me towards her nor repulsed me. She did not take her eyes from her work; she tried to behave as if she had not seen me at her feet; but all my stupidity could not prevent me from concluding that she shared my embarrassment, perhaps even my desires, and that she was restrained by the same feeling of shame as myself, although this did not assist me to overcome it. Being five or six years older than myself, she ought, as I considered, to have had all the boldness on her side; and I said to myself that, as she did nothing to awaken mine, she could not wish me to show any. Even now I think I was right, and certainly she was too clever not to see that a novice, such as I was, needed to be not only encouraged, but also instructed.

I do not know what would have been the end of this lively dumb show, nor how long I should have remained without moving in my ridiculous and yet delicious situation, if we had not been interrupted. At the moment of my most violent excitement, I heard the door of the kitchen, which was close to the room where we were, open, and Madame Basile, in lively alarm which showed itself in her words and gestures, said, "Get up! here comes Rosina." Hastily rising, I seized the hand which she held out to me, and imprinted two burning kisses upon it, at the second of which I felt this charming hand pressed lightly against my lips. Never in my life had I enjoyed so sweet a moment; but the oppor-

tunity which I had lost never came again, and our youthful loves stopped at that point.

This is, perhaps, the very reason why the image of that amiable woman has remained imprinted on the bottom of my heart in such charming outlines. It has even grown in beauty in proportion as my knowledge of the world and women has been enlarged. If she had only had a little experience, she would have behaved differently in order to encourage a lad; but, if her heart was weak, it was upright; she yielded involuntarily to the inclination which carried her away; it was, according to all appearance, her first infidelity, and I should, perhaps, have found more difficulty in overcoming her shyness than my own. Without having gone so far, I found in her presence indescribable happiness. None of the feelings caused by the possession of women have ever equalled the two minutes which I spent at her feet without even venturing to touch her dress. No; there is no enjoyment equal to that which a virtuous woman, whom one loves, can afford. Everything is a favour with her. A sign with the finger, a hand pressed lightly against my mouth—these are the only favours that I ever received from Madame Basile, and the recollection of these trifling tokens of regard still enchants me when I think of them.

For the two next days it was in vain that I looked out for the chance of another *tête-à-tête*; it was impossible for me to find the opportunity, and I did not observe any anxiety on her part to bring it about. Her manner, although not colder, was more reserved than usual; and I believe that she avoided my looks, for fear of being unable to control her own sufficiently. Her confounded clerk was more unbearable than ever; he even joked and bantered me, saying that I should get on with the ladies. I trembled at the thought of having been guilty of some indiscretion; and, already considering that there was an understanding between Madame Basile and myself, I wished to keep secret an inclination which, until then, had not greatly needed it. This made me more careful in seizing opportunities to satisfy it; and, as I wished them to be safe, I no longer found any at all.

This is another romantic folly of which I have never been able to cure myself, and which, combined with my natural shyness, has strikingly falsified the clerk's predictions. I loved too sin-



cerely, too completely, I venture to say, to be able to be happy easily. Never have passions been at once more lively and purer than mine; never has love been tenderer, truer, more disinterested. I would have sacrificed my happiness a thousand times for that of the person whom I loved; her reputation was dearer to me than my life, and I would never have wished to endanger her repose for a single moment for all the pleasures of enjoyment. This feeling has made me employ such carefulness, such secrecy, and such precaution in my undertakings, that none of them have ever been successful. My want of success with women has always been caused by my excessive love for them.

To return to the flute player Aegisthus: the curious thing was that the traitor, as he became more unendurable, appeared to become more affable. From the first day that his mistress had taken a liking to me, she had thought of making me useful in the shop. I was a fairly good arithmetician. She had proposed to him to teach me to keep the books; but the boorish fellow received the proposal with a very ill grace, perhaps because he was afraid of being supplanted. Thus all my work, besides that with my graving-tool, consisted in copying a few accounts and memoranda, correcting a few books, and translating a few business letters from Italian into French. Suddenly it occurred to my friend to return to the proposal which had been made and rejected. He offered to teach me double entry, and said that he wished to make me competent to offer my services to M. Basile on his return. In his voice, in his manner, there was something false, spiteful, and ironical, which did not inspire me with confidence. Madame Basile, without waiting for me to answer, said to him coldly, that I was obliged to him for his offer; that she hoped that fortune would in the end reward my good qualities, and that it would be a great pity if, with my talents, I became nothing more than a clerk.

She had on several occasions told me that she desired to introduce me to some one who might be of assistance to me. She was prudent enough to feel that it was time for us to separate. Our mute declarations had been made on a Thursday. On the following Sunday she gave a dinner, at which I was present, and amongst the guests was a monk of the Jacobin order, a man

of good appearance, to whom she introduced me. He treated me very cordially, congratulated me on my conversion, and spoke to me about my history in a manner which proved to me that she had given him a full account of it; then, giving me a friendly slap on the cheek with the back of his hand, he told me to behave myself properly, to be of good courage, and to go and see him, that we might talk more at leisure. I judged, by the respect which everyone showed him, that he was a person of some importance; and, from the paternal tone which he adopted towards Madame Basile, that he was her confessor. I also remember that his respectful familiarity was united with marks of esteem and even respect for his penitent, which impressed me less at the time than they do now. If I had been more intelligent, I should have been affected at the thought of having been able to touch the feelings of a young woman so respected by her confessor. The table was not large enough for all of us; another small one was called into requisition, at which I had the pleasure of sitting opposite the clerk. As far as attention and good cheer were concerned, I lost nothing by the arrangement; several plates were sent to the little table, which were certainly not meant for him. Up to this time all was going well; the ladies were very gay, the men very attentive; Madame Basile did the honours with charming grace. In the middle of dinner, a carriage stopped at the door; someone came upstairs. It was M. Basile. I see him now, just as when he came in, dressed in a scarlet coat with gilt buttons, a colour which, since that day, I have always regarded with aversion. He was a tall, handsome man of good appearance. He entered noisily, with the air of a man surprising his guests, although all who were present were friends of his. His wife flung her arms round his neck, pressed his hands, and lavished caresses upon him, which he accepted without returning. He saluted the company, and sat down to eat. The guests had scarcely begun to speak of his journey, when, turning his eyes towards the little table, he asked, in a severe tone, who the little boy was whom he saw there. Madame Basile told him everything quite simply. He asked whether I lived in the house, and being told no, he said, coarsely, "Why not? since he is here in the daytime, he might as well stop during the night." The monk took up the conversation; and, after speaking of Madame Basile in terms of praise that



were earnest and true, said a few words in my favour, adding that, far from blaming his wife's pious work of charity, he ought to be eager to take part in it himself, since nothing in it overstepped the bounds of discretion. M. Basile replied in a tone of annoyance, which he half concealed, out of respect for the monk's presence, but which was enough to make me feel that he had been informed about me, and that the clerk had done me an ill turn.

No sooner was the meal over, than the latter, sent by his master, came in triumph to tell me, by his orders, to leave the house at once and never set foot in it again. He seasoned his message with everything that could make it cruel and insulting. I went without saying a word, but with a heart deeply afflicted, not so much at the thought of leaving this amiable woman, as of abandoning her to her husband's brutality. He was no doubt right in wishing her not to be untrue to him; but, although intelligent and well brought up, she was an Italian, that is to say, of a sensitive and revengeful disposition; and it appears to me that he was wrong in treating her in the manner most calculated to bring upon himself the misfortune which he dreaded.

Such was the result of my first love adventure. I did not omit to pass two or three times through the street, in the hope of at least seeing again her whom my heart unceasingly regretted; but, instead of her, I only saw the husband and the watchful clerk, who, as soon as he saw me, made a movement towards me with the yard measure, which was more expressive than alluring. Seeing that I was so well watched, I lost heart and did not pass the shop again. I wished, at least, to see the patron whom Madame Basile had found for me. Unfortunately I did not know his name. I wandered several times round the convent in the hope of meeting him, but without success. At last other events banished the delightful recollections of Madame Basile, and in a short time I forgot her so completely that, simple and as great a novice as before, I did not even feel attracted by pretty women.

However, her generosity had somewhat refurnished my wardrobe, although very modestly, and with the foresight of a prudent woman who thought more of neatness than of adornment, and whose wish was to keep me from discomfort, not to deck me out. The

clothes which I had brought from Geneva were still good enough to wear ; she only added a hat and some linen. I had no cuffs ; she would not give me any, although I was very anxious to have some. She was satisfied with putting me in a position to keep myself neat and clean, and that was a thing which there was no need to recommend me to be careful about, as long as I was in her presence.

A few days after my misfortune, my landlady who, as I have said, had taken a liking to me, told me that she had, perhaps, found me a place, and that a lady of position wanted to see me. At these words, I believed myself already in the midst of fashionable adventures ; for my mind was always running upon that. This one, however, did not prove as brilliant as I had pictured to myself. I went to see the lady with the servant who had spoken of me to her. She questioned and examined me ; I did not displease her, and immediately entered her service, not exactly as a favourite, but as a lackey. I was dressed in her livery ; the only difference was that, while they wore shoulder knots, I had none ; as there was no lace on her livery, it looked like an ordinary dress. Such was the unexpected end of all my grand hopes !

The Comtesse de Vercellis, whose service I then entered, was a widow without children ; her husband was a Piedmontese. I always took her to be a Savoyard, since I could not believe that a Piedmontese could speak French so well and with so pure an accent. She was middle-aged, of distinguished appearance, possessed a cultivated mind, and was fond of French literature, of which she had an extensive knowledge. She wrote much, and always in French. Her letters had the character and almost the grace of those of Madame de Sévigné, and some of them might have been mistaken for hers. My chief employment, one that I did not dislike, was to write them from her dictation ; since a cancer in the stomach, from which she suffered greatly, made it impossible for her to write them herself.

Madame de Vercellis was not only a woman of great talent, but possessed a strong and lofty soul. I was with her during her last illness. I saw her suffer and die without showing signs of weakness, even for a moment, without making the least effort to control herself, without doing anything unwomanly, without suspecting that her conduct was an example of philosophy, a word

which was not as yet fashionable, and with which she was not even acquainted in the sense which it bears to-day. This force of character sometimes even became coldness. She always appeared to me as little without feeling for others as for herself; and, when she did a kindness to anyone who was unfortunate, she did it rather from a desire to do what was good in itself, than from genuine feelings of pity. During the three months which I spent with her, I experienced to some extent this want of feeling. It would have been natural that she should conceive a regard for a young man of some promise, whom she had continually in her sight, and that, feeling that her end was near, she should reflect that he would afterwards stand in need of assistance and support; however, whether it was that she did not consider me worthy of special attention, or that those who besieged her did not allow her to think of anyone but themselves—she did nothing for me.

I remember very well, however, that she displayed some curiosity to know my story. She sometimes asked me questions; she liked me to show her the letters I wrote to Madame de Warens, and to give her an account of my feelings; but she certainly did not go the right way to become acquainted with them, as she never disclosed her own to me. My heart loved to unbosom itself, provided it felt that it was doing so to another heart. Cold and dry questions, without any sign of approval or blame at my answers, gave me no confidence. When there was nothing to show me, whether my chatter pleased or displeased, I was always in a state of alarm, and I endeavoured, not so much to show what I thought, as to say nothing which might do me harm. I have since observed that this dry manner of questioning people in order to find out their character, is a frequent trick with women who wish to be thought clever. They imagine that, by concealing their own feelings, they will be more likely to succeed in finding out your own; but they fail to see that, in so doing, they are depriving you of the courage to exhibit them. A man who is questioned, for that reason alone begins to put himself on his guard, and, if he believes that his questioner, without feeling any genuine interest in him, merely wants to make him talk, he either lies, holds his tongue, or redoubles his watchfulness, preferring to be thought a fool than to be the dupe of curiosity. In short, when a man desires to read the

hearts of others, it is always a bad plan to make a show of concealing his own.

Madame de Vercellis never said a word to me expressive of affection, pity, or goodwill. She asked me questions with coldness; I replied with reserve. My answers were so timid that she must have found them commonplace and tedious. At length she gave up questioning me, and never spoke to me except to give me an order. She judged me less according to what I was than according to what she had made me; and, as she never saw anything in me but a lackey, she prevented me from appearing anything else.

I believe that from that time I suffered from the malicious sport of secret intrigue which has ever since thwarted me, and which has inspired me with a very natural aversion for the apparent order of things which produces it. The heir of Madame de Vercellis, who was childless, was her nephew, the Comte de la Roque, who assiduously paid court to her. Besides, her chief servants, who saw that her end was near, did not neglect their own interests; and there were so many devoted attendants round her, that it would have been difficult for her to give a thought to myself. At the head of the establishment was a certain M. Lorenzi, a clever man, whose still more clever wife had so insinuated herself into her mistress's good graces, that she stood rather on the footing of a friend than of a paid servant. She had bestowed the post of lady's-maid upon her own niece, Mademoiselle Pontal, a sly creature, who gave herself the airs of a maid of honour, and so successfully helped her aunt to get round her mistress, that she only saw through their eyes and only acted through their hands. I had not the good fortune to please these three persons; I obeyed them, but I did not serve them; I did not consider that, besides serving our common mistress, I was obliged to be a servant to her servants. Besides, I was the kind of person who caused them uneasiness. They saw clearly that I was not in my place; they were afraid that Madame saw it as well, and that what she might do to put me in my proper position, might diminish their share of her money; for people of this class, too greedy to be just, look upon every legacy left to others as stolen from their own property. They accordingly conspired to remove me from her sight. She was fond of writing letters; it was an amusement for her in her state of

health; they inspired her with disgust for it, and dissuaded her from continuing it by the advice of her physician, while persuading her that it was too tiring for her. On the pretence that I did not understand my duty, two loutish sedan-chair carriers were employed in my place; in short, they managed so cleverly that, when she made her will, I was not allowed to enter her room for eight days. It is true that I subsequently went in as before, and I showed her even more attention than anyone else; for the sufferings the poor woman endured tore my heart; the firmness with which she bore them inspired me with extreme reverence and affection for her, and I often shed tears of genuine sorrow in my room, unperceived by her or anyone else.

At length we lost her. I saw her die. Her life had been the life of a woman of talent and intelligence; her death was that of a philosopher. I can say that she inspired me with a feeling of esteem for the Catholic religion, by the cheerfulness of soul with which she fulfilled its instructions, without carelessness and without affectation. She was naturally of a serious disposition. Towards the end of her illness, she assumed a sort of gaiety, which was too regular to be unreal, and which was only a counterpoise to her melancholy condition and was the gift of reason. She only kept her bed the two last days, and continued to converse quietly with everybody to the end. At last, speaking no more, and already in the agonies of death, she broke wind loudly. "Good!" she said, turning round, "a woman who can fart is not dead!" These were the last words she uttered.

She left a year's wages to her underservants. I received nothing, not having been entered on the list of her establishment. However, the Comte de la Roque ordered thirty *livres* to be given me, and left me the new suit which I was wearing, and which M. Lorenzi wanted to take from me. He even promised to try and find a place for me, and gave me leave to go and see him. I went there two or three times without being able to speak to him. Being easily rebuffed, I did not go again. It will soon be seen that I was wrong. Would that I had finished all that I had to say about my stay at Madame de Vercellis's! But, although my condition apparently remained the same, I did not leave the house as I entered it, I carried away from it lasting recollections of crime and the insup-

portable weight of remorse, which, after forty years, still lies heavy on my conscience; while the bitterness of it, far from growing weaker, makes itself more strongly felt with my advancing years. Who would believe that a childish fault could have such cruel consequences? For these more than probable consequences my heart is inconsolable. I have, perhaps, caused the ruin of an amiable, honest, and estimable girl, who certainly was far more worthy than myself, and doomed her to disgrace and misery.

It is almost unavoidable that the break up of an establishment should cause some confusion in the house, and that several things should get lost; however, the servants were so honest, and the Lorenzi's so watchful, that nothing was missing when the inventory was taken. Only Mademoiselle Pontal had lost a piece of old red and silver-coloured ribbon. Many other things of greater value were at my disposal; this ribbon alone tempted me; I stole it, and, as I took no trouble to conceal it, it was soon found. They wanted to know how it had come into my possession. I became confused, stammered, blushed, and at last said that Marion had given it to me. Marion was a young girl from Maurienne, whom Madame de Vercellis had taken for her cook, when she left off giving dinners and discharged her own, as she had more need of good soup than of fine stews. Marion was not only pretty but had a fresh colour, only found on the mountains, and, above all, there was something about her so gentle and modest, that it was impossible for anyone to see her without loving her; in addition to that, she was a good and virtuous girl, and of unquestionable honesty. All were surprised when I mentioned her name. We were both equally trusted, and it was considered important to find out which of us two was really the thief. She was sent for; a number of people were assembled, amongst them the Comte de la Roque. When she came, the ribbon was shown to her. I boldly accused her; she was astounded, and unable to utter a word; looked at me in a manner that would have disarmed the Devil himself, but against which my barbarous heart was proof. At last, she denied the theft firmly, but without anger, addressed herself to me, exhorted me to reflect, and not to disgrace an innocent girl who had never done me any harm; but I, with infernal impudence, persisted in my story, and declared to her face that she had given me the ribbon. The



poor girl began to cry, and only said to me: "Ah! Rousseau, I thought you were a good man. You make me very unhappy, but I should not like to be in your place." That was all. She proceeded to defend herself with equal simplicity and firmness, but without allowing herself to utter the slightest reproach against me. This moderation, contrasted with my decided tone, did her harm. It did not seem natural to suppose, on the one side, such devilish impudence, and, on the other, such angelic mildness. Although the matter did not appear to be absolutely settled, they were pre-possessed in my favour. In the confusion which prevailed, they did not give themselves time to get to the bottom of the affair; and the Comte de la Roque, in dismissing us both, contented himself with saying that the conscience of the guilty one would amply avenge the innocent. His prediction has been fulfilled; it fulfils itself every day.

I do not know what became of the victim of my false accusation; but it is not likely that she afterwards found it easy to get a good situation. She carried away with her an imputation upon her honesty which was in every way cruel. The theft was only a trifling one, but still it was a theft, and, what is worse, made use of to lead a young man astray; lastly, lying and obstinacy left nothing to be hoped from one in whom so many vices were united. I do not even consider misery and desertion as the greatest danger to which I exposed her. At her age, who knows to what extremes discouragement and the feeling of ill-used innocence may have carried her? Oh, if my remorse at having, perhaps, made her unhappy is unendurable, one may judge what I feel at the thought of having, perhaps, made her worse than myself!

This cruel remembrance at times so sorely troubles and upsets me, that in my sleepless hours I seem to see the poor girl coming to reproach me for my crime, as if it had been committed only yesterday. As long as I have lived quietly, it has tormented me less; but in the midst of a stormy life it robs me of the sweet consolation of persecuted innocence, it makes me feel what I think I have said in one of my books, that "Remorse goes to sleep when our fortunes are prosperous, and makes itself felt more keenly in adversity." However, I have never been able to bring myself to unburden my heart of this confession to a friend.

The closest intimacy has never led me so far with anyone, not even with Madame de Warens. All that I have been able to do has been to confess that I had to reproach myself with an atrocious act, but I have never stated wherein it consisted. This burden has remained to this day upon my conscience without alleviation ; and I can affirm that the desire of freeing myself from it in some degree, has greatly contributed to the resolution I have taken of writing my Confessions.

I have behaved straightforwardly in the confession which I have just made, and it will assuredly be found that I have not attempted to palliate the blackness of my offence. But I should not fulfil the object of this book, if I did not at the same time set forth my inner feelings, and hesitated to excuse myself by what is strictly true. Wicked intent was never further from me than at that cruel moment ; and when I accused the unhappy girl, it is singular, but it is true, that my friendship for her was the cause of it. She was present to my thoughts ; I threw the blame on the first object which presented itself. I accused her of having done what I meant to do, and of having given me the ribbon, because my intention was to give it to her. When I afterwards saw her appear, my heart was torn ; but the presence of so many people was stronger than repentance. I was not afraid of punishment, I was only afraid of disgrace ; and that I feared more than death, more than crime, more than anything else in the world. I should have rejoiced if the earth had suddenly opened, swallowed me up and suffocated me ; the unconquerable fear of shame overcame everything, and alone made me impudent. The greater my crime, the more the dread of confessing it made me fearless. I saw nothing but the horror of being recognised and publicly declared, in my own presence, a thief, liar, and slanderer. Complete embarrassment deprived me of every other feeling. If I had been allowed to recover myself, I should have assuredly confessed everything. If M. de la Roque had taken me aside and said to me : " Do not ruin this poor girl ; if you are guilty, confess it to me," I should have immediately thrown myself at his feet, of that I am perfectly certain. But, when I needed encouragement, they only intimidated me. And yet it is only fair to consider my age. I was little more than a



child, or rather, I still was one. In youth real crimes are even more criminal than in riper years; but that which is only weakness is less so, and my offence was at bottom scarcely anything else. Thus the recollection of it afflicts me not so much by reason of the evil in itself as on account of its evil consequences. It has even done me the good of securing me for the rest of my life against every act tending to crime, by the terrible impression which I have retained of the only offence that I have ever committed; and I believe that my horror of a lie is due in great measure to my regret at having been capable myself of telling one so shameful. If it is a crime that can be expiated, as I venture to believe, it must be expiated by all the unhappiness which has overwhelmed the last years of my life, by forty years of honourable and upright conduct in difficult circumstances; and poor Marion finds so many avengers in this world, that, however great my offence against her may have been, I have little fear of dying without absolution. This is what I have to say on this matter: permit me never to speak of it again.

## BOOK III

[1728-1731.]

HAVING left Madame de Vercellis's house in almost the same state as I had entered it, I went back to my old landlady, with whom I remained for five or six weeks, during which health, youth, and idleness again rendered my temperament troublesome. I was restless, absent-minded, a dreamer. I wept, I sighed, I longed for a happiness of which I had no idea, and of which I nevertheless felt the want. This state cannot be described; only few men can even imagine it, because most of them have anticipated this fulness of life, at once so tormenting and so delicious, which, in the intoxication of desire, gives a foretaste of enjoyment. [My heated blood incessantly filled my brain with girls and women;] but, ignorant of the relations of sex, I made use of them in my imagination in accordance with my distorted notions, without knowing what else to do with them; and these notions kept my feelings in a state of most uncomfortable activity, from which, fortunately, they did not teach me how to deliver myself. I would have given my life to have found another Mademoiselle Goton for a quarter of an hour. But it was no longer the time when childish amusements took this direction as if naturally. Shame, the companion of a bad conscience, had made its appearance with advancing years; it had increased my natural shyness to such an extent that it made it unconquerable; and never, neither then nor later, have I been able to bring myself to make an indecent proposal, unless she, to whom I made it, in some measure forced me to it by her advances, even though I knew that she was by no means scrupulous, and felt almost certain of being taken at my word.

My agitation became so strong that, being unable to satisfy my desires, I excited them by the most extravagant behaviour. I haunted dark alleys and hidden retreats, where I might be able to

expose myself to women in the condition in which I should have liked to have been in their company. What they saw was not an obscene object, I never even thought of such a thing; it was a ridiculous object. The foolish pleasure I took in displaying it before their eyes cannot be described. There was only one step further necessary for me to take, in order to gain actual experience of the treatment I desired, and I have no doubt that some one would have been bold enough to afford me the amusement, while passing by, if I had had the boldness to wait. This folly of mine led to a disaster almost as comical, but less agreeable for myself.

One day, I took up my position at the bottom of a court where there was a well, from which the girls of the house were in the habit of fetching water. At this spot there was a slight descent which led to some cellars by several entrances. In the dark I examined these underground passages, and finding them long and dark, I concluded that there was no outlet, and that, if I happened to be seen and surprised, I should find a safe hiding-place in them. Thus emboldened, I exhibited to the girls who came to the well a sight more laughable than seductive. The more modest pretended to see nothing; others began to laugh; others felt insulted and made a noise. I ran into my retreat; someone followed me. I heard a man's voice, which I had not expected, and which alarmed me. I plunged underground at the risk of losing myself; the noise, the voices, the man's voice, still followed me. I had always reckoned upon the darkness; I saw a light. I shuddered, and plunged further into the darkness. A wall stopped me, and, being unable to go any further, I was obliged to await my fate. In a moment I was seized by a tall man with a big moustache, a big hat, and a big sword, who was escorted by four or five old women, each armed with a broom-handle, amongst whom I perceived the little wretch who had discovered me, and who, no doubt, wanted to see me face to face.

The man with the sword, seizing me by the arm, asked me roughly what I was doing there. It may be imagined that I had no answer ready. However, I recovered myself; and, in desperation, at this critical moment I invented a romantic excuse which proved successful. I begged him in a suppliant voice to have pity upon my age and condition; I said that I was a young stranger of

good birth, whose brain was affected ; that I had run away from home, because they wanted to shut me up ; that I was lost if he betrayed me ; but that, if he would let me go, I might some day be able to reward him for his kindness. Contrary to all expectation, my words and demeanour took effect ; the terrible man was touched by them, and, after administering a short reproof, he let me go quietly without questioning me further. From the demeanour of the girl and the old women, when they saw me go, I judged that the man whom I had feared so much had been of great service to me, and that I should not have got off so easily with them alone. I heard them murmur something or other to which I hardly paid attention ; for, provided that the man and his sword did not interfere, I felt confident, active and vigorous as I was, of escaping from them and their cudgels.

A few days afterwards, while walking down a street with a young Abbé, my neighbour, I nearly ran into the man with the sword. He recognised me, and, imitating me mockingly, said : " I am a prince, I am a prince, and I am a coward ; but don't let his highness come back again ! " He said no more, and I sneaked away, not venturing to look up, and thanking him in my heart for his discretion. I judged that the confounded old women had made him ashamed of his credulity. Anyhow, Piedmontese as he was, he was a good man, and I never think of him without a feeling of gratitude ; for the story was so funny that, merely from the desire of creating a laugh, anyone else in his place would have shamed me. This adventure, without having the consequences which I dreaded, nevertheless made me careful for a long time.

My stay with Madame de Vercellis had gained me some acquaintances, whom I cultivated in the hope that they might prove useful to me. Amongst others, I sometimes went to visit a Savoyard Abbé, named M. Gaime, tutor to the children of the Comte de Mellarède. He was still young and went little into society, but was full of good sense, honour and intelligence, and one of the most honourable men that I have known. He was not the least use to me for the object which took me to him ; he had not sufficient interest to get me a situation ; but I gained from him still more precious advantages, which have been of use to me all my life, lessons of healthy morality and principles of sound reason. In

my alternating tastes and ideas, I had always been too high or too low—Achilles or Thersites: now a hero, now a good-for-nothing. M. Gaime undertook to put me in my place, and to show me to myself in my true colours, without sparing or discouraging me. He spoke to me with due recognition of my natural talents, but added that he saw obstacles arising from them which would prevent me from making the best use of them; so that, in his opinion, they would be less useful to me as steps to fortune than as a means to enable me to do without it. He put before me a true picture of human life, of which I had only false ideas; he showed me how, in the midst of contrary fortune, the wise man can always strive after happiness and sail against the wind in order to reach it; that there is no true happiness without prudence, and that prudence belongs to all conditions of life. He damped my admiration for external grandeur, by proving that those who ruled others were neither happier nor wiser than the ruled. He told me one thing, which I have often remembered since then—that, if every man could read the hearts of all other men, there would be found more people willing to descend than to rise in life. This reflection, the truth of which is striking, and in which there is no exaggeration, has been of great service to me during the course of my life, by helping to make me quietly content with my position. He gave me the first true ideas of what was honourable, which my inflated genius had only grasped in its exaggerated forms. He made me feel that the enthusiasm of lofty virtues was rarely shown in society; that, in trying to climb too high, one was in danger of falling; that a continued round of trifling duties, always well performed, required no less effort than heroic actions; that from them a man gained more in the matter of honour and happiness; and that it was infinitely better to enjoy the esteem of one's fellow men at all times, than their admiration occasionally.

In order to define the duties of man, it was necessary to go back to their principles. Besides, the step which I had just taken, and of which my present condition was the result, led us to speak of religion. It will be already imagined that the honourable M. Gaime is, in great part at least, the original of the "Savoyard Vicar." Only, as prudence constrained him to speak with more reserve, he expressed himself less openly upon certain points; but, for the rest,

his maxims, his sentiments, his opinions were the same, and, his advice to return home not excepted, everything was just as I have since publicly represented it. Therefore, without enlarging further upon the conversations, the substance of which is accessible to everyone, I will only say that his lessons, the wisdom of which was at first without effect, became in my heart a gerin of virtue and religion which was never choked, and which only needed the care of a dearer hand in order to bear fruit.

Although, at the time, my conversion was by no means thorough, I nevertheless felt moved. Far from feeling tired of his conversations, I was attracted to them by their clearness and simplicity, and, above all, by a certain warmth of heart, by which I felt they were pervaded. I have a loving disposition, and have always attached myself to people less in proportion to the good they have done me than the good they have wished to do me; and in regard to the latter, my judgment rarely deceives me. I was also genuinely attached to M. Gaime; I was, so to speak, his second pupil, and for the moment this had for me the inestimable advantage of turning me aside from the inclination to vice, towards which my want of occupation drew me.

One day, when I least expected it, I was sent for by the Comte de la Roque. The frequent visits I had made without being able to speak to him had tired me, and I gave up going to his house; I thought that he had forgotten me, or that he had retained a bad impression of me. I was mistaken. He had more than once witnessed the pleasure with which I fulfilled my duties to his aunt. He had even spoken of it to her, and spoke of it again to me, when I had forgotten it myself. He received me kindly, told me that, instead of putting me off with idle promises, he had tried to find a place for me; that he had been successful; that he was going to put me in the way of becoming something, that it was for me to do the rest; that the house to which he had procured me admission was influential and respected; that I needed no other patrons to help me on; and that, although treated at first as a simple servant, as I had lately been, I might rest assured that they would be quite ready not to leave me in that position, if my disposition and behaviour gave them reason to think that I was fit for something better. The end of the

conversation cruelly belied the brilliant hopes with which the commencement had inspired me. "What! always a lackey!" I said to myself, with a feeling of bitter annoyance which confidence soon effaced. I felt too little adapted for such a position to fear that I should be left in it.

He took me to the Comte de Gouvon, chief equerry to the Queen, and head of the illustrious house of Solar. The dignified air of this venerable old man made the kindness of his reception more touching. He questioned me with interest, and I answered him with sincerity. He told the Comte de la Roque that I had pleasant features, which gave promise of intelligence; that it appeared to him that in fact I was not wanting in it, but that that was not everything, and that it was necessary to see what I was in other respects. Then, turning to me, he said: "My child, in almost everything the beginning is difficult; in your case, however, it will not be so to any great extent. Be prudent, and endeavour to please everyone here; for the present, that is all you have to do; for the rest, be of good courage; you will be taken care of." Immediately afterwards, he went over to the Marquise de Breil, his step-daughter, to whom he presented me, and then to the Abbé de Gouvon, his son. This beginning seemed to promise well. I was already experienced enough to know that lackeys were not received with so much ceremony. In fact, I was not treated like one. I took my meals at the steward's table, and wore no livery; and when the Comte de Favria, an empty-headed young fool, wanted me to get up behind his carriage, his grandfather forbade my riding behind anyone's carriage, or attending upon anyone outside the house. However, I waited at table, and, in the house, performed almost the duties of a lackey; but I performed them to a certain extent voluntarily, without being specially attached to anyone. With the exception of writing a few letters from dictation, and carving a few figures for the Comte de Favria, I was master of my time for almost the whole of the day. This test, which I did not perceive, was in truth very dangerous; it was not even very kind; for this long idleness might have led me to vices which I should not otherwise have contracted.

But, happily, this did not occur. M. Gaime's lessons had made an impression upon my heart, and I conceived such a



liking for them that I sometimes stole out to go and listen to them again. I believe that those who saw me leaving the house secretly had not the least suspicion where I was going. Nothing could have been more sensible than the advice which he gave me concerning my behaviour. I commenced admirably; I displayed assiduity, attention, and eagerness which charmed everybody. The Abbé prudently advised me to moderate my youthful zeal, for fear that it might gradually relax and that this might be noticed. "As you begin," said he, "so will you be expected to behave as a rule; try to manage to do even more as time goes on, but beware of ever doing less."

As no one had taken much trouble to find out my poor talents, and as I was only credited with those which Nature had bestowed upon me, it did not appear to me, in spite of what M. Gouvon had told me, that anyone thought of making any use of me. Other things came in the way, and I was almost forgotten. The Marquis de Breil, the Comte de Gouvon's son, was at the time ambassador at Vienna. Events happened at court which made themselves felt in the family, and for some weeks everyone was in a state of excitement which left little time to think of me. However, up to that time I had relaxed little of my zeal. One thing did me both good and harm; good, by keeping me away from any outside distractions; harm, by making me a little less attentive to my duties.

Mademoiselle de Breil was a young lady of nearly my own age, well formed, tolerably good-looking, fresh-complexioned, with very dark hair, and, although a brunette, she had that expression of gentleness which is peculiar to fair women, and which my heart has never been able to resist. Her court dress, so becoming to young people, showed her beautiful figure to advantage, left her breast and shoulders free, and made her complexion still more dazzling by reason of the mourning which was worn at the time. It will be said that a servant has no business to notice such things; I was wrong, no doubt; but I noticed them all the same, and I was not the only one who did so. The *maître d'hôtel* and the *valets de chambre* sometimes spoke of them at table with a coarseness which made me suffer cruelly. My head was not, however, so turned that I fell in love without more ado. I did not forget myself; I kept



myself in my place, and even my desires were not allowed too much freedom. I liked to see Mademoiselle de Breil, to hear her say a few words which showed her intelligence, good sense and modesty; my ambition, limited to the pleasure of serving her, never went beyond my rights. At table I was always on the lookout to assert them. If her footman left her chair for a moment, I was behind it immediately; otherwise I stood opposite to her; I looked in her eyes to see what she was going to ask for, and watched for the moment to change her plate. What would I not have done if she would only have deigned to give me some order, to look at me, to address a single word to me! but no! I had the mortification of being nothing to her; she did not even notice that I was there. However, on one occasion, when her brother, who sometimes spoke to me at table, addressed a somewhat uncivil remark to me, I gave him an answer, so neat and so well expressed, that she noticed it and turned her eyes upon me. This glance, rapid as it was, nevertheless enchanted me. The next day, the opportunity of winning a second glance presented itself, and I took advantage of it. A big dinner was given on that occasion, at which for the first time I saw the *maître d'hôtel*, to my great astonishment, waiting with his hat on his head and a sword at his side. By chance the conversation turned upon the motto of the house of Solar, which was embroidered under the coat-of-arms, *Tel fieri qui ne tue pas*. As the Piedmontese are not, as a rule, masters of the French language, someone detected in this motto a mistake in spelling, and declared that there should be no *t* in the word *fieri*.

The old Comte de Gouvon was just going to answer, but, happening to look at me, saw that I was smiling without venturing to say anything, and ordered me to speak. I thereupon said that I did not believe that the *t* was unnecessary; that *fieri* was an old French word, not derived from *ferus*, proud, threatening, but from *ferit*, he strikes, he wounds; so that the meaning of the motto appeared to me to be, not, Many a man threatens, but, Many a man strikes and does not kill.

All the company looked first at me and then at themselves without saying a word. I had never seen such astonishment in my life. But what flattered me more was to see from Mademoiselle de Breil's face that she was evidently much pleased. This disdainful

young lady condescended to cast a second glance at me, which, at least, was equal to the first; then, turning her eyes towards her grandfather, she appeared to be waiting with a sort of impatience for the compliment which was my due, and which he, in fact, paid me so fully and completely, and with the appearance of such satisfaction, that the whole table hastened to join in the chorus. The moment was brief, but in every respect delicious. It was one of those moments, only too rare, which replace things in their natural order, and avenge depreciated merit for the insults of fortune. A few minutes afterwards, Mademoiselle de Breil, lifting her eyes to me again, asked me, in a timid and affable voice, to give her something to drink. I need not say that I did not keep her waiting; but, as I came near to her, I trembled so violently that, having filled the glass too full, I spilt some of the water over her plate, and even over herself. Her brother asked me thoughtlessly why I was trembling so? This question did not serve to reassure me, and Mademoiselle de Breil blushed up to the whites of her eyes.

Here ended the romance, in which it will be observed, as in the case of Madame Basile and during all the rest of my life, that I am not happy in the conclusion of my amours. In vain I paid special attention to Madame de Breil's ante-room; I did not obtain another mark of attention from her daughter. She went in and out without looking at me, and, as for myself, I hardly ventured to cast eyes upon her. I was even so stupid and awkward that, one day, when she dropped her glove while passing, instead of darting upon this glove which I should have liked to cover with kisses, I did not dare to leave my place; and I allowed it to be picked up by a great lout of a valet, whom I would gladly have throttled. To complete my nervousness, I perceived that I had not the good fortune to please Madame de Breil. She not only gave me no orders, but never accepted my services; and on two occasions, finding me in her ante-room, she asked me coldly if I had not something to do. I was obliged to renounce this dear ante-room; at first I regretted it, but distractions intervened, and soon I thought no more of it.

The kindness of her stepfather, who at last perceived that I was there, consoled me for the coldness of Madame de Breil. During the evening after the dinner of which I have spoken, he held a conversation with me for half-an-hour, with which he appeared satis-

fied, and I was delighted. This good old man, although less gifted than Madame de Vercellis, had more heart, and I got on better with him. He told me to attach myself to the Abbé de Gouvon, who had conceived a regard for me; that this regard, if I made good use of it, might be useful to me, and assist me in acquiring what I still lacked, in order to promote what they had in view for me. Next morning, I hastened to the Abbé. He did not receive me as a servant, but made me sit down by the side of the fire, and, questioning me with the greatest gentleness, soon discovered that my education, which had been commenced in so many things, was complete in none. Finding, especially, that I knew very little Latin, he undertook to teach me more. It was arranged that I should go to him every morning, and I commenced the following day. Thus, by one of those curious coincidences, which will often be found in the course of my life, I was at once above and below my station—I was pupil and valet in the same house; and, while still a servant, I had a tutor of such noble birth that he ought to have been the tutor of none but kings' sons.

The Abbé de Gouvon was a younger son, destined by his family for a bishopric; and for this reason his studies had been pushed on more than is usual in the case of children of rank. He had been sent to the University of Sienna, where he remained several years, and from which he had brought back a tolerably strong dose of *cruscantism*,<sup>1</sup> so that he was almost the same at Turin as the Abbé de Dangeau<sup>2</sup> had formerly been at Paris. Distaste for theology had driven him to *belles-lettres*—a very common thing in Italy in the case of those who are training for the rank of a prelate. He had read the poets attentively, and wrote tolerable Latin and Italian verses. In a word, he had sufficient taste to form my own, and to introduce some order into the confused mass with which my head was stuffed. But, whether it was that my chatter had given him a false idea of my knowledge, or that he could not endure the tedium

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<sup>1</sup> *Cruscantism* is here synonymous with *purism*. The word *cruscante*, in Italian, denotes a man who affects to use only words authorised by the *Accademia della Crusca* of Florence.

<sup>2</sup> The Abbé de Dangeau was a member of the *Académie française* in the middle of the previous century, and was the author of grammatical treatises on the French language.

of the elements of Latin, he put me far too high to begin with; and, no sooner had he made me translate a few fables of Phædrus, than he plunged me into Virgil, of which I scarcely understood anything. It was my fate, as will be afterwards seen, often to begin Latin afresh and never to learn it. However, I worked zealously enough, and the Abbé lavished his attention upon me with a kindness of which I cannot think, even now, without emotion. I spent a good part of the morning with him, both for my own instruction and for his service—not personal service, for that he never allowed me to perform, but to write from his dictation and to do copying; and my duties as secretary were more useful to me than my studies as pupil. In this manner I not only learnt Italian in its purity, but I imbibed a taste for literature, and acquired some knowledge of good books which had been impossible at La Tribu's, and which proved very serviceable to me afterwards when I began to work by myself.

This was the period of my life when, without romantic projects, I might most reasonably have hoped for success. The Abbé, who was well satisfied with me, told everybody; and his father had conceived so special a regard for me that the Comte de Favria told me that he had spoken of me to the King. Even Madame de Breil had laid aside her contemptuous demeanour towards me. In short, I became a sort of favourite in the house, to the great jealousy of the other servants, who, seeing me honoured by receiving instruction from their master's son, well understood that I was not long intended to remain one of themselves.

As far as I was able to judge of the views entertained for me from a few words hastily dropped, upon which I only reflected later, it seems to me that the house of Solar, eager for ambassadorial, and possibly, in the future, ministerial offices, would have been very glad to educate in advance a trustworthy and talented person, who, being entirely dependent upon it, might have been received into its confidence and have served it faithfully. This project of the Comte de Gouvion was noble, judicious, generous, and truly worthy of a great nobleman, beneficent and far-seeing; but, not to mention that, at the time, I did not see its entire range, it was too sensible for me to understand, and required too long a period of submission. My foolish ambition only looked for good

fortune in the midst of adventures; and, as no woman had anything to do with it, this means of succeeding seemed to me slow, wearisome, and dull; whereas I ought to have considered it safer and more honourable, for the very reason that no women were mixed up in it, seeing that the kind of merit which they take under their protection was assuredly not so honourable as that which I was supposed to possess.

Everything was going on admirably. I had gained, almost taken by storm, the respect of all; the time of probation was over, and in the house I was looked upon generally as a young man of great promise who was not in his proper place, but whom everyone expected to see promoted to it. But my place was not that which was generally assigned to me, and I was destined to reach it by a very different road. I now come to one of those characteristic traits which are peculiar to me, and which I need only put before the reader without further discussion.

Although there were several new converts like myself at Turin, I was not fond of them and had never wished to see any of them. But I had made the acquaintance of some Genevese who did not belong to them, amongst others, a M. Mussard, surnamed *Tord-gueule*, a miniature-painter and a sort of connection of mine. He found out that I was staying with the Comte de Gouvion and came to see me with another Genevese, named Bâcle, whose companion I had been during my apprenticeship. This Bâcle was a very amusing fellow, very lively, and full of witty sallies which his age rendered agreeable. Behold me, then, suddenly infatuated with M. Bâcle to such a degree that I was unable to leave him! He intended soon to set out on his return to Geneva. What a loss for me! I realised its full extent. In order, at least, to make the best use of the time that remained to me, I never left his side, or rather, he never left me, for I did not at first lose my head so entirely as to spend the day with him outside the hotel without leave; but soon, seeing that he occupied my time entirely, they forbade him the house, and I became so enraged that, forgetting everything except my friend Bâcle, I never went near the Abbé or the Count, and was never seen in the house. I paid no heed to reprimands. [I was threatened with dismissal, and this proved my ruin;] it showed me that it was possible not to let Bâcle go

unaccompanied. From this moment I saw no other pleasure, no other destiny, no other happiness, than that of making a similar journey, and I saw nothing but the unspeakable bliss of the journey, at the end of which, as a further happiness, I perceived Madame de Warens, but in the remote distance; for I never had the least idea of returning to Geneva. Mountains, meadows, woods, brooks, villages, passed in never-ending succession before me with fresh charms; this happy journey appeared to absorb my whole life. I recalled with delight how charming this same journey had seemed to me on my way to Turin. What would it be like when, in addition to all the charm of independence, I should enjoy the further delight of the companionship of a friend of my own age and tastes, and of cheerful temper, without restraint, without duties, without check, without being obliged to go or remain anywhere unless it pleased us! I thought that a man must be a fool to sacrifice such good fortune to ambitious plans, slow, difficult, and uncertain of fulfilment, which, even supposing them to be some day realised, in spite of all their brilliancy, were not worth a quarter of an hour of real pleasure and youthful freedom.

Full of this wise idea, I behaved in such a manner that I succeeded in getting myself dismissed, although, in truth, not without considerable difficulty. One evening, on my return to the house, the *maitre d'hôtel* gave me my dismissal from the Count. This was exactly what I wanted; for, well aware, in spite of myself, of the extravagance of my conduct, in order to excuse myself, I added to it injustice and ingratitude, thinking that, in this manner, I should be able to lay the blame upon others, and justify myself, as if I had been obliged to take measures for which I had been solely responsible. The Comte de Favria sent a message that I was to go and speak to him before I left on the following morning; and, as they saw that I had completely lost my head and was quite capable of doing nothing of the kind, the *maitre d'hôtel* informed me that, after I had done so, he would give me a sum of money which was intended for me, and which I certainly did not deserve; for, as it had not been intended that I should remain in the position of a valet, no wages had been fixed for me.



The Comte de Favria, young and thoughtless as he was, on this occasion spoke to me most sensibly—I might almost say, most tenderly—so earnestly and in such a flattering and touching manner did he put before me his uncle's sympathy and his grandfather's intentions in regard to me. At last, after having represented to me, as strongly as he was able, all the advantages I was sacrificing in order to rush to my own destruction, he offered to make peace for me, on the sole condition that I would give up the little wretch who had led me astray. It was so evident that he did not say all this on his own responsibility, that, in spite of my foolish blindness, I was sensible of all the kindness of my old master and felt touched by it; but my beloved journey was too deeply impressed upon my imagination for anything to be able to outweigh its attractions. I was quite out of my mind; I grew callous and hardened, stood on my dignity and answered haughtily that, as I had received my dismissal, I had accepted it; that there was no time now to recall it; and that, whatever might happen to me during my life, I was determined not to allow myself to be dismissed twice from the same house. Then the young man, justly irritated, called me the names I deserved, took me by the shoulders and put me out of his room, and shut the door behind me. I went out in triumph, as if I had just gained a brilliant victory; and, for fear of being obliged to endure a second struggle, I was base enough to depart without thanking the Abbé for his kindness.

To form an idea of the lengths to which my madness carried me at this moment, one ought to know to what a degree my heart is liable to become heated about the smallest trifles, and how violently it plunges into the idea of the object which attracts it, however idle and worthless this object may be. The oddest, the most childish, the most foolish plans flatter and support my favourite idea, in order to convince me of the reasonableness of devoting myself to it. Would it be believed that anyone, almost nineteen years of age, could place his hopes of support for the rest of his life on an empty bottle? Then listen.

The Abbé de Gouvon, some weeks before, had made me a present of a pretty little heron-fountain,<sup>1</sup> with which I was delighted.

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<sup>1</sup> *Fontaine de héron*: the proper name is *fontaine de Hiéron*, called after its inventor, Hiero of Alexandria.



As we were constantly playing with this artificial fountain, while talking about our journey, the wise Bâcle and myself thought that the one might prove very serviceable in lengthening the other. What could there be more curious in the world than a heron-fountain? This axiom was the foundation upon which we built the edifice of our future fortune. We need only assemble the peasants of each village round our fountain, and food and all kinds of good cheer would be showered upon us in so much greater abundance, as we were both convinced that provisions cost nothing to those who procure them, and that, if they do not stuff passers-by with them, it is pure ill-will on their part. Everywhere we expected weddings and festivities, reckoning that, without further expenditure than the breath of our lungs and the water of our fountain, it would pay our way through Piedmont, Savoy, France—in fact, all over the world. We made endless plans for our journey, and first took our way northwards, more for the pleasure of crossing the Alps than with the idea that we should be obliged to stop anywhere at last.

[1731—1732.]—Such was the plan with which I set out, abandoning without regret my protector, my tutor, my studies, my hopes and the expectation of a fortune almost assured, to begin the life of a regular vagabond. I said good-bye to the capital, to the court, to ambition, vanity, love, pretty women, and all the exciting adventures, the hope of which had brought me there the year before. I set out with my fountain and my friend Bâcle, with a light purse but a heart filled with joy, thinking of nothing but the enjoyment of this roving happiness to which I had suddenly limited my brilliant projects.

I made this extravagant journey quite as agreeably as I had expected, but not exactly in the same way; for, although our fountain amused the landladies and their servants for a few moments at the inns, we had to pay just the same when we went out. But this troubled us little, and we only thought of seriously utilising this resource when our money failed us. An accident spared us the trouble; the fountain broke when we were near Bramant; and, indeed, it was time, for we felt, without venturing to admit it, that we were beginning to get tired of it. This misfortune made us more cheerful than before, and we laughed greatly at our folly in forgetting that our clothes and boots would wear out, and in

believing that we should be able to get new ones by making our fountain play. We continued our journey as cheerfully as we had commenced it, but making our way a little more directly towards the goal which the gradual exhaustion of our resources made it necessary for us to reach.

At Chambéri I became thoughtful, not on account of the folly which I had just committed—no man ever knew how to console himself so rapidly or so completely in regard to the past—but in regard to the reception which awaited me from Madame de Warens; for I looked upon her house quite as my own home. I had written to inform her of my entry into the Comte de Gouvon's house; she knew on what footing I stood there, and, while congratulating me, she had given me some excellent advice as to the manner in which I ought to requite the kindness shown to me. She looked upon my fortune as assured, unless I destroyed it by my own fault. What would she say when she saw me arrive? The possibility of her shutting the door upon me never occurred to me; but I was afraid of the sorrow which I was about to cause her; I was afraid of her reproaches, harder for me to bear than the greatest misery. I resolved to endure all in silence, and to do all I could to calm her. In the world I saw no one but her; to live in disgrace with her was an impossibility! What troubled me most was my travelling companion, with whom I had no desire to burden her, and whom I was afraid I should find it no easy matter to get rid of. I prepared him for the separation by treating him somewhat coldly on the last day. The rascal understood me; he was more a madman than a fool. I thought he would take my fickleness to heart; I was wrong; my friend Bâcle took nothing to heart. Hardly had we set foot in Annecy, when he said to me: "Here you are at home," embraced me, said good-bye, turned round on his heel, and disappeared. I have never heard of him since. Our acquaintance and friendship lasted about six months in all; their consequences will remain as long as I live.

✓ How my heart beat as I drew near to her house! My legs trembled beneath me; my eyes seemed covered with a veil; I saw nothing, I heard nothing, I should not have recognised anybody; I was obliged to stop several times to recover my breath and compose myself. Was it the fear of not obtaining the assistance I needed that

troubled me so? does the fear of starvation cause such alarm to a person of my age? No! that I can declare with as much truth as pride; never, at any moment of my life, has self-interest or want been able to open or shut my heart. In the course of a life, uneven and memorable for its vicissitudes, often without shelter and bread, I have always looked with the same eye upon wealth and poverty. In time of need I could have begged or stolen like anybody else, but never distressed myself in consequence of being reduced to do so. Few men have sighed so much as I, few have shed so many tears in their life; but never has poverty or the fear of being reduced to it made me utter a sigh or shed a tear. My soul, proof against fortune, has never known true blessings or misfortunes other than those which do not depend upon her; and, when I am in want of nothing that is needful, that is just the time when I feel myself the unhappiest of mortals.

No sooner had I shown myself to Madame de Warens, than her manner reassured me. I trembled at the first sound of her voice. I threw myself at her feet, and, in transports of liveliest joy, I fastened my lips upon her hand. I do not know whether she had heard any news of me, but her face showed little surprise and no displeasure. "Poor little one," she said, in a caressing voice, "here you are again then? I knew you were too young for the journey. I am glad, at any rate, that it has not turned out so badly as I had feared." Then she made me tell my story, which was not a long one, and which I faithfully related, suppressing a few details, but otherwise neither sparing nor excusing myself.

It was a question where I was to sleep. She consulted her maid. I hardly ventured to breathe during the discussion; but when I heard that I was to sleep in the house I could scarcely contain myself, and I saw my little bundle carried into the room appointed for me with much the same feelings as St. Preux saw his chaise taken into Madame de Wolmar's<sup>1</sup> coach-house. To increase my delight, I learned that this favour was not to be a passing one, and, at the moment when I was believed to be thinking of something quite different, I heard her say: "Let them say what they like; since Providence sends him back to me, I am resolved not to abandon him."

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1 Two of the characters in the "New Héloïse."

Thus I was at last settled in her house. This settlement, however, was not as yet that from which I date the happy days of my life, but it served to pave the way for it. Although this sensibility of the heart, which makes us truly enjoy ourselves, is the work of Nature, and, perhaps, a product of the organisation, it requires certain situations to develop it. Without such developing causes, a man born with powerful susceptibilities would feel nothing, and would, perhaps, die without ever having known his real self. Up to that time it had been so, or nearly so, with me: and I should, perhaps, have always remained such, if I had never known Madame de Warens, or if, having known her, I had not lived with her long enough to contract the sweet habit of affectionate feelings with which she inspired me. I venture to say that he who only feels love does not feel what is sweetest in life. I know another feeling, less impetuous, perhaps, but a thousand times more delightful, which is sometimes combined with love, but is frequently separated from it. This feeling is not simple friendship either; it is more voluptuous, more tender. I do not believe that it can be felt for a person of the same sex; at any rate, I was a friend, if ever a man was, and I never felt it in the presence of any of my friends. This is somewhat obscure, but it will become clear in the sequel; feelings can only be satisfactorily described by their effects.

Madame de Warens lived in an old house, large enough to contain a pretty spare room, which she made her drawing room; in this I was lodged. It led into the passage of which I have already spoken, where our first interview took place; on the other side of the brook and the gardens the country could be seen. This view was not a matter of indifference to the youthful occupant. Since I had lived at Bossey, it was the first time that I had seen anything green before my windows. Always surrounded by walls, I had nothing before my eyes except the roofs of houses or the dull grey of the streets. How vividly I felt the charm of novelty, which strengthened my inclination to tender emotions! I looked upon this enchanting landscape as another of my dear patroness's kindnesses; it seemed to me that she had put everything there on purpose for me; I placed myself in it by her side full of peaceful contentment; I saw her everywhere, in the midst of the flowers and verdure; her charms and those of spring melted together insensibly before my

eyes. My heart, until then restricted, expanded in this unconfined space, and my sighs found freer vent amongst the fruit-gardens.

I did not find with Madame de Warens the magnificence which I had seen at Turin, but I found cleanliness, neatness, and a patriarchal abundance, with which pomp and pride are never combined. She had little plate, no porcelain, no game in the larder, no foreign wines in the cellar; but both kitchen and cellar were sufficiently well furnished for anybody, and in Delft-ware cups she provided excellent coffee. All who came to visit her were invited to dine with her or in her house; no workman, messenger, or passer-by left without eating or drinking. Her servants consisted of a rather pretty maid from Fribourg, named Merceret; a valet from her own country, named Claude Anet, of whom more will be said later; a cook, and two hired sedan-chair carriers for the rare occasions when she went to pay a visit. That was a great deal for a yearly pension of two thousand *livres*; nevertheless, her little income, well managed, might have been sufficient in a country where the soil is very good and money very scarce. Unfortunately, economy was never her favourite virtue; she got into debt and paid what she could; the money went in all directions, and things went on as best they could.

The manner in which her establishment was arranged was just such as I should have chosen myself; it may be imagined that I was only too pleased to take advantage of it. What was less pleasant to me was to be obliged to remain a long time at table. She could scarcely endure the first smell of the soup and other dishes; the smell almost made her faint, and this feeling of aversion lasted some time. By degrees she recovered herself, talked, and ate nothing. It was at least half-an-hour before she tried to eat a morsel. I could have eaten three dinners in the time, and I had always finished my meal long before she had begun. For the sake of keeping her company, I used to begin again; in this manner I ate for two, and never felt any the worse for it. In a word, I abandoned myself the more freely to the sweet sensation of comfort, which I felt when with her, as this comfort which I enjoyed was free from all uneasiness as to the means of preserving it. Not being yet admitted with complete confidence into the state of her affairs, I imagined that the present state of

things would always continue. I found the same comfort again in her house in after times ; but, being better informed as to her real position, and seeing that she drew upon her income in advance, I never enjoyed it with the same content. Looking ahead always spoils my enjoyment. It is not the least use to me to foresee the future ; I have never known how to avoid it.

From the first day, the most complete intimacy was established between us, which has continued during the rest of her life. "Little one" was my name ; "Mamma" was hers ; and we always remained "Little one" and "Mamma," even when advancing years had almost obliterated the difference between us. I find that these two names give a wonderfully good idea of the tone of our intercourse, of the simplicity of our manners, and, above all, of the mutual relation of our hearts. For me she was the tenderest of mothers, who never sought her own pleasure, but always what was best for me ; and if sensuality entered at all into her attachment for me, it did not alter its character, but only rendered it more enchanting, and intoxicated me with the delight of having a young and pretty mamma whom it was delightful to me to caress—I say caress in the strictest sense of the word, for it never occurred to her to be sparing of kisses and the tenderest caresses of a mother, and it certainly never entered my mind to abuse them. It will be objected that, in the end, we had relations of a different character ; I admit it, but I must wait a little—I cannot say all at once.

The moment of our first meeting was the only really passionate moment which she has ever made me feel ; yet this moment was the work of surprise. My looks never ventured to peep indiscreetly beneath her neckerchief, although an ill-concealed *embonpoint* might very well have attracted them. I felt no transports or desires in her presence. I was in a state of charming repose and enjoyment, without knowing in what the enjoyment consisted. I could have spent all my life in this manner, and eternity as well, without a moment's weariness. She is the only person with whom I have never felt that dearth of conversation which makes the obligation of keeping it up a martyrdom. Our *tête-à-têtes* were not so much conversations as an inexhaustible gossip, which never came to an end unless it was interrupted. There was no need to invite me to talk ; it was far more necessary to impose silence upon me.



From constantly thinking over her plans, she often fell into a reverie. Well, then I let her alone; I held my tongue, I looked at her, and was the happiest of men. I had still a singular fancy. Without claiming the favour of a *tête-à-tête*, I incessantly sought one; and enjoyed it with a passion which degenerated into madness when troublesome visitors disturbed it. As soon as anyone came—whether man or woman, it did not matter which—I left the room grumbling, being unable to remain with her in the presence of a third party. I counted the minutes in her ante-room, cursing these eternal visitors a thousand times, and unable to imagine how it was that they had so much, because I myself had still more, to say.

I only felt the full strength of my attachment when I no longer saw her. When I saw her, I was only content; but, during her absence, my restlessness became painful. The need of living with her caused me outbreaks of tenderness which often ended in tears. I shall never forget how, on the day of a great festival, while she was at vespers, I went for a walk outside the town, my heart full of her image and a burning desire to spend my life with her. I had sense enough to see that at present this was impossible, and that the happiness which I enjoyed so deeply could only be short. This gave to my reflections a tinge of melancholy, about which, however, there was nothing gloomy, and which was tempered by flattering hopes. The sound of the bells, which always singularly affects me, the song of the birds, the beauty of the daylight, the enchanting landscape, the scattered country dwellings in which my fancy placed our common home—all these produced upon me an impression so vivid, tender, melancholy and touching, that I saw myself transported, as it were, in ecstasy, into that happy time and place, wherein my heart, possessing all the happiness it could desire, tasted it with inexpressible rapture, without even a thought of sensual pleasure. I never remember to have plunged into the future with greater force and illusion than on that occasion; and what has struck me most in the recollection of this dream after it had been realised, is that I have found things again exactly as I had imagined them. If ever the dream of a man awake resembled a prophetic vision, it was assuredly that dream of mine. I was only deceived in the imaginary duration: for the days, the years, and



our whole life were spent in serene and undisturbed tranquillity, whereas in reality it lasted only for a moment. Alas! my most lasting happiness belongs to a dream, the fulfilment of which was almost immediately followed by the awakening.

I should never have done, if I were to enter into the details of all the follies which the remembrance of this dear mamma caused me to commit when I was no longer in her presence. How often have I kissed my bed, since she had slept in it; my curtains, all the furniture of my room, since they belonged to her, and her beautiful hand had touched them; even the floor, on which I prostrated myself, since she had walked upon it! Sometimes, even in her presence, I was guilty of extravagances, which only the most violent love seemed capable of inspiring. At table one day, just when she had put a piece of food into her mouth, I exclaimed that I saw a hair in it; she put back the morsel on her plate, and I eagerly seized and swallowed it. In a word, between myself and the most passionate lover there was only one, but that an essential, point of distinction, which makes my condition almost unintelligible and inconceivable.

I had returned from Italy not quite the same as I had entered it, but as, perhaps, no one of my age had ever returned from it. I had brought back, not my mental and moral, but my bodily virginity. I had felt the progress of years; my restless temperament had at last made itself felt, and its first outbreak, quite involuntary, had caused me alarm about my health in a manner which shows better than anything else the innocence in which I had lived up to that time. Soon reassured, I learned that dangerous means of assisting it, which cheats Nature and saves up for young men of my temperament many forms of excess at the expense of their health, strength, and, sometimes, of their life. This vice, which shame and timidity find so convenient, possesses, besides, a great attraction for lively imaginations—that of being able to dispose of the whole sex as they desire, and to make the beauty which tempts them minister to their pleasures, without being obliged to obtain its consent. Seduced by this fatal advantage, I did my best to destroy the good constitution which Nature had restored to me, and which I had allowed time to strengthen itself. Add to this habit the circumstances of my position, living

as I was with a beautiful woman, caressing her image in the bottom of my heart, seeing her continually throughout the day, surrounded in the evening by objects which reminded me of her, sleeping in the bed in which I knew she had slept ! What causes for excitement ! Many a reader, who reflects upon them, no doubt already considers me as half-dead ! Quite the contrary ; that which ought to have destroyed me was just the thing that saved me, at least for a time. Intoxicated with the charm of living with her, with the ardent desire of spending my life with her, I always saw in her, whether she were absent or present, a tender mother, a beloved sister, a delightful friend, and nothing more. I saw her always thus, always the same, and I never saw anyone but her. Her image, ever present to my heart, left room for no other ; she was for me the only woman in the world ; and the extreme sweetness of the feelings with which she inspired me did not allow my senses time to awake for others, and protected me against her and all her sex. In a word, I was chaste, because I loved her. Considering these results, which I can only imperfectly describe, let him who can say what was the nature of my attachment for her. For myself, all that I can say about it is that, if it already seems to be very extraordinary, in the sequel it will appear far more so.

I spent my time in the pleasantest manner possible, although occupied with things which were least attractive to me. There were plans to draw up, fair copies of accounts to make, recipes to transcribe, herbs to pick out, drugs to pound, stills to work. In the midst of all this, chance travellers, beggars, and visitors of all classes kept coming in crowds ; we were obliged to entertain at one and the same time a soldier, an apothecary, a canon, a fine lady, and a lay brother. I cursed, I grumbled, I swore, I wished the whole accursed gang at the devil. Madame de Warens, who took it all good-humouredly, laughed at my rage till she cried ; and what made her laugh still more was to see me the more furious, as I was unable to prevent even myself from laughing. These brief interruptions, during which I had the pleasure of grumbling, were delightful, and, if another unwelcome visitor arrived during the dispute, she knew how to extract amusement from it by maliciously prolonging his visit, casting glances at me for which I should have liked to beat her. She could hardly keep from bursting out laughing, when she

saw me, restrained and kept in check by politeness, glaring at her like one possessed, while in the bottom of my heart, and even in spite of myself, I found it all very amusing.

All this, without being pleasant in itself, nevertheless amused me, because it formed part of a kind of existence which was delightful to me. Of all that was going on around me, of all that I was obliged to do, nothing suited my taste, but everything suited my heart. I believe that I should have come to like medicine, had not my natural distaste for it caused those comical scenes which delighted us so much; this is, perhaps, the first time that this art has produced a similar effect. I pretended to be able to recognise a medical work by its smell, and the amusing thing is that I was rarely mistaken. She made me taste the most horrible drugs. It was no use to run away or try to defend myself; in spite of my resistance and wry faces, in spite of myself and my teeth, when I saw her pretty fingers, all besmeared, near my mouth, I was obliged at last to open it and suck them. When all her little household was assembled in the same room, to hear us running about and shrieking with laughter, any one would have thought we were performing some farce, instead of compounding opiates and elixirs.

My time, however, was not entirely occupied with these fooleries. In the room which I occupied I had found a few books: the "Spectator," "Puffendorf," "St. Évremont," the "Henriade." Although I no longer had my old mania for reading, I read a little when I had nothing else to do. The "Spectator," especially, pleased me and proved beneficial to me. The Abbé de Gouvion had taught me to read less greedily and with more reflection; and, accordingly, my reading did me more good. I accustomed myself to think about the language and style, and the elegance of the constructions; I practised myself in distinguishing pure French from my provincial idioms. For instance, I learned to correct an orthographical error, of which I, in common with all us Genevese, was guilty, by the two following lines of the "Henriade":

"Soit qu'un ancien respect pour le sang de leurs maîtres  
Parlât encore pour lui dans le cœur de ces traîtres."

I was struck by this word *parlât*, which taught me that the third person subjunctive must end in *t*, whereas formerly I wrote and pronounced *parla*, as if it had been the perfect indicative.

Sometimes I talked with mamma about my reading, sometimes I read to her, which afforded me great pleasure. I tried to read well, and this, also, was useful to me. I have mentioned that she had a cultivated mind, and just at that time it was in its prime. Several men of letters had shown themselves eager to win her favour and had taught her to distinguish the productions of genius. Her taste, if I may say so, smacked of Protestantism; she talked only of Bayle, and thought highly of St. Évremond, who had died some time ago in France. But this did not hinder her from an acquaintance with good literature, and she discussed it intelligently. She had been brought up in select society and had come to Savoy while still young; in the charming society of the nobility of this country she had lost the affected manners of the Vaud country, where women consider attempts at wit to be good style, and can only speak in epigrams.

Although she had only a passing acquaintance with the Court, she had cast a rapid glance at it, which had been sufficient to give her a knowledge of it. She always retained her friends there, and, in spite of secret jealousies, in spite of the disapproval excited by her conduct and her debts, she never lost her pension. She possessed knowledge of the world and that capacity of reflection which makes this knowledge useful. Worldly matters formed the chief topic of her conversations, and, considering my romantic ideas, this was exactly the kind of instruction of which I stood most in need. We read La Bruyère together; he pleased her better than La Rochefoucauld, a gloomy and comfortless author, especially for the young, who do not care to see men as they are. When she moralised, she sometimes lost herself in lengthy discourses; but, by kissing her mouth or hands from time to time, I managed to endure it, and her prolixity ceased to weary me.

This life was too delightful to be able to last. I felt this, and my distress at the thought of seeing it come to an end was the only thing that disturbed my enjoyment of it. In the midst of her playfulness, mamma studied, observed, and questioned me, and sketched out a number of plans for my advancement, which I could well have dispensed with. Happily, it was not enough to know my inclinations, my tastes, my abilities; it was necessary to find or to create opportunities for employing them profitably, and this

was not the work of a day. The prejudices which the poor woman had conceived in favour of my talents, served to defer the moment of putting them to the proof, by making her more particular in regard to the choice of means. In short, everything went on in accordance with my wishes, thanks to her good opinion of me; but, sooner or later, this life was bound to come to an end, and, from that moment, good-bye to all hope of tranquillity. One of her relations, a M. d'Aubonne, came to pay her a visit. He was a man of considerable endowments, an intriguer, and a born schemer like herself, but too clever to allow his plans to ruin him—a sort of adventurer. He had just proposed to the Cardinal de Fleury a very intricate plan of a lottery, which had not met with approval. He was now going to lay it before the Court of Turin, where it was adopted and carried out. He remained some time at Annecy where he fell in love with the wife of the Intendant, a very amiable person much to my taste, and the only one whom I cared to see at mamma's house. M. d'Aubonne saw me; his relative spoke of me to him; he undertook to examine me, to see what I was fit for, and, if he found anything in me, to endeavour to get me a place.

Madame de Warens sent me to him on two or three successive mornings, on the pretence of executing some commission for her, and without giving me any intimation of the truth. He succeeded admirably in making me talk, became quite intimate with me, put me at my ease as far as possible, spoke to me about matters of no importance and all kinds of subjects—all without appearing to watch me, without the least formality, as if he found pleasure in my society and desired to converse with me without restraint. I was enchanted with him. The result of his observations was that, in spite of my attractive appearance and animated features, I was, if not quite silly, a lad of little intelligence, without any ideas, almost without knowledge, in a word, of very limited capacities in every respect; and that the highest position to which I had any right to aspire was that of some day becoming a village *curé*. Such was the account of me which he gave to Madame de Warens. This was the second or the third time that I was thus judged; it was not the last, and M. Masseron's opinion has often been confirmed.

The reason of the judgments passed upon me is too closely connected with my character not to require some explanation; for, to speak honestly, it will be readily understood that I cannot subscribe to them unreservedly, and that, with all possible impartiality, in spite of all that MM. Masseron, d'Aubonne, and many others may have said, I cannot take them at their word.

Two things, almost incompatible, are united in me in a manner which I am unable to understand: a very ardent temperament, lively and tumultuous passions, and, at the same time, slowly developed and confused ideas, which never present themselves until it is too late. One might say that my heart and my mind do not belong to the same person. Feeling takes possession of my soul more rapidly than a flash of lightning; but, instead of illuminating, inflames and dazzles me. I feel everything and see nothing. I am carried away by my passions, but stupid; in order to think, I must be cool. The astonishing thing is that, notwithstanding, I exhibit tolerably sound judgment, penetration, even finesse, if I am not hurried; with sufficient leisure I can compose excellent impromptus; but I have never said or done anything worthy of notice on the spur of the moment. I could carry on a very clever conversation through the post, as the Spaniards are said to carry on a game of chess. When I read of that Duke of Savoy, who turned round on his journey, in order to cry, "At your throat, Parisian huckster," I said, "There you have myself!"

This sluggishness of thought, combined with such liveliness of feeling, not only enters into my conversation, but I feel it even when alone and at work. My ideas arrange themselves in my head with almost incredible difficulty; they circulate in it with uncertain sound, and ferment till they excite and heat me, and make my heart beat fast; and, in the midst of this excitement, I see nothing clearly and am unable to write a single word—I am obliged to wait. Imperceptibly this great agitation subsides, the confusion clears up, everything takes its proper place, but slowly, and only after a period of long and confused agitation. Have you ever been to the opera in Italy? During the changes of scene, there prevails upon the stage of those vast theatres an unpleasant disorder which continues for some time: all the decorations are mixed up, things



are pulled about in different directions in a manner most painful to see, which produces the impression that everything must be upset. Gradually, however, complete order is restored, nothing is wanting, and one is quite astounded to see an enchanting spectacle succeed this long-continued disorder. This mode of procedure is almost the same as that which takes place in my brain when I attempt to write. If I had known how to wait first and then to restore in all their beauty the things represented therein, few writers would have surpassed me.

Hence comes the extreme difficulty which I find in writing. My manuscripts, scratched, smeared, muddled and almost illegible, bear witness to the trouble they have cost me. There is not one of them which I have not been obliged to copy four or five times before I could give it to the printer. I have never been able to produce anything, pen in hand, in front of my table and paper; it is during a walk, in the midst of rocks and forests, at night in my bed while lying awake, that I write in my brain; one may judge how slowly, especially in the case of a man utterly without verbal memory and who has never been able to learn six lines by heart in his life. Many of my periods have been turned and turned again five or six nights in my head before they were fit to be set down on paper. This, also, is the reason why I succeed better in works which require labour than in those which require to be written with a certain lightness of style, such as letters—a style of which I have never been able to properly catch the tone, so that such occupation is a perfect torture to me. I cannot write a letter on the most trifling subject, which does not cost me hours of fatigue; or, if I try to write down immediately what occurs to me, I know neither how to begin nor how to end; my letter is a long and confused mass of verbosity, and, when it is read, my meaning is difficult to make out.

\* Not only is it painful for me to put my ideas into shape: I also find a difficulty in grasping them. I have studied mankind, and believe that I am a fairly shrewd observer; nevertheless, I cannot see clearly anything of all that I perceive; I only see clearly what I remember, and only show intelligence in my recollections. Of all that is said, of all that is done, of all that goes on in my presence, I feel nothing, I see through nothing. The



outward sign is the only thing that strikes me. But, later, all comes back to me; I recall place, time, manner, look, gesture, and circumstance: nothing escapes me. Then, from what people have said or done, I discover what they have thought; and I am rarely mistaken.]

If, when alone with myself, I am so little master of my intellectual capacity, it may be imagined what I must be in conversation, when, in order to speak to the purpose, it is necessary to think of a thousand things at the same time and at once. [The mere idea of all the usages of society—which it is so necessary to observe, and of which I am certain to forget one or other—is enough to frighten me. I do not even understand how anyone can dare to speak at all in society, where, at every word, it is essential to pass in review all those who are present; it is essential to be acquainted with all their characters and histories, in order to make sure of saying nothing which can give offence. In this respect, those who live in the world have a great advantage; since they know better than others what ought not to be spoken about, they are more confident of what they say; and yet, even they frequently let fall awkward and ill-timed remarks. How must it fare with one who drops into their midst as it were from the clouds! It is almost impossible for him to speak for a minute with impunity. In a *tête-à-tête*, there is another inconvenience which I find even worse: the necessity of talking perpetually. When one is spoken to, one is obliged to answer, and, when silence ensues, to take up the conversation again. This unbearable constraint would alone have disgusted me with society. I find no compulsion more terrible than the obligation of speaking continuously and on the spur of the moment. I do not know whether this has anything to do with my mortal aversion to constraint of any kind; but to be absolutely obliged to speak is enough to make me infallibly talk nonsense.]

A still more fatal defect of mine is that, instead of being able to hold my tongue when I have nothing to say, that is just the time when, in order to discharge my debt sooner, I am mad to speak. I hasten to stammer out a few words destitute of ideas, and am only too happy when they have no meaning at all. When attempting to overcome or conceal my stupidity, I rarely fail to show it. Out of

numerous instances that I could cite, I will select one which does not belong to my youthful days, but to a period of my life when, having lived several years in society, I should have caught its easy tone, if the thing had been possible. One evening, I was sitting between two great ladies and a gentleman, whose name I may mention—it was the Duc de Gontaut. There was no one else in the room, and I was doing my utmost to supply a few words—heaven knows what!—during a conversation between four persons, three of whom certainly had no need of my supplementary efforts. The mistress of the house ordered an opiate to be brought to her, which she took twice a day to ease her stomach. The other lady, seeing the wry face she made, said, laughingly: “Is it M. Tronchin’s opiate?” “I don’t think so,” the first replied in the same tone. “I think it is little better,” politely added the witty Rousseau. Everyone was amazed; not a word was uttered, not a smile was seen, and immediately afterwards the conversation took a different turn. In the presence of anyone else this awkward remark might have been only amusing, but, addressed to a woman who was too amiable not to have made herself somewhat talked about, and whom I most certainly had no desire to offend, it was terrible; and I believe that the two who heard it, both the lady and the gentleman, could scarcely refrain from bursting out into a laugh. Such are the flashes of genius which escape me when I attempt to speak without having anything to say. I shall not easily forget that particular instance, for not only is it in itself worthy of record, but I cannot help thinking that it has produced results which recall it to my mind only too often.

I think this is enough to make it intelligible how, although not a fool, I have often been taken for one, even by people who were in a position to judge correctly; what aggravates my misfortune is the fact that my eyes and features give promise of something better, and the failure of this hope makes my stupidity more startling to others. This detailed explanation, to which a special circumstance has led me, is not without its use in reference to what follows. It contains the solution of many extraordinary things which I have done, and which are attributed to an unsociable disposition which I by no means possess. I should be as fond of society as anyone else, if I was not sure of appearing in it, not only to my own disad-

vantage, but quite a different person from what I really am. My resolution to write and live in seclusion, is exactly that which suits me. If I had been present, my powers would never have been known, or even suspected; this actually happened in the case of Madame Dupin, although she was a woman of intelligence, and although I lived for several years in her house. Since that time, she has often told me so herself. However, this rule is liable to certain exceptions, to which I will subsequently return.

The extent of my capacities having thus been settled, and the position for which I was adapted marked out for the second time, the only question remaining was how to fit me for fulfilling my vocation. The difficulty was that I had not studied sufficiently, and did not even know enough Latin to be a priest. Madame de Warens thought of having me taught for some time at the seminary. She spoke of it to the Superior, a Lazarist,<sup>1</sup> named M. Gros, a good little man, lean and grey-haired, who had almost lost the sight of one eye, and who was the most intelligent and the least pedantic Lazarist that I have ever known—although, to tell the truth, that is not saying much.

He came sometimes to see mamma, who welcomed him, petted him, teased him, and sometimes made him lace her stays, a service which he was only too glad to perform. While he was thus engaged, she ran from one side of the room to the other, doing first one thing and then another. Dragged along by her staylace, the Superior followed, grumbling and crying out every minute: "Madame, do please keep still!" It was an extremely attractive picture!

M. Gros entered heartily into mamma's plan. He was satisfied with a very modest fee for my board, and undertook to teach me. Nothing else was required except the consent of the bishop, who not alone granted it, but offered to pay the fee. He also gave me permission to wear my lay dress until the degree of success which might be hoped for could be estimated by a trial.

What a change! I was obliged to submit. I went to the seminary as I should have gone to execution. A seminary is a melancholy abode, especially for one who has just left the house

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1 A monk of the order of St. Lazare.



Le Retour au 8<sup>e</sup> sc

M GROS AT M<sup>ME</sup> DE WARENS'  
(Book III)



of an amiable woman. I took with me only a single book, which I had begged mamma to lend me, and which was a great consolation to me. No one would guess what kind of book it was; it was a book of music. Amongst the accomplishments which she had cultivated, music had not been forgotten. She had a good voice, sang fairly well, and played the piano a little; she had been good enough to give me some lessons in singing, in which she was obliged to begin at the very beginning, for I hardly knew the music of our psalms. Eight or ten lessons, constantly interrupted, and given me by a woman, were not enough to teach me a quarter of the notes, much less to enable me to sing the scales. However, I had such a passion for the art that I determined to try to practise by myself. The volume which I took with me was not even one of the easiest; it was the cantatas of Clérambault. The doggedness of my application may be imagined, when I mention that, without any knowledge of transposition or quantity, I succeeded in deciphering and singing without a mistake the first air and recitative of the cantata *Alpheus and Arethusa*; although, certainly, this air is so correctly set, that it is only necessary to recite the verses in proper time in order to catch the air.

At the seminary there was a confounded Lazarist, who took charge of me, and disgusted me with the Latin which he wanted to teach me. He had sleek, greasy, black hair, a gingerbread face, a voice like a buffalo, the look of a night-owl and a beard like boar's bristles; his smile was sardonic, his limbs moved like those of a jointed doll. I have forgotten his hateful name, but his frightful and mawkish face has remained in my memory, and I can scarcely think of it without a shudder. I fancy I still meet him in the corridors, politely holding out his dirty square cap, as an invitation to enter his room, which was more dreadful to me than a prison cell. Imagine the impression such a teacher produced by contrast upon the pupil of a court Abbé.

If I had remained two months at the mercy of this monster, I am convinced that I should have lost my reason. But good M. Gros, who perceived that I was depressed, that I ate nothing and grew thin, guessed the reason of my grief; it was not hard to do so! He rescued me from the claws of my wild beast, and, by a still

more marked contrast, handed me over to the gentlest of men, a young Abbé from Le Faucigny,<sup>1</sup> named Gâtier, who was going through his college course, and who, from a desire to oblige M. Gros, and also, I believe, from feelings of humanity, was so good as to rob his own studies of the time he devoted to the direction of mine. I have never seen a more touching expression than M. Gâtier's. He was fair, and his beard inclined to be red; he had the ordinary appearance of those who came from his province, who all conceal considerable intelligence under a heavy exterior; but what truly distinguished him was a tender, affectionate and loving heart. There was in his large blue eyes a mixture of gentleness, tenderness and sadness, which made it impossible for anyone to see him without being attracted by him. From the looks and manner of this poor young man, one would have said that he foresaw his destiny, and that he felt he was born to be unhappy.

His character did not belie his looks; full of patience, and ever ready to oblige, he seemed rather to study with than to teach me. That alone was more than enough to make me love him; his predecessor had made that exceedingly easy. However, in spite of all the time that he devoted to me, in spite of the hearty good-will with which we both devoted ourselves to our studies, and although he went quite the right way to work, I made little progress, although I worked hard. It is singular that, although endowed with considerable powers of apprehension, I have never been able to learn anything with tutors, with the exception of my father and M. Lambercier. The little additional knowledge I possess I owe to my own unaided efforts, as will be presently seen. My spirit, impatient of any kind of constraint, cannot submit to the laws of the moment; even the fear of not learning prevents my attention; for fear of making those who are talking to me impatient, I pretend to understand them; they accordingly go on, and I understand nothing. My mind must fix its own time for work; it cannot submit to that which is fixed by another.

The time of ordination came, and M. Gâtier returned to his province in deacon's orders. He took with him my regrets, my attachment, my gratitude. I offered prayers on his behalf, which

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<sup>1</sup> A small province of the Duchy of Savoy.



were no more granted than those which I offered for myself. Some years afterwards, I learned that, while *vicaire* of a parish, he seduced a girl, the only one whom, in spite of a very tender heart, he had ever loved. The girl had a child by him, which caused a terrible scandal in a parish which was very strictly managed. The priests, being under good regulations, are not allowed to have children—except by married women. For his offence against this rule of propriety, he was imprisoned, disgraced, and deprived of his benefice. I do not know whether he afterwards regained his position, but the thought of his misfortune, deeply graven on my heart, returned to me when I wrote “*Émile*”; and, uniting M. Gâtier with M. Gaime, I made of these two worthy priests the original of the “*Savoyard Vicar*.” I flatter myself that the imitation has not disgraced its originals. ✓

While I was at the seminary, M. d'Aubonne was obliged to leave Annecy. The Intendant took it into his head to be displeased that he made love to his wife. This was playing the part of the dog in the manger; for, although Madame Corvezi was extremely amiable, he lived on very bad terms with her; ultramontane tendencies rendered her useless to him, and he treated her so brutally that a separation was talked of. M. Corvezi was an ugly-looking fellow, black as a mole, knavish as an owl, and who, by continued abuse of his office, ended in getting dismissed himself. It is said that the natives of Provence revenge themselves upon their enemies by songs; M. d'Aubonne revenged himself upon his by a comedy; he sent the piece to Madame de Warens, who showed it to me. It pleased me, and put into my head the idea of writing one myself, in order to see whether I was really such a fool as the author had declared me to be; but I did not carry out this idea until I went to Chambéry, where I wrote *L'Amant de lui-même*. Consequently, when I state in the preface to this piece that I wrote it when I was eighteen years old, I have deviated from the truth in the matter a few years.

It was nearly about this time that an event occurred, of little importance in itself, but which affected me, and made a stir in the world when I had already forgotten it. One day in every week I had permission to go out; it is not necessary to say what use I made of it. One Sunday, when I was with mamma, a fire broke

out in a building belonging to the Grey Friars, which adjoined the house she occupied. This building, in which was their oven, was crammed full of dry faggots. In a very short time the whole was in flames. The house was in great danger, already enveloped by the flames which the wind drove in that direction. Everyone made ready to remove the furniture as quickly as possible, and to carry it into the garden, which was opposite the windows of my old room, beyond the brook of which I have already spoken. I was so confused, that I threw out of the window promiscuously everything that came into my hands, even a large stone mortar, which at any other time I should scarcely have been able to lift; in like manner I should have thrown out a large looking-glass, had not someone stopped me. The good bishop, who had come to pay mamma a visit, did not remain idle. He took her into the garden, where he began to pray with her and all those who were there, so that, when I came up some time later, I found all on their knees and followed their example. During the holy man's prayer, the wind changed, but so suddenly and just at the right moment, that the flames, which enveloped the house and were already making their way through the windows, were blown to the other side of the court, and the house suffered no damage. Two years later, after the death of M. de Bernex, his former brethren, the Antonines, began to collect evidence which might serve towards his beatification. At the earnest request of Father Boudet, I added to this evidence an attestation of the fact which I have just related, in which I was right; but, in giving out the fact for a miracle, I was wrong. I had seen the bishop at prayers, and during his prayers I had seen the wind change, and just at the critical moment; this I was able to state and certify; but that one of these two things was the cause of the other, this I ought not to have certified, because I could not possibly know. However, as far as I can recollect my ideas, I was at that time a sincere Catholic, and therefore a good believer. The love of the marvellous, so natural to the human heart, my veneration for this virtuous prelate, the feeling of secret pride at having, perhaps, contributed to the miracle myself, helped to lead me astray; and it is quite certain that, if this miracle had been the result of fervent prayer, I might with good reason have claimed a share in it. More than thirty years afterwards, when I published

my "Lettres de la Montagne," M. Fréron somehow or other unearthed this testimony and made use of it in his papers. I must confess that it was a fortunate discovery, and it seemed to me very amusing that it was made at so opportune a moment.

I was destined to be the rejected of all professions. Although M. Gâtier had given the least unfavourable account of my progress that he possibly could, it was easily seen that it was out of proportion to my efforts, and that was no encouragement to make me study further. Accordingly, the bishop and the Superior refused to have any more to do with me, and gave me back to Madame de Warens as a person not even good enough for a priest; in other respects, a good enough lad, they said, and free from vice: which was the reason why, in spite of so many discouraging prejudices against me, she did not desert me.

I brought back to her in triumph her volume of music, of which I had made such good use. My air of *Alpheus and Arethusa* was nearly all that I had learnt at the seminary. My marked taste for this art gave her the idea of making me a musician; the opportunity was favourable; she had music at her house at least once a week, and the choir-master of the cathedral, who directed these little concerts, was a frequent visitor. He was a Parisian, named Le Maître, a good composer, very lively, very gay, still young, tolerably good-looking, not very intelligent, but, on the whole, a good fellow. Mamma introduced me to him. I took a fancy to him, and he was not displeased with me; the fee was discussed and settled. In short, I went to his house, where I passed the winter the more agreeably, as it was only twenty yards distant from mamma's; we were with her in a moment, and very often supped there together.

It will be readily imagined that life in the choir-master's house, where singing and gaiety prevailed, together with musicians and choir-boys, pleased me far better than life in the seminary with the fathers of St. Lazare. However, this life, although more unrestrained, was not less orderly and regular. I was born to love independence, without abusing it. For six whole months, I never went out once, except to visit mamma or to attend church, nor did I ever feel tempted to do so. This period is one of those during which I have enjoyed the greatest calm, and which I recall with the greatest

pleasure. Of the various situations in which I have found myself, some have been distinguished by such a feeling of comfort, that, in recalling them, I am as affected by them as if I were still similarly situated. I not only recall times, places, persons, but all the surrounding objects, the temperature of the air, its smell, its colour, a certain local impression only felt there, the lively remembrance of which stirs my old transports anew. For instance, all that was repeated in the choir-master's house, all that was sung in the choir, everything that took place there, the beautiful and majestic dress of the canons, the chasubles of the priests, the mitres of the chanters, the faces of the musicians, an old lame carpenter, who played the counterbass, a fair little Abbé who played the violin, the ragged cassock which, after laying down his sword, M. le Maître put on over his lay-coat, and the beautiful fine surplice with which he covered its rags when he went to the choir; the pride with which, holding my little flageolet, I took my place in the orchestra in the gallery, to assist in the end of a recitative which M. le Maître had composed on purpose for me; the good dinner waiting for us afterwards, the good appetite we took to it—all these objects together, recurring most vividly a hundred times to my memory, have enchanted me as much or even more than the reality had ever done. I have always preserved a tender affection for a certain air of the *Conditor alme siderum* which goes in iambics, because, one Advent Sunday, I heard from my bed this hymn being sung before day-break on the steps of the cathedral, according to a custom of that church. Mademoiselle de Merceret, mamma's chambermaid, knew a little music. I shall never forget a little motet, called *Afferte*, which M. le Maître made me sing with her, and which her mistress listened to with great pleasure. In short, everything, down to the good servant Perrine, who was so good a girl, and whom the choir-boys teased to madness, frequently comes back to me from those innocent and happy times, to enchant and sadden me.

I lived at Annecy for nearly a year without the least reproach; everybody was satisfied with me. Since my departure from Turin I had committed no follies, nor was I guilty of any as long as I was under mamma's eyes. She guided me, and always guided me well; my attachment to her had become my only passion, and, a proof that it was not a foolish passion, my heart formed my reason.

It is true that a single sentiment, absorbing, so to speak, all my faculties, put it out of my power to learn anything, even music, although I did my utmost. But it was not my fault; the most perfect good-will was there, and steady application. But I was distracted, a dreamer; I sighed. What could I do? Nothing that depended upon me was wanting to ensure my progress; but, in order for me to commit fresh follies, I only needed a subject to put them into my head. This subject presented itself; chance arranged matters, and, as will be seen in the sequel, my stupid head knew how to profit by it.

One evening during the month of February, in very cold weather, while we were all seated round the fire, we heard a knock at the street door. Perrine took her lantern, went down and opened it; and returned with a young man, who came up stairs, introduced himself with an easy air, paid M. le Maître a short and well-turned compliment, and told us that he was a French musician, obliged by the low state of his finances to offer his services to churches, in order to pay his way. When he heard the words "French musician," Le Maître's good heart leaped for joy; he was passionately fond of his country and his profession. He received the young wayfarer, offered him a night's lodging, of which he seemed sorely in want, and which he accepted without much ceremony. I examined him while he was warming himself and chattering, while waiting for supper. He was short of stature, but broad-shouldered. There was something misshapen about his figure, without any special deformity; he was, so to speak, a hunchback with straight shoulders, and I fancy that he limped a little. His black coat was worn out by constant use rather than old, and was falling to pieces; his shirt, made of very fine linen, was very dirty; he wore beautiful fringed ruffles and gaiters, in either of which he could have put both his legs; and, by way of protection against the snow, he had a little hat only fit to carry under his arm. In this whimsical attire, however, there was something noble, to which his general demeanour did not give the lie. His expression was pleasant and intelligent: he spoke readily and well, although his language was rather too free. Everything about him showed him to be a young libertine of good education, who did not go begging like a beggar, but like a madcap. He told us that his name was Venture de

Villeneuve, that he came from Paris, that he had lost his way, and, forgetting for the moment his *rôle* of musician, he added that he was going to Grenoble to see one of his relations who was a member of the parliament.

During supper the conversation turned upon music, and he spoke well upon the subject. He was acquainted with all the great virtuosi, all the famous works, all the actors and actresses, pretty women, and great noblemen. He appeared familiar with everything that was alluded to; but, directly a subject was broached, he upset the discussion with some broad joke, which made us laugh and forget what had been said. It was Saturday; on the following day there was music in the cathedral. M. le Maître proposed to him to take part in the singing; "With pleasure," he replied. Being asked what part he took, he answered, "Alto," and went on to speak of something else. Before church, his part was given him to look through; but he never even glanced at it. This piece of swagger surprised Le Maître. "You will see," he whispered to me, "that he doesn't know a note." "I am very much afraid so," I replied. I followed them full of uneasiness. When the singing began, my heart beat violently, for I was greatly interested in him.

I soon found I had no reason for uneasiness. He sang his two parts with the greatest correctness and the best taste imaginable, and, what was more, in a charming voice. I have rarely experienced a more agreeable surprise. After mass, he was highly complimented by the canons and musicians, whom he thanked in his usual jesting manner, but with perfect grace. M. le Maître embraced him heartily; I did the same; he saw that I was very glad, and this seemed to afford him pleasure.

The reader will assuredly agree with me that, after having become infatuated with Bâcle, who, when all is said and done, was nothing but a boor, it was only to be expected that I should be enchanted by Venture, a man of education, talent, intelligence, and worldly experience, who might be called an agreeable rake. This was just what happened to me, and which, I think, would have happened to any other young man in my position, the more easily in proportion as he possessed better judgment in recognising merit, and greater inclination to allow himself to be fascinated by it; for undoubtedly Venture possessed merit, and a merit very rare



at his age—that of not being too eager to display his accomplishments. It is true that he boasted about many things, which he did not understand at all; but of those things which he knew well, and these were by no means few, he said nothing—he waited for the opportunity of showing his knowledge, and when it came, he took advantage of it without exhibiting too much eagerness, which produced a great effect. As he stopped at each subject, without speaking of the rest, one could never tell when his knowledge was exhausted. Witty, droll, inexhaustible, seductive in conversation, always smiling and never laughing, he would say the rudest things in the most refined tone without ever giving offence. Even the most modest women were astonished at what they endured from him. It was useless for them to feel that they ought to be angry—they could not. He wanted nothing but loose women, and I do not believe that he was made to succeed with the sex, but he was certainly made to enliven immensely the society of those who enjoyed that good fortune. In a country where such agreeable accomplishments were duly esteemed and loved, he could not long remain limited to the sphere of a musician.

My liking for M. Venture, more reasonable in its cause, was also less extravagant in its effects than my friendship for M. Bâcle, although it was warmer and more lasting. I loved to see him, to listen to him; everything he did appeared to me charming, everything he said was an oracle to me; but my infatuation did not go so far that I could not have endured separation from him. I had in my neighbourhood a good safeguard against such extravagance. Besides, I felt that his principles, although they might be very good for him, were of no value to me; I wanted a different kind of pleasure, of which he had no idea, and of which I did not even venture to speak to him, as I felt sure that he would only have laughed at me. However, I would gladly have united this new attachment with that which already had possession of me. I spoke of him to mamma with transport; Le Maître spoke of him to her in terms of the highest praise. She consented that he should be introduced to her; but the meeting was altogether unsuccessful. He found her affected; she found him dissolute, and, being alarmed to think that I had formed so undesirable an acquaintance, she not only forbade me to bring him again, but



painted in such lively colours the risks I ran with this young man, that I became a little more reserved in my intercourse with him, and, luckily for my morals and my understanding, we were soon separated.

M. le Maître had the taste of all the followers of his profession: he was fond of wine. At table, however, he was temperate; when working in his study, he was obliged to drink. His maidservant knew him so well that, as soon as he arranged his paper in order to compose, and took up his violoncello, his jug and glass arrived the moment after, and the jug was replenished from time to time. Without ever being completely drunk, he was always fuddled; this was really a pity, for he was essentially a good fellow, and so playful that mamma always called him the "Kitten." Unfortunately, he was fond of his talent, worked hard and drank proportionately. This told upon his health, and, in the end, upon his temper; he was sometimes suspicious and ready to take offence. Incapable of rudeness, incapable of failing in respect to anyone, he never used bad language, even to one of his choir-boys; but neither was anyone allowed to fail in respect to him, as was only fair. The misfortune was that he had too little intelligence to distinguish manners and characters, and often took offence at nothing.

The ancient Chapter of Geneva, into which formerly so many princes and bishops esteemed it an honour to be admitted, has lost in exile some of its ancient splendour, but has retained its pride. In order to be admitted, it is still necessary to be a gentleman or doctor of Sorbonne; and if there is an excusable pride, next after that which is derived from personal merit, it is that which is derived from birth. Besides, all the priests, who have laymen in their service, as a rule treat them with considerable arrogance. It was thus that the canons often treated Le Maître. The precentor especially, the Abbé de Vidonne, who in other respects was extremely polite but too proud of his noble birth, did not always treat him with the respect which his talents deserved, and Le Maître could not endure this disdain. This year, during Passion week, they had a more serious dispute than usual at a regulation dinner given by the bishop to the canons, to which Le Maître was always invited. The precentor showed him some slight, and said

something harsh to him, which he was unable to stomach. He immediately resolved to run away the next night, and nothing could dissuade him from this; although Madame de Warens, to whom he went to say good-bye, did her utmost to appease him. He could not forego the pleasure of avenging himself upon his tyrants, by leaving them in the lurch during the Easter festival, which was just the time when his services were most needed. But what troubled him most was his music, which he wanted to take with him—no easy task, for it filled a tolerably heavy box which could not be carried under the arm.

Mamma did what I should have done in her place, and should do again. After many fruitless attempts to keep him back, seeing that he had made up his mind to depart, whatever happened, she devoted herself to assisting him as far as she possibly could. I venture to say that it was her duty to do so. Le Maître had, so to say, devoted himself entirely to her service. In reference to his art, as well as other attentions, he was entirely at her command; and the heartiness with which he carried out what she desired attached a double value to his readiness to oblige. Consequently, she only repaid a friend, on a critical occasion, for all that he had done for her on many separate occasions during three or four years, although she had a heart which, in order to repay such obligations, had no need to be reminded that they were obligations. She sent for me and ordered me to follow Le Maître at least as far as Lyons, and not to leave him as long as he needed my assistance. She has since confessed to me, that the desire of separating me from Venture had been one of her chief considerations in this arrangement. She consulted Claude Anet, her faithful servant, about the removal of the box. He was of opinion that it would infallibly lead to discovery if we hired a beast of burden in Annecy; that, as soon as it was dark, we ought to carry the box ourselves a certain distance, and then hire an ass in some village to convey it as far as Seyssel, where, being on French territory, we should no longer run any risk. We followed his advice; we set out the same night at seven o'clock, and mamma, on pretence of paying my expenses, reinforced the lightly-filled purse of the poor "Kitten" by a sum of money which was very useful to him. Claude Anet, the

gardener, and myself carried the box as best we could as far as the first village, where an ass relieved us; and the same night we reached Seyssel.

I believe that I have already observed that there are times when I so little resemble myself, that one would take me for another man of quite an opposite character. The following is a case in point. M. Reydelet, *curé* of Seyssel, was canon of St. Peter's, consequently acquainted with Le Maître, and one of the persons from whom it was most important that he should conceal himself. My advice, on the contrary, was that we should present ourselves to him, and, on some pretext or other, ask him for a night's lodging, as if we were at Seyssel with the sanction of the Chapter. Le Maître liked the idea, which made his revenge ironical and amusing. We accordingly proceeded boldly to M. Reydelet's house, and were kindly received. Le Maître told him that he was going to Bellay, at the request of the bishop, to conduct the choir at the Easter festival, and that he expected to pass through Seyssel again in a few days; while I, to back up these lies, poured out a hundred others so unconcernedly, that M. Reydelet, finding me a nice-looking lad, took a fancy to me, and spoke to me in a most friendly manner. We were well entertained and well lodged. M. Reydelet did not know how to make enough of us; and we parted the best friends in the world, promising to stop longer on our return. We could scarcely wait till we were alone before we burst out laughing, and I declare that I do the same now, whenever I think of it; for I cannot imagine a piece of waggery better planned or more happily executed. It would have kept us in good spirits throughout the journey, had not Le Maître, who drank incessantly, and went from one tavern to another, been attacked two or three times by fits to which he was very liable, which strongly resembled epilepsy. These attacks alarmed me, and made me think how I could best get out of it.

We went on to Bellay to spend Easter, as we had told M. Reydelet; and, although we were not expected there, we were received by the choir-master, and joyfully welcomed by all. Le Maître had a reputation, and deserved it. The choir-master made a point of producing his best works, and endeavoured to obtain the approval of so experienced a critic; for Le Maître, besides being a

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connoisseur, was always fair, free from jealousy, and no flatterer. He was so superior to all these provincial choir-masters, and they were so well aware of it, that they looked upon him rather as their chief than as a brother professional.

After having spent four or five days very agreeably at Bellay, we set out again and continued our journey without any further adventures than those which I have just mentioned. When we arrived at Lyons, we put up at Notre Dame de Pitié; and, while we were waiting for the box (which, thanks to another lie, we had persuaded our kind patron, M. Reydelet, to put on board a vessel on the Rhône), Le Maître went to see his acquaintances, amongst others Father Caton, a Grey friar, of whom I shall have something to say later, and the Abbé Dortan, Comte de Lyon. Both received him kindly, but afterwards betrayed him, as will presently be seen; his good luck had become exhausted at M. Reydelet's.

Two days after our arrival at Lyons, as we were going through a little street not far from our inn, Le Maître was overtaken by one of his attacks, which was so violent that I was seized with affright. I cried out and shouted for help, gave the name of his inn, and begged someone to take him there; then, while the crowd gathered round, eager to assist a man who had fallen senseless and foaming at the mouth in the middle of the street, he was abandoned by the only friend on whom he had a right to depend. I seized the moment when nobody was thinking of me; I turned the corner of the street and disappeared. Thank Heaven, I have finished this third painful confession! If I had many more of a similar kind to make, I should abandon the task I have commenced.

Of all the incidents I have related up to the present time, some traces have remained in all the places where I have lived; those which I shall relate in the next book are almost entirely unknown. They are the greatest extravagances of my life, and it is fortunate that they have not led to worse results. But my head, raised to the pitch of a foreign instrument, was out of its proper key; it recovered it of itself, and I abandoned my follies, or at least only committed such as were more in agreement with my natural disposition. This period of my youth is the one of which I have the most confused idea. During this time scarcely anything occurred of sufficient interest to my heart for me to preserve a lively recol-

lection of it; and it is almost unavoidable that, amidst so many wanderings backwards and forwards, so many successive changes, I should transpose times or places. I am writing entirely from memory, without notes, without materials to assist my recollection. There are events in my life which are as fresh in my mind as it they had just happened; but there are also gaps and voids, which I can only fill up by the aid of a narrative which is as confused as the recollection of it which has remained to me. It is, therefore, possible that I have sometimes made mistakes, and I may do so again, in unimportant matters, up to the time when I possess surer information regarding myself; but, in all that is really of essential importance, I feel sure of being an accurate and faithful chronicler, as I shall always endeavour to be in everything—of that the reader may rest assured.

As soon as I had left Le Maître, I made up my mind, and set out again for Annecy. The reason and secrecy of our departure had greatly interested me in the safety of our retreat; and this interest, which entirely absorbed my attention, had for some days diverted me from the thought of return; but as soon as a feeling of security left me free from anxiety, the ruling passion recovered its ascendancy. Nothing flattered or tempted me; my only desire was to return to mamma. The warmth and tenderness of my attachment to her had uprooted from my heart all imaginary projects, all the follies of ambition. I saw no other happiness than that of living with her, and I never went a step without feeling that I was removing further from this happiness. I accordingly returned to her as soon as it was possible. My return was so speedy, and my mind so distracted, that, although I recall to mind all my other journeys with the liveliest pleasure, I have not the slightest recollection of this; I remember nothing about it, except my departure from Lyons and my arrival at Annecy. I leave it to the reader to imagine whether this latter period is ever likely to fade from my memory. On my arrival, I no longer found Madame de Warens; she had set out for Paris.

I have never learnt the real secret of this journey. She would have told me, I am convinced, if I had pressed her to do so; but no one was ever less curious than myself about his friends' secrets; my heart, occupied only with the present, is entirely filled

with it, and, except for past pleasures, which henceforth form my only enjoyment, there is no empty corner in it for anything that is past. From the little that she told me, I fancied that, owing to the revolution at Turin, caused by the abdication of the King of Sardinia, she was afraid of being forgotten, and was anxious, with the assistance of the intrigues of M. d'Aubonne, to endeavour to obtain the same advantages at the French court, which, as she often told me, she would herself have preferred, because, in the midst of so many important affairs, one is not kept under such disagreeable surveillance. If this is true, it is surprising that, on her return, she was not regarded with greater disfavour, and that she has always drawn her pension uninterruptedly. Many believe that she was charged with some secret commission, either by the bishop, who had business at the French court and was obliged to undertake a journey thither himself, or by some even more powerful personage, who knew how to insure her a happy return. It is certain that, if this be the case, the ambassadress was not ill-chosen, and that, still young and beautiful, she possessed all the necessary qualifications for carrying out a negotiation successfully.

## BOOK IV

[1731 - 1732.]

I ARRIVED at Annecy, where I no longer found her. Imagine my surprise and grief! Then, for the first time, my regret at having abandoned Le Maître in so cowardly a manner made itself felt. It became keener still, when I heard of the misfortunes that had befallen him. His box of music, which contained all his worldly goods, the precious box, which had cost such trouble to save, had been seized on its arrival at Lyons, in consequence of a letter, in which the Chapter had informed Comte Dortan of its secret removal. Le Maître in vain claimed his property, his means of livelihood, the work of his whole life. The ownership of the box was at least open to dispute; but the question was not raised. The matter was decided on the spot by the law of the stronger, and poor Le Maître thus lost the fruit of his talents, the work of his youth and the resource of his old age.

Nothing was wanting to the blow which fell upon me to make it overwhelming. But I was at an age when great sorrow takes little hold, and I soon found means of consolation. I expected soon to hear news of Madame de Warens, although I did not know her address and she was ignorant of my return; and, as for my desertion of Le Maître, all things considered, I did not find it so blameworthy. I had been of service to him in his flight; that was the only service I could render him. If I had remained with him in France, I could not have cured him of his illness, I could not have saved his box, I should only have doubled his expenditure without being able to help him. This was the light in which I then regarded the matter: I regard it differently now. (A mean action does not torture us when we have just committed it, but long afterwards, when we recall it to mind; for the remembrance of it never dies.

In order to get news of mamma, the only thing I could do was



to wait; for where could I look for her in Paris, and what means had I to make the journey? Annecy was the safest place to gain tidings of her whereabouts, sooner or later. I therefore remained where I was, but behaved very badly. I never called on the bishop, who had already assisted me, and might have assisted me further; my patroness was no longer near me, and I was afraid of being reprimanded by him for running away. Still less did I go to the seminary; M. Gros was no longer there. I visited none of my acquaintances; however, I should have liked to go and see the Intendant's wife, but was afraid to do so. I did worse than this; I found M. Venture again, of whom, in spite of my enthusiasm for him, I had not even thought since my departure. I found him resplendent, fêted throughout Annecy; the ladies fought for him. This success completely turned my head. I saw no one but Venture, who almost made me forget Madame de Warens. In order to profit by his lessons more easily, I proposed to him to share his lodgings; he agreed. He lodged at a shoemaker's, a pleasant and amusing fellow, who in his *patois* never called his wife anything except *salopière* (slut), a name which she fully deserved. He often had quarrels with her, which Venture did his best to prolong, while pretending that he wanted to put a stop to them. Coldly, and in his Provençal dialect, he used words and expressions to them which produced the greatest effect; the scenes that took place were enough to make one burst with laughter. In this manner the mornings passed before we were aware of it; at two or three o'clock we took a modest lunch; Venture went to visit his friends, with whom he took dinner, while I went for a solitary walk, meditating upon his great advantages, admiring and envious of his rare talents, and cursing my unlucky star for not summoning me to an equally happy lot. How little I knew about it! my own life would have been a hundred times more delightful, if I had been less foolish, and had known better how to enjoy it!

Madame de Warens had only taken Anet with her; she had left Merceret behind, her maid of whom I have already spoken, and whom I found still occupying her mistress's room. Mademoiselle Merceret was a little older than myself, not pretty, but sufficiently agreeable; a good Fribourgeoise, free from vice, in whom I discovered no other failing except that at times she was somewhat

insubordinate to her mistress. I went to see her pretty often ; she was an old acquaintance, and the sight of her reminded me of another still dearer, for whose sake I loved her. She had several friends, amongst them a certain Mademoiselle Giraud, a Genevese, who, for my sins, took it into her head to take a fancy to me. She continually pressed Merceret to take me to see her, which I allowed her to do, because I was fond of her, and there were other young persons there whose company was very agreeable. As for Mademoiselle Giraud, who made up to me in every possible way, nothing could add to the aversion I felt towards her. When she put her withered black snout, filthy with snuff, near my face, I could hardly keep from spitting on it. But I bore it patiently ; besides, I enjoyed myself very much with all the girls, all of whom, either to pay court to Mademoiselle Giraud, or for my own sake, vied with one another in making much of me. In all this I saw nothing but friendship. Since then, I have sometimes thought that it only rested with myself to see something more ; but it never occurred to me, I never even gave it a thought.

Besides, sempstresses, chambermaids, and shop girls had not much temptation for me ; I wanted young ladies. Everyone has his fancies ; this has always been mine, and my ideas on this point are not those of Horace. However, it is certainly not the vanity of rank and position that attracts me ; it is a well preserved complexion, beautiful hands, a charming toilet, a general air of elegance and neatness, better taste in dress and expression, a finer and better made gown, a nattier pair of shoes, ribbons, lace, better arranged hair—this is what attracts me. I should always prefer a girl, even of less personal attractions, if better dressed. I myself confess this preference is ridiculous ; but my heart, in spite of myself, makes me entertain it.

Well ! once again these advantages offered themselves, and it only rested with myself to profit by them. How I love, from time to time, to come suddenly upon the delightful moments of my youth ! They were so sweet to me ; they have been so brief, so rare, and I have enjoyed them so cheaply ! Ah ! the mere remembrance of them brings back to my heart an unmixed pleasure, which I sorely need to reanimate my courage and to sustain the weariness of my remaining years.

One morning, the dawn appeared so beautiful that I threw on my clothes and hurried out into the country to see the sun rise. I enjoyed this sight in all its charm; it was the week after the festival of St. John. The earth, decked in its greatest splendour, was covered with verdure and flowers; the nightingales, nearly at the end of their song, seemed to delight in singing the louder; all the birds, uniting in their farewell to Spring, were singing in honour of the birth of a beautiful summer day, one of those beautiful days which one no longer sees at my age, and which are unknown in the melancholy land<sup>1</sup> in which I am now living.

Without perceiving it, I had wandered some distance from the town; the heat increased, and I walked along under the shady trees of a little valley by the side of a brook. I heard behind me the sound of horses' hoofs and the voices of girls, who seemed in a difficulty, but, nevertheless, were laughing heartily at it. I turned round, and heard myself called by name; when I drew near, I found two young ladies of my acquaintance, Mademoiselle de Graffenried and Mademoiselle Galley, who, being poor horsewomen, did not know how to make their horses cross the brook. Mademoiselle de Graffenried was an amiable young Bernese, who, having been driven from her home in consequence of some youthful folly, had followed the example of Madame de Warens, at whose house I had sometimes seen her; but, as she had no pension, she had been only too glad to attach herself to Mademoiselle Galley, who, having conceived a friendship for her, had persuaded her mother to let her stay with her as her companion until she could find some employment. Mademoiselle Galley was a year younger than her companion, and better-looking; there was something about her more delicate and more refined; at the same time, she had a very neat and well-developed figure, the greatest charm a girl can possess. They loved each other tenderly, and their good-nature could not fail to keep up this intimacy, unless some lover came to disturb it. They told me that they were on their way to Toune, an old château belonging to Madame Galley; they begged me to assist them to

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<sup>1</sup> Rousseau was at this time at Wootton, in Staffordshire.

get their horses across, which they could not manage by themselves. I wanted to whip the horses, but they were afraid that I might be kicked and they themselves thrown off. I accordingly had recourse to another expedient. I took Mademoiselle Galley's horse by the bridle, and then, pulling it after me, crossed the brook with the water up to my knees; the other horse followed without any hesitation. After this, I wanted to take leave of the young ladies and go my way like a fool. They whispered a few words to each other, and Mademoiselle de Graffenried, turning to me, said, "No, no; you shan't escape us like that. You have got wet in serving us, and we owe it as a duty to our conscience to see that you get dry. You must come with us, if you please; we make you our prisoner." My heart beat; I looked at Mademoiselle Galley. "Yes, yes," added she, laughing at my look of affright; "prisoner of war. Get up behind her; we will give a good account of you." "But, mademoiselle," I objected, "I have not the honour of your mother's acquaintance; what will she say when she sees me?" "Her mother is not at Touné," replied Mademoiselle de Graffenried; "we are alone; we return this evening, and you can return with us."

The effect of electricity is not more rapid than was the effect of these words upon me. Trembling with joy, I sprang upon Mademoiselle de Graffenried's horse; and, when I was obliged to put my arm round her waist to support myself, my heart beat so violently that she noticed it. She told me that hers was beating too, since she was afraid of falling. In the situation in which I was, this was almost an invitation to me to verify the truth for myself; but I had not the courage; and, during the whole of the ride, my two arms surrounded her like a belt, which certainly held her tight, but never shifted its place for a moment. Many women who read this would like to box my ears—and they would not be wrong.

The pleasant excursion and the chatter of the young ladies made me so talkative that we were never silent for a moment until evening—in fact, as long as we were together. They had put me so completely at my ease, that my tongue was as eloquent as my eyes, although not in the same manner. For a few moments only, when I found myself alone with one or the other, the conversation



Ed Hedouin inv. & sc

CROSSING THE BROOK  
(Book IV)



became a little constrained; but the absent one soon returned, and did not allow us time to investigate the reason of our embarrassment.

When we reached Toune, after I had first dried myself, we breakfasted. Next, it was necessary to proceed to the important business of dinner. The young ladies from time to time left off their cooking to kiss the farmer's children, and their poor scullion looked on and smothered his vexation. Provisions had been sent from the town, and all that was requisite for a good dinner, especially in the matter of delicacies; but, unfortunately, the wine had been forgotten. This was no wonder, since the young ladies did not drink it; but I was sorry for it, since I had counted upon its assistance to give me courage. They also were annoyed, possibly for the same reason, although I do not think so. Their lively and charming gaiety was innocence personified; besides, what could the two of them have done with me? They sent all round the neighbourhood to try and get some wine, but without success, so abstemious and poor are the peasants of this canton. They expressed their regret to me; I said that they need not be so concerned about it, that they did not require wine in order to intoxicate me. This was the only compliment I ventured to pay them during the day; but I believe that the roguish creatures saw clearly enough that the compliment was sincere.

We dined in the farmer's kitchen, the two friends seated on benches on either side of the long table, and their guest between them on a three-legged stool. What a dinner! what an enchanting remembrance! Why should a man, when he can enjoy pleasures so pure and real at so little cost, try to find new ones? No supper at any of the *petites maisons* of Paris could be compared to this meal, not only for gaiety and cheerfulness, but, I declare, for sensual enjoyment.

After dinner we practised a little economy. Instead of drinking the coffee which remained over from breakfast, we kept it for our tea with the cream and cakes which they had brought with them; and, to keep up our appetites, we went into the orchard to finish our dessert with cherries. I climbed up the tree, and threw down bunches of fruit, while they threw the stones back at me through the branches. Once Mademoiselle Galley, holding out her apron



and throwing back her head, presented herself as a mark so prettily, and I took such accurate aim, that I threw a bunch right into her bosom. How we laughed! I said to myself, If my lips were only cherries, how readily would I throw them into the same place!

The day passed in this manner in the most unrestrained enjoyment, which, however, never overstepped the limits of the strictest decency. No *double-entendre*, no risky jest was uttered; and this decency was by no means forced, it was perfectly natural, and we acted and spoke as our hearts prompted. In short, my modesty—others will call it stupidity—was so great, that the greatest liberty of which I was guilty was once to kiss Mademoiselle Galley's hand. It is true that the circumstances gave special value to this favour. We were alone, I was breathing with difficulty, her eyes were cast down; my mouth, instead of giving utterance to words, fastened upon her hand, which she gently withdrew after I had kissed it, looking at me in a manner that showed no irritation. I do not know what I might have said to her; her friend came into the room, and appeared to me distinctly ugly at that moment.

At last, they remembered that they ought not to wait till night before returning to the town. We only just had time to get back while it was daylight, and we hastened to set out in the same order as we came. If I had dared, I would have changed the order; for Mademoiselle Galley's looks had created a profound impression upon my heart; but I did not venture to say anything, and it was not for her to make the proposal. On the way, we said to ourselves that it was a great pity that the day was over; but, far from complaining that it had been too short, we agreed that we had possessed the secret of lengthening it by the aid of all the amusements with which we had known how to occupy it.

I left them almost at the spot where they had found me. With what regret we separated! with what delight we planned to meet again! Twelve hours spent together were for us as good as centuries of intimacy. The sweet remembrance of that day cost the young girls nothing; the tender union between us three was worth far livelier pleasures, which would not have suffered it to exist; we loved one another openly and without shame, and were ready

to love one another always in the same manner. Innocence of character has its enjoyment, which is certainly equal to any other, since it knows no relaxation and never ceases. As for me, I know that the memory of so beautiful a day touches and charms me more, and goes straighter to my heart, than the recollection of any pleasures that I have ever enjoyed. I did not exactly know what I wanted with these two charming persons, but both of them interested me exceedingly. I do not say that, if I had had control of the arrangements, my heart would have been equally shared between them. I had a slight feeling of preference; I should have been quite happy to have Mademoiselle de Graffenried as a mistress; but, if it had depended entirely upon myself, I think I should have preferred her for an intimate friend. Be that as it may, it seemed to me, when I left them, that I could no longer live without them both. Who would have said that I was never to see them in my life again, and that our love of a day was to end there?

My readers will not fail to laugh at my love adventures, and to remark that, after lengthy preliminaries, even those which made greatest progress, end in a kiss of the hand. O, my readers, do not be mistaken! I have, perhaps, had greater enjoyment in my amours which have ended in a simple kiss of the hand, than you will ever have in yours, which, at least, have begun with that!

Venture, who had gone to bed very late the night before, came home soon after me. This time I did not feel as pleased as usual to see him, and I was careful not to tell him how I had spent the day. The young ladies had spoken of him somewhat contemptuously, and had seemed ill-pleased to know that I was in such bad hands; this did him harm in my estimation, and, besides, everything which drew my attention from them could not fail to be disagreeable. However, he soon brought me back to myself and to him, by speaking of my position. It was too critical to be able to continue. Although I spent very little, my purse was almost empty, and I was without resources. No news of mamma arrived; I did not know what to do, and I felt a cruel pang at seeing the friend of Mademoiselle Galley reduced to beggary.

Venture told me that he had spoken about me to the Juge-Mage and that he would take me to dine with him on the following day;

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1 The lieutenant of the seneschal, an important officer of the crown, who administered justice in the King's name.

that he was a man who might be able to assist me through his friends, and a pleasant acquaintance to make, being a man of intelligence and education, and an agreeable companion, who possessed talent himself and respected it in others; then, mingling together in his usual fashion the most serious matters with the most trifling frivolities, he showed me a pretty little couplet just arrived from Paris, set to an air out of one of Mouret's operas, which was being played at the time. This couplet had pleased M. Simon (the Juge-Mage) so much, that he wanted to compose another to the same tune to answer it; he had also told Venture to compose one, and the latter had been seized with the mad idea of making me compose a third, in order, as he said, that the couplets might be seen arriving on the next day like the sedan-chairs in the *Roman comique*.<sup>1</sup>

Being unable to sleep, I composed my couplet to the best of my abilities. Considering that they were the first verses that I had ever made, they were tolerable, even better, or, at any rate, more tasteful, than they would have been the day before, as the subject turned upon a tender situation, for which my heart was already sympathetic. I showed my couplet, in the morning, to Venture, who, thinking it pretty, put it in his pocket without telling me whether he had composed his own. We went to dine with M. Simon, who received us cordially. The conversation was animated, indeed, it could not have been anything else, when carried on by two intelligent and well-read men. As for me, I played my usual part; I listened and held my tongue. Neither of them said a word about the couplet; I said nothing either, and, as far as I know, mine was never mentioned.

M. Simon appeared satisfied with my behaviour; this was nearly all that he learned about me at this interview. He had already seen me several times at mamma's house, without paying particular attention to me. It is from this dinner that I date my acquaintance with him, which proved useless as far as the object I had in view was concerned, but from which I afterwards gained other advantages, which cause me to remember him with pleasure.

I must not omit to say something about his personal appear-

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1 By Scarron.

ance, of which, considering his magisterial capacity and the *bel esprit* on which he prided himself, it would otherwise be impossible for anyone to form an idea. His height was certainly not three feet. His legs, straight, thin, and tolerably long would have made him look taller, if they had been vertical; but they formed an obtuse angle like those of a wide-opened pair of compasses. His body was not only short, but thin, and in every way indescribably small. When naked, he must have looked like a grasshopper. His head, of ordinary size, with a well-formed face, noble features, and nice eyes, looked like a false head set upon a stump. He might have spared himself much expense in the matter of clothing, for his large wig alone covered him completely from head to foot.

He had two entirely different voices, which, when he spoke, continually mingled together, and contrasted in a manner which at first was very amusing, but soon became disagreeable. One was grave and sonorous; if I may say so, it was the voice of his head. The other—clear, sharp, and piercing—was the voice of his body. When he was very careful, spoke very deliberately, and husbanded his breath, he could always speak with his deep voice; but as soon as he became ever so little animated and spoke in a livelier tone, his accent resembled the whistling of a key, and he had the greatest difficulty in recovering his bass.

With the appearance which I have described, and which is not in the least exaggerated, M. Simon was polite, a great courtier, and careful in his dress even to foppishness. As he desired to make the most of his advantages, he liked to give audience in bed; for no one, who saw a fine head on the pillow, was likely to imagine that that was all. This sometimes caused scenes, which I am sure all Annecy still remembers.

One morning, when he was waiting for some litigants in, or rather upon, this bed, in a beautiful fine white nightcap, ornamented with two large knots of rose-coloured ribbon, a countryman arrived and knocked at the door. The maidservant had gone out. M. Simon, hearing the knock repeated, cried out, "Come in," and the word, spoken a little too vigorously, came out of his mouth with his shrill utterance. The man entered, looked to see where the woman's voice came from, and, seeing in the bed a woman's mobcap and a top-knot, was going to retire with profound apologies.

M. Simon became angry, and cried out in a still shriller voice. The countryman, confirmed in his idea and considering himself insulted, overwhelmed him with abuse, told him that he was apparently nothing but a prostitute, and that the Juge-Mage set anything but a good example in his house. M. Simon, full of fury, and having no other weapon but his chamberpot, was going to throw it at the poor man's head, when his housekeeper came in.

This little dwarf, although so cruelly treated by nature in regard to his person, had received compensation for this in his mental talents, which were naturally agreeable, and which he had carefully developed. Although he was said to be a tolerably good lawyer, he had no liking for his profession. He had thrown himself into polite literature, and had succeeded. He had, above all, acquired that brilliant superficiality, that gift of varied conversation which gives society its charm, even in the company of women. He knew by heart all the little characteristics of the *Anas*<sup>1</sup> and the like; he possessed the art of making the most of them, relating them to advantage and with an air of mystery, as if that which had taken place sixty years ago had been an anecdote of yesterday. He understood music, and sang agreeably with his man's voice—in short, he possessed many pretty accomplishments for a magistrate. By dint of long paying court to the ladies of Annecy, he had become the fashion amongst them: he was always in attendance upon them like a little monkey.<sup>2</sup> He even pretended to have great success with women, which amused them exceedingly. A certain Madame d'Épagny said that the greatest favour for him was to be allowed to kiss a woman's knee.

As he had a knowledge of good literature and was very fond of talking about it, his conversation was not only amusing, but also instructive. Afterwards, when I had acquired a taste for study, I cultivated his acquaintance, and derived great advantage from it. I sometimes went from Chambéri, where I was at that time, to see him. He commended and encouraged my zeal, and gave me some

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<sup>1</sup> Collections of memorable sayings of certain persons, and anecdotes connected with them, as *Johnsoniana*, *Walpoliana*. These titles originated in France.

<sup>2</sup> *Sapajou*: an American monkey; used figuratively in the sense of "an ugly little man."

good advice about my reading, by which I often benefited. Unfortunately, in this weakly body dwelt a very sensitive soul. Some years later, he had some trouble or other which so grieved him that he died of it. It was a pity; he was certainly a good little man, whom one began by laughing at and ended by loving. Although his life has had little to do with mine, yet, as I have received some useful lessons from him, I thought I might, out of gratitude, dedicate a niche in my memory to him.

As soon as I was at liberty, I ran to the street where Mademoiselle Galley lived, flattering myself with the hope of seeing some one going in or out, or opening a window. Nothing, not even a cat, was to be seen; and all the time I was there the house remained as firmly closed as if it had never been inhabited. The street was narrow and deserted; the presence of a man attracted attention; from time to time some one passed, or went in or out of the neighbourhood. I was much troubled about my person; it seemed to me that they guessed why I was there; and this idea tormented me, for I have always preferred the honour and repose of those who were dear to me to my own pleasures.

At last, tired of playing the Spanish lover, and having no guitar, I determined to write to Mademoiselle de Graffenried. I would rather have written to her friend, but I did not dare to do so; besides, it was more becoming to begin with the one to whom I owed the acquaintance of the other, and with whom I was more intimate. When my letter was finished, I took it to Mademoiselle Giraud, as had been agreed with the young ladies when we parted. It was they who suggested this expedient. Mademoiselle Giraud was a quilter, and, as she sometimes worked at Madame Galley's, she had access to her house. The messenger, certainly, did not appear to me well chosen: but I was afraid that, if I made any difficulty about her, they would propose no other. Besides, I did not dare to hint that she wanted to establish a claim of her own upon me. I felt mortified that she should venture to think that she was, in my eyes, of the same sex as those young ladies. In short, I preferred this means of delivering my letter to none at all, and took my chance.

At the first word Giraud guessed my secret; it was not difficult. Even if a letter to be delivered to a young lady had not

spoken for itself, my silly and embarrassed air alone would have betrayed me. It may be imagined that this commission did not afford her great pleasure; however, she undertook it, and executed it faithfully. The next morning I ran to her house, where I found my answer. How I hastened to get outside, to read and kiss it to my heart's content—that there is no need to tell; but there is all the more reason to mention the manner in which Mademoiselle Giraud behaved, in which she showed greater delicacy and reserve than I should have expected from her. Sensible enough to perceive that, with her thirty-seven years, her leveret's eyes, her snuff-bedaubed nose, her shrill voice and her black skin, she stood a bad chance against two young persons, full of grace and in all the splendour of beauty, she resolved neither to betray nor to assist them, and preferred to lose me rather than help them to win me.

[1732.]—Merceret, not having received any tidings of her mistress, had for some time thought of returning to Fribourg; Mademoiselle Giraud made her decide to do so. She did more; she gave her to understand that it would be right that someone should take her back to her father, and proposed myself. Little Merceret, who by no means disliked me either, thought this idea a very good one. The same day they spoke to me of it as a settled affair, and, as I found nothing disagreeable in this manner of disposing of myself, I consented, considering the journey as a matter of a week at most. Giraud, who thought otherwise, arranged everything. I was obliged to confess the state of my finances. Provision was made for me; Merceret undertook to defray my expenses, and, to make up for the loss she thus incurred, it was agreed, at my entreaty, that her few belongings should be sent on in advance, and that we should make the journey slowly on foot. This was done.

I am sorry to be obliged to describe so many girls in love with me; but, as I have very little reason to be vain of the advantages I have gained from these amours, I think I may tell the truth without scruple. Merceret, younger and not so cunning as Giraud, never made such lively advances; but she imitated the tone of my voice and accent, repeated my words, showed me the attention which I ought to have shown to her, and, being naturally very timid, always took care that we slept in the same



room; an intimacy which rarely stops at such a point in the case of a young man of twenty and a young woman of twenty-five who are travelling together.

On this occasion, however, such was the case. My simplicity was such that, although Merceret was not disagreeable to me, not only did the slightest attempt at gallantry never occur to my mind, during the whole journey, but I never even had the remotest idea of anything of the kind; and, even if the idea had occurred to me, I should have been too foolish to know how to take advantage of it. I could not imagine how a young man and a young woman could ever sleep together; I believed that it required ages to prepare for this terrible arrangement. If poor Merceret, when she offered to defray my expenses, reckoned upon some equivalent, she was deceived; we reached Fribourg exactly as we had left Annecy.

When we passed through Geneva, I did not go to see anyone; but I almost had a serious attack of illness on the bridges. I have never seen the walls of this happy city, never entered its gates, without feeling a certain heart-sinking, the result of excessive emotion. While the noble image of liberty elevated my soul, thoughts of equality, union, and gentleness of manners moved me even to tears, and inspired me with a lively regret at having lost all these blessings. How mistaken I was, and yet how naturally! I thought I saw all this in my native land, because I carried it in my heart.

We were obliged to pass Nyon. Pass without seeing my good father! Had I been able to bring myself to do this, I should afterwards have died of grief. I left Merceret at the inn, and went at all risks to see him. Ah! how wrong I was to be afraid of him! When I approached him, his heart opened itself to those feelings of a father with which it was filled. How he wept while we embraced! He at first thought that I had returned to him. I told him my story and my resolution. He feebly opposed it. He pointed out to me the dangers to which I was exposing myself, and told me that the briefest follies were the best. For the rest, he did not feel the slightest temptation to detain me by force, and in that I am of opinion that he was right; but it is none the less certain that he did not do all that he might have done to bring

me back, whether it was that he himself was of opinion that I ought not to retrace the step that I had already taken, or, perhaps, did not quite know what he could do with me at my age. I have since learned that he had formed a very unjust and entirely false, although very natural, opinion of my travelling companion. My step-mother, a good woman but rather mawkish, pretended to want to keep me to supper. I did not stay, but told them that I intended to stop longer with them on my return, and left in their charge my little bundle which I had sent by the boat and did not know what to do with. I set out early the next morning, pleased that I had had the courage to do my duty and had seen my father.

We arrived without accident at Fribourg. Towards the end of the journey, my companion's advances became less pronounced. After our arrival, she showed me nothing but coldness, and her father, who was not rolling in money, did not give me a very favourable reception; and I went to an inn to sleep. The following day I went to see them; they invited me to dinner; I accepted. Then we separated with dry eyes. In the evening I returned to my beershop, and left the place two days after my arrival, without exactly knowing which way I intended to go.

[ Here again was an incident in my life when Providence offered me exactly what I wanted, in order to spend my days in happiness. Merceret was a very good girl, certainly not brilliant or handsome, but neither was she ugly; she possessed little animation, and, but for occasional exhibitions of temper, which passed off with tears and never led to any stormy results, was very sensible. She was really attached to me; I might have married her without any difficulty, and followed her father's trade; my taste for music would have made me fond of it. I should have settled at Fribourg—a little town, not pretty, certainly, but inhabited by very good-natured people. I should, no doubt, have lost much pleasure, but I should have lived in peace to my last hour; and I, better than anyone else, ought to know that there was no reason for a moment's hesitation about such a bargain.

I returned, not to Nyon, but to Lausanne. I wanted to sate myself with the sight of this beautiful lake, which is there seen in its greatest extent. Few of the secret motives which have

determined me to act have been more rational. Things seen at a distance are rarely powerful enough to make me act. The uncertainty of the future has always made me look upon plans, which need considerable time to carry them out, as decoys for fools. I indulge in hopes like others, provided it costs me nothing to support them; but if they require continued attention, I have done with it. The least trifling pleasure which is within my reach tempts me more than the joys of Paradise. However, I make an exception of the pleasure which is followed by pain; this has no temptation for me, because I love only pure enjoyments, and these a man never has when he knows that he is preparing for himself repentance and regret.

It was very necessary for me to reach some place, the nearer the better; for, having lost my way, I found myself in the evening at Moudon, where I spent the little money I had left, except ten kreutzers, which went the next day for dinner; and, in the evening, when I reached a little village near Lausanne, I entered an inn without a sou to pay for my bed, and not knowing what to do. Being very hungry, I put a good face upon the matter, and called for supper, as if I had been quite able to pay for it. I went to bed without thinking of anything, and slept soundly; and, after I had breakfasted in the morning and reckoned with my host, I wanted to leave him my waistcoat as security for the seven *batz*, which was the amount of my bill. This good fellow refused it; he said that, thanks to heaven, he had never stripped anyone; that he did not mean to begin for the sake of seven *batz*; that I could keep my waistcoat and pay him when I could. I was touched by his kindness, but less than I ought to have been, and less than I have been since, when I have thought of it again. I soon sent him his money, with thanks, by a messenger whom I could trust; but, fifteen years afterwards, returning from Italy by way of Lausanne, I sincerely regretted to find that I had forgotten the name of the landlord and of the inn. I should certainly have gone to see him; it would have been a real pleasure to me to remind him of his act of charity, and to prove to him that it had not been ill-applied. The simple and unpretentious kindness of this worthy man appears to me more deserving of gratitude than services, doubtless more important, but rendered with greater ostentation.

When approaching Lausanne, I mused upon the straits in which I found myself, and thought how I might extricate myself without betraying my distress to my step-mother; and, in this pilgrimage on foot, I compared myself to my friend Venture on his arrival at Annecy. I was so heated with this idea that, without reflecting that I possessed neither his charm of manner nor his accomplishments, I took it into my head to play the little Venture at Lausanne, to give lessons in music which I did not understand, and to say that I came from Paris, where I had never been. As there was no choir-school, in which I could have offered to assist, and as, besides, I was not such a fool as to venture amongst those who were acquainted with the art, I commenced to carry out my fine project by making inquiries for a small inn where I could live well and cheaply. I was recommended to a certain M. Perrotet, who took boarders. This Perrotet proved to be the best fellow in the world, and gave me a most hearty reception. I told him my petty lies, as I had prepared them. He promised to speak about me, and to try to get me some pupils, and said that he would not ask me for any money until I had earned some. His charge for board was five "white crowns," little enough, everything considered, for the accommodation, but a great deal for me. He advised me only to put myself on half-board at first; this meant some good soup, and nothing else, for dinner, but a good supper later. I agreed. Poor Perrotet let me have all this without payment, and with the best heart in the world, and spared no pains to be of use to me.

Why is it that, having found so many good people in my youth, I find so few in my later years? Is their race extinct? No; but the class in which I am obliged to look for them now, is no longer the same as that in which I found them. Among the people, where great passions only speak at intervals, the sentiments of nature make themselves more frequently heard; in the higher ranks they are absolutely stifled, and, under the mask of sentiment, it is only interest or vanity that speaks.

I wrote from Lausanne to my father, who forwarded my bundle, and gave me some excellent advice—of which I ought to have made better use. I have already noted moments of incomprehensible delirium, during which I was no longer myself. Here,

again, is one of the most striking instances. In order to understand to what an extent I had lost my head, to what an extent I had, so to speak, *Venturised* myself, it is only necessary to consider how many extravagances I committed at one and the same time. Behold me a teacher of singing, without knowing how to decipher an air; for even had I profited by the six months spent with Le Maître, they would never have been sufficient; besides, I had been taught by a master, and that was enough to make me learn indifferently. A Parisian from Geneva, and a Catholic in a Protestant country, I considered I ought to change my name as well as my religion and my country. I always adhered as closely as possible to my great model. He had called himself *Venture de Villeneuve*; out of the name Rousseau I made the anagram *Vaussore*, and called myself *Vaussore de Villeneuve*. *Venture* knew how to compose, although he had said nothing about it; I, without any knowledge of this, boasted of my skill before all the world; and, without being able to score the most trifling vaudeville, I gave myself out as a composer. This was not all; having been presented to M. de Treytorens, a professor of law, who was very fond of music and gave concerts at his house, I must needs give him a sample of my talents, and began to compose a piece for his concert with as much effrontery as if I knew how to set about it. I had the perseverance to work for a fortnight at this beautiful composition, to make a fair copy of it, to write out the parts, and distribute them with as much assurance as if it had been a masterpiece of harmony. Lastly, a thing which will hardly be believed although it is perfectly true, to crown this lofty production in a befitting manner, I added at the end a pretty minuet, which was sung in every street, and which, perhaps, everybody still recollects, the words of which were as follows:

Quelle caprice !  
 Quelle injustice !  
 Quoi ! ta Clarice  
 Trahirait tes feux ! etc.

*Venture* had taught me this air, with a bass accompaniment and other disgusting words, which had helped me to remember it. I accordingly added at the end of my composition this minuet and his bass, suppressing the words, and gave the whole out as

my own, as fearlessly as if I had been talking to the inhabitants of the moon.

The company assembled to perform my piece. I explained to each how the time was to be taken, the manner of execution, and the signs of repetition of the parts. I was extremely busy. They spent five or six minutes in trying their voices and instruments, which seemed five or six centuries. At last all was ready; I gave five or six beats of "Attention!" with a beautiful roll of paper upon my conductor's desk. Silence having been obtained, I solemnly began to beat time, the performance commenced. . . . No, since the days of French opera, never has such a caterwauling been heard! Whatever they might have thought of my pretended talent, the effect was worse than anything that seemed to be expected. The musicians were ready to choke with laughter; the audience opened their eyes wide, and would gladly have stopped their ears, but did not know how. The musicians, who played the part of my executioners, wishing to amuse themselves, scraped horribly enough to split the drum of a deaf man's<sup>1</sup> ear. I had the hardihood to keep on without stopping, my forehead covered with large drops of sweat, but prevented by shame from running away and leaving them all in the lurch. By way of consolation, I heard those who were present whispering to themselves, or rather to me, "Intolerable! What mad music! What a witches' Sabbath!" Poor Jean Jacques! in this cruel moment, little did you think that one day, in the presence of the King of France and all his Court, your music would excite murmurs of applause and astonishment, and that, in all the boxes round you, charming women would whisper to themselves, "What enchanting music! What charming notes! All these airs go straight to the heart!"

But what put everyone in good humour was the minuet. No sooner had a few notes been played, then I heard on all sides bursts of laughter. Everybody congratulated me on my refined taste; they assured me that this minuet would make a name for me, and that my composition deserved to be sung everywhere. I need not describe my anguish, nor confess that I well deserved it.

Next day, one of the musicians, named Lutold, came to see me,

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<sup>1</sup> *Un quinze-vingt*: properly an inmate of the hospital at Paris, established for 300 blind men.

and was honest enough not to congratulate me on my success. The deep feeling of folly, shame and regret, despair at the position to which I was reduced, the impossibility of keeping my heart shut in my distress, made me open it to him. I let my tears flow freely; and, not content with confessing my ignorance, I told him everything, begging him to keep it a secret; he promised to do so, and kept his word in the manner that may be imagined. The same evening the whole of Lausanne knew who I was; and, what was remarkable, no one showed that he knew it, not even the good Perrotet, who, in spite of everything, was not deterred from giving me board and lodging.

I lived, but my life was very melancholy. The results of my first appearance did not make Lausanne a very agreeable place for me to stay in. Pupils did not come in crowds; I did not even get a single girl to teach, and no one belonging to the town. I had in all two or three fat "Deutsche," whose stupidity was only equalled by my ignorance, who wearied me to death, and, in my hands, did not turn out very accomplished strummers. I was sent for to one house only, where a little serpent of a girl amused herself with showing me a quantity of music of which I could not read a note, and which she was spiteful enough afterwards to sing in the music-master's face, to show him how it ought to be executed. I was so little able to read an air at sight, that, at the brilliant concert of which I have spoken, I was utterly unable to follow the performance even for a moment to find out whether the musicians were playing what I had before my eyes—the music which I had composed myself.

In the midst of these great humiliations I found sweet consolation in the news I received from time to time from my two charming friends. I have always found great power of consolation in their sex; and nothing soothes my dejection in times of affliction more than the feeling that an amiable person sympathizes with me. The correspondence, however, came to an end soon afterwards, and was never renewed; but it was my fault. When I changed my place of abode, I forgot to give them my address; and, being compelled by necessity to think of nothing but myself, I soon forgot them altogether.

I have not spoken of poor mamma for some time; but it would



be a mistake to think that I also forget her. I never ceased to think of her and to long to find her again, not only to satisfy the needs of existence, but still more those of my heart. My devotion to her, lively and tender as it was, did not prevent me from loving others, but not in the same way. All alike owed my tenderness to their charms; but, whereas in the case of others these were the only cause of it, and it would have disappeared with them, mamma might have grown old and ugly, and I should have loved her as fondly as ever. My heart had completely transferred to her person the homage which it at first rendered to her beauty; and, whatever change she might have suffered, my feelings towards her could never have changed, provided that she had still remained herself. I knew very well that I owed her my gratitude; but in reality I did not think of that. Whatever she might have done for me or not, it would always have been the same. I loved her neither from a feeling of duty or self-interest, nor from motives of convenience; I loved her because I was born to love her. When I fell in love with any other woman, I admit that it distracted my attention, and I thought of her less frequently; but I thought of her with the same feelings of pleasure, and, whether in love or not, I never occupied my thoughts with her without feeling that there could never be any real happiness for me in life, as long as I was separated from her.

Although I had not heard of her for so long, I never believed that I had lost her altogether, or thought it possible that she could have forgotten me. I said to myself: Sooner or later she will learn that I am a lonely wanderer, and will give me some sign of life; I shall find her again, of that I am certain. Meanwhile, it was a delight to me to live in her native country, to walk through the streets through which she had walked, past the houses in which she had lived—all by guess, for it was one of my foolish oddities that I could not bring myself to make inquiries about her, or even to mention her name, unless it was absolutely necessary. It seemed to me that I could not speak of her without betraying the feelings with which she inspired me, without my mouth revealing the secret of my heart, without in some way compromising her. I even believe that with this was mingled a certain feeling of alarm that someone might say something bad about her. The step she had taken had

been freely commented upon, and her conduct discussed. For fear that they might not speak of her as I should have liked, I preferred to hear nothing at all said about her.

As my pupils did not take up much of my time, and her birth-place was only twelve miles from Lausanne, I spent three or four days in walking there, during which a feeling of most tender emotion never left me. [The view of the Lake of Geneva and its delightful shores always possessed a special charm in my eyes which I cannot explain, and which consists not only in the beauty of the view, but in something still more attractive, which moves and touches me.] Whenever I approach the Canton of Vaud, I am conscious of an impression in which the remembrance of Madame de Warens, who was born there, of my father who lived there, of Mademoiselle de Vulson who enjoyed the first fruits of my youthful love, of several pleasure trips which I made there when a child, and, I believe, some other exciting cause, more mysterious and more powerful than all this, is combined. When the burning desire of this happy and peaceful life, which flees from me and for which I was born, inflames my imagination, it is always the Canton of Vaud, near the lake, in the midst of enchanting scenery, to which it draws me. I feel that I must have an orchard on the shore of this lake and no other, that I must have a loyal friend, a loving wife, a cow, and a little boat. I shall never enjoy perfect happiness on earth until I have all that. I laugh at the simplicity with which I have several times visited this country merely in search of this imaginary happiness. I was always surprised to find its inhabitants, especially the women, of quite a different character from that which I expected. How contradictory it appeared to me! The country and its inhabitants have never seemed to me made for each other.

During this journey to Vévay, walking along the beautiful shore, I abandoned myself to the sweetest melancholy. My heart eagerly flung itself into a thousand innocent raptures; I was filled with emotion, I sighed and wept like a child. How often have I stopped to weep to my heart's content, and, sitting on a large stone, amused myself with looking at my tears falling into the water!

At Vévay I lodged at *La Clef*, and, during the two days that I remained there without seeing anyone, I conceived an affection

for this town which has followed me on all my journeys, and which, finally, made me fix the abode of the heroes of my romance there. I would say to all persons of taste and feeling: Go to Vévay, explore the country, contemplate the scenery, row on the lake, and then say if Nature has not made this beautiful country for a Julie, a Claire and a St. Preux; but do not expect to find them there!

I return to my history.

As I was a Catholic and professed to be one, I followed openly and without hesitation the faith which I had embraced. On Sundays, when it was fine, I went to mass at Assens, two leagues from Lausanne. I usually went in the company of other Catholics, particularly a Parisian embroiderer whose name I have forgotten. He was not a Parisian like myself, but a true Parisian from Paris, an arch-Parisian of the *bon Dieu*, good-natured as a child of Champagne. His love for his country was so great that he would not allow himself to have any doubts about my being a Parisian as well, for fear of losing the opportunity of talking about it. M. de Crouzas, the lieutenant-governor, had a gardener—who was also a Parisian, but not so good-natured—who considered the honour of his country compromised if anyone dared to claim it for his own when he had no right to do so. He questioned me with the air of a man who felt sure of catching me in a mistake, and then smiled maliciously. He once asked me what there was remarkable in the Marché-neuf. As may be imagined, I answered at random. Having lived twenty years in Paris, I ought by this time to know the city; and yet, if anyone were to ask me a similar question to-day, I should be equally at a loss for an answer, and my embarrassment might lead anyone to conclude that I have never been there. To such an extent is a person liable, even when he meets with the truth, to put his trust in misleading arguments.

I cannot say exactly how long I remained at Lausanne; I did not carry away from it very lively recollections. I only know that, finding myself unable to gain a livelihood, I went from there to Neufchâtel, where I spent the winter. I was more successful in the latter town; I got some pupils, and earned enough to settle with my good friend Perrotet, who had faithfully sent on my little bundle, although I still owed him a considerable sum.

I insensibly learned music by teaching it. My life was tolerably pleasant; a sensible man would have been content with it, but my restless heart wanted something more. On Sundays and other days when I was at liberty, I roamed the country and forests in the neighbourhood, ever wandering, musing, and sighing; and, when once out of the city, I never returned till the evening. One day, being at Boudry, I went into an inn to dine; I saw there a man with a long beard, a violet-coloured coat after the Greek style, a fur cap, of somewhat noble appearance and presence, who often had great difficulty in making himself understood, since he spoke an almost unintelligible jargon, which resembled Italian more than any other language. I understood nearly everything he said, and I was the only person who did. He could only express his meaning by making signs to the landlord and the country people. I said a few words to him in Italian, which he understood perfectly; he got up and embraced me with delight. The acquaintance was soon made, and from that moment I acted as his interpreter. His dinner was a good one, mine was barely tolerable; he invited me to share his, and I accepted without ceremony. Drinking and chattering, we became quite intimate, and at the end of the meal we were inseparable. He told me that he was a Greek prelate and Archimandrite of Jerusalem, and that he had been commissioned to make a collection in Europe for the restoration of the Holy Sepulchre. He showed me beautiful patents from the Czarina and the Emperor; he had several more from other sovereigns. He was well satisfied with the amount he had already collected, but he had found incredible difficulties in Germany, since he did not understand a word of German, Latin, or French, and was reduced to his Greek, Turkish, and the *lingua franca*, as his sole resource, which had not helped him much in the country in which he had made so bad a beginning. He proposed that I should accompany him as secretary and interpreter. Although I had just bought a new violet coat, which was not ill-suited to my new employment, I looked anything but smart, so that he thought it would be an easy matter to secure my services, and in this he was not mistaken. Our agreement was soon made; I asked nothing, and he promised much. Without security, without bond, without knowing anything about him, I submitted myself to his guidance, and the next morning behold me on my way to Jerusalem!

We commenced our journey with the Canton of Fribourg, where he did not do much. His episcopal rank did not allow him to play the beggar and collect money from private persons; but we presented his commission to the senate, who gave him a small sum. From there we went to Berne. We put up at the Falcon, at that time a good inn, where good company was to be found. The guests were numerous and the table well served. I had so long had to put up with bad fare, that I needed to recruit myself; I had the opportunity and made use of it. The worthy Archimandrite was himself very good company, lively, fond of the table, and conversed well with those who understood him. He was not without a certain amount of knowledge, and employed his Greek erudition with considerable taste. One day, while cracking nuts at dessert, he cut his finger very deeply; and as the blood poured forth in streams, he showed his finger to the company, and said, with a laugh, *Mirate, Signori; questo è sangue pelasgo*.<sup>1</sup>

At Berne my services were of some use to him, and I did not come off as badly as I had expected. I was more courageous and eloquent than I should have been on behalf of myself. But it was not so simple a matter as at Fribourg; lengthy and frequent conferences with the chief men of the State were necessary, and the examination of his papers was not the work of a day. At length, when everything was in order, he was admitted to an audience by the senate. I went with him as his interpreter, and was ordered to speak. This was the last thing I had expected; it had never entered my head that, after long conferences with the individual members, it would be necessary to address the assembly in a body as if nothing had been said. Judge of my embarrassment! For a man as bashful as myself, to speak, not only in public but before the Senate of Berne, and to speak extempore, without having a single minute for preparation, was enough to annihilate me. And yet I did not even feel nervous. Briefly and clearly I explained the Archimandrite's commission. I praised the piety of those princes who had contributed to the collection he had come to make. In order to stir their excellencies to emulation, I said that no less was to be expected from their accustomed munificence; and then,

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1 Admire, gentlemen; this is Pelasgian blood!

having tried to prove that this good work was equally meritorious for all Christians without distinction of sect or creed, I ended by promising the blessings of Heaven to all those who should take part in it. I will not say that my speech made a great impression, but it was certainly to the taste of the audience, and, on leaving, the Archimandrite received a considerable donation, and, in addition, compliments upon the intelligence of his secretary, which I had the pleasing task of interpreting, although I did not venture to render them word for word. This is the only time in my life that I have ever spoken in public and in the presence of a sovereign, and perhaps, also the only time that I have spoken well and boldly. What a difference in the temperament of the same man! Three years ago, I went to Yverdon to see my old friend M. Roguin, and received a deputation, which came to thank me for some books which I had presented to the town library. The Swiss are great orators; they harangued me. I felt obliged to reply; but I was so embarrassed when I began to do so, and my head became so confused, that I stopped short and made myself ridiculous. Although naturally shy, I have sometimes shown confidence in my youth, never in my riper years. The more I have seen of the world, the less I have been able to conform to its manner.

On leaving Berne, we went to Soleure; for the Archimandrite intended to pass through Germany again and to return by way of Hungary or Poland, which was an enormously long round; but as his purse filled rather than emptied on the road, he had little fear of a roundabout way. As for me, it was a matter of indifference whether I was on horseback or on foot; and I should have desired nothing better than to travel in the same manner my whole lifetime; but it was written that I should not go so far.

The first thing we did on our arrival at Soleure, was to go and pay our respects to the French ambassador. Unfortunately for my Bishop, this ambassador was the Marquis de Bonac, who had been ambassador at the Sublime Porte, and was bound to be well acquainted with everything concerning the Holy Sepulchre. The Archimandrite had a quarter of an hour's audience, to which I was not admitted, as the ambassador was acquainted with the *lingua franca* and spoke Italian at least as well as myself. When my Greek went out, I was going to follow him, but was detained; it



was my turn next. Having given myself out as a Parisian, I was, as such, under his Excellency's jurisdiction. He asked me who I was, and exhorted me to tell the truth. I promised to do so, and asked him for a private audience, which was granted. He took me to his study, and shut the door. I threw myself at his feet and kept my word. I should not have confessed less, even if I had made no promise; for a continual need of opening my heart brings it every moment to my lips, and, having disclosed myself unreservedly to the musician Lutold, I was not likely to play the mysterious with the Marquis de Bonac. He was so satisfied with my little story, and the frankness with which I had unbosomed myself, that he took me by the hand, conducted me to his wife, and introduced me to her, at the same time giving her an outline of my story. Madame de Bonac received me kindly, and said that I must not be allowed to go with the Greek monk. It was decided that I should stay at the hotel, until they saw what could be done with me. I wished to go and say good-bye to my poor Archimandrite, for whom I had conceived a liking, but they would not allow me. He was informed that I had been detained, and, a quarter of an hour afterwards, I saw my little bundle arrive. M. de la Martinière, secretary to the embassy, was, in a manner, intrusted with the care of me. While showing me to the room which was intended for me, he said: "This room, in the time of the Comte du Luc, was occupied by a celebrated man of the same name as yourself;<sup>1</sup> it rests with yourself to supply his place in every respect, so that it may one day be said, Rousseau the first, Rousseau the second." This similarity, of which at that time I had little hopes, would have flattered my ambition less, if I had been able to foresee how heavy would be the price I should one day have to pay for it.

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<sup>1</sup> This was Jean Baptiste Rousseau (1671-1741), a French lyric poet. Pierre Rousseau (1725-1785), was a writer of plays. The following lines are quoted by Mr. John Morley, in his "Life of Rousseau":

"Trois auteurs que Rousseau l'on nomme,  
 Connus de Paris jusqu' à Rome,  
 Sont différens: voici par où :  
 Rousseau de Paris fut grand homme ;  
 Rousseau de Genève est un fou :  
 Rousseau de Toulouse un atome."

A fourth, Théodore (1808-1867), was a celebrated landscape-painter.



M. de la Martinière's words excited my curiosity. I read the works of the writer whose room I occupied; and, having regard to the compliment which had been paid me, and believing that I had a taste for poetry, I composed a cantata in praise of Madame de Bonac as a first attempt. This fancy did not last. From time to time I have written indifferent verses; it is a fairly good exercise, for practising oneself in elegant turns and improving one's prose; but I have never found sufficient attraction in French poetry to devote myself to it entirely.

M. de la Martinière wanted to see how I could write, and asked me to give him in writing the same details as I had given to the ambassador. I wrote him a long letter, which I hear has been preserved by M. de Marianne, who was for a long time attached to the embassy under the Marquis de Bonac, and has since succeeded M. de la Martinière during the ambassadorship of M. de Courteilles. I have asked M. de Malesherbes to try and get me a copy of this letter. If I can procure it through him or others, it will be found in the collection which is intended to accompany my Confessions.

The experience which I began to acquire by degrees moderated my romantic plans; for instance, I not only did not fall in love with Madame de Bonac, but I immediately saw that I had little chance of advancement in her husband's house. M. de la Martinière in office, and M. de Marianne waiting as it were to step into his shoes, left me nothing higher to hope for than the post of under-secretary, which was not excessively tempting to me. For this reason, when I was consulted as to what I should like to do, I showed a great desire to go to Paris. The ambassador liked the idea, which at least seemed likely to relieve him of me. M. de Merveilleux, secretary and interpreter to the embassy, said that his friend, M. Godard, a Swiss colonel in the service of France, was looking for a companion for his nephew, who was entering the service very early, and thought that I might suit him. With this idea, which was adopted without much consideration, my departure was settled; and I, who saw before me a journey, with Paris at the end of it, was highly delighted. They gave me some letters, a hundred francs for my travelling expenses, together with some very good advice, and I set out.

The journey took me a fortnight, which I may reckon amongst the happy days of my life. I was young, and in good health; I had sufficient money and abundant hopes; I travelled on foot and I travelled alone. That I should consider this an advantage would appear surprising, if the reader were not by this time familiar with my disposition. My pleasing chimeras kept me company, and never did my heated imagination give birth to any that were more magnificent. When anyone offered me an empty seat in a carriage, or accosted me on the road, I made a wry face when I saw that fortune overthrown, the edifice of which I reared during my walk. This time my ideas were warlike. I was going to be attached to a military man and to become a soldier myself; for it had been arranged that I should begin by being a cadet. I already saw myself in an officer's uniform, with a beautiful white plume. My breast swelled at this noble thought. I had a smattering of geometry and fortification; I had an uncle an engineer; I was, in a manner, a soldier born. My short sight was a slight obstacle, which, however, did not trouble me much; and I hoped, by dint of coolness and intrepidity, to supply this defect. I had read that Marshal Schomberg was very short-sighted; why should not Marshal Rousseau be the same? I grew so warm in pursuit of these foolish ideas, that I saw nothing but troops, ramparts, gabions, batteries, and myself, in the midst of fire and smoke, calmly giving my orders with my field-glass in my hand. However, when I passed through beautiful scenery, when I saw groves and rivulets, this touching sight made me sigh regretfully; in the midst of my glory, I felt that my heart was not made for such din and noise; and soon, without knowing how, I found myself in the midst of my beloved sheepfolds, renouncing for ever the toils of Mars.

How greatly did the entrance into Paris belie the idea I had formed of it! The external decorations of Turin, the beauty of its streets, the symmetry and regularity of the houses, had made me look for something quite different in Paris. I had imagined to myself a city of most imposing aspect, as beautiful as it was large, where nothing was to be seen but splendid streets, and palaces of gold and marble. Entering by the suburb of St. Marceau, I saw nothing but dirty and stinking little streets, ugly black houses, a general air of slovenliness and poverty, beggars, carters, menders

of old clothes, criers of decoctions and old hats. All this, from the outset, struck me so forcibly, that all the real magnificence I have since seen in Paris has been unable to destroy this first impression, and I have always retained a secret dislike against residence in this capital. I may say that the whole time, during which I afterwards lived there, was employed solely in trying to find means to enable me to live away from it.

Such is the fruit of a too lively imagination, which exaggerates beyond human exaggeration, and is always ready to see more than it has been told to expect. I had heard Paris so much praised, that I had represented it to myself as the ancient Babylon, where, if I had ever visited it, I should, perhaps, have found as much to take off from the picture which I had drawn of it. The same thing happened to me at the Opera, whither I hastened to go the day after my arrival. The same thing happened to me later at Versailles; and again, when I saw the sea for the first time; and the same thing will always happen to me, when I see anything which has been too loudly announced; for it is impossible for men, and difficult for Nature herself, to surpass the exuberance of my imagination.

To judge from the manner in which I was received by all those to whom I had letters, I thought my fortune was made. The person to whom I was specially recommended, and who received me with the least enthusiasm, was M. de Surbeck, who had left the service and was living in philosophic retirement at Bagneux, where I went to see him several times, and where he never offered me so much as a glass of water. I was better received by Madame de Merveilleux, the interpreter's sister-in-law, and by his nephew, an officer in the guards; mother and son not only received me kindly, but they gave me a standing invitation to their table, of which I often availed myself during my stay at Paris. Madame de Merveilleux seemed to me to have been handsome once; her hair was a beautiful black, and worn in ringlets on her forehead in the old-fashioned style. She still retained what does not perish with personal attractions: an agreeable mind. She appeared satisfied with mine, and did all she could to help me; but no one supported her, and I was soon undeceived in regard to the great interest which was apparently taken in me. I must,

however, do justice to the French; they do not exhaust themselves so much in protestations as is said, and those they make are nearly always sincere; but they have a way of appearing to be interested in you, which is more deceptive than words. The coarse compliments of the Swiss can only impose upon fools. [The manners of the French are more seductive, for the very reason that they are simpler; one would think that they are not telling you all they mean to do for you, in order to give you a more agreeable surprise. I will say more: they are not false in their professions; they are naturally obliging, kindly, benevolent, and even, whatever one may say, more sincere than any other nation; but they are fickle and flighty. The feelings which they express towards you are genuine; but these feelings are no sooner come than they are gone. When you converse with them, they are full of you; as soon as you are out of their sight, they forget you. Nothing is permanent in their hearts; with them everything is the work of the moment.]

Thus I was greatly flattered, but little benefited. This Colonel Godard, to whose nephew I had been sent, turned out to be a frightful old miser, who, although rolling in riches, wanted my services for nothing, when he saw the distress I was in. He wanted me to be a sort of valet to his nephew, without wages, rather than a real tutor. As I was permanently attached to him, and thereby exempt from service, he said that I ought to live on my pay as a cadet—that is, as a soldier. He would scarcely consent to give me a uniform; he would have liked me to content myself with that of the regiment. Madame de Merveilleux, indignant at his proposals, herself persuaded me not to accept them; her son was of the same opinion. They looked for something else for me, but found nothing. In the meantime, I began to be pressed for money; a hundred francs, out of which I had paid the expenses of my journey, could not carry me very far. Fortunately, I received from the ambassador a small additional remittance which was very useful to me, and I think that he would not have abandoned me if I had had more patience; but I am unable to wait long for what I desire, or to solicit it. I lost heart, I appeared no more, and all was at an end. I had not forgotten my poor mamma; but how was I to find her? where was I to look for her? Madame

de Merveilleux, who was acquainted with my story, had assisted me in my inquiries for a long time without success. At last, she informed me that Madame de Warens had left Paris more than two months ago, but that no one knew whether she had gone to Savoy or Turin, and that some said she had returned to Switzerland. This was enough to decide me to follow her, as I was sure that, wherever she was, I should find her in the country more easily than I had been able to do in Paris.

Before setting out, I exercised my new poetical talent in a letter to Colonel Godard, in which I abused him to the best of my power. I showed this scrawl to Madame de Merveilleux, who, instead of reproving me, as she ought to have done, was highly amused at my sarcasms; and so was her son, who, I fancy, had no great affection for M. Godard, and, indeed, I must confess that he was by no means an amiable person. I felt tempted to send him my verses; they encouraged me to do so. I made them up into a parcel addressed to him, and, as there was no city post in Paris at that time, I put it in my pocket and sent it to him from Auxerre as I passed through. I still sometimes laugh when I think of the wry face he must have made when he read this panegyric, in which he was described to the life. It began as follows:—

“ Tu croyais, vieux pénard, qu'une folle manie  
D'élever ton neveu m'inspirerait l'envie.”<sup>1</sup>

This trifle—in truth, a poor production, but which was not wanting in wit, and showed a talent for satire—is, nevertheless, the only satirical composition which has proceeded from my pen. I have too little malice in my heart to make use of such a talent; but I think one may judge, from those polemics which I have written from time to time in my own defence, that, if I had been of a quarrelsome disposition, my aggressors would seldom have had the laugh on their side.

What I most regret in regard to the details of my life which have escaped my memory, is that I never kept a diary of my travels. I have never thought so much, existed so much, lived so much, been so much myself, if I may venture to use the phrase, as in the

<sup>1</sup> You thought, you old sinner, that a mad folly would inspire me with a longing to bring up your nephew.

journeys which I have made alone and on foot. There is something in walking which animates and enlivens my ideas. I can scarcely think when I remain still; my body must be in motion to make my mind active. The sight of the country, a succession of pleasant views, the open air, a good appetite, the sound health which walking gives me, the free life of the inns, the absence of all that makes me conscious of my dependent position, of all that reminds me of my condition—all this sets my soul free, gives me greater boldness of thought, throws me, so to speak, into the immensity of things, so that I can combine, select, and appropriate them at pleasure, without fear or restraint. I dispose of Nature in its entirety as its lord and master; my heart, roaming from object to object, mingles and identifies itself with those which soothe it, wraps itself up in charming fancies, and is intoxicated with delicious sensations. If, in order to render them permanent, I amuse myself by describing them by myself, what vigorous outlines, what fresh colouring, what power of expression I give them! All this, it is said, has been found in my works, although written in my declining years. Ah! if only one had seen the compositions of my early youth, those which I wrote during my travels, those which I sketched and have never written down! Then, why not write them? you will say. Why should I? I answer. Why deprive myself of the actual charms of enjoyment, in order to tell others that I did enjoy them? What did I care for readers, the public, or the whole world, while I was mounting to the skies? Besides, did I carry pens and paper with me? If I had thought of all that, nothing would have occurred to me. I did not foresee that I should have ideas; they come to me when it pleases them, not when it pleases me. They either do not come at all, or they come in crowds, and overwhelm me with their force and number. Ten volumes a day would not have been sufficient. When could I find time to write them? When I arrived at any town, I thought of nothing but a good dinner; when I left it, of nothing but a good walk, I felt that a new paradise was waiting for me at the door. I thought only of going to find it.

I have never felt this so strongly as during the return journey of which I am speaking. On my way to Paris, my ideas were limited to what I was going to do there. I had thrown myself into the career which I thought lay before me, and should have gone



through it with sufficient honour; but this career was not the one to which my heart summoned me, and the beings of reality injured the beings of imagination. Colonel Godard and his nephew ill suited a hero like myself. Thank Heaven! I was now freed from all these obstacles; I could plunge at will into the land of chimeras, for that alone lay before me. I went astray in it so completely, that several times I really lost my way; but I should have been very sorry to have taken a more direct route, for, having a presentiment that at Lyons I should again find myself on earth, I should have liked never to arrive there.

One day, amongst others, having purposely turned out of my way to get a nearer view of a spot which appeared worthy of admiration, I was so delighted with it, and went round it so often that, at last, I completely lost myself. After several hours of useless walking, tired, and dying of hunger and thirst, I entered a peasant's hut, not much to look at, but the only dwelling I saw in the neighbourhood. I expected to find it the same as in Geneva, or Switzerland, where all the well-to-do inhabitants are in a position to show hospitality. I begged him to give me dinner, and offered to pay for it. He offered me some skimmed milk and coarse barley bread, saying that that was all he had. I drank the milk with delight, and ate the bread, husks and all; but it was not very invigorating fare for a man exhausted by fatigue. The peasant, who examined me closely, estimated the truth of my story by my appetite, and immediately afterwards declared that he could see that I was a good and honourable young man,<sup>1</sup> who had not come there to betray him for money. He opened a little trapdoor near the kitchen, went down, and came up a minute afterwards with a nice brown wheaten loaf, a very tempting-looking ham, although considerably cut down, and a bottle of wine, the sight of which rejoiced my heart more than all the rest; to this he added a substantial omelette, and I made a dinner such as none but a pedestrian ever enjoyed. When it came to the question of payment, his uneasiness and alarm returned; he would take none of my money, and refused it with

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<sup>1</sup> At that time, apparently, my features did not as yet resemble those of my later portraits.



singular anxiety; and the amusing thing was that I could not imagine what he was afraid of. At last, with a shudder, he uttered the terrible words, "Revenue-officers and excisemen."<sup>1</sup> He gave me to understand that he hid his wine on account of the excise, that he hid his bread on account of the tax, and that he was a lost man, if anyone had a suspicion that he was not starving. All that he said to me on this subject, of which I had not the least idea, made an impression upon me which will never be forgotten. It was the germ of the inextinguishable hatred which subsequently grew up in my heart against the oppression to which these unhappy people are subject, and against their oppressors. This man, although in good circumstances, did not dare to eat the bread which he had obtained by the sweat of his brow, and could only escape utter ruin by displaying the same poverty as prevailed around him. I left his house, equally indignant and touched, lamenting the lot of these beautiful countries, upon which Nature has only lavished her gifts to make them the prey of barbarous farmers of taxes.

This is the only distinct recollection I have of the incidents of this journey. The only other thing I remember is that, when near Lyons, I was tempted to prolong my journey in order to visit the banks of the Lignon, for, amongst the romances which I had read with my father, "Astraea" had not been forgotten, and returned most frequently to my mind. I asked the way to Forez; and, while talking with the landlady of an inn, was informed by her that it was a good country for workmen, that there were many forges in it, and a considerable amount of work done in iron. This panegyric cooled my romantic curiosity at once, and it seemed incongruous to look for Dianas and Sylvanders amongst a tribe of blacksmiths. The good woman, who encouraged me in this manner, must have taken me for a journeyman locksmith.

I did not go to Lyons entirely without an object. As soon as I arrived, I went to the Chasottes to see Mademoiselle du Châtelet, a friend of Madame de Warens, to whom she had given me a letter when I went there with M. le Maître, so that it was an acquaintance already made. She informed me that her friend had, in fact, passed

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1 Literally, "cellar-rats," *rats de cave*.

through Lyons, but that she did not know whether she had gone on as far as Piedmont; and that Madame de Warens herself, when she left, had been uncertain whether she would not have to stop in Savoy; that, if I desired, she would write for information, and that the best thing I could do would be to wait at Lyons till she had heard from her. I accepted her offer, but I did not venture to tell her that I was in a hurry for the answer, and that, as my small means were exhausted, I was not in a position to wait long for it. What restrained me was not any unfriendliness in her reception; on the contrary, she had been very cordial to me, and had treated me on a footing of equality, which deprived me of the courage to disclose my circumstances to her, and to come down from the rôle of an agreeable companion to that of a miserable beggar.

I seem to have a tolerably clear view of the sequence of events which I have described in this book. Nevertheless, I think that I recollect another voyage to Lyons belonging to this period, which I cannot fix, and during which I found myself in great straits. A little incident, which I find some difficulty in relating, will never allow me to forget it. One evening, I was sitting in Bellecour, after having partaken of a very light supper, musing how I should get out of my difficulties, when a man in a cap came and sat by my side. He looked like one of those silk-workers who, at Lyons, are called *taffetatiers*. He spoke to me; I answered him. After we had talked for about a quarter of an hour, with the same coolness and without any alteration in the tone of his voice, he proposed that we should amuse ourselves together. I waited for him to explain what amusement he meant, but, without another word, he made ready to give me a practical illustration. We were almost touching each other, and the night was not too dark to prevent me from seeing what he was going to do. He had no designs upon my person; at least, nothing seemed to show that he meditated anything of the kind, and the place would not have been adapted for it; just as he had told me, he only wanted each of us to amuse himself separately. This appeared to him so simple a matter, that it never occurred to him that I should not look upon it in the same light. I was so terrified at this disgraceful proposal, that, without replying, I got up in a hurry, and ran away as fast as I could, fancying the wretch was at my heels. I was so confused that, instead of making for my

lodging, I ran in the direction of the quay, and did not stop till I had crossed the wooden bridge, trembling as if I had just committed a crime. I was addicted to the same vice; the recollection of this incident cured me of it for a long time.

During this journey I met with an adventure of an almost similar kind, but which exposed me to greater danger. Finding that my funds were nearly exhausted, I economised the miserable sum that remained. At first I took my meals less frequently at my inn; soon I gave up taking them there altogether, since, for five or six sous, I could satisfy myself quite as well at the tavern, as for twenty-five sous at the inn. As I no longer took my meals there, I did not feel justified in sleeping there, not that I was much in debt, but I was ashamed to occupy a bedroom without putting any profit into my landlady's pocket. It was beautiful weather. One very hot evening I decided to pass the night in the public square. I had already settled myself upon a bench, when an Abbé, who was passing by, saw me lying down, came up to me, and asked me if I had anywhere to sleep. I confessed the state of my affairs, and he seemed touched. He sat down by my side and we conversed. He was an agreeable talker; all he said gave me the highest possible opinion of him. When he saw that I was favourably inclined, he told me that he had not very extensive quarters himself; that he had only one room, but that he certainly would not leave me to sleep in the square; that it was too late to find a lodging, and he offered me half his bed for the night. I accepted his offer, for I already had hopes of finding in him a friend who might be useful to me. We went. He struck a light. His room seemed neat and clean, and he did the honours with great politeness. He took some cherries steeped in brandy out of a glass jar; we each ate two, and went to bed.

This man had the same tastes as my Jew of the hospice, but did not show them so brutally. Either because he knew that I should be heard and was afraid to force me to defend myself, or because he was really less determined in his designs, he did not venture to propose their accomplishment openly, and tried to excite without alarming me. Taught by my former experience, I soon understood what he wanted, and shuddered. Not knowing in what kind of house or in whose hands I was, I was afraid to

make a noise for fear of being murdered. I pretended not to know what he wanted of me; but, appearing greatly annoyed at his caresses, and quite decided not to let them go on, I managed so well that he was obliged to restrain himself. Then I spoke to him with all the gentleness and firmness of which I was capable; and, without appearing to suspect anything, I excused my uneasiness on the score of my recent adventure, which I made a show of relating to him in terms so full of horror and disgust, that I believe I disgusted him, and he altogether abandoned his filthy designs. We spent the rest of the night quietly; he even gave me some good and sensible information; certainly he was a man of some intelligence, although a great rascal.

In the morning, the Abbé, not wishing to appear dissatisfied, spoke of breakfast, and asked one of his landlady's daughters, who was a pretty girl, to send some to him. She answered that she had no time. He turned to her sister, who did not deign to give him an answer. We still waited; no breakfast. At last, we went into these young ladies' room. They received the Abbé in a manner that was anything but cordial. I had still less reason to congratulate myself on my reception. The elder, turning round, stepped upon my toes with the pointed heel of her boot, where a very painful corn had obliged me to cut a hole in my shoe; the other abruptly pulled away from behind me a chair on which I was just going to sit down; their mother, while throwing water out of the window, splashed my face; wherever I sat down, they made me move that they might look for something. I had never in my life been so entertained. In their jeering and insulting looks I saw concealed rage, which I was so stupid as to fail to understand. Astounded, stupefied, and inclined to think they were all bewitched, I began to feel seriously alarmed, when the Abbé, who pretended to see and hear nothing, judging correctly that no breakfast was to be expected, decided to leave the house. I hastened to follow him, thinking myself lucky to escape from the three furies. As we were walking along, he proposed that we should go and have breakfast at the café. Although I was very hungry, I declined his offer, which he did not press me to accept, and we separated at the third or fourth turning. I was delighted to get out of sight of everything connected with that accursed house; and I believe that he was

very glad to have taken me so far from it that I should have found great difficulty in recognising it. No similar adventures have ever happened to me either in Paris or any other city. They have given me so disagreeable an impression of the people of Lyons, that I have always looked upon this city as the most frightfully corrupt in all Europe.

The remembrance of the extremities to which I was there reduced, does not help to give me pleasant recollections of it. If I had been like anyone else, if I had possessed the art of borrowing and getting into debt at my inn, I should easily have got out of my difficulties; but in such matters my incapacity was equalled by my repugnance. To give an idea of the extent of both, it is enough to mention that, although I have spent nearly all my life in distressed circumstances, and have often been almost entirely without bread, I have never once been asked for money by a creditor without paying him at once. I have never been able to incur petty debts, and have always preferred to suffer than to owe money.

It was certainly suffering, to be reduced to spend the night in the streets, which was frequently my lot at Lyons. I preferred to spend the few sous I had left in buying bread than in paying for a lodging, because, after all, I ran less risk of dying of want of sleep than of hunger. The remarkable thing is that, in my miserable condition, I was neither melancholy nor uneasy. I did not feel the least anxiety about the future, and waited patiently for the answer which Mademoiselle du Châtelet was sure to receive. At night I lay in the open air, and, stretched on the ground or on a bench, slept as calmly as upon a bed of roses. I remember, especially, that I spent a delightful night outside the city, on a road which ran by the side of the Rhône or Saône, I do not remember which. Raised gardens, with terraces, bordered the other side of the road. It had been very hot during the day; the evening was delightful; the dew moistened the parched grass; the night was calm, without a breath of wind; the air was fresh, without being cold; the sun, having gone down, had left in the sky red vapours, the reflection of which cast a rose-red tint upon the water; the trees on the terraces were full of nightingales answering one another. I walked on in a kind of ecstasy, abandoning my heart and senses to the enjoyment of all, only regretting, with a sigh, that I was obliged to enjoy it alone.

Absorbed in my delightful reverie, I continued my walk late into the night, without noticing that I was tired. At last, I noticed it. I threw myself with a feeling of delight upon the shelf of a sort of niche or false door let into a terrace wall; the canopy of my bed was formed by the tops of trees; a nightingale was perched just over my head, and lulled me to sleep with his song; my slumbers were sweet, my awaking was still sweeter. It was broad day; my eyes, on opening, beheld the water, the verdure, a charming landscape. I got up and shook myself; and, feeling hungry, set out gaily on my way to the city, resolved to spend the two small silver pieces I still had left on a good breakfast. I was in such good spirits, that I sang the whole way; I even remember that I sang one of Batistin's cantatas, called *Les Bains de Thomery*, which I knew by heart. Blessed be the good Batistin and his good cantata, which procured me a better breakfast than I had reckoned upon, and a still better dinner, upon which I had not reckoned at all! While walking and singing my best, I heard some one behind me; I turned round, and saw an Antonine,<sup>1</sup> who was following me, and seemed to be listening with pleasure to my singing. He accosted me, greeted me, and asked me whether I knew music. I replied, "A little," by which I meant him to understand, A great deal. He continued his questions. I told him part of my history. He asked me if I had ever copied music. "Often," I replied, which was true, for I had learned most by copying. "Well," said he, "come with me; I can give you something to do for a few days; in the meanwhile you shall want for nothing, but you must agree not to leave the room." I readily agreed, and followed him. ✓

His name was Rolichon; he was very fond of music, which he knew well, and sang at some little concerts which he used to give with his friends. This was innocent and honourable enough; but his hobby was certainly degenerating into a mania, which he was partly obliged to conceal. He showed me to a little room, where I found a quantity of music which he had copied. He gave me some more to copy, particularly the cantata which I had sung, and which he was to sing himself in a few days. I remained there three or four days, copying all the time that I was not eating, for never in my

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1 The "Antonines" were a community of secularised monks.



life was I so hungry or better fed. He brought my meals himself from their kitchen, which must have been a good one, if the ordinary meals were as good as my own. In all my life I had never enjoyed my food so much; and I must also confess that these snacks came very opportunely, for I was as dry as a piece of wood. I worked almost as heartily as I ate, and that is saying a good deal. It is true that my accuracy did not equal my diligence. Some days afterwards, M. Rolichon met me in the street and told me that my score had rendered the music altogether impracticable, being so full of omissions, repetitions, and transpositions. I cannot deny that I chose the one profession for which I was least fitted. My notation was good and I copied very neatly; but the fatigue of a long task so bewilders me, that I spend more time in erasing than writing, and unless I compare the parts with the greatest carefulness, they always spoil the execution. Thus, in my endeavour to perform my task well, I performed it very badly; and, in my efforts at rapidity, I went all wrong. This, however, did not prevent M. Rolichon from treating me handsomely to the last; and, when I left him, he gave me a crown, which I by no means deserved, and which completely set me on my legs again; for, a few days afterwards, I heard of Madame de Warens, who was at Chambéry, and sent me some money to rejoin her, which I was only too delighted to do. Since then my finances have often been very low, but never to such an extent that I have been obliged to fast. I note this period of my life with a heart sensible of the care of Providence; it was the last time in my life that I ever suffered hunger and wretchedness.

I remained a week or so longer at Lyons, while Mademoiselle du Châtelet executed some trifling commissions for mamma. During this time I visited her more frequently than before, delighted to talk with her about her friend, and no longer distracted by the painful thoughts of my situation, or obliged to conceal it. Mademoiselle du Châtelet was neither young nor pretty, but was not wanting in comeliness; she was affable and familiar, and her mental endowments enhanced the value of this familiarity. She possessed that liking for moral observation which leads to the study of character; and it is to her that I originally owe the first impulse in this direction. She was fond of the romances of Le Sage, especially "Gil Blas"; she talked to me



about it, and lent it to me; I read it with pleasure, but was not yet ripe for such literature; I wanted high-flown romances. In this manner I passed my time in her parlour with equal pleasure and profit; and it is certain that interesting and intelligent conversation with a woman of education and character are better calculated to form the understanding of a young man than all the pedantic philosophy that can be acquired from books. At the Chasottes I became acquainted with other boarders and their friends, amongst others Mademoiselle Serre, a young girl of fourteen, to whom I did not pay particular attention at the time, but with whom I fell violently in love eight or nine years later, and no wonder, for she was a charming girl.

Full of the expectation of soon seeing my good mamma again, I abandoned my dreams for awhile, and the real happiness which awaited me relieved me of the trouble of seeking for it in what was merely visionary. I not only found her again, but also, near her and by her assistance, a pleasant situation; for she informed me that she had found an occupation for me which she hoped would suit me, and one which would not take me far away from her. I exhausted my conjectures in trying to guess what this occupation might be, but it would have needed the gift of prophecy to guess aright. I had enough money to make the journey comfortably. Mademoiselle du Châtelet wanted me to take a horse; to this I would not agree, and I was right; I should have lost the enjoyment of the last journey I ever made on foot; for the excursions which I frequently made in the neighbourhood of Motiers, while I lived there, do not deserve the name.

It is a very remarkable fact, that my imagination is never more agreeably excited, than when my situation is the very reverse of agreeable, and that, on the contrary, it is less cheerful when all around me is cheerful. My obstinate nature is unable to bow to facts. It cannot beautify, it must create. Realities appear to it nothing more than they are; it can only embellish the objects of imagination. If I wish to depict the spring, it must be in winter; if I wish to describe a beautiful landscape, I must be surrounded by walls; and I have said a hundred times that, if I were ever imprisoned in the Bastille, I should draw the picture of Liberty. When setting out from Lyons, I saw only a pleasant future before

me ; I was—and I had every reason to be—as happy as I had been the reverse, when I set out from Paris. Nevertheless, during this journey, I did not enjoy those delightful reveries which had accompanied me before. My heart was light, and that was all. I drew near with emotion to the excellent friend whom I was going to see again, I tasted in advance, but without any feeling of intoxication, the happiness of living near her ; I had always expected it ; it seemed to me that there was nothing new for me in that. I felt anxious about my future occupation, as if that had been a great source of anxiety. My ideas were calm and gentle, instead of heavenly and enchanting. All material objects claimed my attention ; I observed the surrounding country ; I remarked the trees, the houses, the brooks ; I took counsel with myself at the cross-roads ; I was afraid of losing myself, and did not do so. In a word, I was no longer in the clouds, I was just where I was, just where I was going, nowhere else.

In relating my journeys, as in making them, I do not know how to stop. My heart beat with joy when I drew near to my dear mamma, but I walked no faster. I like to walk at my ease, and to stop when I like. A wandering life is what I want. To walk through a beautiful country in fine weather, without being obliged to hurry, and with a pleasant prospect at the end, is of all kinds of life the one most suited to my taste. My idea of a beautiful country is already known. No flat country, however beautiful, has ever seemed so to my eyes. I must have mountain torrents, rocks, firs, dark forests, mountains, steep roads to climb or descend, precipices at my side to frighten me. I had this pleasure, and enjoyed it in all its charm, as I approached Cham-béri. Not far from a precipitous mountain wall, called Le Pas de l'Échelle, below the military road cut out of the rocks, at the place called Chailles, a little stream rushes and foams in some fearful precipices, which it seems to have spent millions of ages in hollowing out. Along the side of the road is a parapet to prevent accidents, which enabled me to look down and be as giddy as I pleased ; for the amusing thing about my taste for steep places is, that I am very fond of the feeling of giddiness which they give rise to, provided I am in a safe position. Leaning securely over the parapet, I stretched forward, and remained there for hours

together, from time to time catching a glimpse of the foam and dark water, the roaring of which I heard in the midst of the screams of the ravens and birds of prey which flew from rock to rock, and from bush to bush, a hundred fathoms below me. In places where the slope was fairly even, and the brushwood was not too thick to allow stones to pass through, I collected from a distance a large number, as big as I could carry, and piled them up on the parapet; then, hurling them down, one after the other, I amused myself with watching them roll, rebound, and shiver into a thousand pieces, before reaching the bottom of the abyss.

Nearer Chambéri, I saw a similar sight, of a different kind. The road passes at the foot of the most beautiful cascade I have ever seen. The mountain is so steep, that the water falls away clear, in the shape of an arch, at a sufficient distance to allow a person to walk between it and the rock, sometimes even without being wetted; but, unless one is careful, it is easy to be deceived, as I was; for, owing to the immense height, the water divides and falls in a spray, and, if one goes only a little too near to this cloud, without at first noticing that he is getting wet, he is drenched in a moment.

At length I arrived; I saw her again. She was not alone. The Intendant-General was with her when I entered. Without a word, she took me by the hand and introduced me to him with that graceful manner which gained her the affections of all, saying: "Here is the poor young man, sir; deign to protect him as long as he deserves it, and I shall feel no further anxiety about him for the rest of his life." Then she turned to me; "My child," she said, "you belong to the King; thank Monsieur l'Intendant, who offers you the means to live." I opened my eyes wide and said nothing, without knowing exactly what to think of it; my growing ambition nearly turned my head, and already I saw myself a young Intendant. My fortune certainly did not prove as brilliant as I had expected from such a start; but, for the moment, it was enough to keep me, and that, for me, was a good deal. The state of the case was as follows:

King Victor Amadeus, judging, from the issue of preceding wars and the state of his ancestral inheritance, that it would one day slip from his hands, did his utmost to exhaust it beforehand. A

few years ago, having resolved to tax the Savoyard nobility, he had ordered a general land-register of the country to be made, in order to impose taxation on landed property and distribute it more fairly. The work, commenced in the father's time, was completed by the son. Two or three hundred persons, land-surveyors who were called geometricians, and writers who were called secretaries, were employed in the task, and mamma had secured me an appointment amongst the latter. The post, although not very lucrative, afforded me ample means to live upon in that country; the misfortune was, that the employment was only temporary, but it put me in a position to wait and look about me, and mamma had purposely endeavoured to secure for me the special protection of the Intendant, that I might be able to proceed to some more permanent employment, when my present work was finished.

I entered upon my duties a few days after my arrival. The work was not difficult and I soon became familiar with it. Thus it came to pass, that, after four or five years of vagabondage, of folly, and suffering, since I had left Geneva, I began for the first time to earn a respectable living.

These lengthy details of my early youth will naturally have seemed puerile, and I regret it; although born a man in certain respects, I long remained a child, and in many respects I am one still. I have never promised to introduce a great character to the public; I have promised to describe myself as I am; and, in order to know me in my riper years, it is necessary to have known me well in my youth. Since, as a rule, objects make less impression upon me than the remembrance of them, and since all my ideas assume the form of the representations of objects in my mind, the first traits which have stamped themselves upon my mind have remained, and those which have since imprinted themselves there have rather combined with them than obliterated them. There is a certain sequence of mental conditions and ideas, which exercises an influence upon those which follow them, with which it is necessary to be acquainted, in order to pass a correct judgment upon the latter. I endeavour in all cases to develop the first causes, in order to make the concatenation of effects felt. I should like to be able to make my soul to a certain extent transparent to the eyes of the reader; and, with this object,

I endeavour to show it to him from all points of view, to exhibit it to him in every aspect, and to contrive that none of its movements shall escape his notice, so that he may be able by himself to judge of the principles that produce them.

If I made myself responsible for the result, and said to him, Such is my character, he might think that, if I am not deceiving him, I am at least deceiving myself. But, in simply detailing to him everything that has happened to me, all my acts, thoughts, and feelings, I cannot mislead him, except wilfully, and even if I wished to do so, I should not find it easy. It is his business to collect these scattered elements, and to determine the being which is composed of them; the result must be his work; and if he is mistaken, all the fault will be his. But for this purpose it is not sufficient that my narrative should be true; it must also be exact. It is not for me to judge of the importance of facts; it is my duty to mention them all, and to leave him to select them. This is what I have hitherto aimed at with all my best endeavours, and in the sequel I will not depart from it. But the recollections of middle-age are always less vivid than those of early youth. I have begun by making the best possible use of the latter. If the former return to me with the same freshness, impatient readers will, perhaps, grow tired; but I myself shall not be dissatisfied with my work. I have only one thing to fear in this undertaking; not that I may say too much or what is not true, but that I may not say all, and may conceal the truth.

## BOOK V

[1732-1736.]

I THINK it was in 1732 that, as I have just related, I arrived at Chambéri, and commenced land-surveying in the King's service. I was nearly twenty-one years of age. For my age, my mind was sufficiently well formed; not so my powers of judgment, and I sorely needed instruction from those into whose hands I fell, in order to learn how to conduct myself sensibly; for my few years of experience had not been sufficient to cure me completely of my romantic fancies; and, in spite of all the sufferings I had endured, I knew as little of the world and mankind, as if I had never paid dearly for my knowledge of them.

I lived at home, that is to say, with mamma; but I never found my room at Annecy again. No garden, no brook, no landscape! The house which she occupied was dark and gloomy, and my room was the darkest and gloomiest in the house. A wall to look out upon, a blind alley instead of a street, very little air, light, or room; crickets, rats, rotten boards—all combined to make a by no means pleasant abode. But I was in her house, I was near her; always at my desk, or in her room, I did not notice the ugliness of my own; I had no time to think of it. It will appear singular that she should have settled at Chambéri on purpose to live in this wretched house; but it was a piece of cleverness on her part, which I must not omit to explain. She very much disliked the idea of going to Turin, as she felt that, after the recent changes that had taken place there, and during the present excitement at the Court, it was not the right moment to present herself. However, her affairs required her presence; she was afraid of being forgotten or slandered, especially as she knew that the Comte de Saint-Laurent, Intendant-General of Finance, was not favourably disposed towards her. He had an old house at Chambéri, badly built, and so

disagreeably situated, that it was always empty; she took it, and settled there. This plan succeeded better than a journey to Turin; her pension was not discontinued, and from that time the Comte de Saint-Laurent was always one of her best friends.

I found her household arrangements much the same as before, and the faithful Claude Anet still with her. I believe I have already stated that he was a peasant from Moutru, who, in his childhood, used to gather herbs in Jura to make Swiss tea, and whom she had taken into her service on account of his knowledge of drugs, finding it convenient to have a lackey who understood them. He was so passionately fond of the study of plants, and she encouraged his taste so strongly, that he became a real botanist, and, if he had not died young, might have made himself a name in this department of science, equal to that which he deserved as an honest man. Being serious, even grave, and older than myself, he became to me a kind of mentor, who kept me from many follies; for he inspired me with respect, and I never ventured to forget myself in his presence. He made the same impression on his mistress, who knew his good sense, uprightness, and unshaken devotion to herself, and repaid it in kind. Claude Anet was, undoubtedly, no ordinary man, and the only man of his kind that I have ever seen. Slow, sedate, thoughtful, prudent in his behaviour, cold in manner, laconic and sententious in his utterances, when under the influence of his passions he was a prey to a violent impetuosity, which he never showed, but which inwardly devoured him, and never caused him to commit a folly in his life, except one, and that a terrible one—he took a dose of poison. This tragic event took place shortly after my arrival; nothing but this made me aware of the intimacy between him and his mistress; for, unless she had told me herself, I should never have suspected it. If devotion, zeal, and loyalty can deserve such a recompense, it was certainly due to him; and the fact that he never abused her confidence proves that he was worthy of it. Their disputes, which were rare, always ended amicably, with the exception of one, which did not terminate so happily. His mistress, in a passion, said something insulting to him; unable to endure the affront, he took counsel with his despair, and finding a bottle of laudanum ready to hand, he swallowed it, and then went quietly to bed,



never expecting to wake again. Luckily Madame de Warens, uneasy and agitated herself, while wandering about the house, found the empty bottle, and guessed the rest. She flew to his assistance, with shrieks that attracted my attention. She confessed everything, implored my assistance, and with much difficulty succeeded in making him bring up the opium. Witnessing this scene, I marvelled at my stupidity in never having entertained the least suspicion of the connection of which she informed me. But Claude Anet was so discreet, that keener observers than myself might well have been deceived. The reconciliation was of such a nature that I was greatly affected by it; and, from that time, my esteem for him being increased by a feeling of respect, I became in a manner his pupil, which was by no means to my disadvantage.

However, it was not without pain that I discovered that another could live with her on terms of greater intimacy than myself. I had never even thought of desiring such a position for myself; but it was hard for me to see it filled by another, and my feeling was a very natural one. Notwithstanding, instead of conceiving an aversion to him who had robbed me of her, I actually found that my attachment to her extended itself to him. Before all things I desired her happiness; and, since he was necessary to it, I was content that he should be happy likewise. On his part, he entered completely into his mistress's views, and conceived a sincere friendship for the friend whom she had chosen. Without claiming the authority over me to which his position entitled him, he naturally exercised that which his superior intelligence gave him over mine. I never ventured to do anything of which he appeared to disapprove, and he only disapproved of what was bad. Thus we lived in a union which made us all happy, and which could only be dissolved by death. One of the proofs of the excellent character of this admirable woman is, that all those who loved her loved one another. Jealousy, even rivalry, submitted to the predominant feeling which she inspired, and I have never seen any of those who surrounded her ill-disposed towards one another. Let my readers pause a moment at this panegyric, and if they can think of any other woman of whom they can say the same, I advise them to attach themselves to her, if they value their repose.

Here commences, from the time of my arrival at Chambéri to my departure for Paris in 1741, a period of eight or nine years, during which I shall have few events to relate, because my life was as simple as it was pleasant. This uniformity was exactly what I most wanted to complete the formation of my character, which continual troubles had prevented from becoming settled. During this precious interval, my miscellaneous and disconnected education acquired consistency, and made me what I have never ceased to be, amidst all the storms which awaited me. This development was imperceptible and slow, accompanied by few events worth recording; but, nevertheless, it deserves to be followed out and described.

At first, I was almost entirely occupied with my work; the ties of the desk left me scarcely any time to think of anything else. The little time I had free was spent with my good mamma; and, not having even sufficient leisure to read, I felt no inclination to do so. But when my duties, having become a kind of routine, occupied my mind less, the feeling of restlessness returned. Reading again became necessary, and, as if the desire for it had always been heightened when it was difficult to satisfy, it would have again become a passion with me, as at my master's, had not other inclinations interfered and diverted my attention from it.

Although we did not require a very profound knowledge of arithmetic for our calculations, we required enough to sometimes cause me some trouble. To overcome this difficulty, I bought some books on arithmetic, and learned the subject well, for I learned it alone. Practical arithmetic is of wider extent than one imagines, when strict accuracy is aimed at. There are calculations of extraordinary length, in which I have sometimes seen skilled geometricians go wrong. Reflection, combined with practice, gives clear ideas, and then one discovers short methods, the invention of which is flattering to one's self-complacency, while their accuracy satisfies the mind, and which lend a charm to a task thankless in itself. I threw myself into it with such success that no problem, which was capable of being solved by figures alone, gave me any difficulty; and even now, when all that I have known daily fades from my memory, this accomplishment in part still remains, after an interval of thirty years. A few days ago, when I made a journey

to Davenport, being present at my host's house when his children were having their arithmetic lesson, I worked out, without a mistake and with incredible pleasure, an extremely complicated calculation. It seemed to me, as I set down my figures, that I was still at Chambéri in my happy days. What a distant recollection!

The colouring of the maps of our geometricians had also given me a taste for drawing. I bought some colours, and began to paint flowers and landscapes. It was a pity that I found I possessed but little talent for this art, for I was entirely devoted to it. I could have spent whole months in the midst of my crayons and pencils without going out. As this occupation occupied too much of my attention, they were compelled to drag me away from it. It is always the same with all the pursuits to which I begin to devote myself; they grow upon me, become a passion, and soon I see nothing else in the world but my favourite amusement. Age has not cured me of this fault, it has not even diminished it; even while I write this, I sit like an old twaddler, infatuated with another study, which is useless to me and of which I understand nothing, which even those who have devoted themselves to it during their youth, are obliged to give up at the age when I want to begin it.

At that time, it would have been in its right place. The opportunity was favourable, and I had some temptation to make use of it. The satisfaction that I saw in Anet's eyes, when he came home loaded with new plants, two or three times nearly made me go out botanising with him. I am almost certain that, if I had only gone once, I should have been captivated by it, and I should, perhaps, now be a famous botanist; for I know no study in the world better suited to my natural tastes than that of plants; and the life which I have now been leading for ten years in the country is hardly anything but a continual botanising, although certainly without purpose, or progress; but, at that time, having no idea of the science of botany, I conceived a kind of contempt—even of aversion—for it, and only considered it an occupation fit for an apothecary. Mamma, who was very fond of it, made no other use of it herself; she only looked for common plants, such as she could make use of in her remedies. In this manner, botany, chemistry, and anatomy, confused in my mind under the general term medicine, only served to provide me throughout the day with a subject for

humorous sarcasms, and, from time to time, brought upon me a box on the ears. Besides, a different and most opposite taste gradually developed itself in me, and soon supplanted all the others. I mean music. I must certainly have been born for this art, since I began to love it from my earliest childhood, and it is the only one that I have loved constantly at all times. The remarkable thing is, that an art, for which I was intended by Nature, has nevertheless cost me so much trouble to learn, and that my progress in it has been so slow, that, although I have practised it all my life, I have never been able to sing with any certainty at sight. What at that time made this study particularly a pleasure, was that I could pursue it together with mamma. With very different tastes in other respects, we found in music a bond of union, which I gladly made use of. She made no objection; I was at that time almost as advanced as she was; after two or three attempts we could decipher an air. Sometimes, when I saw her busy round a furnace, I used to say: "Mamma, here is a charming duet, which seems to me just the thing to make your drugs smell of burning." "On my honour," she would reply, "if you make me burn them, I will make you eat them." While the dispute was going on, I pulled her to her piano, where we soon forgot everything else; the extract of juniper or absinthe was reduced to powder; she smeared my face with it—and how delightful it all was!

It will be seen that, with little time to spare, I had many things to employ it. One amusement, however, was worth all the rest.

We lived in a dungeon so stifling, that we were sometimes obliged to go and get some fresh air in the country. Anet persuaded mamma to rent a garden in one of the suburbs, to rear plants. Attached to this garden was a pretty little rustic house, which was decently furnished, and a bed put up in it. We often had dinner, and I sometimes slept there. Imperceptibly, I became infatuated with this little retreat. I took a few books there and a number of prints; I spent part of my time in decorating it, and preparing an agreeable surprise for mamma when she walked out there. I sometimes left her, that I might busy my mind with her, and think of her with greater pleasure; this was another whim, which I can neither excuse nor explain, but which I acknowledge,

since it was really the case. I remember that Madame de Luxembourg once spoke jestingly to me of a man who used to leave his mistress in order to write to her. I told her that I might very well have been that man, and I might have added that I had sometimes acted like him. However, when I was with mamma, I never felt it necessary to leave her, in order to love her more; for, *tête-à-tête* with her, I felt as completely at my ease as if I had been alone, which I have never felt in the presence of anyone else, man or woman, however much attached to them I may have been. But she was so often surrounded by people who were by no means congenial to me, that a feeling of annoyance and weariness drove me to my refuge, where I could enjoy her as I wanted her, without fear of being followed by troublesome visitors.

In this manner, my time being divided between work, pleasure, and instruction, I led a life of sweetest repose. Europe, however, was not so calm as myself. France and the Emperor had just declared war; the King of Sardinia had taken part in the quarrel, and the French army was marching through Piedmont to invade Milanese territory. One column passed through Chambéri, amongst others the regiment of Champagne, the colonel of which was the Duc de la Tremouille, to whom I was presented. He was lavish in his promises, and I am quite certain that he never once thought of me again. Our little garden was situated just at the end of the suburb through which the troops entered, so that I could enjoy to my heart's content the pleasure of seeing them pass, and I was as eager for the success of this war as if I had had the greatest interests at stake in it. Hitherto it had not entered my head to think about public affairs; and I began to read the newspapers for the first time, but with such partiality for France, that my heart beat with joy when it gained the least success, while its reverses afflicted me as much as if they had overtaken myself. If this folly had only been transitory, I should not consider it worth speaking of; but it has become so rooted in my heart without any sufficient reason, that when, later, at Paris, I played the part of the enemy of tyrants and the proud republican, I felt, in spite of myself, a secret predilection for this very nation I found servile, and for the government which I pretended to condemn. The amusing thing was that, being ashamed of an inclination so opposed

to my principles, I never dared to confess it to anyone, and I rallied the French on their defeats, while my heart bled for them more than their own. I am certainly the only man who, living in the midst of a people who treated him well and whom he worshipped, has assumed amongst them an air of contempt. On my part, this inclination is so disinterested, so powerful, so lasting, and so invincible, that, even after my departure from France, after the storm which its government, magistrates, and writers have vied with one another in stirring up against me, and since it has become the fashion to overwhelm me with undeserved abuse, I have been unable to cure myself of my folly. I love them in spite of myself, in spite of their ill-treatment of me.

I have long endeavoured to discover the reason of this partiality, and have been unable to find it anywhere except in the occasion that produced it. A growing taste for literature gave me a fondness for French books, their authors, and the country of these authors. At the moment when the French army was marching past, I read Brantôme's "Great Captains." My head was full of the Clissons, Bayards, Lautrecs, Colignys, Montmorencys, and Trimouilles, and I loved their descendants as the inheritors of their virtues and their courage. In each regiment that passed I thought I beheld again those famous black bands which had formerly performed such heroic deeds in Piedmont. In short, I connected with what I saw the ideas which I drew from my books; my continuous reading, still confined to French authors, nourished my affection for their country, and finally converted it into a blind infatuation, which nothing has been able to overcome. I have later had occasion to remark in the course of my journeys that this impression was not peculiar to myself, and that, exercising more or less influence in all countries upon that part of the nation which loves reading and cultivates literature, it counterbalanced the general hatred inspired by the conceited manners of the French. Their romances, more than their men, win the hearts of the women of all countries, their dramatic masterpieces attract the young to their theatres. The fame of the theatres of Paris draws crowds of strangers, who return home their enthusiastic admirers. In short, the excellent taste displayed in their literature captivates the minds of all those who have any mind: and, during the war which ended so

disastrously for them, I have seen their authors and philosophers uphold the honour of the French name, so tarnished by its warriors.

I was, then, an ardent Frenchman, and this made me a news-monger. I went with the crowd of gapers to the market-place, to wait for the post; and, sillier than the ass in the fable, I was very anxious to know what master's saddle I should have the honour to carry; for at that time it was declared that we should belong to France, and that Savoy would be exchanged for the territory of Milan. However, it must be admitted that I had some reason for anxiety; for, if this war had turned out badly for the allies, mamma's pension would have been in danger. But I had full confidence in my good friends; and, this time, in spite of the surprise of M. de Broglie, my confidence was not deceived, thanks to the King of Sardinia, whom I had never thought of.

While there was fighting in Italy, there was singing in France. Rameau's operas began to make a stir, and gave a lift to his theoretical works, which, by reason of their obscurity, were within the reach of only a few capacities. Having accidentally heard his "Treatise on Harmony" mentioned, I had no rest till I had procured the book. By another accident I fell ill. The malady was an inflammation, which was very violent during the short time it lasted, but my restoration to health was tedious, and I was unable to go out for a month. During this period, I worked at, I devoured my "Treatise on Harmony"; but it was so long, so diffuse, and so badly arranged, that I felt it would take me a considerable time to study and disentangle it. I suspended my efforts, and refreshed my eyes with music. The cantatas of Bernier, which I practised, were never out of my mind. I learned four or five of them by heart, amongst others, *The Sleeping Cupids*, which I have never seen again since then, and which I still remember almost perfectly, and also *Cupid Stung by a Bee*, a very pretty cantata by Clérambault, which I learned almost at the same time.

To confirm my passion, a young organist, called the Abbé Palais, arrived from Val-d'Aost, a good musician, a good fellow, and an excellent accompanist. I made his acquaintance, and we immediately became inseparable. He had been the pupil of an Italian monk, a fine organist. He spoke to me of his principles of music,



which I compared with those of my Rameau; I filled my head with harmony, accompaniments, and chords. My ear required training for all that, and I proposed to mamma to give a little concert every month, to which she agreed. I was so full of this concert, that, day and night, I thought of nothing else; and it really occupied a considerable part of my time to arrange the music, the accompanists, and instruments, to write out the parts, and so forth. Mamma sang; Père Caton—of whom I have already spoken, and of whom I shall have occasion to speak again—sang also; M. Roche, a dancing-master, and his son played the violin; M. Canavas, a Piedmontese musician, who was employed in the Survey, and has since married and settled at Paris, played the violoncello; the Abbé Palais accompanied on the piano, and I had the honour of conducting with my bâton. It may be imagined how delightful it was! Not quite like the concerts at M. de Treytorens's, but nearly so.

This little concert given by Madame de Warens, a new convert, who lived, as was reported, on the King's charity, gave offence to the band of devotees; but for many worthy people it was an agreeable amusement. It would not easily be guessed whom I placed at the head of these on this occasion. It was a monk, but a monk, talented and even amiable, whose later misfortunes keenly affected me, and whose memory, connected as it is with that of my happy days, is still dear to me. The monk in question was Père Caton, a Franciscan, who, conjointly with Comte Dortan, had caused the music of the poor "Kitten" to be confiscated at Lyons, which was not the most worthy incident in his life. He was a Bachelor of Sorbonne; he had lived a long time in the highest circles in Paris, and was an especial favourite with the Marquis d'Antremont, at that time Sardinian ambassador. He was tall, well built, with a full face and prominent eyes, black hair, which curled naturally over his forehead, and a manner at once noble, frank, and modest; his appearance was simple and pleasing, without the hypocritical or impudent attitude of a monk, or the haughty demeanour of a man of fashion, although he was one; he displayed only the assurance of an honourable man, who, without blushing for his cloth, respects himself and always feels himself in his proper place in honourable company. Although he was

not very learned for a doctor, he was very accomplished for a man of the world; and, never eager to display his knowledge, he made use of it so opportunely, that he was credited with more than he really possessed. Having lived much in society, he had paid more attention to agreeable accomplishments than to solid learning. He was witty, wrote verses, talked well, sang better, had a fine voice, and played the organ and piano. This was more than enough to make him sought after, as indeed he was; but so little did this cause him to neglect the duties of his position, that, in spite of jealous rivals, he was chosen *Définitéur*<sup>1</sup> of his province, in other words, one of the highest dignitaries of the order.

Père Caton made mamma's acquaintance at the Marquis d'Antremont's. He heard our concerts spoken of, and expressed a desire to take part in them; he did so, and made them delightful. We soon became attached by our mutual taste for music, which, with both of us, was a lively passion, the only difference being that he was really a musician, while I was only a bungler. We used to go and play in his room together with Canavas and the Abbé Palais, and sometimes, on feast days, we had music on his organ. We often shared his little table at dinner; for—a thing surprising in a monk—he was liberal, profuse, and fond of the pleasures of the table without being a glutton. On our concert days, he stayed to supper with mamma. These suppers were very gay and very pleasant. We spoke as we thought, and sang duets; I was in my element, and displayed my wit and humour; Père Caton was delightful, mamma was adorable; the Abbé Palais, with his deep voice, was the butt of all. Sweet moments of youthful folly, how long is it since you have departed?

As I shall have no further occasion to speak of this poor Père Caton, let me finish his melancholy story in a few words. The other monks, jealous, or rather, furious, at seeing in him good qualities and a refinement of manners which had nothing in common with monastic debauchery, conceived a violent hatred for him, since he was not as hateful as themselves. Their leaders combined against him, and stirred up the inferior monks who envied his position, and who had hitherto not dared to look at him. They heaped

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1 *Définitéur*: assessor to the head of his order.

a thousand insults upon him, deprived him of his office, took away his room, which he had furnished with taste, although quite simply, and banished him I know not whither; at last, these wretches so overwhelmed him with insults, that his honourable and justly proud soul was unable to withstand them; and he who had been the delight of the most agreeable society, died of grief on a miserable bed, in some cell or dungeon, regretted and lamented by all the worthy people who had known him and found no other fault in him, except that of being a monk.

Living in this manner, I soon became entirely absorbed by music, and found it impossible to think of anything else. I never went to my desk willingly; the restraint and constant hard work made it an unendurable torture, and at last I expressed a wish to throw up my employment, in order to devote myself entirely to music. It may be imagined that this folly on my part did not escape opposition. To leave a respectable situation and a certain salary in order to run after uncertain pupils, was too foolish a plan to meet with mamma's approval. Even if my future success should prove as great as I imagined, it was fixing very humble limits to my ambition, to confine myself for life to the position of a musician. She, whose plans for me were all ambitious, and who no longer judged me entirely in accordance with M. d'Aubonne's verdict, was sorry to see me seriously occupied with a talent which she regarded as unprofitable, and often repeated to me the provincial saying, which is less applicable in Paris, "He who sings and dances well, has a profession which does not lead to much." On the other hand, she saw me carried away by an irresistible inclination; my passion for music was becoming a regular madness, and there was reason to fear that my work might suffer from my distractions, and that this might cause me to be dismissed, which would be far worse than voluntary resignation. Again, I pointed out to her that my employment was only temporary, that I should be obliged to do something for a livelihood, and that it was far safer to acquire by practice a thorough knowledge of the art to which my tastes inclined me and which she had chosen for me, than to put myself at the mercy of patrons, or to try something fresh which might not succeed, and might leave me, when I was too old to learn, without the means of earning my bread. At last, I extorted her consent more by dint of

importunities and caresses than arguments which she considered satisfactory. I immediately ran to M. Coccelli, general manager of the Survey, to resign my appointment, as proudly as if I had performed a most heroic action; and I voluntarily resigned my situation, without cause, reason, or excuse, with as much and even greater joy than I had accepted it less than two years before.

This step, utterly foolish as it was, procured for me in the country a certain consideration which was useful to me. Some imagined that I possessed means which I did not possess; others, seeing me entirely devoted to music, estimated my talents by the sacrifice that I had made, and believed that, with so much passion for this art, I must really possess a superior knowledge of it. In the country of the blind the one-eyed are kings; I passed for a good master, since all the rest were bad. Besides, since I really possessed a certain taste for singing, and was also favoured by my age and personal appearance, I soon had more lady pupils than were necessary to make up the pay I had received as a clerk.

It is certain that, as far as a pleasant life was concerned, it would not have been possible for anyone to pass more rapidly from one extreme to the other. At the survey, occupied for eight hours daily with the most disagreeable employment, amongst people still more disagreeable, shut up in a gloomy office, poisoned by the breath and perspiration of a number of clods, most of them dirty and unkempt, I was sometimes so overcome by the exertion, smell, restraint and weariness, that I felt quite giddy. In place of this, I was suddenly launched into the fashionable world, admitted and sought after in the best houses, everywhere graciously received, caressed, and fêted; amiable young ladies, gaily dressed, awaited my arrival, and received me with eagerness; I saw nothing but enchanting objects, I smelt nothing but the perfume of roses and orange-flowers, found nothing but singing, gossip, laughter and amusement; I only left one house to find the same in another. It will be agreed that, the other advantages being equal, there could be no hesitation in the choice. I was so satisfied with mine, that I never once repented it, and I do not regret it even now, when I weigh in the scale of reason the actions of my life, and am free from the not very sensible motives which led me to make it.

This was almost the only time that I was not deceived in my

expectations, when I only obeyed my inclinations. The affable and sociable disposition, the easy-going temperament of the inhabitants of this country rendered my intercourse with the world agreeable, and the liking I then conceived for it has clearly proved to me that, if I do not like society, it is society's fault rather than mine.

It is to be regretted that the Savoyards are not rich, or, perhaps, it would be still more to be regretted if they were; for, such as they are, they are the best and most sociable people that I know. If there is a little city in the world where it is possible to enjoy the pleasures of life in agreeable and safe intercourse, it is Chambéri. The noble families of the province, who assemble there, have only enough to live on, not enough to advance themselves; and, being unable to indulge in ambitious projects, are obliged to follow the counsel of Cineas.<sup>1</sup> In youth, they devote themselves to military service, and return to spend their old age in peace at home. Honour and reason have an equal share in this distribution of their lives. The women are beautiful, without having any need to be so; they possess all those qualities which can give beauty its value, and even supply its place. It is remarkable that I, whose profession brought me into contact with so many young girls, do not remember to have ever seen one in Chambéri who was not charming. It will be said that I was inclined to find them so, and there may be some truth in that; but I had no need to add anything of my own. In truth, I cannot think of my young pupils without pleasure. Why, when I mention here the most amiable of them, can I not reinstate them and myself together in those happy times which we then enjoyed, those sweet and innocent moments, which we spent together? The first was Mademoiselle de Mellarède, my neighbour, the sister of M. Gaimé's pupil. She was a lively brunette, full of tender vivacity and grace, and free from thoughtlessness. Like most girls of her age, she was rather thin; but her bright eyes, her slender figure, and her attractive manner needed no fulness to add to her charms. I used to go to her in the morning, when she was generally in *deshabille*, without any headdress except her hair carelessly pinned up and set off by a few flowers which she placed there on my arrival,

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<sup>1</sup> The minister of Pyrrhus, King of Epirus.

and which were taken off when I left, for her hair to be dressed. I am more afraid of a pretty young woman in *deshabille* than of anything else in the world; I should fear them a hundred times less in full dress, as *Mademoiselle de Menthon*, to whose house I went in the afternoon, always was. She made upon me an equally pleasing but entirely different impression. Her hair was very light; she was very slight, very shy, and very fair; her voice was clear, correct, and melodious, but she was afraid of employing its full compass. She had a scar on her bosom where she had been scalded by some boiling water, which was only partly hidden by a neckerchief of blue chenille. This mark sometimes drew my attention to the place, and, in a short time, no longer on account of the scar. *Mademoiselle de Challes*, another of my neighbours, was fully developed, tall, well made, and rather stout. She had been very pretty, but was no longer a beauty; but she deserves notice on account of her graceful manners, even temper, and good disposition. Her sister, *Madame de Charly*, the prettiest woman in *Chambéri*, no longer learned music, but I gave lessons to her daughter, who was still quite young, and whose growing beauty gave promise of equalling that of her mother, had she not unfortunately been somewhat red-haired. At the Convent of the Visitation I gave lessons to a young French lady, whose name I have forgotten, but who deserves a place in the list of my favourite pupils. She had adopted the slow and drawling tones of the nuns, and in this drawling tone made some very witty remarks, which seemed quite out of harmony with her manner. For the rest, she was idle, not caring to take pains to show her wit, which was a favour she did not grant to everyone. It was only after a month or two, during which I had given her lessons and she had been very idle, that she bethought herself of this expedient to make me more punctual, a thing which I have never been able to persuade myself to be. I liked my lessons while I was giving them; but I did not like the idea of being obliged to attend, or being tied to time; restraint and subjection of any kind are to me at all times unbearable; they would make me hate even pleasure itself. It is said that, amongst the Mahommedans, a man goes through the streets at daybreak, ordering husbands to do their duty to their wives. I should be a poor Turk at that hour.



I also had some pupils among the middle classes, amongst others, one who was the indirect cause of a change in my relations, of which I have to speak, since I must tell everything. She was a grocer's daughter, named *Mademoiselle Lard*; a perfect model for a Greek statue, and whom I should quote as the most beautiful girl I have ever seen, if true beauty could exist without life and soul. Her indifference, coldness, and want of feeling were almost incredible. It was as impossible to please as it was to annoy her; and I am convinced that, if any man had made an attempt upon her virtue, she would have allowed him to succeed, not from inclination, but from sheer stupidity. Her mother, who did not wish to run the risk, never left her for a moment. In having her taught singing, in providing her with a young master, she did all she could to rouse her, but without success. While the master tried to fascinate the daughter, the mother tried to fascinate the master, with equally bad success. *Madame Lard* united with her natural vivacity all the sprightliness which her daughter should have possessed. She was a lively, pretty little woman, although her features were somewhat irregular and marked with the small-pox. She had small, fiery eyes, which were rather red, and nearly always sore. Every morning, on my arrival, I found my coffee and cream ready; the mother never failed to salute me with a hearty kiss on the lips, which I should have liked to return to the daughter, merely out of curiosity to see how she would have taken it. All this was done so simply and naturally, that, even when *M. Lard* was there, the kissing and caressing went on as usual. He was a good fellow, the true father of his daughter, whom his wife never deceived, since she had no need to do so.

I submitted to all these caresses with my usual stupidity, treating them simply as tokens of friendship. Sometimes they became troublesome, for lively *Madame Lard* always exacted her rights, and if, in the course of the day, I had passed the shop without stopping, it would have created a disturbance. When I was in a hurry, I was obliged to go round by another street; for I well knew that it was not so easy a matter to get out of her house as to enter it.

*Madame Lard* showed me too much attention for me to show none to her. These attentions touched me greatly. I spoke about



them to mamma, as something which was no secret; and, even if there had been any mystery, I should have spoken to her all the same, for it would have been impossible for me to keep a secret of any kind from her; my heart was as open before her as in the sight of heaven. She did not consider the matter quite as harmless as I did. She saw advances where I had only seen friendship; she thought that, if Madame Lard made it a point of honour not to leave me as great a fool as she had found me, she would somehow or other succeed in making herself understood, and, apart from the consideration that it was not fair that another woman should undertake the instruction of her pupil, she had motives, which were more worthy of her, in a desire to protect me from the snares to which my age and calling exposed me. At the same time, a more dangerous snare was set for me, which I indeed escaped, but which showed her that the dangers, which continually threatened me, rendered necessary all the measures of protection which she could employ.

The Comtesse de Menthon, the mother of one of my pupils, was a woman of great wit, and had the reputation of being equally malicious. It was reported that she had caused several quarrels, amongst others, one which had had fatal consequences for the house of Antremont. Mamma was sufficiently intimate with her to be acquainted with her character; having quite innocently taken the fancy of someone upon whom Madame de Menthon had designs, mamma was charged by her with the offence of the preference shown towards her, although she had neither sought nor accepted it; and, from that time, Madame de Menthon sought to do her rival several ill turns, none of which succeeded. By way of sample, I will relate one of the most laughable. They were together in the country, with several gentlemen of the neighbourhood, amongst whom was the suitor in question. Madame de Menthon one day told one of these gentlemen that Madame de Warens was very affected, that she had no taste, dressed badly, and kept her bosom covered like a tradesman's wife. "As for the last point," answered the gentleman, who was fond of a joke, "she has her reasons for it; I know she has a scar on her breast, just like an ugly rat, so perfectly natural that it looks as if it was moving." Hatred, like love, causes credulity. Madame de Menthon resolved to make capital





Ed. Rostand del.

SPITEFUL BEHAVIOUR OF THE COMTESSE DE MENTHON  
(Book V)

out of this discovery; and one day, when mamma was playing cards with the lady's ungrateful favourite, she seized the opportunity to step behind her rival, and, almost upsetting her chair, cleverly turned back her neckerchief; but, instead of the large rat, the gentleman saw something very different, which it was easier to see than to forget, and this was certainly not what the lady had intended.

I was not calculated to attract Madame de Menthon, who only liked to see brilliant company around her; nevertheless, she paid me some attention, not on account of my personal appearance, about which she certainly did not trouble herself, but because of my supposed wit, which might have made me serviceable to her. She had a lively taste for satire, and was fond of composing songs and verses upon those who displeased her. If she had found me sufficiently gifted to assist her in composing her verses, and sufficiently obliging to write them, between us we should soon have turned Chambéri upside down. These lampoons would have been traced back to their source; Madame de Menthon would have got out of it by sacrificing me, and I should, perhaps, have been imprisoned for the rest of my life, as a reward for playing the Apollo of the ladies.

Happily, nothing of the kind happened. Madame de Menthon kept me to dinner two or three times, to make me talk, and found that I was only a fool. I was conscious of this myself, and sighed over it, envying the accomplishments of my friend Venture, whereas I ought to have been grateful to my stupidity for saving me from danger. I continued her daughter's singing-master, and nothing more; but I lived peacefully, and was always welcome in Chambéri, which was far better than being considered a wit by her, and a serpent by everybody else.

Be that as it may, mamma saw that, in order to rescue me from the perils of my youth, she must treat me as a man, which she immediately proceeded to do, but in the most singular manner that ever occurred to a woman in similar circumstances. I found her manner more serious, and her utterances more moral than usual. The playful gaiety, which was usually mingled with her advice, was all at once succeeded by a sustained gravity, neither familiar nor severe, which seemed to pave the way for an explanation. After

having in vain asked myself the reason of this change, I asked her, which was just what she expected. She proposed a walk in the little garden on the following day; the next morning found us there. She had taken precautions that we should be left undisturbed all day, and employed the time in preparing me for the kindness which she wished to show me, not, as another woman would have done, by artifices and coquetry, but by language full of feeling and good sense, better calculated to instruct than to seduce me, which appealed rather to my heart than my senses. But, however admirable and useful the words she addressed to me may have been, although they were anything but cold and mournful, I did not listen to them with all the attention they deserved, and did not impress them on my memory, as I should have done at any other time. The manner in which she began, the appearance of careful preparation had disquieted me; while she was speaking, I was dreamy and distracted, thinking less of what she was saying than of what she wanted; and, as soon as I understood, which was by no means easy, the novelty of the idea, which had never once entered my head all the time I had been living with her, it so completely took possession of me, that I was no longer in a state to pay attention to what she said to me. I only thought of her, and did not listen to her.

Most instructors are liable to the perverse idea, which I have not avoided myself in my "*Émile*," of making young people attentive to that which they desire to impress upon them, by revealing to them the prospect of something in the highest degree attractive. Struck by the object held before him, a young man devotes his attention to that exclusively, and, leaping lightly over your introductory discourses, makes straight for the goal towards which you are leading him too slowly for his liking. If it be desired to make him attentive, he must not be allowed to go too far ahead; and it was just in this particular that mamma showed her want of judgment. With characteristic singularity, which accorded with her systematic mind, she took the superfluous precaution of attaching conditions; but, as soon as I saw their reward, I no longer listened to them, and hastened to agree to everything. I even doubt whether there is a man in the world sufficiently honest and courageous to make a bargain in a similar case, or a woman

capable of pardoning him, if he ventured to do so. In consequence of the same singularity, she attached to the agreement the most solemn formalities, and gave me eight days to think over them, which, like a hypocrite, I assured her I did not require; for, to crown the singularity of the whole affair, I was really glad of the respite, so greatly had the novelty of these ideas struck me, and so disordered did I feel the state of my own to be, that I wanted time to set them in order.

It will be imagined that those eight days seemed eight centuries to me; on the contrary, I could have wished that they had really lasted as long. I do not know how to describe my condition; it was a kind of fright mingled with impatience, during which I was so afraid of what I longed for, that I sometimes seriously endeavoured to think of some decent way of avoiding the promised happiness. Consider my ardent and lascivious temperament, my heated blood, my heart intoxicated with love, my vigorous health, my age. Remember that, in this condition, thirsting after women, I had never yet touched one; that imagination, need, vanity, and curiosity, all combined to devour me with the burning desire of being a man and showing myself one. Add to this, above all—for it must never be forgotten—that my tender and lively attachment to her, far from diminishing, had only become warmer every day; that I was never happy except with her; that I never left her except to think of her; that my heart was full, not only of her goodness and amiability, but of her sex, her form, her person; in a word, of her, under every aspect in which she could be dear to me. Do not imagine that, because she was ten or twelve years older than myself, she had either grown old, or appeared so to me. During the five or six years since the first sight of her had so enchanted me, she had really altered very little, and, in my eyes, not at all. She has always appeared charming to me, and, at that time, everyone still considered her so. Her figure alone had become a little stouter. In other respects, it was the same eye, the same complexion, the same bosom, the same features, the same beautiful, fair hair, the same cheerfulness, even the voice was the same, the silvery voice of youth, which always made so deep an impression upon me, that, even now, I cannot hear without emotion the tones of a pretty girlish voice.

What I had to fear in the expectation of possessing one who was so dear to me, was naturally the anticipation of it, and the inability to control my desires and imagination sufficiently to remain master of myself. It will be seen that, at an advanced age, the mere idea of certain trifling favours which awaited me in the company of the person I loved, heated my blood to such a degree that it was impossible for me to make with impunity the short journey which separated me from her. How then was it that, in the flower of my youth, I felt so little eagerness for the first enjoyment? How was it that I could see the hour approach with more pain than pleasure? How was it that, instead of the rapture which should have intoxicated me, I almost felt repugnance and fear? There is no doubt that, if I had been able to escape my happiness with decency, I should have done so with all my heart. I have promised singularities in the history of my attachment to her; this is surely one which would never have been expected.

The reader, already disgusted, is doubtless of opinion that, being already possessed by another man, she degraded herself in my eyes by distributing her favours, and that a feeling of disesteem cooled those with which she had inspired me. He is mistaken. This distribution was certainly very painful to me, as much in consequence of a very natural feeling of delicacy as because I really considered it unworthy of her and myself; but it never altered my feelings towards her, and I can swear that I never loved her more tenderly than when I had so little desire to possess her. I knew too well her modest heart and her cold temperament to think for a moment that sensual pleasure had anything to do with this abandonment of herself; I was perfectly convinced that nothing but anxiety to save me from dangers that were otherwise almost inevitable and to preserve me entirely for myself and my duties, caused her to violate a duty which she did not regard in the same light as other women, as will be shown later. I pitied her and pitied myself. I should have liked to say to her: "No, mamma, it is not necessary; I will answer for myself without that." But I did not dare to do so—first, because it was not a thing to say, and, in the second place, because in the main I felt that it was not true, and that, in reality, there was only *one* woman who could protect me against other women and secure me against



temptations. Without desiring to possess her, I was very glad that she prevented me from desiring the possession of other women, to such an extent did I look upon everything as a misfortune which would draw me away from her. Our long-continued and innocent intercourse, far from weakening my feelings for her, had strengthened them, but, at the same time, had given them a different turn, which made them more affectionate, more tender perhaps, but also less sensual. Having so long called her *mamma*, having enjoyed with her the intimacy of a son, I had become accustomed to look upon myself as one. I believe that this was really the cause of the little eagerness I felt to possess her, although she was so dear to me. I well remember that my early feelings, without being livelier, were more sensual. At Annecy, I was intoxicated; at Chambéry, I was no longer so. I still loved her as passionately as possible; but I loved her more for her own sake than for my own, or, at least, I sought happiness with her, rather than enjoyment; she was for me more than a sister, more than a mother, more than a friend, even more than a mistress; and for that very reason she was not a mistress for me. In short, I loved her too well to desire to possess her; that is most clearly prominent in my ideas.

The day, more dreaded than wished for, at length arrived. I promised everything, and kept my word. My heart sealed all my vows, without desiring their reward. However, I obtained it. For the first time I found myself in the arms of a woman, a woman whom I adored. Was I happy? No; I tasted pleasure. A certain unconquerable feeling of melancholy poisoned its charm; I felt as if I had been guilty of incest. Two or three times, while pressing her in ecstasy to my arms, I wetted her bosom with my tears. She, on the other hand, was neither sad nor excited; she was tender and calm. As she was by no means sensual and had not looked for enjoyment, she felt no gratification, and never experienced remorse.

I repeat it: all her faults were due to her errors, none to her passions. She was well born, her heart was pure, she loved propriety; her inclinations were upright and virtuous, her taste was refined; she was formed for an elegance of manners which she always loved but never followed, because, instead of listening to her heart, which always guided her aright, she listened to her

reason, which guided her wrongly; for when the latter is led astray by false principles, these are always belied by its real feelings; but, unfortunately, she rather prided herself on her philosophy, and the morals which she drew from it corrupted those which her heart dictated.

M. de Tavel, her first lover, was her instructor in philosophy, and the principles which he taught her were those which he found necessary, in order to seduce her. Finding her attached to her husband, devoted to her duties, always cold, calculating, and inaccessible to sensual feelings, he endeavoured to reach her by sophistries, and succeeded in convincing her that the duties, to which she was so attached, were so much catechism-nonsense, intended solely for the amusement of children; that the union of the sexes was in itself a matter of the greatest indifference; that conjugal fidelity was merely an apparent obligation, the inner morality of which only had reference to public opinion; that the husband's repose was the only rule of duty which the wife need respect, so that secret acts of unfaithfulness, being nothing to him against whom they were committed, were equally nothing to the conscience; in short, he persuaded her that the thing was nothing in itself, that only scandal called it into existence, and that every woman who appeared virtuous owed it to that alone. In this manner the wretch attained his object, by corrupting the mind of a child whose heart he had been unable to corrupt. He was punished for it by an all-devouring jealousy, being convinced that she treated him as he had persuaded her to treat her husband. I do not know whether he was mistaken in this. The minister Perret was supposed to have been his successor. All I know is, that the cold temperament of this young woman, which ought to have protected her against this system, was just what subsequently prevented her from abandoning it. She could not conceive that anyone should attach such importance to that which possessed no importance for her. She never honoured by the name of virtue an abstinence which cost her so little.

She hardly ever misused these false principles for her own sake; but she misused them for the sake of others, and that in consequence of another maxim almost equally false, but more in harmony with the goodness of her heart. She always believed that

nothing attached a man so strongly to a woman as possession; and, although her love for her friends was only friendship, it was a friendship so tender, that she employed all possible means at her disposal to attach them more strongly to her. The remarkable thing is, that she nearly always succeeded. She was so truly amiable, that, the greater the intimacy in which one lived with her, the more one found fresh reasons for loving her. Another thing worthy of notice is that, after her first weakness, she rarely bestowed her favours except upon the unfortunate; persons of distinction spent their labour upon her in vain; but, if she once began to feel sympathy for a man, he must have been little deserving of love if she did not end by loving him. If she sometimes chose those who were unworthy of her, the blame rested, not on any low inclinations, which were far removed from her noble heart, but only on her too generous, too kindly, too compassionate, and too feeling disposition, which she did not always control with sufficient judgment.

If some false principles led her astray, how many admirable ones did she possess, to which she always remained constant! By how many virtues did she make up for her weaknesses, if those errors can be so called, with which the senses had so little to do! The same man, who deceived her in one point, instructed her admirably in a thousand others; and, as her passions were not so unruly as to prevent her from following her reason, she took the right path when her sophisms did not mislead her. Her motives, even in her errors, were praiseworthy; owing to her mistaken ideas, she might do wrong, but she was incapable of doing so wilfully. She abhorred duplicity and lying; she was just, fair, humane, disinterested, faithful to her word, her friends, and the duties which she regarded as such, incapable of revenge or hatred, without the least idea that there was any merit in forgiveness. Finally, to return to those qualities which less admit of excuse, without knowing how to estimate the value of her favours, she never made a common trade of them; she was lavish of them, but she never sold them, although she was always at her wit's end how to live; and I venture to assert, that if Socrates could esteem Aspasia, he would have respected Madame de Warens.

\* I know beforehand, that, when I ascribe to her a sensitive

disposition and a cold temperament, I shall, as usual, be accused of contradiction, and with as much reason. It may be that Nature was wrong, and that this combination ought not to have existed; I only know that it did exist. All who have known Madame de Warens, many of whom are still alive, know well that this was the case. I will even venture to add, that she never knew but *one* real pleasure in life—to procure enjoyment for those whom she loved. Anyone is at liberty to judge of that as he pleases, and learnedly prove that it is not true. My duty is to state the truth, not to make people believe it.

By degrees I became acquainted with all I have just said in the course of the conversations which succeeded our union, and which alone rendered it delightful. She had been right in hoping that her complaisance would be useful to me; I derived great advantages from it as regards my instruction. Hitherto, she had only spoken to me of myself alone as if she had been talking to a child. She now began to treat me as a man, and spoke to me of herself. All that she said to me was so interesting, and I felt so touched by it, that, when I reflected, I derived greater advantage from these confidences than from her instructions. When we truly feel that the heart speaks, our own opens to receive its confidences, and all the morality of a pedagogue will never be worth the tender and loving chatter of a clever woman, who has gained our affection.

The intimate terms on which I lived with her afforded her the opportunity of forming a more favourable estimate of me than before; she was of opinion that, in spite of my awkward manner, I was worth being trained for the world, and that, if I one day appeared on a certain footing, I should be in a position to make my way. With this idea, she devoted herself, not only to forming my judgment, but also my appearance and manners, in order to make me amiable as well as estimable; and, if it is true that worldly success is compatible with virtue—which for my part I do not believe—I am at least convinced, that there is no other way to such an end than that which she had taken and wished to teach me. For Madame de Warens understood mankind, and understood, in a high degree, the art of dealing with them without falsehood and without indiscretion, without deceiving or offending them. But she taught this art rather by her character than by her lessons;

she knew better how to practise than explain it, and I was of all men in the world the least capable of learning it. Thus her efforts in this direction were nearly all labour lost, as well as the trouble she took to provide me with fencing and dancing-masters. Although supple and of a good figure, I could never learn to dance a minuet. Owing to my corns, I had contracted the habit of walking on my heels, of which Roche could never cure me; and, in spite of my active appearance, I have never been able to jump an ordinary ditch. It was worse at the fencing-school. After three months' instruction I was still obliged to confine myself to parrying, without being able to deliver an attack; my wrist was not supple enough, or my arm sufficiently firm, to hold my foil, whenever my master chose to make it fly out of my hand. In addition to this, I had a mortal aversion to this exercise, and to the master who attempted to teach me. I could never have believed that a man could be so proud of being able to kill another. In order to bring his commanding genius within my reach, he always explained himself by comparisons drawn from music, about which he knew nothing. He discovered striking analogies between a thrust in tierce and carte and the musical intervals of the same name. When he intended to make a feint, he told me to look out for a *dièse*,<sup>1</sup> because a *dièse* was formerly called a *feinte*; when he had knocked the foil out of my hand, he used to say, with a grin, that it was a *pause*. In short, I have never in my life beheld a more insufferable pedant than this wretched fellow with his plumes and his leather stomacher.

I consequently made little progress in these exercises, which I soon gave up from sheer disgust; but I succeeded far better in a more useful art—that of being content with my lot, and not desiring one more brilliant, for which I began to feel that I was not born. Entirely devoted to the desire of making mamma's life happy, I always felt greater pleasure in her company; and, when I was obliged to leave her and hurry into the town, in spite of my passion for music, I began to feel the restraint imposed upon me by my lessons.

I do not know whether Claude Anet was aware of the intimacy of our relations. I have reason to believe that it did not escape his

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1 Mus., sharp.

notice. He was very quick-witted, but very discreet; he never said what he did not think, but he did not always say what he thought. Without giving me the least hint that he knew about it, he seemed to show by his conduct that he did. This conduct was certainly not due to any lowness of disposition, but to the fact that, having adopted his mistress's principles, he could not disapprove if she acted in accordance with them. Although no older than she was, he was so mature and serious, that he looked upon us almost as two children, who deserved to be indulged, and both of us regarded him as a man worthy of respect, whose esteem we had to conciliate. It was not until she had been unfaithful to him, that I understood the extent of the attachment that she felt for him. Since she knew that I only felt, thought and breathed through her, she showed me how much she loved him, in order that I might feel the same affection for him, and she laid less stress upon her friendship than upon her esteem for him, since this was the feeling which I was capable of sharing most fully. How often did she move our hearts, and make us embrace with tears, at the same time telling us that we were both necessary to her happiness in life! Let not those women who read this laugh maliciously. With her peculiar temperament, there was nothing suspicious about this necessity; it was solely the necessity of her heart.

Thus a companionship was established between us, of which there is, perhaps, no other example upon earth. All our wishes, cares, and inclinations were in common; none of them went beyond our little circle. The habit of living together, to the exclusion of the rest of the world, became so strong, that if, during the course of our meals, one of the three was absent, or a fourth came in, everything was upset, and, in spite of our special bonds of attachment, our *tête-à-têtes* were not so sweet as our party of three. What prevented all restraint between us was an extreme mutual confidence, and what prevented weariness was the fact that we were all constantly employed. Mamma, always planning and always active, allowed neither of us to be idle; and, besides, we each of us had enough to do on our own account, to keep our time fully occupied. In my opinion, want of occupation is equally the scourge of society and solitude. Nothing narrows the mind more, nothing begets more nothings—gossip, tittle-tattle, bickering, and lies, than for people to be



eternally shut up, opposite one another, in the same room, reduced, for the want of anything else to do, to the necessity of chattering incessantly. When everyone is busy, people only speak when they have something to say; but, when doing nothing, they are absolutely obliged to keep talking, which is the most wearisome and the most dangerous kind of constraint. I even venture to go further and maintain that, in order to make company really agreeable, not only must everybody be doing something, but something that requires a certain amount of attention. Knitting is as bad as doing nothing; and it takes as much trouble to amuse a woman who is knitting, as one who is sitting with her arms folded. Embroidering is different; she is sufficiently occupied to fill up the intervals of silence. What is disgusting and ridiculous, is to see, in the meantime, a dozen overgrown hobble-de-hoys get up, sit down again, walk backwards and forwards, turn round on their heels, move the porcelain chimney-ornaments about, and rack their brains in order to keep up an inexhaustible flow of words—a charming occupation truly! Such people, whatever they may do, will always be a burden to themselves and others. When I was at Motiers, I used to go to my neighbours' houses to make stay-laces; if I went back into the world, I should always carry a cup and ball in my pocket, and amuse myself with it all day, to avoid being obliged to speak when I have nothing to say. If everyone did the same, men would become less spiteful, their intercourse would become safer, and, in my opinion, more agreeable. In short, let wits laugh if they please, but I maintain that the only lesson of morality within the reach of the present generation is the morality of the cup and ball.

Besides, we were not allowed much time for taking precautions against *ennui* when by ourselves; the crowds of troublesome visitors caused us too much weariness to allow us to feel any when we were left to ourselves. The feeling of impatience, with which they had formerly inspired me, had not diminished, and the only difference was, that I had less time to abandon myself to it. Poor mamma had not lost her old fancy for schemes and systems; on the contrary, the more pressing her domestic embarrassments became, the more she abandoned herself to visionary projects, in order to meet them; the smaller her present resources, the greater she imagined



them in the future. Advancing years only strengthened her in this folly; and, in proportion as she lost the taste for the pleasures of the world and youth, she supplied its place by a mania for secrets and schemes. The house was never free from quacks, manufacturers, alchemists, and promoters of all kinds, who flung millions about them, and ended by being in want of a crown-piece. None of them left her empty-handed; and it has always amazed me, how she was able to support such extravagant expenditure without exhausting her means and the patience of her creditors.

The scheme with which she was most occupied at the time of which I am speaking, and which was not the most unreasonable that she had formed, was to establish at Chambéri a royal botanical garden with a paid demonstrator; it will be guessed for whom this post had already been designed. The position of this town, in the midst of the Alps, was excellently adapted for botanical purposes; and mamma, who always tried to assist one scheme by another, combined with it the idea of a college of pharmacy, which really seemed likely to be very useful in so poor a country, where apothecaries are almost the only medical men. The retirement of Grossi, the royal physician in ordinary, to Chambéri, after the death of King Victor, seemed to her to be very favourable to this idea, or, perhaps, suggested it. However that may be, she laid herself out to flatter Grossi, who was by no means an easy subject; he was certainly the most sarcastic and brutal fellow that I have ever known. The reader will be able to judge of his character by two or three specimens of it, which I will mention.

One day, he was in consultation with some other physicians, one of whom had been summoned from Annecy, and was the patient's usual medical attendant. This young man, who possessed little tact for a physician, ventured to disagree with Grossi's opinion. The latter, by way of reply, simply asked him when he was going back, which way he meant to go, and by what conveyance he travelled. The other, having satisfied Grossi on these points, asked him in his turn whether he could do anything for him. "Nothing, nothing," said Grossi, "except that I intend to sit at a window while you are passing, to have the pleasure of seeing an ass riding by on horseback." He was as mean as he was wealthy and hard-hearted. One of his friends once asked him to lend him some

money on good security. "My friend," said he, seizing his arm and grinding his teeth, "if St. Peter himself came down from heaven to borrow ten pistoles from me, and offered me the Trinity as sureties, I would not lend them to him." One day, being invited to dinner with Comte Picon, Governor of Savoy, who was a very religious man, he arrived before the time; and his Excellency, who was busy telling his beads, proposed the same amusement to him. Not knowing exactly what to answer, he made a fearful grimace and knelt down; but he had scarcely recited two *Aves*, when, unable to endure it any longer, he hastily got up, took his stick, and went off without saying a word. Comte Picon ran after him, crying, "M. Grossi! M. Grossi! stop, stop! there is an excellent red partridge on the spit!" "Monsieur le Comte," replied the other, turning round, "I would not stay if you were to set a roasted angel before me." Such was the chief physician, M. Grossi, whom mamma took in hand, and succeeded in taming. Although extremely busy, he was in the habit of coming to see her very frequently, conceived a friendship for Anet, showed that he thought highly of his learning, spoke of him in terms of esteem, and, what one would not have expected from such a bear, treated him with studious respect, to obliterate the impressions of the past. For, although Anet was no longer on the footing of a servant, it was known that he had formerly been one, and it needed nothing less than the example and authority of the chief physician, to make people treat him in a manner which they would certainly not have adopted from anyone else. Claude Anet, with his black coat, well-combed wig, serious and respectable demeanour, prudent and careful behaviour, a tolerably extensive knowledge of botany and medicine, and the support of the head of the Faculty, might reasonably have hoped to fill the place of Demonstrator Royal of plants, if the idea of the establishment had been carried out; and, in fact, Grossi had approved of the plan, had taken it up, and only waited an opportunity to lay it before the Court, when the conclusion of peace should allow it to give attention to useful things, and leave some money at its disposal to provide for the necessary expenses.

But this project, the carrying out of which would probably have plunged me into the study of botany, for which, as it appears to me, I was born, failed in consequence of one of those unexpected

accidents which overthrow the best concerted plans. I was fated to become by degrees an example of human misery. It was as if Providence, who summoned me to these great trials, with its own hand removed every obstacle which might have prevented me from encountering them. In an excursion which Anet had made to the top of the mountains to look for genipi, a rare plant which only grows upon the Alps and which M. Grossi wanted, the poor fellow got so hot that he was attacked by a pleurisy, which the genipi was unable to cure, although it is said to be a specific for that complaint; and, notwithstanding all the skill of Grossi, who was certainly a very clever man, in spite of the unremitting care and attention of his good mistress and myself, he died in our arms on the fifth day, after suffering the most cruel agonies, during which he had no spiritual exhortations but mine, which I lavished upon him with such outbursts of grief and fervour, that, if he had been able to understand me, they must have afforded him some consolation. Thus I lost the most faithful friend I have had in my life; an uncommon and estimable man, in whom Nature took the place of education, who, in his position as a servant, nourished in his heart all the virtues of great men, and who, in order to show himself one of them to all the world, perhaps wanted nothing except a longer life and a different position.

The next day, I was speaking of him to mamma with the most lively and sincere affliction; when suddenly, in the midst of our conversation, the vile and unworthy thought came across my mind, that I should inherit his wardrobe, particularly a nice black coat, which had caught my fancy. I thought of this, and consequently gave utterance to my thought; for when I was with her, to think and speak was the same thing for me. Nothing made her feel more keenly the loss which she had sustained than this contemptible and hateful remark, disinterestedness and nobility of soul being qualities for which the deceased had been pre-eminently distinguished. The poor woman, without answering a word, turned away from me and began to cry. Dear and precious tears! They were understood, and all made their way into my heart, from which they washed away even the last traces of so contemptible and unworthy a thought. Never again, since that time, has a similar thought entered it.

This loss caused mamma as much harm as sorrow. From this moment, her affairs went from bad to worse. Anet had been very exact and methodical, and kept his mistress's house in good order. His vigilance was feared, and extravagance was checked. Even mamma herself was afraid of his censure, and curtailed her expenses. She was not satisfied with his attachment, she wished to preserve his esteem, and she dreaded the just reproach which he sometimes ventured to utter, that she was squandering not only her own property, but that of others as well. I thought as he did, and even said so; but I had not the same influence over her, and my words did not make the same impression upon her as his. When he was no more, I was obliged to take his place, for which I had as little capacity as inclination; consequently, I filled it badly. I was not sufficiently careful, I was very shy; though grumbling to myself, I let everything go on as it liked. Besides, although I had gained the same confidence, I had not the same authority. I saw the disorder, I sighed over it, I complained of it, but no one paid any attention to me. I was too young and too lively to have a right to be sensible; and, when I wanted to interfere and play the censor, mamma gave me two or three playful slaps on the cheek, called me her little Mentor, and obliged me to resume the part which suited me.

The profound conviction of the distress into which her unlimited extravagance was bound, sooner or later, to plunge her, made an impression upon me, which was so much the stronger, as, being now the overseer of her household, I was able to judge for myself of the difference between her income and expenses, in which the balance was in favour of the latter. It is from this period that I date the tendency to avarice, which I have always felt since then. I have never been foolishly extravagant except by fits and starts; but, until then, it never troubled me whether I had little or much money. I now began to pay attention to this, and to look after my purse. I became miserly from a very excellent motive; for, in truth, my only thought was, how to save something for mamma against the time of the crash which I saw coming. I was afraid that her creditors would confiscate her pension, or that it might be altogether discontinued; and I imagined, with my narrow ideas, that my little savings would then be of great service to her. But, in

order to save anything, and, above all, to keep it, it was necessary for me to hide it from her; for, while she was hard pressed for money, it would never have done for her to know of the existence of my little hoard. I accordingly looked about for various hiding-places, where I stored a few *louis*, intending to increase the store from time to time, until the moment when I intended to lay it at her feet. But I was so awkward in the choice of my hiding-places, that she always found them out; and then, in order to let me know that she had done so, she removed the money which I had deposited and replaced it by a larger sum in different coinage. Then, feeling quite ashamed, I put my little treasure into the common purse, and she never failed to lay it out in clothes or other articles for my use, such as a silver-hilted sword, a watch, or something of the kind.

Convinced that I should never succeed in saving much money, and that, after all, it would only be of very little use to her, I at last felt that there was nothing else to be done, in view of the disaster which I feared, except for me to secure a position, which would enable me to provide for her myself, as soon as she ceased to provide for me and found herself reduced to want. Unfortunately, I built my plans upon my own inclinations, and foolishly persisted in looking for my fortune in music; feeling *motifs* and melodies rising in my head, I thought that, as soon as I should be in a position to make use of them, I should become a celebrated man, a modern Orpheus, whose notes could not fail to attract all the wealth of Peru. As I now began to read music fairly well, the question was, how I was to learn composition. The difficulty was to find anyone to teach me; for I did not expect to be able to teach myself with the assistance of my Rameau alone; and, since Le Maître's departure, there was no one in Savoy who knew anything about harmony.

Here will be seen another of those inconsistencies of which my life is full, and which have often led me directly away from the object I had in view, even when I thought that I was making straight for it. Venture had often spoken to me of the Abbé Blanchard, his composition-master, a man of great merit and talents, who at the time was music-master of Besançon Cathedral, and now occupies the same post in the Chapel of Versailles. I

determined to go to Besançon and take lessons from the Abbé Blanchard; and this idea seemed to me so sensible, that I succeeded in making mamma look upon it in the same light. She immediately set about getting ready my little outfit with the extravagance she displayed in everything. Thus, with the object of preventing her bankruptcy and repairing in the future the consequences of her extravagance, I began at the outset by putting her to an expenditure of eight hundred francs; I hastened her ruin, in order to put myself in a position to prevent it. Foolish as this conduct may have been, the illusion was complete on my part and even on hers. We were both of us convinced—I, that I was working for her benefit: she, that I was working for my own.

I had counted upon finding Venture still at Annecy, and intended to ask him for a letter of introduction to the Abbé Blanchard. He was no longer there. I could learn nothing more, and was obliged to content myself with a mass composed by himself, written in four parts, which he had left for me. With this recommendation, I set out for Besançon by way of Geneva, where I paid a visit to my relations, and through Nyon, where I saw my father, who received me as usual and undertook to send on my trunk, which, as I was on horseback, arrived after myself. I reached Besançon. The Abbé received me kindly, promised to teach me, and offered to help me in any way he could. When we were ready to begin, I received a letter from my father, informing me that my trunk had been seized and confiscated at Rousses, a French custom-house on the Swiss frontier. Alarmed at this news, I made use of the acquaintances whom I had made at Besançon to find out the reason of this confiscation; for, being certain that I had nothing contraband, I could not imagine what excuse there was for it. At last, I discovered the reason, and it is so curious that I must relate it.

At Chambéri I had made the acquaintance of an old Lyonnese, named Duvivier, a very worthy fellow, who, under the Regency, had been employed at the passport-office, and, for want of occupation, had come to assist in the land-survey. He had lived in the fashionable world; he possessed talents and some knowledge, was kind-hearted and courteous; he understood music; and, as we worked in the same room, we had become attached to each other



by preference in the midst of the unlicked cubs around us. He had correspondents at Paris, who kept him supplied with those little trifles, those ephemeral publications, which circulate, one knows not why, and die, one knows not how, of which no one thinks any further after they have ceased to be spoken of. As I sometimes took him to dine with mamma, he treated me with a certain amount of respect, and, to make himself agreeable, endeavoured to inspire me with a taste for such twaddle, for which I have always felt such disgust, that I have never in my life read any of it myself. Unhappily, one of these cursed papers had been left in the breast-pocket of a new coat which I had worn two or three times, to prevent its seizure by the custom-house officers. This paper contained an insipid Jansenist parody of the beautiful scene in Racine's *Mithridates*; I had not read ten lines of it, and had forgotten to take it out of my pocket. This was the reason of the confiscation of my property. The tax-collectors, at the head of the inventory of my trunk, drew up an imposing report, in which, assuming that the document was brought from Geneva in order to be printed and distributed in France, they launched out into pious invectives against the enemies of God and the Church, and into praises of those who, by their pious watchfulness, had prevented this infernal project from being carried out. No doubt they also found that my shirts smelt of heresy, for, on the strength of this terrible paper, everything was confiscated, and I never received any account or news of my poor outfit. The revenue-officers, to whom I applied, required so many informations, proofs, vouchers, and memorials that, after losing myself a thousand times in the mazes of this labyrinth, I was obliged to give up everything. I genuinely regret that I have not kept the report drawn up by the officials of Rousses; it would have figured with distinction amongst the collection which is to accompany this work.

This loss made me return at once to Chambéry, without having learned anything with the Abbé Blanchard; and, after weighing everything carefully, and seeing that misfortune pursued me in all my undertakings, I resolved to attach myself entirely to mamma, to share her lot, and no longer to trouble myself to no purpose about a future on which I had no influence. She received me as if I had brought back treasures, gradually supplied the loss of my ward-



robe, and my misfortune, sufficiently great for us both, was forgotten almost as soon as it overtook us.

Although it had cooled my ardour for music, I still continued to study my Rameau; and, by dint of repeated efforts, I at length succeeded in understanding it, and made some trifling attempts at composition, the success of which encouraged me. The Comte de Bellegarde, son of the Marquis d'Antremont, had returned from Dresden after the death of King Augustus. He had lived a long time at Paris, and was passionately fond of music, especially Rameau's. His brother, the Comte de Nangis, played the violin; the Comtesse de la Tour, their sister, sang a little. All this made music the fashion at Chambéri, and what may be called public concerts were introduced there, which I was at first asked to direct; but it soon became clear that this was beyond my powers, and other arrangements were made. I still continued, however, to compose some little pieces of my own, amongst others a cantata, which met with great approval. It was not a well-executed piece of work, but it was full of new airs and effects, which were not expected from me. These gentlemen could not believe that I, who read music so indifferently at sight, could be capable of composing anything tolerable, and felt certain that I had taken the credit of someone else's work. In order to settle the matter, M. de Nangis came to see me one morning and brought a cantata by Clérambault, which he told me he had transposed to suit his voice, and for which another bass was required, since the original could no longer be played in consequence of the transposition. I told him that it would involve considerable labour, and that it could not be finished on the spot. He thought this was only an excuse, and pressed me to write, at least, the bass of a recitative. I did so, badly, I have no doubt, since, in order to do anything well, I must be free and unrestrained; but, at least, I wrote it according to the rules, and, as he was present, he could have no doubt that I knew the elements of composition. I did not, therefore, lose my pupils, but it somewhat cooled my ardour for music, to see that they could give a concert without my assistance.

It was about this time that peace was concluded, and the French army recrossed the Alps. Several officers came to visit mamma, amongst others the Comte de Lautrec, colonel of the

Orleans regiment, afterwards Plenipotentiary at Geneva, and subsequently Marshal of France, to whom she presented me. After hearing her account of me, he appeared to take a great interest in me, and made me several promises, which he never remembered till the last year of his life, when I no longer needed his assistance. The young Marquis de Sennecterre, whose father was at the time ambassador at Turin, passed through Chambéri at the same time. He dined with Madame de Menthon. I happened to be dining there the same day. After dinner, the conversation turned upon music, which he knew well. The opera of *Jephtha* was at that time something new; he spoke of it, and it was brought to him. He made me shudder by proposing that we should go through the opera together, and opened the book just at the famous piece for the double chorus:

" La terre, l'enfer, le ciel même,  
Tout tremble devant le Seigneur." <sup>1</sup>

He asked me, "How many parts will you take? I will take these six." I was not yet accustomed to French forwardness, and, although I had sometimes stammered out the score, I did not understand how one man could take six parts at once, or even two. I have found nothing more difficult in practising music, than skipping lightly from one part to the other, and keeping my eye on a whole score at once. From the manner in which I evaded this attempt, M. de Sennecterre must have been inclined to think that I did not understand music. It was, perhaps, in order to clear up his doubts on the point, that he suggested to me to compose the score of a song which he wanted to give to Mademoiselle de Menthon. I could not refuse. He sang the song, and I wrote down the music, without asking him to repeat it too often. He afterwards read it, and found that it was correctly scored. He had noticed my embarrassment and seemed pleased to make the most of my trifling success. It was, however, in reality, a very simple matter. In the main, I had a very considerable knowledge of music; I only needed that first rapid glance, which I have never possessed in any single thing, and which can only be acquired in music by constant practice. Anyhow, I felt thankful for his honourable efforts to efface

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<sup>1</sup> Earth, hell, heaven itself—everything trembles before the Lord.

from the minds of others, as well as my own, the trifling disgrace which I had suffered; and, twelve or fifteen years later, when I met him at different houses in Paris, I was frequently tempted to remind him of this incident, and to show him that I had not forgotten it. But he had lost his sight since then, and I was afraid to renew his regrets, by reminding him of the use he had formerly made of it, and I held my tongue.

I now come to the moment which connects my past with my present existence. Some friendships, which have lasted from that time to this, are very dear to me. They have often caused me to regret that happy obscurity, when those who called themselves my friends were really such, and loved me for myself, from pure goodwill, not from the vanity of being intimate with a well-known man, or from the secret desire of thus finding more opportunity of injuring him.

It is from this period that I date my acquaintance with my old friend Gauffecourt, who has always remained true to me, in spite of the efforts of others to take him away from me. Always? Alas, no! I have just lost him. But his affection for me only ended with his life; our friendship only ended at his death. M. de Gauffecourt was one of the most amiable men who have ever existed. It was impossible to see him without loving him, or to live with him without becoming devotedly attached to him. I have never seen more frank or more kindly features, or an expression which showed greater calmness, feeling and intelligence, or inspired greater confidence. However reserved a man might be, it was impossible for him to help being, at first sight, as familiar with him as if he had known him for twenty years. I myself, who found it so hard to feel at ease with strangers, was at home with him from the first moment. His manner, his way of speaking, his conversation were in perfect accord with his features. The tone of his voice was clear, full, well modulated, a fine bass, sonorous and powerful, which filled the ear and penetrated to the heart. It is impossible to imagine a gentler or more uniform cheerfulness, simpler or more unaffected grace, more natural or more tastefully cultivated talents. Add to this a loving heart—a little too affectionate towards all the world—a character too ready to oblige without discretion, serving his friends zealously, or rather making friends of people whom he was

able to serve, capable of managing his own affairs very cleverly, while warmly promoting the interests of others. Gauffecourt was the son of a humble watchmaker, and had himself followed his father's trade. But his personal appearance and merits summoned him to another sphere, into which he was not slow to enter. He made the acquaintance of M. de la Closure, the French Resident at Geneva, who took a fancy to him. He procured him other acquaintances at Paris, who proved useful to him, and by their influence he secured the right of supplying the salt at Valais, which brought him in an income of twenty thousand francs. His good fortune, which was amply sufficient, ended there as far as men were concerned; but, in regard to women, it was a great struggle; he had to choose, and made what choice he thought best. It was a rare and most honourable point about him, that, having connections with persons in all ranks of life, he was everywhere beloved and sought after by all, without ever incurring anyone's hatred or jealousy; and I believe that he died without ever having had a single enemy. Happy man! He went every year to the baths at Aix, the resort of the best society of the neighbouring countries. Intimate with all the nobility of Savoy, he came from Aix to Chambéry to visit the Comte de Bellegarde and his father the Marquis d'Antremont, at whose house mamma made his acquaintance and introduced me to him. This acquaintance, which did not seem destined to lead to anything, and was broken off for several years, was renewed on an occasion which I will afterwards relate, and became a genuine attachment. This is enough to justify me in speaking of a friend with whom I have been so closely connected; but, even if I had no personal interest in remembering him, he was so amiable a man and born under so lucky a star, that, for the credit of the human race, I should always think his memory worth preserving. Certainly, this charming man had his faults like others, as will be afterwards seen; but, if he had not had any, he would, perhaps, have been less amiable. To make him as attractive as possible, it was necessary that he should sometimes require to be pardoned.

Another connection of the same period is not yet entirely extinct, and still tempts me with the hope of earthly happiness, which dies so hard in the heart of man. M. de Conzié, a Savoyard

gentleman, at that time young and amiable, took it into his head to learn music, or rather to make the acquaintance of him who taught it. With considerable intelligence and a taste for polite acquirements, M. de Conzié combined a gentleness of character which made him very fascinating, and I also easily made myself attractive to people in whom I found such a disposition. Our friendship was soon formed.<sup>1</sup> The germs of literature and philosophy, which were beginning to stir in my head and only waited for a little care and encouragement to develop themselves completely, found them in him. M. de Conzié had little talent for music, which was a good thing for me; for the lesson hours were devoted to everything else but singing scales. We breakfasted, talked, and read new publications, but never said a word about music. Voltaire's correspondence with the Crown Prince of Prussia was at that time causing some stir; we frequently conversed about these two celebrated men, one of whom, who had only lately ascended the throne, already gave promise of what he was soon to become, while the other, as vilified as he is now admired, caused us to lament sincerely the misfortune by which he seemed to be pursued, and which is so often the heritage of great minds. The prince had enjoyed little happiness in his youth; and Voltaire seemed born never to enjoy any. The interest which we took in both extended to everything connected with them. Nothing that Voltaire wrote escaped us. The pleasure which these readings afforded me inspired me with the desire of learning to write elegantly, and of attempting to imitate the beautiful colouring of this author, which enchanted me. Some time afterwards his "Philosophical Letters" appeared. Although certainly not his best work, it was that which most attracted me to study, and this growing taste was never extinguished from that time.

But the moment had not yet come for me to devote myself to it entirely. I still had a somewhat fickle disposition, a desire for rambling, which had been restrained rather than eradicated, and which was fostered by our manner of living at Madame de Warens, which was too noisy to suit my solitary disposition. The crowd of

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<sup>1</sup> I have seen him since, and found him entirely changed. What a mighty magician is M. Choiseul! None of my old acquaintances have been proof against his powers of transformation.

strangers who swarmed around her from all directions, and my conviction that they were only seeking, each in his own way, to deceive her, made my life at home a regular torture. Since I had taken the place of Claude Anet in his mistress's confidence, I attentively followed the condition of her affairs, and saw them going from bad to worse in a most alarming manner. A hundred times I had remonstrated, begged, pressed and entreated her, but always in vain. I had thrown myself at her feet, and represented to her, as forcibly as I was able, the catastrophe which threatened her; I had strongly advised her to curtail her expenses, and to begin with me; to undergo a little privation while she was still young, rather than, by continually increasing her debts and the number of her creditors, to expose herself to their annoyance and to poverty in her old age. Touched by the sincerity of my zeal, she became affected like myself, and made me the finest promises in the world. But, the moment some worthless fellow arrived, all was forgotten. After a thousand proofs of the uselessness of my remonstrances, what was left for me to do but to turn my eyes away from the mischief which I could not prevent? I withdrew from the house, the door of which I was unable to guard; I made little excursions to Nyon, Geneva and Lyons, which distracted my attention from my secret trouble, while at the same time they increased the cause of it owing to the expense. I can swear that I would joyfully have put up with any kind of retrenchment, if mamma would really have profited by such saving; but, feeling convinced that the money I denied myself would only find its way into the pockets of swindlers, I abused her generosity in order to share it with them, and, like the dog returning from the slaughter-house, carried off my bit from the piece which I had not been able to save.

// I never lacked excuses for all these journeys; mamma herself would have supplied me with them in abundance, having so many engagements, negotiations, affairs and commissions in all parts, which required a trustworthy agent to execute them. She desired nothing better than to send me away; I was always ready to go; the result of this could only be a wandering kind of life. These journeys afforded me the opportunity of making acquaintances, who proved either agreeable or useful to me. At Lyons,



M. Perrichon, whom I reproach myself for not having cultivated sufficiently, considering the kindness he showed me; at Grenoble, Madame Deybens and the wife of the President of Bardonanche, a woman of great intelligence, who would have shown me especial favour, if I had had the opportunity of seeing her oftener; at Geneva, the French Resident, M. de la Closure, who often spoke to me of my mother, who still retained a hold upon his heart, in spite of death and time; the two Barillots, whose father, who called me his grandson, was a most agreeable companion and one of the worthiest persons I have ever known. During the troubles of the Republic, these two citizens took opposite sides; the son, that of the people, the father, that of the authorities; and when fighting began in 1737, happening to be at Geneva, I saw father and son leave the same house with arms in their hands, the former to go to the town hall, the latter to his headquarters, certain of finding themselves, two hours later, face to face, with the chance of cutting each other's throat. This terrible sight made so deep an impression upon me, that I took an oath never to take part in any civil war, and never to defend liberty at home by force of arms, either in my own person or by my approval, if I ever entered upon my rights as a citizen. I can prove that I kept my oath on a difficult occasion, and it will be found—at any rate I hope so—that my restraint was not without its value.

But I had not yet arrived at that first fermentation of patriotism which Geneva in arms excited in my heart. How far I was removed from it may be judged from a very serious fact which reflects upon myself, which I have forgotten to mention in its proper place, but which ought not to be omitted.

My uncle, Bernard, some years ago, had crossed over to Carolina, to superintend the building of the city of Charlestown, the plan of which he had designed, and died there shortly afterwards. My poor cousin had also died in the service of the King of Prussia, and thus my aunt lost her son and husband almost at the same time. These losses somewhat revived her friendship for her nearest surviving relative, who happened to be myself. Whenever I went to Geneva, I stayed with her, and amused myself with rummaging through and turning over the books and papers which my uncle had left. Amongst them I found several curious things,



together with some letters, of the existence of which certainly no one had any suspicion. My aunt, who attached little value to these papers, would have allowed me to take them all away, if I had wanted to do so. I contented myself with two or three books annotated by my grandfather Bernard, the minister, amongst others a quarto edition of the posthumous works of Rohault, the margin of which was full of excellent remarks, which gave me a fondness for mathematics. This book has remained with those of Madame de Warens; I have always regretted that I did not keep it. Besides these books, I took five or six manuscript pamphlets, and one printed one, written by the famous Micheli Ducret, a man of great talent, learned and enlightened, but too revolutionary in his ideas. He was cruelly treated by the Council of Geneva, and recently died in the fortress of Arberg, in which he had been imprisoned for many years, in consequence, it is said, of having been mixed up in the Bernese conspiracy.

This pamphlet was a judicious criticism of the extensive and absurd plan of fortification which has partly been carried out at Geneva, and is the laughingstock of experts who do not know the secret purpose which the Council had in carrying out this magnificent enterprise. M. Micheli, who had been excluded from the fortification-commission for having found fault with the plan, imagined that he, as a member of the Two Hundred, and even as a citizen, might venture to express his opinion at greater length; this he did in the pamphlet in question, which he was imprudent enough to get printed, although he did not publish it; for he only had a sufficient number of copies struck off to send to the Two Hundred, which were all seized at the post-office by order of the Senate. I found the pamphlet amongst my uncle's papers, together with the reply which he had been commissioned to make to it, and I took both away with me. I had taken this journey soon after leaving the Survey, and I was still on good terms with the advocate Coccoeli, who was at the head of it. Sometime afterwards, the Director of Customs took it into his head to ask me to stand godfather to his child, with Madame de Coccoeli as godmother. This compliment turned my head; and, proud of being so closely connected with the advocate, I tried to put on an air of importance, to appear worthy of so great an honour.

With this idea, I thought I could do nothing better than show him Micheli's printed pamphlet—which was really a curiosity—to prove to him that I belonged to the important personages of Geneva who were acquainted with State secrets. However, with a kind of semi-reserve which I should find it difficult to account for, I did not show him my uncle's reply to the pamphlet, perhaps because it was in manuscript, and nothing but printed matter was worth the advocate's attention. However, he had so strong an opinion of the value of the document, which I had been foolish enough to intrust to him, that I was never able to get it back or even to see it again; and, convinced of the uselessness of my efforts, I made a merit of the matter, and changed the theft into a present. I do not doubt for a moment that he made the most of this pamphlet, although it was more curious than useful, at the Court of Turin, and that, somehow or other, he took care to reimburse the money which it was naturally supposed he must have spent in getting possession of it. Happily, of all possible future contingencies, one of the least likely is that the King of Sardinia will ever besiege Geneva. But, as it is not impossible, I shall always reproach myself for my foolish vanity in having revealed the weaknesses of that place to its most inveterate enemy.

In this manner I passed two or three years, my attention divided between music, magisteries, schemes, and journeys; wandering incessantly from one thing to another; wanting to settle down to something, without knowing what, but gradually being drawn towards study, associating with men of letters, hearing literature discussed, even sometimes venturing to join in the discussion myself; rather adopting the terminology of books than understanding their contents. In my journeys to Geneva, I occasionally called upon my good old friend M. Simon, who encouraged my growing eagerness by entirely fresh news from the republic of letters, taken from Baillet or Colomiés. At Chambéri I also frequently saw a Jacobin, a professor of physics, a good-natured friar, whose name I have forgotten, who often performed little experiments which amused me extremely. From his directions, and with the assistance of the "Mathematical Recreations" of Ozanam, I tried to make some sympathetic ink. With this object, having filled a bottle more than half full with quicklime, orpiment

and water, I corked it tightly. Almost immediately it began to effervesce violently. I ran to uncork the bottle, but was too late; it burst in my face like a bomb. I swallowed so much chalk and orpiment that it nearly killed me. I could not see for more than six weeks, and this taught me not to dabble again in experimental physics, without any knowledge of the elements of the science.

This event proved very detrimental to my health, which for some time had been sensibly deteriorating. I do not understand how it was that, although I had a good constitution, and did not indulge in any excesses, I visibly declined. I am pretty strongly built and broad-chested, and my lungs must have ample room to play; notwithstanding, I was short of breath, had a feeling of oppression, sighed involuntarily, had palpitation of the heart, and spat blood; a slow fever supervened, from which I have never been entirely free. How can one fall into such a state in the flower of one's age, without any internal injury, without having done anything to destroy health?

It is sometimes said that the sword wears out the scabbard. That is my history. My passions have made me live, and my passions have killed me. What passions? will be asked. Trifles, the most childish things in the world, which, however, excited me as much as if the possession of Helen or the throne of the universe had been at stake. In the first place—women. When I possessed one, my senses were calm; my heart, never. The needs of love devoured me in the midst of enjoyment; I had a tender mother, a dear friend; but I needed a mistress. I imagined one in her place; I represented her to myself in a thousand forms, in order to deceive myself. If I had thought that I held mamma in my arms when I embraced her, these embraces would have been no less lively, but all my desires would have been extinguished; I should have sobbed from affection, but I should never have felt any enjoyment. Enjoyment! Does this ever fall to the lot of man? If I had ever, a single time in my life, tasted all the delights of love in their fulness, I do not believe that my frail existence could have endured it; I should have died on the spot.

Thus I was burning with love, without an object; and it is this state, perhaps, that is most exhausting. I was restless, tormented by the hopeless condition of poor mamma's affairs, and her impru-

dent conduct, which were bound to ruin her completely at no distant date. My cruel imagination, which always anticipates misfortunes, exhibited this particular one to me continually, in all its extent and in all its results. I already saw myself compelled by want to separate from her to whom I had devoted my life, and without whom I could not enjoy it. Thus my soul was ever in a state of agitation; I was devoured alternately by desires and fears.

Music was with me another passion, less fierce, but no less wasting, from the ardour with which I threw myself into it, from my persistent study of the obscure treatises of Rameau, from my invincible determination to load my rebellious memory with them, from my continual running about, from the enormous heap of compilations which I got together and often spent whole nights in copying. But why dwell upon permanent fancies, while all the follies which passed through my inconstant brain—the transient inclinations of a single day, a journey, a concert, a supper, a walk to take, a novel to read, a comedy to see, everything that was entirely unpremeditated in my pleasure or business, became for me so many violent passions, which, in their ridiculous impetuosity, caused me the most genuine torment? The imaginary sufferings of Cleveland, which I read of with avidity and constant interruption, have, I believe, afflicted me more than my own.

At Chambéri there was a Genevese, named M. Bagueret, who had been employed by Peter the Great at the Russian Court; he was one of the greatest rascals and greatest fools that I have ever seen, always full of schemes as mad as himself, who flung millions about like rain and thought nothing of an extra cipher. This man, who had come to Chambéri on account of some law-suit before the Senate, got hold of mamma, as was only to be expected, and in return for the ciphers which he generously lavished upon her, drew her few crowns, one by one, out of her purse. I disliked him; he saw it—never a difficult matter in my case—and left no kind of meanness untried, in order to gain my favour. He took it into his head to propose to teach me chess, which he himself played a little. I tried it, almost against my inclination; and, after I had learnt the moves indifferently, I made such rapid progress that, before the end of the first sitting, I was able to give him the rook which at first he had given me. That was enough; I was mad for chess

from that moment. I bought a chess-board and a "Calabrois";<sup>1</sup> I shut myself up in my room, and spent days and nights in trying to learn all the openings by heart, in stuffing them into my head by force, and in playing by myself without rest or relaxation. After two or three months of this praiseworthy occupation and these incredible efforts, I went to the café, thin, sallow, and almost stupid. I tried my hand, I played again with M. Bagueret; he beat me once, twice, twenty times; all the different combinations had become mixed up in my head, and my imagination was so enfeebled, that I saw nothing but a cloud before my eyes. Whenever I wished, with the help of Philidor or Stamma, to practise myself in studying different games, the same thing happened to me; and, after exhausting myself with fatigue, I found myself weaker than before. For the rest, whether I gave up chess for a time, or endeavoured to improve myself by constant practice, I never made the slightest progress after the first sitting, and always found myself just where I was when it was over. I might practise for thousands of generations and not be able to do more than give Bagueret the rook, and nothing else. Time well employed! you will say; and I employed not a little of it in this way. I did not finish the first attempt, until I no longer had strength to continue it. When I left my room, I looked like a corpse, and, if I had continued to live in the same manner, I should certainly not have remained long above ground. It will be admitted that it is difficult, especially in the ardour of youth, for such a disposition to allow the body to enjoy continued good health.

The decline in my health affected my temper and moderated the ardour of my imagination. Feeling myself weaker, I became quieter, and lost, in some degree, my mania for travelling. I remained more at home, and was attacked, not by ennui, but by melancholy; my passions were succeeded by hysteria; my languor changed to sadness; I wept and I sighed about nothing; I felt life slipping away from me before I had enjoyed it. I sighed over the state in which I was leaving my poor mamma; over the state into which I saw her ready to fall. I can assert that my only regret

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<sup>1</sup> A treatise by a famous Italian chess-player, Gioachino Greco, called "Le Calabrois"; he lived in the time of Louis XIV.

was at leaving her, and leaving her in so lamentable a condition. [At length, I became really ill. She nursed me more tenderly than any mother ever nursed her child; and this was beneficial to herself, since it diverted her from schemes, and kept away the promoters of them. How sweet would death have been, if it had come then! If I had not enjoyed many of the good things of life, I had felt but few of its sorrows. My peaceful soul would have departed without that cruel feeling of the injustice of mankind, which poisons both life and death. I should have had the consolation that I was surviving myself in the better half of me; it could hardly have been called death.] Had it not been for the uneasiness I felt concerning her lot, I could have died as easily as I could have fallen asleep; and my very uneasiness was connected with an affectionate and tender object, which softened its bitterness. I said to her: "My whole being is in your hands; make it happy." Two or three times, when I was worse than usual, I got up during the night and dragged myself to her room, to give her advice upon her conduct, which I may say was thoroughly correct and sensible, but in which my sympathy for her was more marked than anything else. As if tears had been food and medicine, those which I shed by her side, sitting on her bed, holding her hands in mine, seemed to give me strength. The hours slipped away in these nightly conversations, and I left her, feeling better than when I entered; calm and content with the promises which she had made me, with the hopes with which she had inspired me, I went to sleep, peace in my heart, and resigned to Providence.

After I have had so many reasons to hate life, after all the storms which have shaken my existence, and only make it a burden to me, may God grant that the death which is to end it may not be more cruel than it would have been to me at that moment!

By her unremitting attention and watchfulness, and incredible exertions she saved me; and it is certain that she alone could have done so. I have little faith in the medicine of physicians, but a great deal in that of true friends; those things on which our happiness depends are always more salutary than anything else. If there is such a thing as a delightful sensation in life, it is that which we felt when we were restored to each other. Our mutual attachment was not increased, that was impossible; but it assumed a more



intimate form which I cannot explain, more touching in its great simplicity. I became entirely her work, entirely her child, more so than if she had been really my mother. We began, without thinking of it, to be inseparable, to share, as it were, our existence in common; and feeling that we were not only necessary, but sufficient, for each other, we accustomed ourselves to think of nothing that was foreign to us, to limit our happiness and all our desires to that possession of each other, which was, perhaps, unique of its kind amongst human beings, which, as I have said, was not love, but a more real possession, which, without being dependent upon the senses, sex, age or personal appearance, was concerned with all that which makes one what one is, and which one can only lose by ceasing to exist.

How came it that this delightful crisis did not bring happiness for the rest of her days and mine? It was not my fault; I can console myself with the conviction of that. Neither was it hers, at least, not wilfully. It was written that the ineradicable tendency of my disposition should soon reassert its sway. But this fatal recoil did not take place all at once. There was, thank Heaven, an interval—a short and precious interval—which did not end through any fault of mine, and which I cannot reproach myself with having badly employed.

Although cured of my serious complaint, I had not recovered my strength. My chest was still weak; some traces of fever remained, and made me languid. I desired nothing except to end my days near her who was so dear to me, to support her in her good resolutions, to make her feel what constituted the real charm of a happy life, to make her life such, as far as it depended on me. But I saw, I even felt, that the continual solitude of our intercourse in a dull and gloomy house would end in becoming equally dull and gloomy. The remedy presented itself as it were of its own accord. Mamma had prescribed milk for me, and wanted me to go into the country to take it. I consented, provided she went with me. That was enough to determine her; the only question to be decided was, where we should go. The garden in the suburb could not be properly called country—surrounded by houses and other gardens, it did not possess the charm of a rustic retreat. Besides, after Anet's death, we had given up the garden for the sake of



economy, since we no longer had any desire to rear plants, and other considerations caused us to feel but little regret for that retreat.

Taking advantage of the dislike, which I discovered she felt towards the town, I proposed to her to leave it altogether, and to settle in pleasant solitude, in some little house, at a sufficient distance from the town to baffle troublesome visitors. She would have done so, and the resolution, which her good angel and mine suggested to me, would probably have assured us a happy and peaceful life, until death should have separated us. But we were not destined for such a lot. Mamma was fated to experience all the miseries of want and discomfort, after having passed her life in abundance, to enable her to quit it with less regret ; while I, overwhelmed with misfortunes of all kinds, was destined one day to serve as a warning to all who, inspired solely by love of justice and the public welfare, and trusting to the strength of their innocence alone, have the courage to tell the truth openly to the world, without the support of cabals, and without having formed a party to protect them.

An unfortunate apprehension kept her back. She did not dare to leave her uncomfortable house, for fear of displeasing the landlord. "Your plan of retirement," she said, "is charming, and I like it very much ; but in such retirement we should have to live. If I leave my prison, I run the risk of losing my bread ; and, when this fails us in the woods, we shall be obliged to return again to town to look for it. To lessen the chance of being obliged to do so, do not let us leave the town altogether. Let us pay this trifling annuity to the Comte de St. Laurent, that he may leave me mine. Let us look for some retreat, far enough from the town to allow us to live in peace, and near enough for us to return to it whenever it is necessary." This was what we did. After looking about a little, we settled upon Les Charmettes, an estate belonging to M. de Conzié, close to Chambéri, but as retired and solitary as if it had been a hundred leagues away. Between two rather high hills, there is a little valley extending from north to south, at the bottom of which a stream of water runs amongst the trees and pebbles. Along this valley, half-way up the hill, there are some scattered houses, a very pleasant retreat for anyone who is fond of a somewhat wild

and retired asylum. Having looked at two or three of these houses, we at last chose the nicest, which belonged to a gentleman in the army, named Noiret. The house was very habitable. In front was a garden with a terrace, above that, a vineyard, and below, an orchard; facing it was a little forest of chestnut-trees, and a fountain close by; higher up on the mountain were pasture meadows; in short, everything requisite for the little country establishment we intended to set up. As far as I can remember times and dates, we took possession of it towards the end of the summer of 1736. I was delighted the first night we slept there. "Oh, mamma," said I to my dear friend, while I embraced her with tears of tenderness and joy, "this is the abode of happiness and innocence. If we do not find both here, it will be useless to look for them anywhere else."

## BOOK VI

[1736.]

Hoc erat in votis; modus agri non ita magnus,  
 Hortus ubi et tecto vicinus iugis aquae fons,  
 Et paulum silvae super his foret.<sup>1</sup>

I cannot add:

Auctius atque

Di melius fecere.<sup>2</sup>

But no matter; I had no need of more; I did not even need any property at all; the enjoyment of it was enough for me, and I have long ago said and felt, that the proprietor and the possessor are often two very different persons, even if one leaves husbands and lovers out of the question.

At this period commences the brief happiness of my life; here approach the peaceful, but rapid moments which have given me the right to say, *I have lived*. Precious and regretted moments! begin again for me your delightful course; and, if it be possible, pass more slowly in succession through my memory, than you did in your fugitive reality. What can I do, to prolong, as I should like, this touching and simple narrative, to repeat the same things over and over again, without wearying my readers by such repetition, any more than I was wearied of them myself, when I recommenced the life again and again? If all this consisted of facts, actions, and words, I could describe, and in a manner, give an idea of them; but how is it possible to describe what was neither said nor done, nor even thought, but enjoyed and felt, without being able to assign any other reason for my happiness than this simple feeling? I got up at sunrise and was happy; I walked, and was happy; I saw mamma, and was happy; I left her, and was happy; I roamed the forests and hills, I wandered in the valleys, I read, I did nothing, I worked in the garden, I picked the fruit, I helped in the work of the

<sup>1</sup> This used to be the height of my wishes: a small piece of land, with a garden, a stream of running water near the house, and a little wood besides.

<sup>2</sup> The gods have blessed me with more than I desire.

—HORACE, Satire II., vi., 1—4.

house, and happiness followed me everywhere—happiness, which could not be referred to any definite object, but dwelt entirely within myself, and which never left me for a single instant.

Nothing that occurred to me during that delightful period, nothing that I did, said, or thought, during all the time it lasted, has escaped my memory. Preceding and subsequent periods only come back to me at intervals; I recall them unequally and confusedly; but I recall this particular period in its entirety, as if it still existed. My fancy, which, during my youth, always looked ahead, and now always looks back, compensates me by these charming recollections for the hope which I have lost for ever. I no longer see anything in the future to tempt me; only the reminiscences of the past can flatter me, and these reminiscences of the period of which I speak, so vivid and so true, often make my life happy, in spite of my misfortunes.

I will mention one single instance of these recollections, which will enable the reader to judge of their liveliness and accuracy. The first day we set out to pass the night at Les Charmettes, mamma was in a sedan-chair, and I followed on foot. The road was somewhat steep, and, being rather heavy and afraid of tiring her bearers, she got down about half-way, intending to finish the rest of the journey on foot. During the walk, she saw something blue in the hedge, and said to me, "Look! there is some periwinkle still in flower." I had never seen any periwinkle, I did not stoop down to examine it, and I am too near-sighted to distinguish plants on the ground, when standing upright. I merely cast a passing glance at it, and nearly thirty years passed before I saw any periwinkle again, or paid any attention to it. In 1764, when I was at Cressier with my friend Du Peyrou, we were climbing a hill, on the top of which he has built a pretty *salon*, which he rightly calls Belle-Vue. I was then beginning to botanise a little. While ascending the hill, and looking amongst the bushes, I exclaimed with a cry of joy, "Ah! there is some periwinkle!" as in fact it was. Du Peyrou observed my delight, without knowing the cause of it; he will learn it, I hope, one day, when he reads these words. The reader may judge, from the impression which so trifling a circumstance made upon me, of the effect produced by everything which has reference to that period.



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# THE PERIWINKLE

Book VI



In the meantime, the country air did not restore me to my former state of health. I was sickly, and grew worse. I could not take milk, and was obliged to give it up. At that time hydropathy was the rage, as a cure for every complaint. I rushed into it with so little discretion, that it nearly put an end, not to my ailments, but to my life. Every morning, when I got up, I went to the spring with a large goblet, and, walking about, drank about two bottlefuls without stopping. I entirely gave up drinking wine at my meals. The water which I drank was rather hard and difficult to pass, like most mountain waters. In short, I managed so well, that in less than two months I completely ruined my stomach, which had hitherto been excellent, and I recognised that I could no longer hope to be cured, as I was totally incapable of digesting anything. At the same time, an accident occurred to me, as curious in itself as in its results, which will only end with my life.

One morning, when I was no worse than usual, while lifting the top of a little table upon its stand, I became conscious of a sudden and almost incomprehensible disturbance in my whole body. I cannot compare it better than with a kind of storm, which arose in my blood, and in a moment gained the mastery over all my limbs. My veins began to beat so violently that I not only felt, but even heard it, especially the beating of the carotid arteries. This was accompanied by a loud noise in my ears, of three, or rather, four kinds; a dull and heavy buzzing, a more distinct murmur like that of running water, a sharp whistling sound, and the beating which I have just described, the pulsations of which I could easily count, without feeling my pulse or touching my body with my hands. This internal noise was so loud, that it deprived me of my hitherto keen faculties of hearing, and made me not altogether deaf, but hard of hearing, as I have continued to be from that day.

My surprise and affright may easily be imagined. I looked upon myself as dead; I took to my bed, and the physician was sent for; trembling with fear, I told him my case, which I considered hopeless. I believe he thought the same, but he acted as became his profession. He strung together a series of lengthy explanations of which I understood nothing; then, in consequence of his sublime theory, he commenced, *in anima vili*, the experimental cure which he was pleased to try. It was so painful, so disgusting, and



produced so little effect, that I soon became tired of it ; and, at the end of a few weeks, finding myself neither better nor worse, I left my bed and resumed my ordinary occupations, although the beating of my arteries and the buzzing in my ears still continued, and, in fact, have never left me for a moment from that day, that is to say, for thirty years.

Hitherto I had been a great sleeper. The total inability to sleep, by which all these symptoms have been accompanied, even to the present day, finally convinced me that I had not long to live. This conviction at first calmed my anxiety to recover. As I could not prolong my life, I resolved to get as much as possible out of the few years or months that remained to me ; and this I was enabled to do, thanks to a special favour of Nature, which, notwithstanding my melancholy condition, gave me exemption from the pain by which it would naturally have been accompanied. I was inconvenienced by the noise, but it caused me no suffering ; the only habitual inconveniences by which it was attended were, inability to sleep at night, and a perpetual shortness of breath, not, however, amounting to asthma, and which only made itself felt when I attempted to run or exert myself more than usual.

This accident, which should have killed my body, only killed my passions ; and I bless Heaven every day for the happy effect which it produced upon my soul. I can certainly say that I never began to live, until I looked upon myself as a dead man. While estimating at their true value the things I was going to leave, I began to occupy my thoughts with nobler cares, as if in anticipation of the duties I should soon have to fulfil, and which until then I had seriously neglected. I had often burlesqued religion after my own fashion, but I had never been entirely without it. It was easier for me to hark back to this subject, so melancholy for so many, but so sweet for one who can find in it a source of hope and consolation. On this occasion, mamma was far more useful to me than all the theologians in the world could have been.

As she always reduced everything to a system, she had not failed to treat religion in the same manner. Her system of religion was made up of ideas of the most different kinds, some very sensible, others very foolish, of feelings connected with her character, and of prejudices arising from her education. As a rule,

believers make God like themselves; the good represent him as good, the wicked, as wicked; malicious and bilious devotees see nothing but hell, because they would like to see the whole world damned; while loving and gentle souls do not believe in the existence of such a place. I have never been able to recover from my astonishment at finding the good Fénélon speak of it in his "Télémachus," as if he sincerely believed in it; but I hope that he lied then, for, after all, however truthful a man may be, he is obliged to lie sometimes—when he is a Bishop. Mamma did not lie to me; and her soul, free from gall and bitterness, which could not imagine a vindictive and ever-wrathful God, saw only mercy and compassion, where devotees see nothing but retributive justice and punishment. She often used to say that, if God were to be strictly just towards us, it would not be justice on His part, since He has not made us such as to require it, and would in such a case require from us more than He has given. The curious thing was that, while not believing in hell, she still believed in purgatory. The reason of this was that she did not know what to do with the souls of the wicked, feeling unable either to damn them or to put them with the good until they had become good themselves. In fact, it must be confessed that, both in this world and the next, the wicked are always a source of considerable embarrassment.

Another of her curious ideas was the following. It is obvious that the whole doctrine of original sin and redemption is destroyed by this system, that the foundations of ordinary Christianity are shaken, and that Catholicism, at any rate, cannot exist. Mamma, however, was a good Catholic, or professed to be one, and certainly in all good faith. It seemed to her that people were accustomed to explain the Scriptures too literally and too harshly. All that we read in them about eternal torments was, according to her, to be taken only as a threat or in a figurative sense. The death of Jesus Christ appeared to her an example of truly divine charity, to teach men to love God and one another in the same manner. In a word, true to the religion which she had adopted, she accepted in all sincerity its entire profession of faith; but, when it came to a discussion of each article, it was manifest that her belief was quite different from that of the Church to which she always professed submission. In reference to this, she displayed a simplicity of

heart, and a frankness which was more eloquent than petty cavilings, and which frequently embarrassed even her confessor, from whom she concealed nothing. "I am a good Catholic, and desire always to remain one," she used to say to him; "I submit with my whole heart to the decisions of Holy Mother Church. I am not mistress of my belief, but I am mistress of my will, which I control without reserve, and am prepared to believe everything. What more can you ask of me?"

Even had no Christian morality existed, I believe she would have followed its principles, since they harmonised so completely with her character. She did all that was prescribed; but she would have done it just the same, even if it had not been prescribed. In unimportant matters she liked to show her obedience; and, if it had not been permitted, even if she had been ordered, to eat meat on fast-days, she would have fasted in order to please God, without any regard for considerations dictated by prudence. But all these principles of morality were subordinated to the principles of M. de Tavel, or rather, she declared that she found nothing contradictory therein. She would have slept every day with twenty men with a calm conscience, and without feeling any more scruple than desire in the matter. I know that many devotees are not more scrupulous on this point, but the difference is that, while they are led astray by their passions, she was only misled by her sophisms. In the course of the most touching, I even venture to say the most edifying, conversations, she would have been able to allude to this matter without any alteration of tone or manner, and without thinking that she was in the least inconsistent. She would even if necessary, have interrupted such a conversation to speak of the subject, and would have been able to resume it as calmly as before, so intimate was her conviction that the whole matter was only a principle of social economy, which every intelligent person was at liberty to interpret, apply, or reject, according to his or her view of the matter, without the least danger of offending God. Although I certainly did not share her opinion upon this point, I confess that I never ventured to contradict her, since I was ashamed of the lack of politeness which such conduct on my part would have forced me to exhibit. I might, certainly, have endeavoured to establish a rule for others, and attempted to make an exception in

my own case; but, not only was her temperament a sufficient protection against the abuse of her principles, but I knew that she was not a woman to be easily deceived, and, if I had claimed exception for myself, I should only have left it for her to grant it to anyone else who might be agreeable to her. Besides, I only mention this inconsistency incidentally by the side of the rest, although it has never had much influence upon her conduct, and at that time, had none at all; but I have promised to give a faithful account of her principles, and I wish to fulfil this promise. Let me now return to myself.

As I found in her all the principles which I needed in order to fortify my soul against the terrors of death and its consequences, I drew upon this source of confidence with perfect security. I became more closely attached to her than I had ever been: I should have been willing to hand over to her entirely the life which I felt was ready to leave me. The result of this redoubled attachment to her, of the conviction that I had only a short time to live, of the profound calmness with which I contemplated my future state, was an habitual condition of tranquillity—even of enjoyment—which, while it allayed all those passions, which remove our hopes and fears to a distance, permitted me to enjoy, without anxiety or trouble, the few days which remained to me. Another thing helped to make them more agreeable: the endeavour to foster her taste for country life by every amusement that I could think of. While I made her fond of her garden, her poultry-yard, her pigeons, and her cows, I myself acquired a liking for them all, and these trifling occupations, which filled up my day without disturbing my tranquillity, did me more good than the milk and all other remedies employed to keep my poor machine in order, and even repaired it as far as was possible.

The vintage and the gathering of the fruit amused us for the remainder of this year, and made us more and more attached to country life, amongst the good people by whom we were surrounded. We were very sorry to see the approach of winter, and went back to town as if we had been going into exile—myself especially, since I did not think that I should live to see the spring again, and believed that I was saying good-bye to Les

Charmettes for the last time. Before I left, I kissed the ground and the trees, and turned back several times as I went on my way. As I had long given up my pupils, and lost my taste for the amusements and society of the town, I never went out, and never saw anybody, except mamma and M. Salomon, who had recently become her physician and mine, an honourable and intelligent man, a strong Cartesian,<sup>1</sup> who talked sensibly about the system of the world, and whose agreeable and instructive conversation did me more good than all his prescriptions. I have never been able to endure the silly and nonsensical padding of ordinary conversation, but serious and useful discourse always affords me great pleasure, and I never refuse to take part in it. I took great delight in M. Salomon's conversation; it seemed to me that, while in his company, I was acquiring a foretaste of that higher knowledge, which was reserved for my soul, when it had lost the fetters which confined it. My predilection for him extended to the subjects which he discussed, and I began to look for books which might help me to understand him better. Those which combined devotion and science were most suitable for me, particularly those of the Oratory and Port-Royal,<sup>2</sup> which I began to read, or rather, to devour. I came across one written by Father Lamy, entitled "*Entretiens sur les Sciences*," a kind of introduction to the knowledge of those books which treated of them. I read and re-read it a hundred times, and resolved to make it my guide. At last, I felt myself, in spite of, or rather by reason of, my condition, gradually and irresistibly attracted to study, and, while looking upon each day as my last, I studied with as great eagerness as if I had been destined to live for ever. I was told that this was injurious to me. I believe that it was beneficial, not only to my mind, but also to my body; for this occupation, to which I passionately devoted myself, became so delightful to me, that I no longer thought of my sufferings, and was much less affected by them. It is certainly true that nothing afforded me any real relief; but, as I felt no acute pain, I became accustomed to languor and sleep-

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<sup>1</sup> A follower of the doctrines of Descartes.

<sup>2</sup> The school of the Jansenists.

lessness, to thought instead of action, and, at last, I came to look upon the slow and gradual decay of my powers as an unavoidable process, which death alone could arrest.

Not only did this opinion release me from all idle and earthly cares, but it also delivered me from the annoyance of the various remedies to which, hitherto, I had been obliged to submit, in spite of myself. Salomon, convinced that his drugs could not cure me, spared me the unpleasantness of taking them, and was content to soothe poor mamma's grief with some of those harmless prescriptions which deceive the sick man with hopes and keep up the reputation of the physician. I gave up strict diet, began to take wine again, and, as far as my strength allowed me, led the life of a man in perfect health, temperate in everything, but denying myself nothing. I even went out sometimes, and began to visit my acquaintances again, especially M. de Conzié, whose society I found very agreeable. In short, whether it was that I thought it a fine thing to keep on learning till my last hour, or that some slight hope of life still remained concealed at the bottom of my heart, the expectation of death, far from diminishing my taste for study, seemed rather to enliven it, and I made great haste to pick up a little knowledge for the next world, as if I had believed that in it I should only possess such knowledge as I took with me. I became fond of the bookshop of a M. Bouchard, frequented by several men of letters; and, as the spring, which I had never expected to live to see, was close at hand, I looked out some books to take to Les Charmettes, in case I should have the good fortune to return there.

I had this good fortune, and I made the best use of it. The joy with which I beheld the first buds is indescribable. To me it was like a resurrection in Paradise to see the spring again. No sooner had the snow begun to melt than we left our dungeon, and arrived at Les Charmettes soon enough to hear the first notes of the nightingale. From that time I no longer thought of dying; and it is really remarkable, that I have never had any serious illness in the country. I have suffered much there, but have never been confined to my bed. I have often said, when feeling more than usually unwell: "When you see me at the



point of death, carry me under the shade of an oak. I promise you that I shall get well again." Although still weak, I resumed my country occupations, but to an extent proportionate to my powers. I was truly grieved not to be able to see after the garden alone; but after half a dozen digs with the spade, I was quite out of breath, the sweat poured down my face, and I felt quite exhausted. When I stooped, my palpitations increased, and the blood flew to my head with such violence that I was obliged to stand upright immediately. Compelled to confine myself to less fatiguing occupations, I undertook, amongst other things, the care of the pigeon-house, to which I became so strongly attached, that I often spent several hours in succession there without feeling a moment's weariness. The pigeon is a very timid creature, and difficult to tame. However, I succeeded in inspiring mine with such confidence that they followed me everywhere, and allowed me to catch them whenever I wanted. I could not show myself in the garden or court without immediately finding two or three of them on my arms and head; and at last, in spite of the pleasure this afforded me, this following became so troublesome to me, that I was obliged to discourage their excessive familiarity. I have always found singular pleasure in taming animals, especially such as are shy and wild. It appeared to me delightful to inspire them with a confidence which I have never abused. I desired their fondness for me to be perfectly unrestricted.

I have mentioned that I took some books with me; but I made use of them in a manner less calculated to instruct than to overwhelm me. The false idea which I entertained of things caused me to believe that, in order to read a book with profit, it was necessary to possess all the preliminary knowledge which it presupposed. I had no suspicion that very frequently the author himself did not possess it, and that he extracted it from other books as he required it. Possessed by this foolish idea, I was detained every moment, and obliged to run incessantly from one book to another: sometimes, before I had reached the tenth page of the work I wanted to study, I should have been obliged to exhaust the contents of whole libraries. However, I followed this senseless method so persistently that I lost an enormous



amount of time, and my head became so confused that I almost lost the power of seeing or comprehending anything. Happily, I at last perceived that I was on the wrong track, which was leading me astray in an interminable-labyrinth, and I left it before I was quite lost in it.

The first thing that strikes anyone who has a genuine taste for learning, however slight, when he devotes himself to it, is the close connection of the sciences, which causes them to attract, support, and throw light upon each other, so that one cannot dispense with the other. Although the human intellect is not capable of mastering all, and one must always be regarded as the principal object of study, yet, without some idea of the rest, a man often finds himself in the dark in his own particular branch. I felt that what I had undertaken was good and useful in itself, and that all that was necessary was a change of method. Taking the *Encyclopaedia* first, I had divided it into its different branches. I saw that I should have done exactly the opposite; that I ought to have taken each branch separately and followed it up to the point at which all unite. Thus, I returned to the ordinary synthetical method, but like a man who knows what he is about. In this, meditation supplied the place of knowledge, and a very natural reflection helped me on the right road. Whether I lived or died, I had no time to lose. A man who, at the age of five and twenty, knows nothing and wishes to learn everything, is bound to make the best use of his time: Not knowing at what point destiny or death might arrest my zeal, I desired, in any case, to get an idea of everything, in order to discover the special bent of my natural abilities, and also to judge for myself what was worthy of cultivation.

In the execution of this plan I found another advantage which had not occurred to me—that of economising my time. I certainly cannot have been born for study, for continuous application tires me to such an extent, that I am utterly unable to devote more than half an hour together to the close study of the same subject, especially when following another's train of thought; for it has sometimes happened that I have been able to devote myself to my own ideas longer, and even with tolerable success. When I have read a few pages of an author who must

be read carefully, my mind wanders from him, and is lost in the clouds. If I persist, I exhaust myself to no purpose; I become dazed, and cease to see anything. But if different subjects follow each other, even without interruption, one relieves me from the other, and, without feeling the need of any relaxation, I follow them more easily. I profited by this observation in my plan of study, and I combined them in such a manner that I was busy the whole day without ever fatiguing myself. It is true that rural and domestic occupations afforded me useful distractions; but, in my increasing zeal, I soon found means to spare time from these to devote to study, and to busy myself with two kinds of things at the same time, without thinking that the result in each case was less satisfactory.

In these trifling details, which afford me delight, and with which I often weary my reader, I nevertheless exercise a reserve which he would scarcely suspect unless I took care to inform him. Here, for example, I remember with delight all the various attempts I made to distribute my time in such a manner as to derive from it as much pleasure and profit as possible; and I can say that this period, during which I lived in retirement and always in ill-health, was the period of my life during which I was least idle and least wearied. Two or three months were thus spent in trying the bent of my mind, and in enjoying, in the most beautiful season of the year, and in a spot which it rendered delightful, the charm of life, the value of which I so well appreciated,—the charm of an unrestrained and sweet companionship, if such a name can be given to a union so perfect, and of the wonderful knowledge which I proposed to acquire; for it seemed to me as if I already possessed it, or rather, it was still better, since the pleasure of learning counted for much in my happiness.

I must pass over these attempts, which were all a source of enjoyment to me, but are too simple to be satisfactorily expressed. I repeat, true happiness cannot be described; it can only be felt, and felt the more, the less it can be described, since it is not the result of a number of facts, but is a permanent condition. I often repeat myself, but I should do so still more if I said the same thing as often as it occurs to me. When my frequently-

changed manner of life had at last adopted a regular course, it was distributed as nearly as possible in the following manner.

I got up every day before sunrise; I climbed through a neighbouring orchard to a very pretty path above the vineyard which ran along the slope as far as Chambéri. During my walk I offered a prayer, which did not consist merely of idle, stammering words, but of a sincere uplifting of the heart to the Creator of this delightful Nature, whose beauties were spread before my eyes. I never like to pray in a room: it has always seemed to me as if the walls and all the petty handiwork of man interposed between myself and God. I love to contemplate Him in His works, while my heart uplifts itself to Him. My prayers were pure, I venture to say, and for that reason deserved to be heard. I only asked for myself and for her, who was inseparably associated with my wishes, an innocent and peaceful life, free from vice, pain, and distressing needs; the death of the righteous, and their lot in the future. For the rest, this act of worship consisted rather of admiration and contemplation than of requests, for I knew that the best means of obtaining the blessings which are necessary for us from the giver of all true blessings, was to deserve, rather than to ask for, them. My walk consisted of a tolerably long round, during which I contemplated with interest and pleasure the rustic scenery by which I was surrounded, the only thing of which heart and eye never tire. From a distance I looked to see if it was day with mamma. When I saw her shutters open, I trembled with joy and ran towards the house; if they were shut, I remained in the garden until she awoke, amusing myself by going over what I had learned the evening before, or by gardening. The shutters opened, I went to embrace her while she was still in bed, often still half asleep; and this embrace, as pure as it was tender, derived from its very innocence a charm which is never combined with sensual pleasure.

We usually took *café au lait* for breakfast. This was the period of the day when we were most undisturbed, and chatted most at our ease. We usually sat a considerable time over our breakfast, and from that time I have always had a great liking for this meal. I infinitely prefer the fashion of the Swiss and

English, with whom breakfast is really a meal at which all the family assemble, to that of the French, who breakfast separately in their rooms, or, most commonly, take no breakfast at all. After an hour or two of conversation, I went to my books till dinner. I began with some philosophical treatise, such as the Logic of Port-Royal, Locke's Essay, Malebranche, Leibnitz, Descartes, &c. I soon observed that all these authors nearly always contradicted each other, and I conceived the fanciful idea of reconciling them, which fatigued me greatly, and made me lose considerable time. I muddled my head without making any progress. At last, abandoning this plan, I adopted one that was infinitely better, to which I attribute all the progress which, in spite of my want of talent, I may have made; for it is certain that I never had much capacity for study. As I read each author, I made a practice of adopting and following up all his ideas, without any admixture of my own or of those of anyone else, and without ever attempting to argue with him. I said to myself: "Let me begin by laying up a store of ideas, no matter whether they be true or false, provided only they are definite, until my head is sufficiently equipped with them to be able to select and compare them." I know that this method is not without its inconveniences; but it has answered my purpose of self-instruction. After I had spent some years in thinking exactly as others thought, without, so to speak, reflecting, and almost without reasoning, I found myself in possession of a fund of learning sufficient to satisfy myself, and to enable me to think without the assistance of another. Then, when travelling and business matters deprived me of the opportunity of consulting books, I amused myself by going over and comparing what I had read, by weighing everything in the scale of reason, and, sometimes, by passing judgment upon my masters. I did not find that my critical faculties had lost their vigour owing to my having begun to exercise them late; and, when I published my own ideas, I have never been accused of being a servile disciple, or of swearing *in verba magistri*.<sup>1</sup>

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1 "By the words of a master": an allusion to the disciples of Pythagoras, who slavishly reproduced the ideas of their master.

From these studies I proceeded to elementary geometry, beyond which I never advanced, although I persistently attempted, in some degree, to overcome my weakness of memory by dint of retracing my steps hundreds of times, and by incessantly going over the same ground. I did not like Euclid, whose object is rather a chain of proofs than the connection of ideas. I preferred Father Lamy's "Geometry," which from that time became one of my favourite works, and which I am still able to read with pleasure. Next came algebra, in which I still took Father Lamy for my guide. When I was more advanced, I took Father Reynaud's "Science of Calculation"; then his "Analysis Demonstrated," which I merely skimmed. I have never got so far as to understand properly the application of algebra to geometry. I did not like this method of working without knowing what I was doing; and it appeared to me that solving a geometrical problem by means of equations was like playing a tune by simply turning the handle of a barrel-organ. The first time that I found by calculation, that the square of a binomial was composed of the square of each of its parts added to twice the product of those parts, in spite of the correctness of my multiplication, I would not believe it until I had drawn the figure. I had considerable liking for algebra, in so far as it dealt with abstract quantities; but, when it was applied to space and dimensions, I wanted to see the operation explained by lines; otherwise I was entirely unable to comprehend it.

After this came Latin. I found this my most difficult task, and I have never made much progress in it. At first I began with the Port-Royal method, but without result. Its barbarous verses disgusted me, and my ear could never retain them. The mass of rules confused me, and when learning the last, I forgot all that had preceded it. A man who has no memory does not want to study words; and it was just in order to strengthen my memory that I persisted in this study, which I was finally obliged to abandon. I was sufficiently acquainted with the construction to be able to read an easy author with the help of a dictionary. I kept to this plan with tolerable success. I limited myself to translation, not written, but mental. By dint of continual practice, I was able to read the Latin authors with

tolerable ease, but I have never been able to speak or write in that language, which frequently caused me embarrassment, when I found myself, I know not how, enrolled a member of the society of men of letters. Another disadvantage resulting from this method of learning is, that I have never learned prosody, still less the rules of versification. However, in my desire to feel the harmony of the language in verse as well as prose, I made great efforts to succeed in this; but I am convinced that it is impossible without the aid of a master. After I had learned the structure of the easiest of all verses, the hexameter, I had sufficient patience to scan nearly the whole of Virgil, marking the feet and quantities; then, when I afterwards had any doubt whether a syllable was long or short, I referred to my Virgil. It may easily be conceived that this made me commit many errors, in consequence of the license allowed by the rules of versification. But, if there is an advantage in self-instruction, there are also great disadvantages, especially the incredible amount of labour necessary. This I know better than anyone else.

Before noon I left my books, and, if dinner was not ready, I paid a visit to my friends the pigeons, or worked in the garden, until it was. When I heard myself called, I was very glad to run to table, provided with an excellent appetite; for it is a remarkable thing that, however ill I may be, my appetite never fails. We dined very pleasantly, talking of our affairs, until mamma was able to eat. Two or three times a week, when it was fine, we took our coffee in a cool and shady arbour behind the house, which I had decorated with hops, which made it very agreeable during the heat. We spent some little time in looking at our vegetables and flowers, and in talking about our mode of life, which heightened the enjoyment of it. I had another little family at the bottom of the garden—some bees. I rarely failed to visit them, and mamma often accompanied me. I took great interest in their work: it amused me immensely to see them returning from their foraging expeditions, their little legs often so loaded that they could scarcely move. At first my curiosity made me too inquisitive, and I was stung two or three times; but at last they got to know me so well, that they let me go



as close to them as I pleased; and, however full their hives were, when they were ready to swarm, I had them all round me, on my hands and on my face, without ever getting stung. All animals rightly distrust human beings; but when they once feel sure that they do not mean to hurt them, their confidence becomes so great that a man must be worse than a barbarian to abuse it.

I returned to my books, but my afternoon occupations deserved less to be called work and study than recreation and amusement. I have never been able to endure close application in my room after dinner, and, generally speaking, any effort during the heat of the day is painful to me. However, I occupied myself with reading without study, without restraint, and almost without any system. My most regular occupations were history and geography; and, as these did not require any great effort of mind, I made as much progress as was possible, considering my weak memory. I tried to study Father Pétau, and plunged into the obscurities of chronology; but I was disgusted by the critical portion of it, which is most intricate, and by preference I took up the study of the exact measurement of time and the course of the heavenly bodies. I should also have become fond of astronomy, if I had had the necessary appliances; but I was obliged to content myself with a few elementary principles, learnt from books, and some crude observations which I made with a telescope, merely to learn the general idea of the situation of the heavenly bodies; for my shortsightedness does not allow me to distinguish the stars clearly with the naked eye. In regard to this, I remember an adventure which has often made me laugh since. I had bought an astronomical chart, in order to study the constellations. I fastened this chart to a frame, and, when the nights were clear, I went into the garden, and placed my frame on four stakes about my own height, with the chart turned downwards. In order to prevent the wind from blowing out my candle, I put it in a pail, which I placed between the four stakes on the ground. Then, looking alternately at the map with my eyes and the stars with my telescope, I practised myself in distinguishing the constellations and the individual stars. I think I have mentioned that M. Noiret's garden was in



the form of a terrace, so that everything that took place could be seen from the road. One evening, some peasants, who were passing by at rather a late hour, saw me, most comically attired, busy at my work. The dim light, which fell upon my chart, without their being able to see where it came from, since it was hidden from their eyes by the edges of the pail, the four stakes, the large sheet of paper covered with figures, the frame, and the movements of my telescope, which kept appearing and disappearing, gave an air of witchcraft to the whole proceeding, which terrified them.

My dress was not calculated to reassure them. A broad-brimmed hat over my cap, and a short, wadded night-dress belonging to mamma, which she had forced me to put on, presented to their eyes the appearance of a real sorcerer; and, as it was nearly midnight, they had no doubt that a witches' meeting was going to commence. Feeling little curiosity to see any more, they ran away in great alarm, woke up their neighbours to tell them of the apparition they had seen, and the story spread so quickly that, on the following day, everyone in the neighbourhood knew that a witches' gathering had been held in M. Noiret's garden. I do not know what would have been the result of this rumour, had not one of the peasants, who had been a witness of my incantations, carried a complaint on the same day to two Jesuits, who often came to see us, and who, without knowing what it was all about, in the meantime disabused them of the idea. They told us the story; I told them the origin of it, and we enjoyed a hearty laugh over it. However, it was decided, for fear of its being repeated, that for the future I should take my observations without the assistance of a light, and that I should consult my chart at home. Those who have read, in my "Letters from the Mountain," of my Venetian magic, will, I hope, find that sorcery had long been my vocation.

Such was my life at Les Charmettes, when I was not occupied with country pursuits, to which I always gave the preference, and in anything which was not beyond my strength I worked like a peasant; but it is true that my extreme weakness allowed me little merit on this point, except that of good intentions. Besides, I wanted to do two different things at once, and con-

sequently did neither well. I had resolved to acquire a good memory by violent measures, and persisted in my attempts to learn a great deal by heart. With this object, I always carried some book with me, which I studied and repeated to myself while at work, with incredible pains. I cannot understand how it was that my persistency in these useless and continued efforts did not end by reducing me to a state of stupidity. I must have learnt and relearnt at least twenty times the *Eclogues* of Virgil, and yet I do not know a single word of them. I have lost or dismembered numbers of books through the habit of carrying them about with me everywhere, in the pigeon-house, in the garden, in the orchard, and in the vineyard. While occupied with something else, I put my book down at the foot of a tree or on a hedge; I always forgot to take it up again, and, at the end of a fortnight, I frequently found it rotted away, or eaten by ants and snails. This eagerness for learning became a mania which drove me nearly stupid, so incessantly was I employed with muttering something or other to myself.

The writings of Port-Royal and the Oratory, which I read most frequently, had made me half a Jansenist, and, in spite of all my trust in God, their harsh theology sometimes frightened me. The dread of hell, which hitherto had had little terror for me, gradually disturbed my peace of mind, and, if mamma had not calmed my uneasiness, this terrible doctrine would have upset me altogether. My confessor, who was also hers, did his best to keep me in a comfortable frame of mind. This confessor was a Jesuit, named Father Hemet, a good and wise old man, whose memory I shall always revere. Although a Jesuit, he was as simple as a child; and his morality, rather gentle than lax, was exactly what I needed to counterbalance the gloomy impressions of Jansenism. This simple old man and his companion, Father Coppier, often came to see us at Les Charmettes, although the road was very rough and the journey long for persons of their age. Their visits did me great good: may God recompense their souls! for they were too old at the time for me to suppose that they are still alive. I also went to see them at Chambéri. I gradually became quite at home in their house; their library was at my disposal. The memory of this happy time is so

closely connected with my recollection of the Jesuits, that I love the one for the sake of the other; and, although I have always considered their doctrines dangerous, I have never been able to bring myself to hate them cordially.

I should much like to know, whether the same childish ideas ever enter the hearts of other men as sometimes enter mine. In the midst of my studies, in the course of a life as blameless as a man could have led, the fear of hell still frequently troubled me. I asked myself: "In what state am I? If I were to die this moment, should I be damned?" According to my Jansenists, there was no doubt about the matter; but, according to my conscience, I thought differently. Always fearful, and a prey to cruel uncertainty, I had recourse to the most laughable expedients to escape from it, for which I would unhesitatingly have anyone locked up as a madman if I saw him doing as I did. One day, while musing upon this melancholy subject, I mechanically amused myself by throwing stones against the trunks of trees with my usual good aim, that is to say, without hardly hitting one. While engaged in this useful exercise, it occurred to me to draw a prognostic from it to calm my anxiety. I said to myself: "I will throw this stone at the tree opposite; if I hit it, I am saved; if I miss it, I am damned." While speaking, I threw my stone with a trembling hand and a terrible palpitation of the heart, but with so successful an aim that it hit the tree right in the middle, which, to tell the truth, was no very difficult feat, for I had been careful to choose a tree with a thick trunk close at hand. From that time I have never had any doubt about my salvation! When I recall this characteristic incident, I do not know whether to laugh or cry at myself. You great men, who are most certainly laughing, may congratulate yourselves; but do not mock my wretchedness, for I swear to you that I feel it deeply.

However, these troubles and alarms, perhaps inseparable from piety, were not lasting. As a rule I was tolerably calm, and the impression which the idea of a speedy death produced upon my soul was not so much one of sadness as of peaceful resignation, which even had its charm. I have just found, amongst some old papers, a kind of exhortation addressed to myself,

in which I congratulated myself upon dying at an age when a man feels sufficient courage in himself to look death in the face, and without having undergone any great sufferings, either bodily or mental, during the course of my life. My judgment was only too correct! a presentiment made me afraid of living only to suffer. It seemed as if I foresaw the destiny which awaited me in my old age. I have never been so near wisdom as during those happy days. Without great remorse for the past, free from all anxiety regarding the future, my dominant feeling was the enjoyment of the present. The devout, as a rule, possess a small amount of very lively sensuality, which gives a flavour of rapturous enjoyment to the innocent pleasures which are permitted to them. The worldly look upon this as a crime on their part, I do not know why,—or rather, I know quite well: they envy in others the taste for simple pleasures which they have lost themselves. This taste I had, and I found it delightful to satisfy it with a quiet conscience. My heart, still fresh, abandoned itself to everything with a childish pleasure, or rather, if I may venture to say so, with angelic rapture; for, in truth, these quiet enjoyments possess the serene charm of the joys of Paradise. Dinners on the grass at Montagnole, suppers in the arbour, the gathering of the fruit, the vintage, the evenings spent in assisting our people to pull off the fibres of hemp—all these were so many festivals for us, which afforded mamma as much pleasure as myself. Solitary walks possessed a still greater charm, because the heart had greater freedom of expansion. Amongst others, I remember one which marks an epoch in my memory, which we took on one St. Louis's day, after whom mamma was named. We set out alone, early in the morning, after having heard mass read by a Carmelite at day-break in a chapel attached to the house. I had proposed that we should stroll about the opposite side of the valley, which we had never yet visited. We had sent our provisions on ahead, for the excursion was to last all day. Mamma, although somewhat stout and fat, was a fairly good walker. We wandered from hill to hill, from thicket to thicket, sometimes in the sun and frequently in the shade, resting now and again, forgetting ourselves for hours, talking of ourselves, our union, and our

happy lot, and offering up prayers for its continuance, which were not heard. Everything seemed in a conspiracy to enhance the happiness of that day. A shower of rain had recently fallen; there was no dust; the brooks were full of running water. A slight, fresh breeze stirred the leaves; the air was pure, the horizon cloudless; the sky was as serene as our hearts. We took our dinner at a peasant's house, and shared it with his family, who showered upon us heartfelt blessings. What good people these poor Savoyards are! After dinner, we reached the shade of some tall trees, where mamma amused herself with botanising amongst the underwood, while I collected some dry sticks to boil our coffee. Mamma pointed out to me a thousand curious things in the structure of the flowers which I had picked for her on the way, which greatly delighted me, and should have inspired me with a taste for botany; but the time for that was not yet come—I was too fully occupied by other studies. I was struck by an idea which diverted my mind from flowers and plants. My frame of mind, all that we said and did on that day, all the objects which had struck my attention, recalled to me the dream which I had had at Annecy seven or eight years before, of which I have given an account in its proper place. The resemblance was so striking that, when I thought of it, I was moved to tears. In a transport of emotion I embraced my dear friend. "Mamma, mamma," I said passionately, "this day has long been promised to me; I can imagine no greater happiness. My joy, thanks to you, is at its height. May it never decline; may it last as long as I feel its charm; it will never end except with my life!"

Thus passed my happy days; happier, since I saw nothing which could disturb them, and I only conceived it possible for them to end when my own end came. Not that the source of my anxiety was completely exhausted; but I found that it took a different course, which I did my best to direct towards useful objects, that it might carry its remedy with it. Mamma was naturally fond of the country, and this taste did not cool while she was with me. She gradually conceived a liking for country pursuits. She endeavoured to make her property a source of profit, and she took pleasure in making a practical use of her knowledge of such matters. Not content with the land belonging

to the house, she rented a field or a meadow. Directing her love of enterprise towards agriculture, she soon bid fair to become a regular farmer, instead of remaining idle at home. I was not particularly pleased to see her enlarging her sphere of occupation, and I opposed it as much as I could, feeling convinced that she would always be disappointed, and that her generous and extravagant disposition would always cause the expenditure to exceed the receipts. However, I consoled myself with the thought that these receipts would amount to something, and would help her to live. Of all the schemes she could possibly have thought of, this appeared to me the least ruinous, and without expecting any profit from it as she did, I saw in it a continuous occupation, which would protect her from unlucky undertakings and the machinations of swindlers. For this reason, I was eager to regain sufficient health and strength to enable me to watch over her affairs and to be her foreman or head workman; and the exercise, which this obliged me to take, often took me away from my books and diverted my thoughts from my condition, so that my health was naturally improved.

[1737-1741].—The following winter Barillot returned from Italy. He brought me some books; amongst others, the "Bon-tempi" and the "Cartella della Musica," which gave me a taste for the history of music and the theoretical investigation of this beautiful art. Barillot remained with us some time; and, as I had attained my majority some months ago, it was agreed that, in the following spring, I should go to Geneva to claim my mother's fortune, or, at least, the share that came to me, until it should be discovered what had become of my brother. This plan was carried out as had been arranged: I went to Geneva, where I was joined by my father. He had for some time been in the habit of visiting the place without anyone molesting him, although the decree against him was still in force; but, as he was esteemed for his courage and respected for his honesty, it was pretended that his little affair was forgotten; and the magistrates, busy with the grand scheme, which soon afterwards burst forth in all its glory, did not desire to irritate the middle classes prematurely, by reminding them of their former partisanship at an inopportune moment.



I was afraid of difficulties being raised in consequence of my change of religion, but found none. The laws of Geneva are in this respect not so severe as those of Berne, where anyone who changes his religion loses, not only his status, but his property as well. My claims were not disputed, but the inheritance itself, for some reason or other which I do not know, was reduced to a very small sum. Although it was almost certain that my brother was dead, there was no legal proof of this. I had not sufficient title to claim his share, and I willingly left it to help to support my father, who, as long as he lived, enjoyed the use of it. As soon as the legal formalities were concluded and I received my money, I laid out part of it in books, and flew to lay the rest at mamma's feet. During the journey my heart beat with joy, and, at the moment when I placed this money in her hands, I was a thousand times happier than when it was placed in mine. She received it with the simplicity of all beautiful souls, who, finding no difficulty in such actions themselves, are not astonished when they see them performed by others. The money was laid out almost entirely upon myself, with the same simplicity. It would have been employed in exactly the same manner, if it had come from any other source.

Meanwhile, my health was not completely re-established; on the contrary, I was visibly wasting away. I was as pale as a corpse and thin as a skeleton. The beating of my veins was terrible; the palpitations of my heart were more frequent. I continually suffered from shortness of breath, and my weakness at length became so great that I could scarcely move. I could not walk fast without a feeling of suffocation; I could not stoop without turning giddy; I could not lift the smallest weight; and I was forced to remain inactive, the greatest torment for a man as restless as I was. There is no doubt that my illness was, to a great extent, attributable to hysteria. This, which is the ailment of happy people, was mine. The tears which I often shed without any cause for weeping, my lively alarm at the rustling of a leaf or the chirping of a bird, my changeable disposition amidst the calm of a most happy life—all these were indications of that weariness caused by happiness, which, so to speak, leads to an extravagant sensibility. We are so little



formed for happiness in this world, that of necessity the soul or the body must suffer, when they do not suffer together, and a happy condition of the one nearly always injures the other. When I might have enjoyed life heartily, the decaying machinery of my body prevented me, without anyone being able to localise the cause of the evil. Later, my body, in spite of my declining years and very real and painful sufferings, appears to have regained its strength, in order to feel my sufferings more keenly; and, while I am writing these words, weak and almost sixty years of age, overwhelmed by pains of every description, I feel that I possess more life and strength for suffering than I possessed for enjoyment in the flower of my age and in the bosom of the truest happiness.

By way of reducing myself completely, after having read a little philosophy, I began the study of anatomy, and took a survey of the number and working of the individual parts which composed my bodily machine. Twenty times a day I was prepared to feel the whole out of gear. Far from being astonished at finding myself in a dying condition, I only felt surprised that I was still able to live, and I believed that every complaint of which I read the description was my own. I am convinced that, if I had not been ill, this fatal study would have made me so. Finding in each complaint the symptoms of my own, I thought that I was suffering from all; and thereby contracted one, which was still more cruel than all the rest, and from which I thought I was free,—an eager desire to be cured, which it is difficult for a man to escape, when once he begins to read medical books. By dint of research, reflection, and comparison, I came to the conclusion that the foundation of my malady was a polypus of the heart, and Salomon himself seemed struck by this idea. These suppositions should reasonably have confirmed me in my previous resolutions. But this was not the case. I exerted all my mental powers to discover how polypus of the heart could be healed, resolved to undertake this marvellous cure. Anet, during a journey which he made to Montpellier, to visit the botanical gardens and the demonstrator, M. Sauvages, had been told that M. Fizes had cured such a polypus. Mamma remembered this, and mentioned it to me. This was enough to inspire me with a

longing to go and consult M. Fizes. The hope of being cured restored my courage, and gave me strength to undertake the journey. The money which I had brought from Geneva furnished the means; and mamma, far from attempting to dissuade me, encouraged me to go. Behold me, then, on my way to Montpellier! I had no need to go so far to find the physician I required. As riding fatigued me too much, I took a carriage at Grenoble. At Moirans five or six other carriages arrived, one after the other, after my own. This time it was, in truth, the story of the sedan-chairs.<sup>1</sup> Most of these carriages formed part of the equipage of a newly-wedded bride, whose name was Madame du Colombier. She was accompanied by another lady, Madame de Larnage, who was younger and not so good-looking, but equally amiable, who intended to proceed from Romans, where Madame du Colombier was stopping, to the town of St. Andiol, near the Pont-Saint-Esprit. Considering my well-known shyness, it will not be imagined that I readily made the acquaintance of these elegant ladies and their suite; but at last, as I travelled by the same route, stopped at the same inns, and, under penalty of being considered a regular boor, was obliged to appear at the same table, it became impossible for me to avoid making the acquaintance. I did so, and even sooner than I could have wished, for all this bustle was ill-suited to a sick man, especially one of my temperament. But curiosity makes these roguish creatures so insinuating, that, in order to make a man's acquaintance, they begin by turning his head. This is what happened to me. Madame du Colombier was too closely surrounded by young dandies to have time to make advances to me, and besides, it was not worth while, since we were soon to separate; but Madame de Larnage, who was not so beset by admirers, had to make provision for her journey. It was Madame de Larnage who undertook my conquest; and, from that time, it was good-bye to poor Jean Jacques, or rather to my fever, hysteria, and polypus—good-bye to everything, when in her company, with the exception of certain palpitations of the heart, which remained, and of which she showed no inclination to cure me. The bad state of my health

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1 From Scarron's *Roman Comique*: see p. 142.

was our first subject of conversation. They saw that I was ill; they knew that I was going to Montpellier; and my appearance and manners must have made it clear that I was no profligate, for it was evident, from what followed, that they did not suspect that I was going there in order to be cured of the effects of debauchery. Although ill-health is no great recommendation amongst women, it made me interesting in the eyes of these ladies. In the morning they sent to know how I was, and invited me to take chocolate with them; and asked me how I had passed the night. On one occasion, in accordance with my praiseworthy habit of speaking without thinking, I answered that I did not know. This answer made them think that I was mad. They examined me more closely, and this examination did me no harm. I once heard Madame du Colombier say to her friend: "He has no manners, but he is amiable." This word greatly encouraged me, and caused me to act up to it.

As we became more intimate, I was obliged to speak about myself; to say who I was, and where I came from. This caused me some embarrassment, for I clearly saw that the word "convert" would ruin me in polite society and amongst ladies of fashion. I do not know what curious whim prompted me to pass myself off as an Englishman. I gave myself out as a Jacobite. I called myself Dudding, and they called me Mr. Dudding. A confounded Marquis de Torignan, who was with us, an invalid like myself, and old and ill-tempered into the bargain, took it into his head to enter into conversation with Mr. Dudding. He talked to me about King James, the Pretender, and the old Court of Saint-Germain. I was on thorns: I knew nothing about them, except the little I had read in Count Hamilton and the newspapers; but I made such good use of my scanty knowledge that I got out of it pretty well. Luckily, no one thought of asking me about the English language, of which I did not understand a single word.

We got on exceedingly well together, and looked forward with regret to our separation. We travelled at a snail's pace by day. One Sunday we found ourselves at Saint-Marcellin. Madame de Larnage wanted to attend mass, and I accompanied her, which nearly spoilt my game. I behaved during service as I had always

been in the habit of doing. From my modest and reserved behaviour she concluded that I was a devotee, which gave her the worst possible opinion of me, as she confessed to me two days later. It required great efforts of gallantry on my part to efface this unfavourable impression; or rather, Madame de Larnage, like a woman of experience, not being easily discouraged, was willing to run the risk of making advances to see how I would extricate myself. She made them so freely and in such a manner that, since I thought nothing of my personal appearance, I believed she was laughing at me. In this ridiculous idea, there was no kind of folly that I did not commit: I was worse than the Marquis du Legs.<sup>1</sup> Madame de Larnage stood her ground; tried to tempt me so often, and spoke so tenderly to me, that a wiser man than myself would have found difficulty in taking it all seriously. The more she persisted, the more she confirmed me in my belief; and what tormented me still more was, that I became seriously enamoured of her. I said, with a sigh, to myself and to her: "Ah! if all you say were only true, I should be the happiest of men." I believe that my raw simplicity only piqued her fancy, and that she was unwilling to acknowledge a defeat.

We had left Madame du Colombier and her suite at Romans. We continued our journey, slowly and most agreeably, —Madame de Larnage, the Marquis de Torignan, and myself. The Marquis, although an invalid and a grumbler, was a decent fellow, but was not best pleased at seeing other people enjoying themselves without being able to do so himself.<sup>2</sup> Madame de Larnage took so little trouble to conceal her fancy for me, that he perceived it sooner than I did myself, and his malicious sarcasms should at least have given me the confidence which I did not venture to draw from the lady's advances, had I not imagined, in a spirit of perversity, of which I alone was capable, that they had come to an understanding to amuse themselves at

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<sup>1</sup> A character in Marivaux's comedy, who is in love for the first time, and, being of an exceedingly timid disposition, is afraid to make a declaration: while the character of the Countess is exactly the opposite. The plot turns on a legacy (*legs*): hence the name.

<sup>2</sup> *Manger son pain à la fumée du rôti*: literally, "To eat bread when he could smell roast meat."

my expense. This foolish idea at last completely turned my head, and made me play the utter simpleton in a situation in which my heart, being really smitten, might have instructed me to act a far more distinguished part. I cannot understand how it was that Madame de Larnage was not disgusted with my sullenness, and did not dismiss me with utter contempt. But she was a clever woman, who understood the people she had to deal with, and saw clearly that there was more silliness than lukewarmness in my behaviour.

She at last succeeded, with some difficulty, in making herself understood. We had reached Valence in time for dinner, and, according to our praiseworthy custom, remained there for the rest of the day. We put up outside the town, at Saint-Jacques. I shall never forget this inn or the room which Madame de Larnage occupied. After dinner she wanted to go for a walk. She knew that the Marquis was not fond of walking. It was a plan to secure for herself a *tête-à-tête*, which she had resolved to make the most of, for there was no more time to be lost, if any was to be left to make use of. We walked round the town, along the moats. I recommenced the long story of my complaints, to which she replied so tenderly, sometimes pressing my arm to her heart, that only stupidity like mine could have prevented me from being convinced that she spoke seriously. The unaccountable thing was, that I myself was greatly affected. I have said that she was amiable; love made her charming; it restored all the brightness of her early youth, and she managed her advances so cunningly, that she would have seduced a man of the greatest experience. I was very ill at ease, and frequently on the point of taking liberties; but the fear of offending or displeasing her, and the still greater dread of being derided, laughed at, mocked, of providing an anecdote for the table, and being complimented upon my courage by the merciless Marquis, kept me back and made me feel irritated at my foolish bashfulness, and at my inability to overcome it, while I reproached myself with it. I was on the rack. I had already abandoned my timid language,<sup>1</sup> the absurdity of which I felt, now that I

<sup>1</sup> *Mes propos de Céladon*: "My Celadonic way of speaking." Céladon was one of the characters in the "Astrée," a celebrated romance by Honoré d'Urfé (1568-1625), and came to be used for a devoted but bashful lover.

was so well on the road; but as I did not know how to act or what to say, I held my tongue and looked sulky. In a word, I did everything that was calculated to bring upon me the treatment which I feared. Happily, Madame de Larnage was more humane. She abruptly interrupted the silence by putting her arm round my neck, while, at the same time, her mouth, pressed upon my own, spoke too clearly for me to have any further doubt. The crisis could not have occurred at a more happy moment. I became amiable. It was time. She had given me the confidence, the want of which has always prevented me from being natural. For once I was myself: never have my eyes, my senses, my heart and my mouth spoken so well; never have I repaired my errors so completely; and if this little conquest had cost Madame de Larnage some trouble, I had reason to believe that she did not regret it.

If I were to live a hundred years, I could never think of this charming woman without delight. I use the word charming, because, although she was neither young nor beautiful, and yet neither old nor ugly, there was nothing in her face to prevent her intellect and grace from exercising their full effect. In complete contrast to other women, her least freshness was in her face, and I believe that the use of rouge had ruined it. She had reasons for her easy virtue: it was the best way in which she could assert all her charms. It was possible to look at her without loving her; it was impossible to possess her without adoring her. This seems to me to prove that she was not always so lavish of her favours as she was with me. Her advances to me had been too sudden and lively to be excusable; but her heart at least had as much to do with it as her senses, and, during the brief and delicious period which I spent with her, I had reason to believe, from the forced moderation which she imposed upon me, that, although sensual and voluptuous, she thought more of my health than her own pleasure.

The understanding between us did not escape the Marquis. He did not, however, leave off chaffing me, but, on the contrary, treated me more than ever as a bashful lover, a martyr to his lady's cruelty. Not a word, not a smile, not a look escaped him, which could have made me suspect that he had found us out;



and I should have believed that he had been deceived by us, had not Madame de Larnage, who was keener than I was, told me that this was not the case, but that he was a chivalrous man; and, indeed, no one could have shown more polite attention, or behaved more courteously than he always did, even towards myself, with the exception of his raillery, especially after my success. He perhaps attributed the credit of it to me, and considered me not such a fool as I had appeared to be. He was mistaken, as has been seen: but no matter, I profited by his mistake; and it is true that, since I now had the laugh on my side, I endured his epigrams with good heart and grace, and sometimes retorted, even happily, proud to be able to exhibit, in the presence of Madame de Larnage, the wit with which she had credited me. I was no longer the same man.

We were in a country and a season of good cheer; and, thanks to the Marquis, we enjoyed it to the full. I could have dispensed with his extending his attentions even to our bedrooms; but he always sent his lackey to engage them in advance, and this rascal, either on his own responsibility or by the Marquis's instructions, always took a room for him next to Madame de Larnage, while I was poked away at the other end of the house. But this caused me little embarrassment, and only added piquancy to our rendezvous. This delightful life lasted four or five days, during which I was intoxicated with the sweetest pleasures. They were unadulterated and lively, without the least alloy of pain, the first and only pleasures of the kind that I have enjoyed; and I can only say that I owe it to Madame de Larnage that I shall not leave the world without having known the meaning of pleasure.

If my feeling for her was not exactly love, it was at least so tender a return for the love which she showed for me, it was a sensuality so burning in its satisfaction, and an intimacy so sweet in its intercourse, that it had all the charm of passion without that delirium which turns the brain and spoils enjoyment. I have only felt true love once in my life, and it was not with her. Nor did I love her as I had loved, and still loved, Madame de Warens; but for that very reason the possession of her afforded me a hundred times greater enjoyment. With mamma, my



pleasure was always disturbed by a feeling of sadness, by a secret feeling of oppression at the heart, which I found difficult to overcome. Instead of congratulating myself upon possessing her, I reproached myself with degrading her. With Madame de Larnage, on the contrary, I was proud of my manhood and my happiness, and abandoned myself with confident joy to the satisfaction of my desires. I shared the impression which I produced upon hers. I was sufficiently master of myself to regard my triumph with as much self-complacency as pleasure, and to derive from it the means of redoubling it.

I do not remember where the Marquis, who belonged to the district, left us; but we were alone when we reached Montélimar, where Madame de Larnage made her maid get into my carriage, while I travelled in her own. I can assure you that in this manner we did not find the journey tedious, and I should have found it difficult to describe the country through which we passed. She was detained at Montélimar three days on business, during which, however, she only left me for a quarter of an hour to pay a visit, which brought her in return some importunate and pressing invitations, which she was by no means disposed to accept. She pleaded indisposition, which did not, however, prevent us from walking together alone every day in the most beautiful country and under the most beautiful sky in the world. Oh, those three days! I have had reason to regret them sometimes! I have never enjoyed their like again!

Travelling amours cannot last. We were obliged to separate, and I confess that it was time: not that I was surfeited, or anything like it; I became more attached to her every day; but, in spite of her discretion, I had little left except goodwill, and, before we separated, I wished to enjoy that little, which she submitted to, by way of precaution against the young ladies of Montpellier. We beguiled our regrets by forming plans to meet again. It was decided that I should continue the treatment, which did me considerable good, and spend the winter at Saint-Andiol under her superintendence. I was to stay only five or six weeks at Montpellier, to allow her time to arrange the necessary preliminaries, to prevent scandal. She gave me full instructions about what it was necessary for me to know, what I was to say,

and the manner in which I was to behave. Meanwhile, we were to write to each other. She spoke to me long and seriously about the care of my health, advised me to consult some clever physicians, to follow their instructions carefully, and took upon herself to make me carry out their directions, however strict they might be, as long as I was with her. I believe that she spoke sincerely, for she loved me. Of this she gave me numerous proofs, more reliable than her favours. From my style of travelling, she judged that I was not rolling in money; and, although she herself was by no means well off, she wanted to make me share the contents of her purse, which she had brought pretty well filled from Grenoble, and I had the greatest difficulty in making her accept my refusal. At last I left her, my heart full of her, and leaving, as I believe, a true attachment for myself in her own.

I finished my journey, while going over it again in my memory from the beginning, and for the moment I was very well content to sit in a comfortable carriage and dream at my ease of the pleasures which I had enjoyed and of those which were promised to me. I thought of nothing but Saint-Andiol, and the delightful life which awaited me there. I saw nothing but Madame de Larnage and her surroundings: the rest of the world was nothing to me: even mamma was forgotten. I employed myself in arranging in my head all the details into which Madame de Larnage had entered, in order to give me beforehand an idea of her house, her neighbourhood, her friends, and her manner of life. She had a daughter, of whom she had often spoken to me in terms of most lavish affection. This daughter was in her sixteenth year, lively, charming, and amiable. Madame de Larnage had promised me that I was sure to be a great favourite with her. I had not forgotten the promise, and I was very curious to see how Mademoiselle de Larnage would behave towards her mamma's good friend. Such were the subjects of my reveries from Pont-Saint-Esprit to Remoulin. I had been told to go and see the Pont du Gard, and did not fail to do so. It was the first Roman work that I had seen. I expected to see a monument worthy of the hands which had erected it; for once, and for the only time in my life, the reality surpassed the

expectation. Only the Romans could have produced such an effect.

The sight of this simple, yet noble, work produced the greater impression upon me, as it was situated in the midst of a desert, where silence and solitude bring the object into greater prominence, and arouse a livelier feeling of admiration; for this pretended bridge was nothing but an aqueduct. One naturally asks what strength has transported these enormous stones so far from any quarry, and united the arms of so many thousands of men in a spot where not one of them dwells. I went through the three storeys of this superb building, within which a feeling of respect almost prevented me from setting foot. The echo of my footsteps under these immense vaults made me imagine that I heard the sturdy voices of those who had built them. I felt myself lost like an insect in this immensity. I felt, in spite of my sense of littleness, as if my soul was somehow or other elevated, and I said to myself with a sigh, "Why was I not born a Roman?" I remained there several hours in rapturous contemplation. I returned, distracted and dreamy, and this dreaminess was not favourable to Madame de Larnage. She had been careful to warn me against the girls of Montpellier, but not against the Pont du Gard. One never thinks of everything!

At Nîmes I went to see the amphitheatre. It is a far more magnificent work than the Pont du Gard, but it made far less impression upon me; either the latter had exhausted my powers of admiration, or the former, being situated in the midst of a town, was less calculated to arouse them. This vast and splendid circus is surrounded by ugly little houses, and the arena is filled with other houses, still smaller and uglier, so that the aspect of the whole produces a confused and incongruous effect, in which regret and indignation stifle pleasure and surprise. Since then I have seen the Circus at Verona, which is far smaller and less imposing, but is kept and preserved with the greatest possible neatness and cleanliness, and for that very reason produced upon me a more forcible and agreeable impression. The French take care of nothing, and have no respect for monuments. They are all eagerness to undertake anything, but do not know how to finish, or keep it in repair when it is finished.

I was so changed, and my sensuality, which had been roused to activity, was awakened to such a degree, that I remained for a whole day at the Pont du Lunel, in order to enjoy its good cheer with the other visitors. This inn, the most famous in Europe, at that time deserved its reputation. Its proprietors had known how to take advantage of its excellent position, in order to keep it abundantly supplied with choice provisions. It was really curious to find, in a lonely and isolated house in the middle of the country, a table furnished with salt and fresh-water fish, excellent game, choice wines, served with the attention and civility which is only found in the houses of the great and wealthy—all for thirty-five *sous* a head. But the Pont du Lunel did not long remain on this footing, and, by presuming too much on its reputation, at length lost it altogether.

During my journey I had quite forgotten that I was ill: I remembered it when I arrived at Montpellier. My attacks of hysteria were certainly cured, but all my other ailments remained; and, though familiarity made me less sensitive to them they were enough to make anyone, who was suddenly attacked by them, fancy himself at death's door. In fact, they were more alarming than painful, and caused more suffering of the mind than of the body, the destruction of which they seemed to announce. Hence, while distracted by violent passions, I thought no more of the state of my health; but, as my complaints were not imaginary, I became aware of them again as soon as I recovered my coolness. I then began to think seriously of Madame de Larnage's advice, and the object of my journey. I consulted the most famous physicians, particularly M. Fizes, and, by way of excessive precaution, boarded with a doctor. He was an Irishman, named Fitzmorris, who took in a considerable number of medical students; and what made his house more comfortable for a resident patient was, that he was satisfied with a moderate fee for board, and charged his boarders nothing for medical attendance. He undertook to carry out M. Fizes' regulations, and to look after my health. As far as diet was concerned, he acquitted himself admirably: none of his boarders suffered from indigestion; and, although I am not very sensible to privations of this kind, the opportunities of drawing

comparison were so near, that I could not help sometimes thinking to myself that M. de Torignan was a better purveyor than M. Fitzmorris. However, as we were not absolutely starved, and the young students were very cheerful, this way of living really did me good, and prevented me from falling into my former state of depression. I spent the morning in taking medicines, especially some waters, which I believe came from Vals, although I am not certain, and in writing to Madame de Larnage; for the correspondence continued, and Rousseau undertook to fetch his friend Dudding's letters. At noon I took a walk to La Canourge with one of our young messmates, all of whom were very good lads; after which we assembled for dinner. When this meal was over, most of us engaged in an important occupation until evening: we went a little way out of town, to play two or three games of mall for our afternoon tea.<sup>1</sup> I did not play myself, as I possessed neither the requisite strength nor skill, but I betted on the result. In this manner, interested in my wager, I followed our players and their balls across rough and stony roads, and enjoyed agreeable and healthy exercise, which suited me admirably. We took our tea at an inn outside the city. I need not say that these meals were very lively; but I may add that there was nothing improper about them, although the landlord's daughters were very pretty. M. Fitzmorris, who was a great player himself, was our president; and I can declare that, in spite of the bad reputation of the students, I found more decency and propriety amongst these young men than it would have been easy to find amongst an equal number of grown-up men. They were noisy rather than licentious, merry rather than profligate, and I become so easily accustomed to any manner of life, when it is voluntary, that I could have desired nothing better than a continuance of it. Amongst the students were several Irish, from whom I tried to learn a few words of English, in anticipation of Saint-Andiol; for the time of my departure was close at hand. Madame de Larnage importuned me by every post, and I prepared to obey her. It was clear that my physicians, who did not understand my complaint at all, regarded it as existing only in my imagina-

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<sup>1</sup> *Gôûter*: a light meal between dinner and supper.

tion, and, under those circumstances, treated me with their China-root, their waters, and their whey. Physicians and philosophers, differing entirely from theologians, only admit that to be true which they are able to explain, and make their understanding the measure of what is possible. These gentlemen understood nothing about my complaint: therefore I was not ill at all; for of course doctors knew everything. I saw that they were only trying to humbug me and make me waste my money; and as I thought that their substitute at Saint-Andiol would do that just as well as they, but in a more agreeable manner, I resolved to give her the preference, and, with this wise resolution, I left Montpellier. I set out towards the end of November, after a stay of six weeks or two months in that city, where I left behind me a dozen *louis d'or*, without any benefit either to my health or understanding, with the exception of a course of anatomy which I commenced under M. Fitzmorris, and which I was obliged to give up, owing to the fearful stench of the bodies which were dissected, and which I found it impossible to endure.

Feeling very ill at ease concerning the resolution that I had taken, I began to reflect upon it as I continued my journey towards the Pont-Saint-Esprit, which was the road to Chambéri as well as Saint-Andiol. The remembrance of mamma and her letters, although she did not write to me so often as Madame de Larnage, again aroused in my heart the remorse which I had stifled during the first part of my journey, and which, on my return, became so keen that, counterbalancing the love of pleasure, it put me in a condition to listen to reason alone. In the first place, in the rôle of adventurer which I was again going to play, I might be less fortunate than I had been on the previous occasion: it only needed, in the whole of Saint-Andiol, a single person who had been in England, or who was acquainted with the English manners or language, to expose me. Madame de Larnage's family might take a dislike to me and treat me with discourtesy. Her daughter, of whom, in spite of myself, I thought more than I ought to have done, also caused me considerable uneasiness. I trembled at the idea of falling in love with her, and this very apprehension half finished the business. Was I, by way of repaying the mother's kindness,



to attempt to lead the daughter astray, to enter upon a most detestable connection, to bring dissension, dishonour, scandal, even hell itself, into her house? This idea horrified me; I firmly resolved to resist and defeat myself, if this wretched inclination made itself felt. But why expose myself to such a struggle? What a miserable state of things would it be to live with the mother, of whom I was tired, and to be burning with love for the daughter, without daring to disclose the state of my feelings! What necessity was there deliberately to seek such a position, to expose myself to misfortunes, affronts and remorse, for the sake of pleasures, the greatest charm of which I had exhausted in advance? for it is certain that my fancy had lost its early vivacity. The taste for pleasure was still there, but not passion. With these thoughts were mingled reflections upon my situation and my duty, and thoughts of that good and generous mamma, whose debts, already heavy, were increased by my foolish expenditure, who drained her purse for my sake and whom I was so unworthily deceiving. This reproach became so lively that it finally turned the scale. When I had nearly reached the Pont-Saint-Esprit, I resolved to hasten past Saint-Andiol without stopping. I carried out this resolution courageously, with a few sighs, I confess, but also with the inward satisfaction that, for the first time in my life, I could say to myself: "I have a right to think well of myself; I know how to prefer my duty to my pleasure." This was the first real advantage for which I had to thank my studies; they had taught me to reflect and compare. After the virtuous principles which I had so recently adopted, after the rules of wisdom and virtue which I had drawn up for myself and which I had felt such pride in following, a feeling of shame at being so little consistent with myself, of giving the lie to my own maxims so soon and so emphatically, gained the victory over pleasure. Perhaps pride had as much to do with my resolution as virtue; but, if this pride is not virtue itself, its effects are so similar that it is excusable to confound them.

One of the good results of virtuous actions is, that they elevate the soul and incline it to attempt something even better; for so great is human weakness, that we must reckon amongst



virtuous actions abstention from the evil which we are tempted to commit. As soon as I had taken my resolution, I became another man, or rather, I became the man I had formerly been, whom the intoxication of the moment had caused to disappear. Full of good sentiments and good resolutions, I continued my journey with the intention of expiating my error, thinking only of regulating my future conduct by the laws of virtue, of devoting myself unreservedly to the service of the best of mothers, of vowing to her a loyalty equal to my attachment, and of listening to no other call but that of my duties. Alas! the sincerity of my return to virtue appeared to promise a different destiny; but my own was already written and begun, and at the moment when my heart, full of love for all that was good and honourable, saw nothing but innocence and happiness before it, I was approaching the fatal moment which was destined to drag behind it the long chain of my misfortunes.

My impatience to reach home made me travel faster than I had intended. I had sent a letter to mamma from Valence, to inform her of the day and hour of my arrival. As I was half a day in advance, I spent that time at Chaparillan, in order to arrive exactly at the moment I had fixed. I wanted to enjoy to the full the pleasure of seeing her again. I preferred to put it off a little, in order to add to it the pleasure of being expected. This precaution had always proved successful: I had always found my arrival celebrated by a kind of little holiday; I expected as much on this occasion, and these attentions, which I felt so much, were worth the trouble of procuring.

I arrived, then, punctual to the moment. When I was still some distance off, I looked ahead in the hope of seeing her on the road; my heart beat more violently, the nearer I approached. I arrived out of breath, for I had left my carriage in town; I saw no one in the court, at the door, or at the window. I began to feel uneasy and afraid that some accident had happened. I entered: everything was quiet: some workmen were eating in the kitchen: there were no signs that I was expected. The maid appeared surprised to see me: she knew nothing about my coming. I went upstairs; at last I saw her, my dear mamma, whom I loved so tenderly, so deeply and so

purely; I ran up to her, and threw myself at her feet. "Ah!" said she, embracing me, "you are back again then, little one! have you had a pleasant journey? how are you?" This reception somewhat surprised me. I asked her whether she had received my letter. She answered, "Yes." "I should not have thought so," I said, and the explanation ended there. A young man was with her. I remembered having seen him in the house before I left, but now he seemed established there, as in fact he was. In a word, I found my place filled.

This young man belonged to the Vaud country; his father, named Vintzenried, was keeper, or, as he called himself, Captain of the Castle of Chillon. The son was a journeyman wig-maker, and was travelling the country in pursuit of his calling, when he first presented himself to Madame de Warens, who received him kindly, as she received all travellers, especially those from her own country. He was tall, fair-haired, insipid, tolerably well set up, with a face as dull as his intellect, and spoke like a *beau Léandre*,<sup>1</sup> mingling all the airs and tastes of his calling with the long story of his conquests, and, according to his own account, mentioning only half the marchionesses with whom he had slept, and boasting that he had never dressed a pretty woman's head without decorating the husband as well. Vain, foolish, ignorant and insolent, he was in other respects the best fellow in the world. Such was the substitute who replaced me during my absence, and the companion who was offered to me after my return.

If souls, when freed from their earthly bonds, still look down from the bosom of the eternal light upon that which takes place upon this earth, pardon me, dear and honoured shade, if I show no more favour to your faults than my own, but unveil both equally before the reader's eyes! I must and will be as true for you as for myself: you will always have much less to lose than I. Ah! how your amiable and gentle character, your inexhaustible goodness of heart, your frankness, and all your admirable qualities atone for your weaknesses, if simple errors

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<sup>1</sup> One of the stock characters of Italian comedy, a fop who takes great pride in his personal appearance, and is fond of displaying his ribbons and lace.

of judgment deserve that name! You erred, but you were free from vice; your conduct was blameworthy, but your heart was always pure.

The new-comer had shown himself zealous, diligent and careful in carrying out her numerous little commissions, and had appointed himself foreman of her labourers. As noisy as I was quiet, he was seen and heard everywhere at once, at the plough, in the hay-loft, in the wood-house, in the stable, in the farm-yard. Gardening was the only thing he neglected, because the work was too quiet, and afforded no opportunity for making a noise. His great delight was to load and drive a waggon, to saw or chop wood: he was always to be seen with an axe or pick in his hand, running, hustling, and shouting with all his might. I do not know how many men's work he did, but he made noise enough for ten or a dozen. All this noise and bustle imposed on my poor mamma: she thought that in this young man she had found a treasure to assist her in business matters. In order to attach him to her, she employed all the means she thought likely to produce this result—not forgetting that on which she placed most reliance.

The reader must have gained some knowledge of my heart, and of its truest and most constant feelings, especially those which brought me back to her at this moment. What a sudden and complete upset of my whole being! To judge of it, let the reader put himself in my place. I saw all the happy future which I had depicted to myself vanish in a moment. All the dreams of happiness which I had so fondly cherished disappeared, and I, who from my youth had never considered my existence except in connection with hers, for the first time found myself alone. This moment was frightful! those which followed were all gloomy. I was still young, but the pleasant feeling of enjoyment and hope which animates youth, deserted me for ever. From that time my sensible being was half dead. I saw nothing before me but the melancholy remains of an insipid life: and, if now and again an image of happiness floated lightly across my desires, this happiness was no longer that which was peculiarly my own: I felt that, even if I succeeded in obtaining it, I should still not be really happy.

I was so simple, and my confidence was so great that, in spite of the new-comer's familiar tone, which I looked upon as one of the results of mamma's easy-going disposition, which attracted everyone towards her, I should never have suspected the real reason of it, unless she had told me herself; but she hastened to make this avowal with a frankness which might well have increased my rage, if my heart had been capable of it. She herself considered it quite a simple matter, reproached me with my carelessness in the house, and appealed to my frequent absences, as if her temperament had been such that it required the void to be filled as quickly as possible. "Ah, mamma," I said to her, with a heart wrung with grief, "what do you dare to tell me? What a reward for such devotion as mine! Have you so often saved my life, only in order to deprive me of that which made it dear to me? It will kill me, but you will regret my loss." She replied, with a calmness calculated to drive me mad, that I was a child, that people did not die of such things, that I should lose nothing, that we should be equally good friends, equally intimate in all respects, and that her tender attachment to me could neither diminish nor end except with her own life. In short, she gave me to understand that all my privileges would remain the same, and that, while sharing them with another, I should not find them in any way curtailed. Never did the purity, truth and strength of my attachment for her, never did the sincerity and uprightness of my soul make itself more plainly felt than at that moment. I threw myself at her feet, and, shedding floods of tears, clasped her knees. "No, mamma," I exclaimed, half distracted, "I love you too deeply to degrade you; the possession of you is too precious for me to be able to share it with another; the regrets which I felt when you first bestowed yourself upon me have increased with my affection; I cannot retain possession of you at the same price. I shall always worship you: remain worthy of it: I have still greater need to respect than to possess you. I resign you to yourself; to the union of our hearts I sacrifice all my pleasures. I would rather die a thousand times than seek an enjoyment which degrades one whom I love."

I remained true to this resolution, with a steadfastness

worthy, I venture to say, of the feeling which had produced it. From that moment I only regarded this dear mamma with the eyes of a real son; and I must observe that, although my resolution did not meet with her private approbation, as I perceived only too clearly, she never attempted to make me abandon it, either by insinuating proposals, caresses, or any of those clever allurements which women so well know how to make use of without committing themselves, and which are rarely unsuccessful.

Compelled to seek for myself a lot independent of her, and unable even to think of one, I soon fell into the other extreme, and sought it entirely in her. There I sought it so completely that I almost succeeded in forgetting myself. The ardent desire to see her happy, at whatever cost, absorbed all my affections. It was useless for her to separate her happiness from mine; I looked upon it as my own, in spite of her.

Thus, together with my misfortunes, those virtues began to develop, the seeds of which were sown at the bottom of my heart, which had been cultivated by study, and only waited for the leaven of adversity in order to bear fruit. The first result of this disinterestedness was the removal from my heart of all feeling of hatred and envy against him who had supplanted me. On the contrary, I desired in all sincerity to become intimate with this young man, to form his character, to educate him, to make him sensible of his happiness, to make him worthy of it, if possible, and, in a word, to do for him all that Anet had formerly done for me in similar circumstances. But our dispositions were not alike. Although gentler and better informed than Anet, I possessed neither his coolness nor firmness, nor that force of character which inspires respect, and which would have been necessary to insure success. Still less did I find in this young man the qualities which Anet had found in me: docility, attachment, gratitude, and, above all, the consciousness that I needed his attention, and the eager desire of profiting by it. All these qualities were wanting. He whom I wanted to educate considered me as nothing more than a tiresome pedant, who could do nothing else but chatter. On the other hand, he admired himself as a person of importance in the house; and, estimating

the services he thought he rendered by the noise he made about them, he looked upon his axes and picks as infinitely more useful than all my old books. In a certain sense, he was right; but, starting from that, he gave himself airs enough to make anyone die with laughter. With the peasants he attempted to play the country gentleman. He soon treated me in the same way, and even mamma herself. As the name Vintzenried did not appear sufficiently distinguished, he abandoned it for that of M. de Courtilles, by which name he was afterwards known at Chambéri, and in Maurienne, where he married.

In a word, this illustrious person soon became everything in the house, and I myself nothing. If I had the misfortune to displease him, it was mamma, not I, whom he scolded. For this reason, the fear of exposing her to his brutal behaviour rendered me subservient to all his wishes; and, whenever he chopped wood—an occupation of which he was inordinately proud—I was obliged to stand by, an idle spectator and quiet admirer of his prowess. His disposition was not, however, altogether bad. He loved mamma because no one could help loving her; he showed no aversion even for me; and, in his calmer moments, he sometimes listened to us quietly enough, and frankly owned that he was only a fool, and, immediately afterwards, proceeded to commit fresh follies. In addition to this, his understanding was so limited and his tastes so low, that it was difficult to reason, and almost impossible to feel at ease with him. Not content with the possession of a most charming woman, he added, by way of seasoning, that of an old, red-haired, toothless waiting-woman, whose disgusting services mamma had the patience to endure, although it quite upset her. I observed this new intrigue, and was beside myself with indignation; but at the same time I perceived something else, which affected me still more deeply, and dispirited me more than anything else which had as yet occurred. This was a growing coldness in mamma's behaviour towards me.

The privation which I had imposed upon myself, and of which she had pretended to approve, is one of those things which women never pardon, however they pretend to take it; not so much for the sake of that of which they are themselves



deprived, as by reason of the feeling of indifference which they consider it implies. Take the most sensible, the most philosophical, the least sensual woman: the most unpardonable crime that a man, for whom in other respects she cares nothing, can be guilty of towards her, is not to enjoy her favours when he has the chance of doing so. There can be no exception to this rule, since a sympathy, at once so natural and so deep, was impaired in her in consequence of an abstinence, the only motives of which were virtue, attachment, and esteem. From that moment, I no longer found in her that intimacy of hearts which had always afforded the sweetest enjoyment to my own. She no longer unbosomed herself to me, except when she had occasion to complain of the new-comer. When they were on good terms, I was rarely admitted to her confidence. At length, y degrees, she became entirely estranged from me. She still seemed pleased to see me, but no longer found my company indispensable; even had I passed whole days without seeing her, she would not have noticed it.

Insensibly I felt myself isolated and alone in that house of which I had formerly been the soul, and in which I led, so to speak, a double life. I gradually accustomed myself to disregard all that took place in it, and even kept aloof from those who dwelt in it. In order to spare myself continual torment, I shut myself up with my books, or wept and sighed to my heart's content in the midst of the woods. This life soon became unendurable. I felt that the personal presence of a woman who was so dear to me, while I was estranged from her heart, only aggravated my sorrow, and that I should feel the separation from her less cruelly if I no longer saw her. I therefore resolved to leave the house. I told her so, and, far from offering any opposition, she approved of it. She had a friend at Grenoble, named Madame Deybens, whose husband was a friend of M. de Mably, the *Grand-Prévôt* of Lyons. M. Deybens suggested to me that I should undertake the education of M. de Mably's children. I accepted the post, and set out for Lyons, without causing, almost without feeling, the slightest regret at a separation, the mere idea of which would formerly have caused us both the most deadly anguish.

I possessed almost sufficient knowledge for a tutor, and



believed that I had the necessary qualifications. During the year which I spent at M. de Mably's, I had ample time to undeceive myself. My naturally gentle disposition would have made me well adapted for this profession, had not a violent temper been mingled with it. As long as all went well, and I saw that my trouble and attention, of which I was not sparing, were successful, I was an angel; but, when things went wrong, I was a devil. When my pupils did not understand me, I raved like a madman; when they showed signs of insubordination, I could have killed them, which was not the way to make them either learned or well-behaved. They were two in number, of very different dispositions. One, between eight and nine years old, named Sainte-Marie, had a pretty face, was fairly intelligent, lively, giddy, playful, and mischievous, but his mischief was always good-humoured. The younger, Condillac, who seemed almost stupid, was idle and lazy, as obstinate as a mule, and incapable of learning anything. It may be imagined that, between the two, I had my work cut out. With the aid of patience and coolness I might, perhaps, have succeeded; but, as I possessed neither, I made no progress, and my pupils turned out very badly. I did not lack assiduity, but I wanted evenness of temper, and, above all, tact. I only knew three means to employ, which are always useless and frequently ruinous to children: sentiment, argument, anger. At one time, with Sainte-Marie, I was moved to tears, and attempted to arouse similar emotions in him, as if a child could have been capable of genuine feeling. At another time I exhausted myself in arguing with him, as if he had been able to understand me; and, as he sometimes made use of very subtle arguments, I seriously thought that he must be intelligent, because he knew how to argue. The little Condillac was still more troublesome, since he understood nothing, never made an answer, and was never affected by anything. His obstinacy was immovable, and he never enjoyed anything more than the triumph of putting me in a rage. Then, indeed, he was the wise man and I was the child. I recognised all my faults, and was conscious of them. I studied my pupils' characters, and fathomed them successfully; and I do not believe that I was ever once taken in by their artifices. But what advantage was it to me to see the evil, if I

did not know how to apply the remedy? Although I saw through everything, I prevented nothing, and succeeded in nothing, and everything that I did was exactly what I ought not to have done.

I was hardly more successful in regard to myself than my pupils. Madame Deybens had recommended me to Madame de Mably, and had requested her to form my manners and to give me the tone of society. She took some pains about it, and wanted to teach me how to do the honours of her house; but I showed myself so awkward, I was so bashful and so stupid, that she became discouraged, and gave me up. This, however, did not prevent me falling in love with her, after my usual manner. I managed to make her perceive it, but I never dared to declare my passion. She was never disposed to make advances, and all my ogling glances and sighs were in vain, so that I soon wearied of them, seeing that they led to nothing.

While with mamma, I had completely lost my inclination for petty thefts, because, since everything was mine, I had nothing to steal. Besides, the lofty principles which I had laid down for myself ought to have made me for the future superior to such meannesses, and certainly they have usually done so; but this was not so much the result of my having learned to overcome my temptations as of having cut them off at the root, and I very much fear that I should steal, as in my childhood, if exposed to the same desires. I had a proof of this at M. de Mably's, where, although surrounded by trifles which I could easily have pilfered, and which I did not even look at, I took it into my head to long for a certain light, white Arbois wine, which was very agreeable, and for which a few glasses I had drunk at table had given me a strong liking. It was a little thick. I prided myself upon my skill in clearing wine. This particular brand was intrusted to me. I cleared it, and, in doing so, spoiled it, but only to look at, for it still remained pleasant to drink, and I took the opportunity of occasionally appropriating a few bottles to drink at my ease by myself. Unfortunately, I have never been able to drink without eating. How was I to manage to get bread? It was impossible for me to lay by a store; to have sent the lackeys to buy it would have betrayed me, and would at the same time have been almost an insult to the master of the house. I was

afraid to buy any myself. How could a fine gentleman, with a sword by his side, go into a baker's shop to buy a piece of bread? At length, I recollected the last resource of a great princess, who, when told that the peasants had no bread, replied: "Then let them eat pastry." But what trouble I had to get it! I went out alone for this purpose, and sometimes traversed the whole town, passing thirty pastrycooks' shops before entering one. It was necessary that there should be only one person in the shop, and this person's features had to be very attractive, before I could make up my mind to take the plunge. But, when once I had secured my dear little cake, and, shutting myself up carefully in my room, fetched my bottle of wine from the bottom of a cupboard, what delightful little drinking-bouts I enjoyed all by myself, while reading a few pages of a novel, for I have always had a fancy for reading while eating, if I am alone; it supplies the want of society. I devour alternately a page and a morsel. It seems as if my book were dining with me.

I have never been dissolute or sottish: in fact, I have never been drunk in my life. Thus, my petty thefts were not very indiscreet. However, they were discovered: the bottles betrayed me. No notice was taken of it, but I no longer had the management of the cellar. In all this M. de Mably behaved honourably and sensibly. He was a very upright man, who, beneath a manner as harsh as his office, concealed a really gentle disposition and rare goodness of heart. He was shrewd, just, and, what would not have been expected in an officer of the *Maréchaussée*,<sup>1</sup> even kindly. Sensible of his indulgence, I became more attached to him, and this made me remain longer in his house than I should otherwise have done. But, at length, disgusted with a profession for which I was ill-adapted, and with a very troublesome situation, which had nothing agreeable for me, after a year's trial, during which I had spared no pains, I resolved to leave my pupils, feeling convinced that I should never succeed in bringing them up properly. M. de Mably saw this as well as I did. However, I do not think that he would ever have taken upon himself to dismiss me, if I had not spared him the trouble,

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1 Mounted police, replaced by the *gendarmerie* in 1791.

and such excessive condescension in such a case I cannot certainly approve of.

What made my present situation still more insupportable, was the comparison I continually drew with that which I had left: the remembrance of my dear Charmettes, of my garden, of my trees, of my fountain, of my orchard, and, above all, of her for whom I felt I was born, who was the life and soul to everything. When I thought again of our pleasures and our innocent life, my heart was seized by a feeling of oppression and suffocation, which deprived me of the courage to do anything. A hundred times I felt violently tempted to set out instantly on foot and return to Madame de Warens. If I could only see her once again, I felt that I should have been content to die on the spot. At length I could no longer resist those tender remembrances, which called me back to her at any cost. I said to myself that I had not been sufficiently patient, obliging, or affectionate; that, if I exerted myself more than I had hitherto done, I might still live happily with her on terms of tender friendship. I formed the most beautiful plans in the world, and burned to carry them out.

I left everything, I renounced everything, I set out, I flew, and, arriving in all the transports of my early youth, found myself again at her feet. Ah! I should have died for joy, if I had found again in her reception, in her eyes, in her caresses, or, lastly, in her heart, one quarter of that which I had formerly found there, and which I myself still brought back to her.

Alas for the terrible illusions of human life! She received me with the same excellent heart, which could only die with her; but I sought in vain the past which was gone, never to return. I had scarcely remained with her half an hour, when I felt that my former happiness was gone for ever. I found myself again in the same disconsolate situation from which I had been obliged to flee, without being able to fix the blame on anyone; for, at bottom, Courtilles was not a bad fellow, and he seemed more glad than annoyed to see me again. But how could I bear to be a super-numerary with her for whom I had been everything, and who would never cease to be everything for me? How could I live as a stranger in the house of which I felt myself the child? The sight of the objects which had witnessed my past happiness

made the comparison still more painful. I should have suffered less in another house. But the sight of so many sweet remembrances, continually revived, only irritated the consciousness of my loss. Consumed by idle regrets, abandoned to the blackest melancholy, I resumed my old manner of life and remained alone, except at meal-times. Shut up with my books, I sought to find in them some useful distraction; and, feeling that the danger, which I had so long dreaded, was imminent, I racked my brains anew, in the endeavour to find in myself a means to provide against it, when mamma's resources should be exhausted. I had so managed her household affairs, that at least things did not grow worse; but, since I had left her, everything was changed. Her steward was a spendthrift. He wanted to make a show with a fine horse and carriage. He was fond of playing the noble in the eyes of the neighbours, and was continually undertaking something about which he knew nothing. Her pension was swallowed up in advance, the quarterly payments were mortgaged, the rent was in arrears, and debts accumulated. I foresaw that her pension would soon be seized, and perhaps discontinued altogether. In a word, I saw nothing but ruin and disasters ahead, and the moment appeared so close, that I felt all its horrors by anticipation.

My dear little room was my only recreation. After a prolonged search for remedies against my mental anxiety, I bethought myself of looking about for a remedy against the troubles which I foresaw; and, returning to my old ideas, I suddenly began to build fresh castles in the air, in order to extricate my poor mamma from the cruel extremities into which I saw her on the point of falling. I did not feel myself sufficiently learned, and I did not believe that I was sufficiently talented, to shine in the republic of letters, or to make a fortune by that means. A new idea, which occurred to me, inspired me with the confidence which the mediocrity of my talents could not give me. I had not given up the study of music when I left off teaching it; on the contrary, I had studied the theory of it sufficiently to consider myself learned in this department of the art. Whilst reflecting upon the trouble I had found in learning to read the notes, and the great difficulty I still felt in singing at sight, I

began to think that this difficulty might be due to the nature of the case as much as to my own incapacity, especially as I knew that no one finds it an easy task to learn music. On examining the arrangement of the musical signs, I found them frequently very badly invented. I had long thought of denoting the scale by figures, to obviate the necessity of always drawing the lines and staves when the most trifling air had to be written. I had been hindered by the difficulties of the octaves, the time, and the values of the notes. This idea again occurred to me, and, on reconsidering it, I saw that these difficulties were not insurmountable. I carried it out successfully, and was at length able to note any music whatever by my figures with the greatest exactness, and also, I may say, with the greatest simplicity. From that moment, I considered my fortune made; and, in my eagerness to share it with her to whom I owed everything, I thought of nothing but setting out for Paris, feeling no doubt that, when I laid my scheme before the Academy, I should cause a revolution. I had brought a little money back from Lyons; I sold my books. In a fortnight my resolution was taken and carried out.

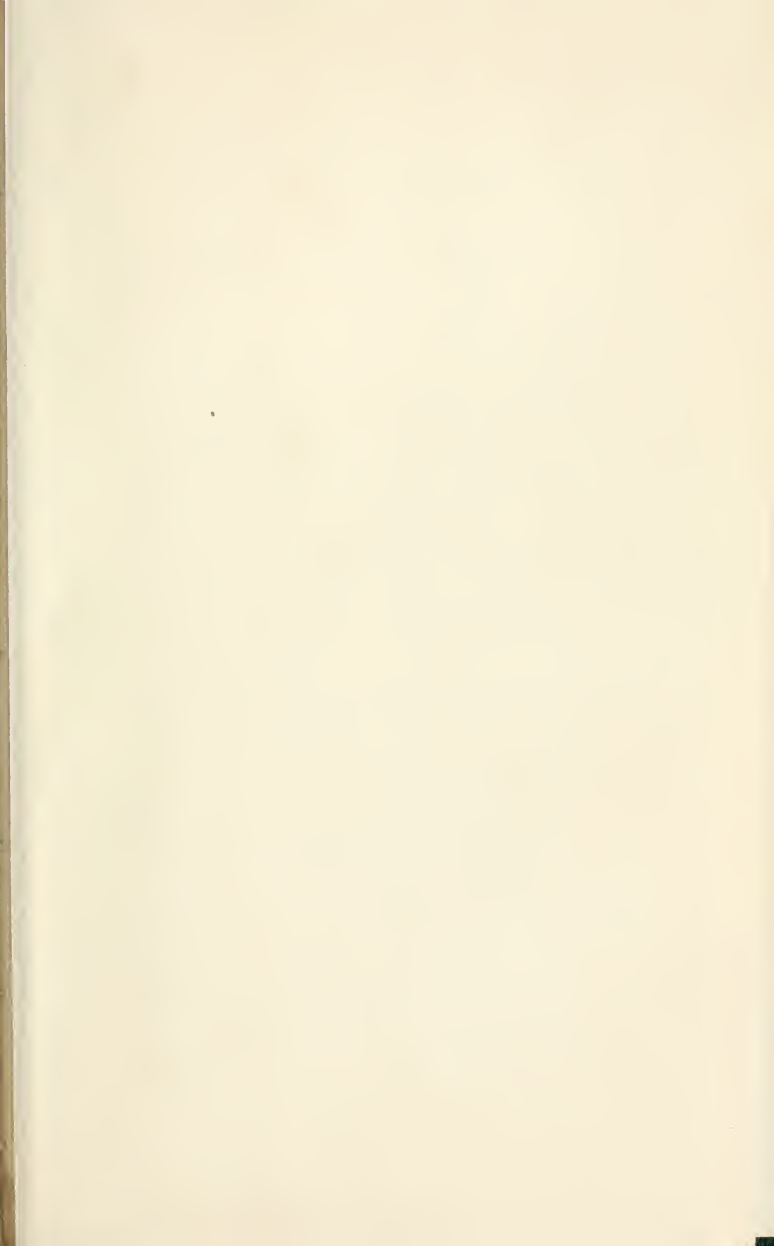
At last, full of the magnificent hopes which had inspired me, being ever and at all times the same, I started from Savoy with my system of music, as I had formerly started from Turin with my heron-fountain.

Such have been the errors and faults of my youth. I have related the history of them with a fidelity of which my heart approves. If, later, I have honoured my riper years with any virtues, I should have declared them with the same frankness, and such was my intention. But I must stop here. Time may lift many a veil. If my memory descends to posterity, perhaps it will one day learn what I had to say; then it will be understood why I am silent.

END OF VOL. I







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