

Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, the — Volume 05 eBook

Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, the — Volume 05 by Jean-Jacques Rousseau

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BOOK V.

It was, I believe, in 1732, that I arrived at Chambery, as already related, and began my employment of registering land for the king. I was almost twenty-one, my mind well enough formed for my age, with respect to sense, but very deficient in point of judgment, and needing every instruction from those into whose hands I fell, to make me conduct myself with propriety; for a few years' experience had not been able to cure me radically of my romantic ideas; and notwithstanding the ills I had sustained, I knew as little of the world, or mankind, as if I had never purchased instruction. I slept at home, that is, at the house of Madam de Warrens; but it was not as at Annecy: here were no gardens, no brook, no landscape; the house was dark and dismal, and my apartment the most gloomy of the whole. The prospect a dead wall, an alley instead of a street, confined air, bad light, small rooms, iron bars, rats, and a rotten floor; an assemblage of circumstances that do not constitute a very agreeable habitation; but I was in the same house with my best friend, incessantly near her, at my desk, or in chamber, so that I could not perceive the gloominess of my own, or have time to think of it. It may appear whimsical that she should reside at Chambery on purpose to live in this disagreeable house; but it was a trait of contrivance which I ought not to pass over in silence. She had no great inclination for a journey to Turin, fearing that after the recent revolutions, and the agitation in which the court yet was, she should not be very favorably received there; but her affairs seemed to demand her presence, as she feared being forgotten or ill-treated, particularly as the Count de Saint-Laurent, Intendent-general of the Finances, was not in her interest. He had an old house in Chambery, ill-built, and standing in so disagreeable a situation that it was always untenanted; she hired, and settled in this house, a plan that succeeded much better than a journey to Turin would have done, for her pension was not suppressed, and the Count de Saint-Laurent was ever after one of her best friends.

Her household was much on the old footing; her faithful Claude Anet still remained with her. He was, as I have before mentioned, a peasant of Moutru, who in his childhood had gathered herbs in Jura for the purpose of making Swiss tea; she had taken him into her service for his knowledge of drugs, finding it convenient to have a herbalist among her domestics. Passionately fond of the study of plants, he became a real botanist, and had he not died young, might have acquired as much fame in that science as he deserved for being an honest man. Serious even to gravity, and older than myself, he was to me a kind of tutor, commanding respect, and preserving me from a number of follies, for I dared not forget myself before him. He commanded it likewise from his mistress, who knew his understanding, uprightness, and inviolable attachment



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to herself, and returned it. Claude Anet was of an uncommon temper. I never encountered a similar disposition: he was slow, deliberate, and circumspect in his conduct; cold in his manner; laconic and sententious in his discourse; yet of an impetuosity in his passions, which (though careful to conceal) preyed upon him inwardly, and urged him to the only folly he ever committed; that folly, indeed was terrible, it was poisoning himself. This tragic scene passed soon after my arrival, and opened my eyes to the intimacy that subsisted between Claude Anet and his mistress, for had not the information come from her, I should never have suspected it; yet, surely, if attachment, fidelity, and zeal, could merit such a recompense, it was due to him, and what further proves him worthy such a distinction, he never once abused her confidence. They seldom disputed, and their disagreements ever ended amicably; one, indeed, was not so fortunate; his mistress, in a passion, said something affronting, which not being able to digest, he consulted only with despair, and finding a bottle of laudanum at hand, drank it off; then went peaceably to bed, expecting to awake no more. Madam de Warrens herself was uneasy, agitated, wandering about the house and happily—finding the phial empty—guessed the rest. Her screams, while flying to his assistance, alarmed me; she confessed all, implored my help, and was fortunate enough, after repeated efforts, to make him throw up the laudanum. Witness of this scene, I could not but wonder at my stupidity in never having suspected the connection; but Claude Anet was so discreet, that a more penetrating observer might have been deceived. Their reconciliation affected me, and added respect to the esteem I before felt for him. From this time I became, in some measure, his pupil, nor did I find myself the worse for his instruction.

I could not learn, without pain, that she lived in greater intimacy with another than with myself: it was a situation I had not even thought of, but (which was very natural) it hurt me to see another in possession of it. Nevertheless, instead of feeling any aversion to the person who had this advantage over me, I found the attachment I felt for her actually extend to him. I desired her happiness above all things, and since he was concerned in her plan of felicity, I was content he should be happy likewise. Meantime he perfectly entered into the views of his mistress; conceived a sincere friendship for me, and without affecting the authority his situation might have entitled him to, he naturally possessed that which his superior judgment gave him over mine. I dared do nothing he disproved of, but he was sure to disapprove only what merited disapprobation: thus we lived in an union which rendered us mutually happy, and which death alone could dissolve.

One proof of the excellence of this amiable woman's character, is, that all those who loved her, loved each other; even jealousy and rivalry submitting to the more powerful sentiment with which she inspired them, and I never saw any of those who surrounded her entertain the least ill will among themselves. Let the reader pause a moment on this

encomium, and if he can recollect any other woman who deserves it, let him attach himself to her, if he would obtain happiness.



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From my arrival at Chambery to my departure for Paris, 1741, included an interval of eight or nine years, during which time I have few adventures to relate; my life being as simple as it was agreeable. This uniformity was precisely what was most wanting to complete the formation of my character, which continual troubles had prevented from acquiring any degree of stability. It was during this pleasing interval, that my unconnected, unfinished education, gained consistence, and made me what I have unalterably remained amid the storms with which I have since been surrounded.

The progress was slow, almost imperceptible, and attended by few memorable circumstances; yet it deserves to be followed and investigated.

At first, I was wholly occupied with my business, the constraint of a desk left little opportunity for other thoughts, the small portion of time I was at liberty was passed with my dear Madam de Warrens, and not having leisure to read, I felt no inclination for it; but when my business (by daily repetition) became familiar, and my mind was less occupied, study again became necessary, and (as my desires were ever irritated by any difficulty that opposed the indulgence of them) might once more have become a passion, as at my master's, had not other inclinations interposed and diverted it.

Though our occupation did not demand a very profound skill in arithmetic, it sometimes required enough to puzzle me. To conquer this difficulty, I purchased books which treated on that science, and learned well, for I now studied alone. Practical arithmetic extends further than is usually supposed if you would attain exact precision. There are operations of extreme length in which I have sometimes seen good geometricians lose themselves. Reflection, assisted by practice, gives clear ideas, and enables you to devise shorter methods, these inventions flatter our self-complacency, while their exactitude satisfies our understanding, and renders a study pleasant, which is, of itself, heavy and unentertaining. At length I became so expert as not to be puzzled by any question that was solvable by arithmetical calculation; and even now, while everything I formerly knew fades daily on my memory, this acquirement, in a great measure remains, through an interval of thirty years. A few days ago, in a journey I made to Davenport, being with my host at an arithmetical lesson given his children, I did (with pleasure, and without errors) a most complicated work. While setting down my figures, methought I was still at Chambery, still in my days of happiness—how far had I to look back for them!



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The colored plans of our geometricians had given me a taste for drawing: accordingly I bought colors, and began by attempting flowers and landscapes. It was unfortunate that I had not talents for this art, for my inclination was much disposed to it, and while surrounded with crayons, pencils, and colors, I could have passed whole months without wishing to leave them. This amusement engaged me so much that they were obliged to force me from it; and thus it is with every inclination I give into, it continues to augment, till at length it becomes so powerful, that I lose sight of everything except the favorite amusement. Years have not been able to cure me of that fault, nay, have not even diminished it; for while I am writing this, behold me, like an old dotard, infatuated with another, to me useless study, which I do not understand, and which even those who have devoted their youthful days to the acquisition of, are constrained to abandon, at the age I am beginning with it.

At that time, the study I am now speaking of would have been well placed, the opportunity was good, and I had some temptation to profit by it; for the satisfaction I saw in the eyes of Anet, when he came home loaded with new discovered plants, set me two or three times on the point of going to herbalize with him, and I am almost certain that had I gone once, I should have been caught, and perhaps at this day might have been an excellent botanist, for I know no study more congenial to my natural inclination, than that of plants; the life I have led for these ten years past, in the country, being little more than a continual herbalizing, though I must confess, without object, and without improvement; but at the time I am now speaking of I had no inclination for botany, nay, I even despised, and was disgusted at the idea, considering it only as a fit study for an apothecary. Madam de Warrens was fond of it merely for this purpose, seeking none but common plants to use in her medical preparations; thus botany, chemistry, and anatomy were confounded in my idea under the general denomination of medicine, and served to furnish me with pleasant sarcasms the whole day, which procured me, from time to time, a box on the ear, applied by Madam de Warrens. Besides this, a very contrary taste grew up with me, and by degrees absorbed all others; this was music. I was certainly born for that science, I loved it from my infancy, and it was the only inclination I have constantly adhered to; but it is astonishing that what nature seemed to have designed me for should have cost so much pains to learn, and that I should acquire it so slowly, that after a whole life spent in the practice of this art, I could never attain to sing with any certainty at sight. What rendered the study of music more agreeable to me at that time, was, being able to practise it with Madam de Warrens. In other respects our tastes were widely different: this was a point of coincidence, which I loved to avail myself of.

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She had no more objection to this than myself. I knew at that time almost as much of it as she did, and after two or three efforts, we could make shift to decipher an air. Sometimes, when I saw her busy at her furnace, I have said, "Here now is a charming duet, which seems made for the very purpose of spoiling your drugs;" her answer would be, "If you make me burn them, I'll make you eat them:" thus disputing, I drew her to the harpsichord; the furnace was presently forgotten, the extract of juniper or wormwood calcined (which I cannot recollect without transport), and these scenes usually ended by her smearing my face with the remains of them.

It may easily be conjectured that I had plenty of employment to fill up my leisure hours; one amusement, however, found room, that was well worth all the rest.

We lived in such a confined dungeon, that it was necessary sometimes to breathe the open air; Anet, therefore, engaged Madam de Warrens to hire a garden in the suburbs, both for this purpose and the convenience of rearing plants, *etc.*; to this garden was added a summer—house, which was furnished in the customary manner; we sometimes dined, and I frequently slept, there. Insensibly I became attached to this little retreat, decorated it with books and prints, spending part of my time in ornamenting it during the absence of Madam de Warrens, that I might surprise her the more agreeably on her return. Sometimes I quitted this dear friend, that I might enjoy the uninterrupted pleasure of thinking on her; this was a caprice I can neither excuse nor fully explain, I only know this really was the case, and therefore I avow it. I remember Madam de Luxembourg told me one day in raillery, of a man who used to leave his mistress that he might enjoy the satisfaction of writing to her; I answered, I could have been this man; I might have added, That I had done the very same.

I did not, however, find it necessary to leave Madam de Warrens that I might love her the more ardently, for I was ever as perfectly free with her as when alone; an advantage I never enjoyed with any other person, man or woman, however I might be attached to them; but she was so often surrounded by company who were far from pleasing me, that spite and weariness drove me to this asylum, where I could indulge the idea, without danger of being interrupted by impertinence. Thus, my time being divided between business, pleasure, and instruction, my life passed in the most absolute serenity. Europe was not equally tranquil: France and the emperor had mutually declared war, the King of Sardinia had entered into the quarrel, and a French army had filed off into Piedmont to awe the Milanese. Our division passed through Chambery, and, among others, the regiment of Champagne, whose colonel was the Duke de la Trimouille, to whom I was presented. He promised many things, but doubtless never more thought of me. Our little garden was exactly at the end of the suburb by which the



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troops entered, so that I could fully satisfy my curiosity in seeing them pass, and I became as anxious for the success of the war as if it had nearly concerned me. Till now I had never troubled myself about politics, for the first time I began reading the gazettes, but with so much partiality on the side of France, that my heart beat with rapture on its most trifling advantages, and I was as much afflicted on a reverse of fortune, as if I had been particularly concerned.

Had this folly been transient, I should not, perhaps, have mentioned it, but it took such root in my heart (without any reasonable cause) that when I afterwards acted the anti-despot and proud republican at Paris, in spite of myself, I felt a secret predilection for the nation I declared servile, and for that government I affected to oppose. The pleasantest of all was that, ashamed of an inclination so contrary to my professed maxims, I dared not own it to any one, but rallied the French on their defeats, while my heart was more wounded than their own. I am certainly the first man, that, living with a people who treated him well, and whom he almost adored, put on, even in their own country, a borrowed air of despising them; yet my original inclination is so powerful, constant, disinterested, and invincible, that even since my quitting that kingdom, since its government, magistrates, and authors, have outvied each other in rancor against me, since it has become fashionable to load me with injustice and abuse, I have not been able to get rid of this folly, but notwithstanding their ill-treatment, love them in spite of myself.

I long sought the cause of this partiality, but was never able to find any, except in the occasion that gave it birth. A rising taste for literature attached me to French books, to their authors, and their country: at the very moment the French troops were passing Chambery, I was reading Brantome's 'Celebrated Captains'; my head was full of the Clissons, Bayards, Lautrecs Colignys, Monlmoreneys, and Trimouille, and I loved their descendants as the heirs of their merit and courage. In each regiment that passed by methought I saw those famous black bands who had formerly done so many noble exploits in Piedmont; in fine, I applied to these all the ideas I had gathered from books; my reading continued, which, still drawn from the same nation, nourished my affection for that country, till, at length, it became a blind passion, which nothing could overcome. I have had occasion to remark several times in the course of my travels, that this impression was not peculiar to me for France, but was more or less active in every country, for that part of the nation who were fond of literature, and cultivated learning; and it was this consideration that balanced in my mind the general hatred which the conceited air of the French is so apt to inspire. Their romances, more than their men, attract the women of all countries, and the celebrated dramatic pieces of France create a fondness in youth for their theaters; the reputation which that of Paris in particular has acquired, draws to it crowds of strangers, who return enthusiasts to their own country: in short, the excellence of their literature captivates the senses, and in the unfortunate

war just ended, I have seen their authors and philosophers maintain the glory of France, so tarnished by its warriors.



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I was, therefore, an ardent Frenchman; this rendered me a politician, and I attended in the public square, amid a throng of news-mongers, the arrival of the post, and, sillier than the ass in the fable, was very uneasy to know whose packsaddle I should next have the honor to carry, for it was then supposed we should belong to France, and that Savoy would be exchanged for Milan. I must confess, however, that I experienced some uneasiness, for had this war terminated unfortunately for the allies, the pension of Madam de Warrens would have been in a dangerous situation; nevertheless, I had great confidence in my good friends, the French, and for once (in spite of the surprise of M. de Broglio) my confidence was not ill-founded—thanks to the King of Sardinia, whom I had never thought of.

While we were fighting in Italy, they were singing in France: the operas of Rameau began to make a noise there, and once more raise the credit of his theoretic works, which, from their obscurity, were within the compass of very few understandings. By chance I heard of his 'Treatise on Harmony', and had no rest till I purchased it. By another chance I fell sick; my illness was inflammatory, short and violent, but my convalescence was tedious, for I was unable to go abroad for a whole month. During this time I eagerly ran over my Treatise on Harmony, but it was so long, so diffuse, and so badly disposed, that I found it would require a considerable time to unravel it: accordingly I suspended my inclination, and recreated my sight with music.

The cantatas of Bernier were what I principally exercised myself with. These were never out of my mind; I learned four or five by heart, and among the rest, 'The Sleeping Cupids', which I have never seen since that time, though I still retain it almost entirely; as well as 'Cupid Stung by a Bee', a very pretty cantata by Clerambault, which I learned about the same time.

To complete me, there arrived a young organist from Valdoste, called the Abbe Palais, a good musician and an agreeable companion, who performed very well on the harpsichord; I got acquainted with him, and we soon became inseparable. He had been brought up by an Italian monk, who was a capital organist. He explained to me his principles of music, which I compared with Rameau; my head was filled with accompaniments, concords and harmony, but as it was necessary to accustom the ear to all this, I proposed to Madam de Warrens having a little concert once a month, to which she consented.

Behold me then so full of this concert, that night or day I could think of nothing else, and it actually employed a great part of my time to select the music, assemble the musicians, look to the instruments, and write out the several parts. Madam de Warrens sang; Father Cato (whom I have before mentioned, and shall have occasion to speak of again) sang likewise; a dancing—master named Roche, and his son, played on the violin; Canavas, a Piedmontese musician (who was employed like myself in the survey, and has since married at Paris), played on the violoncello; the Abbe Palais performed on the harpsichord, and I had the honor to conduct the whole. It may be supposed all

this was charming; I cannot say it equalled my concert at Monsieur de Tretoren's, but certainly it was not far behind it.



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This little concert, given by Madam de Warrens, the new convert, who lived (it was expressed) on the king's charity, made the whole tribe of devotees murmur, but was a very agreeable amusement to several worthy people, at the head of whom it would not be easily surmised that I should place a monk; yet, though a monk, a man of considerable merit, and even of a very amiable disposition, whose subsequent misfortunes gave me the most lively concern, and whose idea, attached to that of my happy days, is yet dear to my memory. I speak of Father Cato, a Cordelier, who, in conjunction with the Count d'Ortan, had caused the music of poor Le Maitre to be seized at Lyons; which action was far from being the brightest trait in his history. He was a Bachelor of Sorbonne, had lived long in Paris among the great world, and was particularly caressed by the Marquis d'Antremont, then Ambassador from Sardinia. He was tall and well made; full faced, with very fine eyes, and black hair, which formed natural curls on each side of his forehead. His manner was at once noble, open, and modest; he presented himself with ease and good manners, having neither the hypocritical nor impudent behavior of a monk, or the forward assurance of a fashionable coxcomb, but the manners of a well-bred man, who, without blushing for his habit, set a value on himself, and ever felt in his proper situation when in good company. Though Father Cato was not deeply studied for a doctor, he was much so for a man of the world, and not being compelled to show his talents, he brought them forward so advantageously that they appeared greater than they really were. Having lived much in the world, he had rather attached himself to agreeable acquirements than to solid learning; had sense, made verses, spoke well, sang better, and aided his good voice by playing on the organ and harpsichord. So many pleasing qualities were not necessary to make his company sought after, and, accordingly, it was very much so, but this did not make him neglect the duties of his function: he was chosen (in spite of his jealous competitors) Definitor of his Province, or, according to them, one of the greatest pillars of their order.

Father Cato became acquainted with Madam de Warrens at the Marquis of Antremont's; he had heard of her concerts, wished to assist at them, and by his company rendered our meetings truly agreeable. We were soon attached to each other by our mutual taste for music, which in both was a most lively passion, with this difference, that he was really a musician, and myself a bungler. Sometimes assisted by Canavas and the Abbe Palais, we had music in his apartment; or on holidays at his organ, and frequently dined with him; for, what was very astonishing in a monk, he was generous, profuse, and loved good cheer, without the least tincture of greediness. After our concerts, he always used to stay to supper, and these evenings passed with the greatest gayety and good-humor; we conversed with the utmost freedom, and sang duets; I was perfectly at my ease, had sallies of wit and merriment; Father Cato was charming, Madam de Warrens adorable, and the Abbe Palais, with his rough voice, was the butt of the company. Pleasing moments of sportive youth, how long since have ye fled!



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As I shall have no more occasion to speak of poor Father Cato, I will here conclude in a few words his melancholy history. His brother monks, jealous, or rather exasperated to discover in him a merit and elegance of manners which favored nothing of monastic stupidity, conceived the most violent hatred to him, because he was not as despicable as themselves; the chiefs, therefore, combined against this worthy man, and set on the envious rabble of monks, who otherwise would not have dared to hazard the attack. He received a thousand indignities; they degraded him from his office, took away the apartment which he had furnished with elegant simplicity, and, at length, banished him, I know not whither: in short, these wretches overwhelmed him with so many evils, that his honest and proud soul sank under the pressure, and, after having been the delight of the most amiable societies, he died of grief, on a wretched bed, hid in some cell or dungeon, lamented by all worthy people of his acquaintance, who could find no fault in him, except his being a monk.

Accustomed to this manner of life for some time, I became so entirely attached to music that I could think of nothing else. I went to my business with disgust, the necessary confinement and assiduity appeared an insupportable punishment, which I at length wished to relinquish, that I might give myself up without reserve to my favorite amusement. It will be readily believed that this folly met with some opposition; to give up a creditable employment and fixed salary to run after uncertain scholars was too giddy a plan to be approved of by Madam de Warrens, and even supposing my future success should prove as great as I flattered myself, it was fixing very humble limits to my ambition to think of reducing myself for life to the condition of a music-master. She, who formed for me the brightest projects, and no longer trusted implicitly to the judgment of M. d'Aubonne, seeing with concern that I was so seriously occupied with a talent which she thought frivolous, frequently repeated to me that provincial proverb, which does not hold quite so good in Paris,

“Qui biens chante et biens dance,
fait un metier qui peu avance.”

[He who can sweetly sing and featly dance.
His interests right little shall advance.]

On the other hand, she saw me hurried away by this irresistible passion, my taste for music having become a furor, and it was much to be feared that my employment, suffering by my distraction, might draw on me a discharge, which would be worse than a voluntary resignation. I represented to her; that this employment could not last long, that it was necessary I should have some permanent means of subsistence, and that it would be much better to complete by practice the acquisition of that art to which my inclination led me than to make fresh essays, which possibly might not succeed, since by this means, having passed the age most proper

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for improvement, I might be left without a single resource for gaining a livelihood: in short, I extorted her consent more by importunity and caresses than by any satisfactory reasons. Proud of my success, I immediately ran to thank M. Coccoeli, Director-General of the Survey, as though I had performed the most heroic action, and quitted my employment without cause, reason, or pretext, with as much pleasure as I had accepted it two years before.

This step, ridiculous as it may appear, procured me a kind of consideration, which I found extremely useful. Some supposed I had resources which I did not possess; others, seeing me totally given up to music, judged of my abilities by the sacrifice I had made, and concluded that with such a passion for the art, I must possess it in a superior degree. In a nation of blind men, those with one eye are kings. I passed here for an excellent master, because all the rest were very bad ones. Possessing taste in singing, and being favored by my age and figure, I soon procured more scholars than were sufficient to compensate for the losses of my secretary's pay. It is certain, that had it been reasonable to consider the pleasure of my situation only, it was impossible to pass more speedily from one extreme to the other. At our measuring, I was confined eight hours in the day to the most unentertaining employment, with yet more disagreeable company. Shut up in a melancholy counting-house, empoisoned by the smell and respiration of a number of clowns, the major part of whom were ill-combed and very dirty, what with attention, bad air, constraint and weariness, I was sometimes so far overcome as to occasion a vertigo. Instead of this, behold me admitted into the fashionable world, sought after in the first houses, and everywhere received with an air of satisfaction; amiable and gay young ladies awaiting my arrival, and welcoming me with pleasure; I see nothing but charming objects, smell nothing but roses and orange flowers; singing, chatting, laughter, and amusements, perpetually succeed each other. It must be allowed, that reckoning all these advantages, no hesitation was necessary in the choice; in fact, I was so content with mine, that I never once repented it; nor do I even now, when, free from the irrational motives that influenced me at that time, I weigh in the scale of reason every action of my life.

This is, perhaps, the only time that, listening to inclination, I was not deceived in my expectations. The easy access, obliging temper, and free humor of this country, rendered a commerce with the world agreeable, and the inclination I then felt for it, proves to me, that if I have a dislike for society, it is more their fault than mine. It is a pity the Savoyards are not rich: though, perhaps, it would be a still greater pity if they were so, for altogether they are the best, the most sociable people that I know, and if there is a little city in the world where the pleasures of life are experienced



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in an agreeable and friendly commerce, it is at Chambery. The gentry of the province who assemble there have only sufficient wealth to live and not enough to spoil them; they cannot give way to ambition, but follow, through necessity, the counsel of Cyneas, devoting their youth to a military employment, and returning home to grow old in peace; an arrangement over which honor and reason equally preside. The women are handsome, yet do not stand in need of beauty, since they possess all those qualifications which enhance its value and even supply the want of it. It is remarkable, that being obliged by my profession to see a number of young girls, I do not recollect one at Chambery but what was charming: it will be said I was disposed to find them so, and perhaps there maybe some truth in the surmise. I cannot remember my young scholars without pleasure. Why, in naming the most amiable, cannot I recall them and myself also to that happy age in which our moments, pleasing as innocent, were passed with such happiness together? The first was Mademoiselle de Mallarede, my neighbor, and sister to a pupil of Monsieur Gaime. She was a fine clear brunette, lively and graceful, without giddiness; thin as girls of that age usually are; but her bright eyes, fine shape, and easy air, rendered her sufficiently pleasing with that degree of plumpness which would have given a heightening to her charms. I went there of mornings, when she was usually in her dishabille, her hair carelessly turned up, and, on my arrival, ornamented with a flower, which was taken off at my departure for her hair to be dressed. There is nothing I fear so much as a pretty woman in an elegant dishabille; I should dread them a hundred times less in full dress. Mademoiselle de Menthon, whom I attended in the afternoon, was ever so. She made an equally pleasing, but quite different impression on me. Her hair was flaxen, her person delicate, she was very timid and extremely fair, had a clear voice, capable of just modulation, but which she had not courage to employ to its full extent. She had the mark of a scald on her bosom, which a scanty piece of blue chenille did not entirely cover, this scar sometimes drew my attention, though not absolutely on its own account. Mademoiselle des Challes, another of my neighbors, was a woman grown, tall, well-formed, jolly, very pleasing though not a beauty, and might be quoted for her gracefulness, equal temper, and good humor. Her sister, Madam de Charly, the handsomest woman of Chambery, did not learn music, but I taught her daughter, who was yet young, but whose growing beauty promised to equal her mother's, if she had not unfortunately been a little red-haired. I had likewise among my scholars a little French lady, whose name I have forgotten, but who merits a place in my list of preferences. She had adopted the slow drawling tone of the nuns, in which voice she would utter some very keen things, which did not in the least



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appear to correspond with her manner; but she was indolent, and could not generally take pains to show her wit, that being a favor she did not grant to every one. After a month or two of negligent attendance, this was an expedient she devised to make me more assiduous, for I could not easily persuade myself to be so. When with my scholars, I was fond enough of teaching, but could not bear the idea of being obliged to attend at a particular hour; constraint and subjection in every shape are to me insupportable, and alone sufficient to make me hate even pleasure itself.

I had some scholars likewise among the tradespeople, and, among others, one who was the indirect cause of a change of relationship, which (as I have promised to declare all) I must relate in its place. She was the daughter of a grocer, and was called Mademoiselle de Larnage, a perfect model for a Grecian statue, and whom I should quote for the handsomest girl I have ever seen, if true beauty could exist without life or soul. Her indolence, reserve, and insensibility were inconceivable; it was equally impossible to please or make her angry, and I am convinced that had any one formed a design upon her virtue, he might have succeeded, not through her inclination, but from her stupidity. Her mother, who would run no risk of this, did not leave her a single moment. In having her taught to sing and providing a young master, she had hoped to enliven her, but it all proved ineffectual. While the master was admiring the daughter, the mother was admiring the master, but this was equally lost labor. Madam de Larnage added to her natural vivacity that portion of sprightliness which should have belonged to the daughter. She was a little, ugly, lively trollop, with small twinkling ferret eyes, and marked with smallpox. On my arrival in the morning, I always found my coffee and cream ready, and the mother never failed to welcome me with a kiss on the lips, which I would willingly have returned the daughter, to see how she would have received it. All this was done with such an air of carelessness and simplicity, that even when M. de Larnage was present; her kisses and caresses were not omitted. He was a good quiet fellow, the true original of his daughter; nor did his wife endeavor to deceive him, because there was absolutely no occasion for it.

I received all these caresses with my usual stupidity, taking them only for marks of pure friendship, though they were sometimes troublesome; for the lively Madam Lard was displeased, if, during the day, I passed the shop without calling; it became necessary, therefore (when I had no time to spare), to go out of my way through another street, well knowing it was not so easy to quit her house as to enter it.



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Madam Lard thought so much of me, that I could not avoid thinking something of her. Her attentions affected me greatly; and I spoke of them to Madam de Warrens, without supposing any mystery in the matter, but had there been one I should equally have divulged it, for to have kept a secret of any kind from her would have been impossible. My heart lay as open to Madam de Warrens as to Heaven. She did not understand the matter quite so simply as I had done, but saw advances where I only discovered friendship. She concluded that Madam Lard would make a point of not leaving me as great a fool as she found me, and, some way or other, contrive to make herself understood; but exclusive of the consideration that it was not just, that another should undertake the instruction of her pupil, she had motives more worthy of her, wishing to guard me against the snares to which my youth and inexperience exposed me. Meantime, a more dangerous temptation offered which I likewise escaped, but which proved to her that such a succession of dangers required every preservative she could possibly apply.

The Countess of Menthon, mother to one of my scholars, was a woman of great wit, and reckoned to possess, at least, an equal share of mischief, having (as was reported) caused a number of quarrels, and, among others, one that terminated fatally for the house of D' Antremont. Madam de Warrens had seen enough of her to know her character: for having (very innocently) pleased some person to whom Madam de Menthon had pretensions, she found her guilty of the crime of this preference, though Madam de Warrens had neither sought after nor accepted it, and from that moment endeavored to play her rival a number of ill turns, none of which succeeded. I shall relate one of the most whimsical, by way of specimen.

They were together in the country, with several gentlemen of the neighborhood, and among the rest the lover in question. Madam de Menthon took an opportunity to say to one of these gentlemen, that Madam de Warrens was a prude, that she dressed ill, and particularly that she covered her neck like a tradeswoman. "O, for that matter," replied the person she was speaking to (who was fond of a joke), "she has good reason, for I know she is marked with a great ugly rat on her bosom, so naturally, that it even appears to be running." Hatred, as well as love, renders its votaries credulous. Madam de Menthon resolved to make use of this discovery, and one day, while Madam de Warrens was at cards with this lady's ungrateful favorite, she contrived, in passing behind her rival, almost to upset the chair she sat on, and at the same instant, very dexterously displaced her handkerchief; but instead of this hideous rat, the gentleman beheld a far different object, which it was not more easy to forget than to obtain a sight of, and which by no means answered the intentions of the lady.



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I was not calculated to engross the attention of Madam de Menton, who loved to be surrounded by brilliant company; notwithstanding she bestowed some attention on me, not for the sake of my person, which she certainly did not regard, but for the reputation of wit which I had acquired, and which might have rendered me convenient to her predominant inclination. She had a very lively passion for ridicule, and loved to write songs and lampoons on those who displeased her: had she found me possessed of sufficient talents to aid the fabrication of her verses, and complaisance enough to do so, we should presently have turned Chambery upside down; these libels would have been traced to their source, Madam de Menton would have saved herself by sacrificing me, and I should have been cooped up in prison, perhaps, for the rest of my life, as a recompense for having figured away as the Apollo of the ladies. Fortunately, nothing of this kind happened; Madam de Menton made me stay for dinner two or three days, to chat with me, and soon found I was too dull for her purpose. I felt this myself, and was humiliated at the discovery, envying the talents of my friend Venture; though I should rather have been obliged to my stupidity for keeping me out of the reach of danger. I remained, therefore, Madam de Menton's daughter's singing-master, and nothing more! but I lived happily, and was ever well received at Chambery, which was a thousand times more desirable than passing for a wit with her, and for a serpent with everybody else.

However this might be, Madam de Warrens conceived it necessary to guard me from the perils of youth by treating me as a man: this she immediately set about, but in the most extraordinary manner that any woman, in similar circumstances, ever devised. I all at once observed that her manner was graver, and her discourse more moral than usual. To the playful gayety with which she used to intermingle her instructions suddenly succeeded an uniformity of manner, neither familiar nor severe, but which seemed to prepare me for some explanation. After having vainly racked my brain for the reason of this change, I mentioned it to her; this she had expected and immediately proposed a walk to our garden the next day. Accordingly we went there the next morning; she had contrived that we should remain alone the whole day, which she employed in preparing me for those favors she meant to bestow; not as another woman would have done, by toying and folly, but by discourses full of sentiment and reason, rather tending to instruct than seduce, and which spoke more to my heart than to my senses. Meantime, however excellent and to the purpose these discourses might be, and though far enough from coldness or melancholy, I did not listen to them with all the attention they merited, nor fix them in my memory as I should have done at any other time. That air of preparation which she had adopted gave me a degree of inquietude; while she spoke (in spite of



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myself) I was thoughtful and absent, attending less to what she said than curious to know what she aimed at; and no sooner had I comprehended her design (which I could not easily do) than the novelty of the idea, which, during all the years I had passed with her, had never once entered my imagination, took such entire possession of me that I was no longer capable of minding what she said! I only thought of her; I heard her no longer.

Thinking to render young minds attentive to reason by proposing some highly interesting object as the result of it, is an error instructors frequently run into, and one which I have not avoided in my *Umlilius*. The young pupil, struck with the object presented to him, is occupied only with that, and leaping lightly over your preliminary discourses, lights at once on the point, to which, in his idea, you lead him too tediously. To render him attentive, he must be prevented from seeing the whole of your design; and, in this particular, Madam de Warrens did not act with sufficient precaution.

By a singularity which adhered to her systematic disposition, she took the vain precaution of proposing conditions; but the moment I knew the purchase, I no longer even heard them, but immediately consented to everything; and I doubt whether there is a man on the whole earth who would have been sincere or courageous enough to dispute terms, or one single woman who would have pardoned such a dispute. By a continuation of the same whimsicality, she attached a number of the gravest formalities to the acquisition of her favors, and gave me eight days to think of them, which I assured her I had no need of, though that assurance was far from a truth: for to complete this assemblage of singularities, I was very glad to have this intermission; so much had the novelty of these ideas struck me, and such disorder did I feel in mine, that it required time to arrange them.

It will be supposed, that these eight days appeared to me as many ages; on the contrary, I should have been very glad had the time been lengthened. I find it difficult to describe the state I found myself in; it was a strange chaos of fear and impatience, dreading what I desired, and studying some civil pretext to evade my happiness.

Let the warmth of my constitution be remembered, my age, and my heart intoxicated with love; let my tender attachment to her be supposed, which, far from having diminished, had daily gained additional strength; let it be considered that I was only happy when with her, that my heart was full, not only of her bounty, of her amiable disposition, but of her shape, of her person, of herself; in a word, conceive me united to her by every affinity that could possibly render her dear; nor let it be supposed, that, being ten or twelve years older than myself, she began to grow an old woman, or was so in my opinion. From the time the first sight of her had made such an impression on me, she had really altered very little, and, in



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my mind, not at all. To me she was ever charming, and was still thought so by everyone. She had got something jollier, but had the same fine eyes, the same clear complexion, the same features, the same beautiful light hair, the sane gayety, and even the same voice, whose youthful and silvery sound made so lively an impression on my heart, that, even to this day, I cannot hear a young woman's voice, that is at all harmonious, without emotion. It will be seen, that in a more advanced age, the bare idea of some trifling favors I had to expect from the person I loved, inflamed me so far, that I could not support, with any degree of patience, the time necessary to traverse the short space that separated us; how then, by what miracle, when in the flower of my youth, had I so little impatience for a happiness I had never tasted but in idea? How could I see the moment advancing with more pain than pleasure? Why, instead of transports that should have intoxicated me with their deliciousness, did I experience only fears and repugnance? I have no doubt that if I could have avoided this happiness with any degree of decency, I should have relinquished it with all my heart. I have promised a number of extravagancies in the history of my attachment to her; this certainly is one that no idea could be formed of.

The reader (already disgusted) supposes, that being in the situation I have before described with Claude Anet, she was already degraded in my opinion by this participation of her favors, and that a sentiment of disesteem weakened those she had before inspired me with; but he is mistaken. 'Tis true that this participation gave me a cruel uneasiness, as well from a very natural sentiment of delicacy, as because it appeared unworthy both of her and myself; but as to my sentiments for her, they were still the same, and I can solemnly aver, that I never loved her more tenderly than when I felt so little propensity to avail myself of her condescension. I was too well acquainted with the chastity of her heart and the iciness of her constitution, to suppose a moment that the gratification of the senses had any influence over her; I was well convinced that her only motive was to guard me from dangers, which appeared otherwise inevitable, by this extraordinary favor, which she did not consider in the same light that women usually do; as will presently be explained.

The habit of living a long time innocently together, far from weakening the first sentiments I felt for her, had contributed to strengthen them, giving a more lively, a more tender, but at the same time a less sensual, turn to my affection. Having ever accustomed myself to call her Mama (as formerly observed) and enjoying the familiarity of a son, it became natural to consider myself as such, and I am inclined to think this was the true reason of that insensibility with a person I so tenderly loved; for I can perfectly recollect that my emotions on first seeing her, though



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not more lively, were more voluptuous: At Annecy I was intoxicated, at Chambéry I possessed my reason. I always loved her as passionately as possible, but I now loved her more for herself and less on my own account; or, at least, I rather sought for happiness than pleasure in her company. She was more to me than a sister, a mother, a friend, or even than a mistress, and for this very reason she was not a mistress; in a word, I loved her too much to desire her.

This day, more dreaded than hoped for, at length arrived. I have before observed, that I promised everything that was required of me, and I kept my word: my heart confirmed my engagements without desiring the fruits, though at length I obtained them. Was I happy? No: I felt I know not what invincible sadness which empoisoned my happiness, it seemed that I had committed an incest, and two or three times, pressing her eagerly in my arms, I deluged her bosom with my tears. On her part, as she had never sought pleasure, she had not the stings of remorse.

I repeat it, all her failings were the effect of her errors, never of her passions. She was well born, her heart was pure, her manners noble, her desires regular and virtuous, her taste delicate; she seemed formed for that elegant purity of manners which she ever loved, but never practised, because instead of listening to the dictates of her heart, she followed those of her reason, which led her astray: for when once corrupted by false principles it will ever run counter to its natural sentiments. Unhappily, she piqued herself on philosophy, and the morals she drew from thence clouded the genuine purity of her heart.

M. Tavel, her first lover, was also her instructor in this philosophy, and the principles he instilled into her mind were such as tended to seduce her. Finding her cold and impregnable on the side of her passions, and firmly attached to her husband and her duty, he attacked her by sophisms, endeavoring to prove that the list of duties she thought so sacred, was but a sort of catechism, fit only for children. That the kind of infidelity she thought so terrible, was, in itself, absolutely indifferent; that all the morality of conjugal faith consisted in opinion, the contentment of husbands being the only reasonable rule of duty in wives; consequently that concealed infidelities, doing no injury, could be no crime; in a word, he persuaded her that the sin consisted only in the scandal, that woman being really virtuous who took care to appear so. Thus the deceiver obtained his end in the subverting the reason of a girl; whose heart he found it impossible to corrupt, and received his punishment in a devouring jealousy, being persuaded she would treat him as he had prevailed on her to treat her husband.

I don't know whether he was mistaken in this respect: the Minister Perret passed for his successor; all I know, is, that the coldness of temperament which it might have been supposed would have kept her from embracing this system, in the end prevented her from renouncing it. She could not conceive how so much importance should be given to

what seemed to have none for her; nor could she honor with the name of virtue, an abstinence which would have cost her little.



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She did not, therefore, give in to this false principle on her own account, but for the sake of others; and that from another maxim almost as false as the former, but more consonant to the generosity of her disposition.

She was persuaded that nothing could attach a man so truly to any woman as an unbounded freedom, and though she was only susceptible of friendship, this friendship was so tender, that she made use of every means which depended on her to secure the objects of it, and, which is very extraordinary, almost always succeeded: for she was so truly amiable, that an increase of intimacy was sure to discover additional reasons to love and respect her. Another thing worthy of remark is, that after her first folly, she only favored the unfortunate. Lovers in a more brilliant station lost their labor with her, but the man who at first attracted her pity, must have possessed very few good qualities if in the end he did not obtain her affection. Even when she made an unworthy choice, far from proceeding from base inclinations (which were strangers to her noble heart) it was the effect of a disposition too generous, humane, compassionate, and sensible, which she did not always govern with sufficient discernment.

If some false principles misled her, how many admirable ones did she not possess, which never forsook her! By how many virtues did she atone for her failings! if we can call by that name errors in which the senses had so little share. The man who in one particular deceived her so completely, had given her excellent instructions in a thousand others; and her passions, being far from turbulent, permitted her to follow the dictates. She ever acted wisely when her sophisms did not intervene, and her designs were laudable even in her failings. False principles might lead her to do ill, but she never did anything which she conceived to be wrong. She abhorred lying and duplicity, was just, equitable, humane, disinterested, true to her word, her friends, and those duties which she conceived to be such; incapable of hatred or revenge, and not even conceiving there was a merit in pardoning; in fine (to return to those qualities which were less excusable), though she did not properly value, she never made a vile commerce of her favors; she lavished, but never sold them, though continually reduced to expedients for a subsistence: and I dare assert, that if Socrates could esteem Aspasia, he would have respected Madam de Warrens.

I am well aware that ascribing sensibility of heart with coldness of temperament to the same person, I shall generally, and with great appearance of reason, be accused of a contradiction. Perhaps Nature sported or blundered, and this combination ought not to have existed; I only know it did exist. All those who know Madam de Warrens (a great number of whom are yet living) have had opportunities of knowing this was a fact; I dare even aver she had but one pleasure in the world, which was serving those she loved. Let every one argue on the point as he pleases, and gravely prove that this cannot be; my business is to declare the truth, and not to enforce a belief of it.



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I became acquainted with the particulars I have just related, in those conversations which succeeded our union, and alone rendered it delicious. She was right when she concluded her complaisance would be useful to me; I derived great advantages from it in point of useful instruction. Hitherto she had used me as a child, she now began to treat me as a man, and entertain me with accounts of herself. Everything she said was so interesting, and I was so sensibly touched with it, that, reasoning with myself, I applied these confidential relations to my own improvement and received more instruction from them than from her teaching. When we truly feel that the heart speaks, our own opens to receive its instructions, nor can all the pompous morality of a pedagogue have half the effect that is produced by the tender, affectionate, and artless conversation of a sensible woman on him who loves her.

The intimacy in which I lived with Madam de Warrens, having placed me more advantageously in her opinion than formerly, she began to think (notwithstanding my awkward manner) that I deserved cultivation for the polite world, and that if I could one day show myself there in an eligible situation, I should soon be able to make my way. In consequence of this idea, she set about forming not only my judgment, but my address, endeavoring to render me amiable, as well as estimable; and if it is true that success in this world is consistent with strict virtue (which, for my part, I do not believe), I am certain there is no other road than that she had taken, and wished to point out to me. For Madam de Warrens knew mankind, and understood exquisitely well the art of treating all ranks, without falsehood, and without imprudence, neither deceiving nor provoking them; but this art was rather in her disposition than her precepts, she knew better how to practise than explain it, and I was of all the world the least calculated to become master of such an attainment; accordingly, the means employed for this purpose were nearly lost labor, as well as the pains she took to procure me a fencing and a dancing master.

Though very well made, I could never learn to dance a minuet; for being plagued with corns, I had acquired a habit of walking on my heels, which Roche, the dancing master, could never break me of. It was still worse at the fencing-school, where, after three months' practice, I made but very little progress, and could never attempt fencing with any but my master. My wrist was not supple enough, nor my arm sufficiently firm to retain the foil, whenever he chose to make it fly out of my hand. Add to this, I had a mortal aversion both to the art itself and to the person who undertook to teach it to me, nor should I ever have imagined, that anyone could have been so proud of the science of sending men out of the world. To bring this vast genius within the compass of my comprehension, he explained himself by comparisons drawn from music, which he understood nothing of.

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He found striking analogies between a hit in 'quarte' or 'tierce' with the intervals of music which bears those names: when he made a feint he cried out, "take care of this 'diesis'," because anciently they called the 'diesis' a feint: and when he had made the foil fly from my hand, he would add, with a sneer, that this was a pause: in a word, I never in my life saw a more insupportable pedant.

I made, therefore, but little progress in my exercises, which I presently quitted from pure disgust; but I succeeded better in an art of a thousand times more value, namely, that of being content with my situation, and not desiring one more brilliant, for which I began to be persuaded that Nature had not designed me. Given up to the endeavor of rendering Madam de Warrens happy, I was ever best pleased when in her company, and, notwithstanding my fondness for music, began to grudge the time I employed in giving lessons to my scholars.

I am ignorant whether Anet perceived the full extent of our union; but I am inclined to think he was no stranger to it. He was a young man of great penetration, and still greater discretion; who never belied his sentiments, but did not always speak them: without giving me the least hint that he was acquainted with our intimacy, he appeared by his conduct to be so; nor did this moderation proceed from baseness of soul, but, having entered entirely into the principles of his mistress, he could not reasonably disapprove of the natural consequences of them. Though as young as herself, he was so grave and thoughtful, that he looked on us as two children who required indulgence, and we regarded him as a respectable man, whose esteem we had to preserve. It was not until after she was unfaithful to Anet, that I learned the strength of her attachment to him. She was fully sensible that I only thought, felt, or lived for her; she let me see, therefore, how much she loved Anet, that I might love him likewise, and dwell less on her friendship, than on her esteem, for him, because this was the sentiment that I could most fully partake of. How often has she affected our hearts and made us embrace with tears, by assuring us that we were both necessary to her happiness! Let not women read this with an ill-natured smile; with the temperament she possessed, this necessity was not equivocal, it was only that of the heart.

Thus there was established, among us three, a union without example, perhaps, on the face of the earth. All our wishes, our cares, our very hearts, were for each other, and absolutely confined to this little circle. The habit of living together, and living exclusively from the rest of the world, became so strong, that if at our repasts one of the three was wanting, or a fourth person came in, everything seemed deranged; and, notwithstanding our particular attachments, even our *tete-a-tete* were less agreeable than our reunion. What banished every species of constraint from our little community, was a lively reciprocal

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confidence, and dulness or insipidity could find no place among us, because we were always fully employed. Madam de Warrens always projecting, always busy, left us no time for idleness, though, indeed, we had each sufficient employment on our own account. It is my maxim, that idleness is as much the pest of society as of solitude. Nothing more contracts the mind, or engenders more tales, mischief, gossiping, and lies, than for people to be eternally shut up in the same apartment together, and reduced, from the want of employment, to the necessity of an incessant chat. When every one is busy (unless you have really something to say), you may continue silent; but if you have nothing to do, you must absolutely speak continually, and this, in my mind, is the most burdensome and the most dangerous constraint. I will go further, and maintain, that to render company harmless, as well as agreeable, it is necessary, not only that they should have something to do, but something that requires a degree of attention.

Knitting, for instance, is absolutely as bad as doing nothing; you must take as much pains to amuse a woman whose fingers are thus employed, as if she sat with her arms crossed; but let her embroider, and it is a different matter; she is then so far busied, that a few intervals of silence may be borne with. What is most disgusting and ridiculous, during these intermissions of conversation, is to see, perhaps, a dozen over-grown fellows, get up, sit down again, walk backwards and forwards, turn on their heels, play with the chimney ornaments, and rack their brains to maintain an inexhaustible chain of words: what a charming occupation! Such people, wherever they go, must be troublesome both to others and themselves. When I was at Motiers, I used to employ myself in making laces with my neighbors, and were I again to mix with the world, I would always carry a cup-and-ball in my pocket; I should sometimes play with it the whole day, that I might not be constrained to speak when I had nothing to discourse about; and I am persuaded, that if every one would do the same, mankind would be less mischievous, their company would become more rational, and, in my opinion, a vast deal more agreeable; in a word, let wits laugh if they please, but I maintain, that the only practical lesson of morality within the reach of the present age, is that of the cup-and-ball.

At Chambery they did not give us the trouble of studying expedients to avoid weariness, when by ourselves, for a troop of important visitors gave us too much by their company, to feel any when alone. The annoyance they formerly gave me had not diminished; all the difference was, that I now found less opportunity to abandon myself to my dissatisfaction. Poor Madam de Warrens had not lost her old predilection for schemes and systems; on the contrary, the more she felt the pressure of her domestic necessities, the more she endeavored to extricate herself from them



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by visionary projects; and, in proportion to the decrease of her present resources, she contrived to enlarge, in idea, those of the future. Increase of years only strengthened this folly: as she lost her relish for the pleasures of the world and youth, she replaced it by an additional fondness for secrets and projects; her house was never clear of quacks, contrivers of new manufactures, alchemists, projects of all kinds and of all descriptions, whose discourses began by a distribution of millions and concluded by giving you to understand that they were in want of a crown—piece. No one went from her empty-handed; and what astonished me most was, how she could so long support such profusion, without exhausting the source or wearying her creditors.

Her principal project at the time I am now speaking of was that of establishing a Royal Physical Garden at Chambéry, with a Demonstrator attached to it; it will be unnecessary to add for whom this office was designed. The situation of this city, in the midst of the Alps, was extremely favorable to botany, and as Madam de Warrens was always for helping out one project with another, a College of Pharmacy was to be added, which really would have been a very useful foundation in so poor a country, where apothecaries are almost the only medical practitioners. The retreat of the chief physician, Grossi, to Chambéry, on the demise of King Victor, seemed to favor this idea, or perhaps, first suggest it; however this may be, by flattery and attention she set about managing Grossi, who, in fact, was not very manageable, being the most caustic and brutal, for a man who had any pretensions to the quality of a gentleman, that ever I knew. The reader may judge for himself by two or three traits of character, which I shall add by way of specimen.

He assisted one day at a consultation with some other doctors, and among the rest, a young gentleman from Annecy, who was physician in ordinary to the sick person. This young man, being but indifferently taught for a doctor, was bold enough to differ in opinion from M. Grossi, who only answered him by asking him when he should return, which way he meant to take, and what conveyance he should make use of? The other, having satisfied Grossi in these particulars, asked him if there was anything he could serve him in? “Nothing, nothing,” answered he, “only I shall place myself at a window in your way, that I may have the pleasure of seeing an ass ride on horseback.” His avarice equalled his riches and want of feeling. One of his friends wanted to borrow some money of him, on good security. “My friend,” answered he, shaking him by the arm, and grinding his teeth, “Should St. Peter descend from heaven to borrow ten pistoles of me, and offer the Trinity as securities, I would not lend them.” One day, being invited to dinner with Count Picon, Governor of Savoy, who was very religious, he arrived before it was ready, and found his excellency busy with his devotions,



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who proposed to him the same employment; not knowing how to refuse, he knelt down with a frightful grimace, but had hardly recited two Ave-Marias, when, not being able to contain himself any longer, he rose hastily, snatched his hat and cane, and without speaking a word, was making toward the door; Count Picon ran after him, crying, "Monsieur Grossi! Monsieur Grossi! stop, there's a most excellent ortolan on the spit for you." "Monsieur le Count," replied the other, turning his head, "though you should give me a roasted angel, I would not stay." Such was M. Grossi, whom Madam de Warrens undertook and succeeded in civilizing. Though his time was very much occupied, he accustomed himself to come frequently to her house, conceived a friendship for Anet, seemed to think him intelligent, spoke of him with esteem, and, what would not have been expected of such a brute, affected to treat him with respect, wishing to efface the impressions of the past; for though Anet was no longer on the footing of a domestic, it was known that he had been one, and nothing less than the countenance and example of the chief physician was necessary to set an example of respect which would not otherwise have been paid him. Thus Claude Anet, with a black coat, a well-dressed wig, a grave, decent behavior, a circumspect conduct, and a tolerable knowledge in medical and botanical matters, might reasonably have hoped to fill, with universal satisfaction, the place of public demonstrator, had the proposed establishment taken place. Grossi highly approved the plan, and only waited an opportunity to propose it to the administration, whenever a return of peace should permit them to think of useful institutions, and enable them to spare the necessary pecuniary supplies.

But this project, whose execution would probably have plunged me into botanical studies, for which I am inclined to think Nature designed me, failed through one of those unexpected strokes which frequently overthrow the best concerted plans. I was destined to become an example of human misery; and it might be said that Providence, who called me by degrees to these extraordinary trials, disconcerted every opportunity that could prevent my encountering them.

In an excursion which Anet made to the top of the mountain to seek for genipi, a scarce plant that grows only on the Alps, and which Monsieur Grossi had occasion for, unfortunately he heated himself so much, that he was seized with a pleurisy, which the genipi could not relieve, though said to be specific in that disorder; and, notwithstanding all the art of Grossi (who certainly was very skillful), and all the care of his good mistress and myself, he died the fifth day of his disorder, in the most cruel agonies. During his illness he had no exhortations but mine, bestowed with such transports of grief and zeal, that had he been in a state to understand them, they must have been some consolation to him. Thus I lost the firmest friend I ever had; a man estimable and extraordinary; in whom Nature supplied the defects of education, and who (though in a state of servitude) possessed all the virtues necessary to form a great man, which, perhaps, he would have shown himself, and been acknowledged, had he lived to fill the situation he seemed so perfectly adapted to.



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The next day I spoke of him to Madam de Warrens with the most sincere and lively affection; when, suddenly, in the midst of our conversation, the vile, ungrateful thought occurred, that I should inherit his wardrobe, and particularly a handsome black coat, which I thought very becoming. As I thought this, I consequently uttered it; for when with her, to think and to speak was the same thing. Nothing could have made her feel more forcibly the loss she had sustained, than this unworthy and odious observation; disinterestedness and greatness of soul being qualities that poor Anet had eminently possessed. The generous Madam de Warrens turned from me, and (without any reply) burst into tears. Dear and precious tears! your reprehension was fully felt; ye ran into my very heart, washing from thence even the smallest traces of such despicable and unworthy sentiments, never to return.

This loss caused Madam de Warrens as much inconvenience as sorrow, since from this moment her affairs were still more deranged. Anet was extremely exact, and kept everything in order; his vigilance was universally feared, and this set some bounds to that profusion they were too apt to run into; even Madam de Warrens, to avoid his censure, kept her dissipation within bounds; his attachment was not sufficient, she wished to preserve his esteem, and avoid the just remonstrances he sometimes took the liberty to make her, by representing that she squandered the property of others as well as her own. I thought as he did, nay, I even sometimes expressed myself to the same effect, but had not an equal ascendancy over her, and my advice did not make the same impression. On his decease, I was obliged to occupy his place, for which I had as little inclination as abilities, and therefore filled it ill. I was not sufficiently careful, and so very timid, that though I frequently found fault to myself, I saw ill-management without taking courage to oppose it; besides, though I acquired an equal share of respect, I had not the same authority. I saw the disorder that prevailed, trembled at it, sometimes complained, but was never attended to. I was too young and lively to have any pretensions to the exercise of reason, and when I would have acted the reformer, Madam de Warrens calling me her little Mentor, with two or three playful slaps on the cheek, reduced me to my natural thoughtlessness. Notwithstanding, an idea of the certain distress in which her ill-regulated expenses, sooner or later, must necessarily plunge her, made a stronger impression on me since I had become the inspector of her household, and had a better opportunity of calculating the inequality that subsisted between her income and her expenses. I even date from this period the beginning of that inclination to avarice which I have ever since been sensible of. I was never foolishly prodigal, except by intervals; but till then I was never concerned whether I had much or little money. I now began to pay more



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attention to this circumstance, taking care of my purse, and becoming mean from a laudable motive; for I only sought to insure Madam de Warrens some resources against that catastrophe which I dreaded the approach of. I feared her creditors would seize her pension or that it might be discontinued and she reduced to want, when I foolishly imagined that the trifle I could save might be of essential service to her; but to accomplish this, it was necessary I should conceal what I meant to make a reserve of; for it would have been an awkward circumstance, while she was perpetually driven to expedients, to have her know that I hoarded money. Accordingly, I sought out some hiding-place, where I laid up a few louis, resolving to augment this stock from time to time, till a convenient opportunity to lay it at her feet; but I was so incautious in the choice of my repositories, that she always discovered them, and, to convince me that she did so, changed the louis I had concealed for a larger sum in different pieces of coin. Ashamed of these discoveries, I brought back to the common purse my little treasure, which she never failed to lay out in clothes, or other things for my use, such as a silver hilted sword, watch, *etc.* Being convinced that I should never succeed in accumulating money, and that what I could save would furnish but a very slender resource against the misfortune I dreaded, made me wish to place myself in such a situation that I might be enabled to provide for her, whenever she might chance to be reduced to want. Unhappily, seeking these resources on the side of my inclinations, I foolishly determined to consider music as my principal dependence; and ideas of harmony rising in my brain, I imagined, that if placed in a proper situation to profit by them, I should acquire celebrity, and presently become a modern Orpheus, whose mystic sounds would attract all the riches of Peru.

As I began to read music tolerably well, the question was, how I should learn composition? The difficulty lay in meeting with a good master, for, with the assistance of my Rameau alone, I despaired of ever being able to accomplish it; and, since the departure of M. le Maitre, there was nobody in Savoy who understood anything of the principles of harmony.

I am now about to relate another of those inconsequences, which my life is full of, and which have so frequently carried me directly from my designs, even when I thought myself immediately within reach of them. Venture had spoken to me in very high terms of the Abbe Blanchard, who had taught him composition; a deserving man, possessed of great talents, who was music-master to the cathedral at Besancon, and is now in that capacity at the Chapel of Versailles. I therefore determined to go to Besancon, and take some lessons from the Abbe Blanchard, and the idea appeared so rational to me, that I soon made Madam de Warrens of the same opinion, who immediately set about the preparations for my journey, in the



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same style of profusion with which all her plans were executed. Thus this project for preventing a bankruptcy, and repairing in future the waste of dissipation, began by causing her to expend eight hundred livres; her ruin being accelerated that I might be put in a condition to prevent it. Foolish as this conduct may appear, the illusion was complete on my part, and even on hers, for I was persuaded I should labor for her emolument, and she thought she was highly promoting mine.

I expected to find Venture still at Annecy, and promised myself to obtain a recommendatory letter from him to the Abbe Blanchard; but he had left that place, and I was obliged to content myself in the room of it, with a mass in four parts of his composition, which he had left with me. With this slender recommendation I set out for Besancon by the way of Geneva, where I saw my relations; and through Nion, where I saw my father, who received me in his usual manner, and promised to forward my portmanteau, which, as I travelled on horseback, came after me. I arrived at Besancon, and was kindly received by the Abbe Blanchard, who promised me his instruction, and offered his services in any other particular. We had just set about our music, when I received a letter from my father, informing me that my portmanteau had been seized and confiscated at Rousses, a French barrier on the side of Switzerland. Alarmed at the news, I employed the acquaintance I had formed at Besancon, to learn the motive of this confiscation. Being certain there was nothing contraband among my baggage, I could not conceive on what pretext it could have been seized on; at length, however, I learned the rights of the story, which (as it is a very curious one) must not be omitted.

I became acquainted at Chambery with a very worthy old man, from Lyons, named Monsieur Duvivier, who had been employed at the Visa, under the regency, and for want of other business, now assisted at the Survey. He had lived in the polite world, possessed talents, was good-humored, and understood music. As we both wrote in the same chamber, we preferred each other's acquaintance to that of the unlicked cubs that surrounded us. He had some correspondents at Paris, who furnished him with those little nothings, those daily novelties, which circulate one knows not why, and die one cares not when, without any one thinking of them longer than they are heard. As I sometimes took him to dine with Madam de Warrens, he in some measure treated me with respect, and (wishing to render himself agreeable) endeavored to make me fond of these trifles, for which I naturally had such a distaste, that I never in my life read any of them. Unhappily one of these cursed papers happened to be in the waistcoat pocket of a new suit, which I had only worn two or three times to prevent its being seized by the commissioners of the customs. This paper contained an insipid Jansenist parody on that beautiful scene in Racine's

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Mithridates: I had not read ten lines of it, but by forgetfulness left it in my pocket, and this caused all my necessities to be confiscated. The commissioners at the head of the inventory of my portmanteau, set a most pompous verbal process, in which it was taken for granted that this most terrible writing came from Geneva for the sole purpose of being printed and distributed in France, and then ran into holy invectives against the enemies of God and the Church, and praised the pious vigilance of those who had prevented the execution of these most infernal machinations. They doubtless found also that my spirits smelt of heresy, for on the strength of this dreadful paper, they were all seized, and from that time I never received any account of my unfortunate portmanteau. The revenue officers whom I applied to for this purpose required so many instructions, informations, certificates, memorials, *etc.*, *etc.*, that, lost a thousand times in the perplexing labyrinth, I was glad to abandon them entirely. I feel a real regret for not having preserved this verbal process from the office of Rousses, for it was a piece calculated to hold a distinguished rank in the collection which is to accompany this Work.

The loss of my necessities immediately brought me back to Chambery, without having learned anything of the Abbe Blanchard. Reasoning with myself on the events of this journey, and seeing that misfortunes attended all my enterprises, I resolved to attach myself entirely to Madam de Warrens, to share her fortune, and distress myself no longer about future events, which I could not regulate. She received me as if I had brought back treasures, replaced by degrees my little wardrobe, and though this misfortune fell heavy enough on us both, it was forgotten almost as suddenly as it arrived.

Though this mischance had rather dampened my musical ardor, I did not leave off studying my Rameau, and, by repeated efforts, was at length able to understand it, and to make some little attempts at composition, the success of which encouraged me to proceed. The Count de Bellegrade, son of the Marquis of Antremont, had returned from Dresden after the death of King Augustus. Having long resided at Paris, he was fond of music, and particularly that of Rameau. His brother, the Count of Nangis, played on the violin; the Countess la Tour, their sister, sung tolerably: this rendered music the fashion at Chambery, and a kind of public concert was established there, the direction of which was at first designed for me, but they soon discovered I was not competent to the undertaking, and it was otherwise arranged. Notwithstanding this, I continued writing a number of little pieces, in my own way, and, among others, a cantata, which gained great approbation; it could not, indeed, be called a finished piece, but the airs were written in a style of novelty, and produced a good effect, which was not expected from me. These gentlemen



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could not believe that, reading music so indifferently, it was possible I should compose any that was passable, and made no doubt that I had taken to myself the credit of some other person's labors. Monsieur de Nangis, wishing to be assured of this, called on me one morning with a cantata of Clerambault's which he had transposed as he said, to suit his voice, and to which another bass was necessary, the transposition having rendered that of Clerambault impracticable. I answered, it required considerable labor, and could not be done on the spot. Being convinced I only sought an excuse, he pressed me to write at least the bass to a recitative: I did so, not well, doubtless, because to attempt anything with success I must have both time and freedom, but I did it at least according to rule, and he being present, could not doubt but I understood the elements of composition. I did not, therefore, lose my scholars, though it hurt my pride that there should be a concert at Chambéry in which I was not necessary.

About this time, peace being concluded, the French army repassed the Alps. Several officers came to visit Madam de Warrens, and among others the Count de Lautrec, Colonel of the regiment of Orleans, since Plenipotentiary of Geneva, and afterwards Marshal of France, to whom she presented me. On her recommendation, he appeared to interest himself greatly in my behalf, promising a great deal, which he never remembered till the last year of his life, when I no longer stood in need of his assistance. The young Marquis of Sennecterre, whose father was then ambassador at Turin, passed through Chambéry at the same time, and dined one day at M. de Menthon's, when I happened to be among the guests. After dinner; the discourse turned on music, which the marquis understood extremely well. The opera of 'Jephtha' was then new; he mentioned this piece, it was brought him, and he made me tremble by proposing to execute it between us. He opened the book at that celebrated double chorus,

La Terra, l'Enfer, le Ciel meme,
Tout tremble devant le Seigneur!

[The Earth, and Hell, and Heaven itself,
tremble before the Lord!]

He said, "How many parts will you take? I will do these six." I had not yet been accustomed to this trait of French vivacity, and though acquainted with divisions, could not comprehend how one man could undertake to perform six, or even two parts at the same time. Nothing has cost me more trouble in music than to skip lightly from one part to another, and have the eye at once on a whole division. By the manner in which I evaded this trial, he must have been inclined to believe I did not understand music, and perhaps it was to satisfy himself in this particular that he proposed my noting a song for Mademoiselle de Menthon, in such a manner that I could not avoid it. He sang this song, and I wrote from his voice, without giving him much



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trouble to repeat it. When finished he read my performance, and said (which was very true) that it was very correctly noted. He had observed my embarrassment, and now seemed to enhance the merit of this little success. In reality, I then understood music very well, and only wanted that quickness at first sight which I possess in no one particular, and which is only to be acquired in this art by long and constant practice. Be that as it may, I was fully sensible of his kindness in endeavoring to efface from the minds of others, and even from my own, the embarrassment I had experienced on this occasion. Twelve or fifteen years afterwards, meeting this gentleman at several houses in Paris, I was tempted to make him recollect this anecdote, and show him I still remembered it; but he had lost his sight since that time; I feared to give him pain by recalling to his memory how useful it formerly had been to him, and was therefore silent on that subject.

I now touch on the moment that binds my past existence to the present, some friendships of that period, prolonged to the present time, being very dear to me, have frequently made me regret that happy obscurity, when those who called themselves my friends were really so; loved me for myself, through pure good will, and not from the vanity of being acquainted with a conspicuous character, perhaps for the secret purpose of finding more occasions to injure him.

From this time I date my first acquaintance with my old friend Gauffecourt, who, notwithstanding every effort to disunite us, has still remained so.—Still remained so!—No, alas! I have just lost him!—but his affection terminated only with his life—death alone could put a period to our friendship. Monsieur de Gauffecourt was one of the most amiable men that ever existed; it was impossible to see him without affection, or to live with him without feeling a sincere attachment. In my life I never saw features more expressive of goodness and serenity, or that marked more feeling, more understanding, or inspired greater confidence. However reserved one might be, it was impossible even at first sight to avoid being as free with him as if he had been an acquaintance of twenty years; for myself, who find so much difficulty to be at ease among new faces, I was familiar with him in a moment. His manner, accent, and conversation, perfectly suited his features: the sound of his voice was clear, full and musical; it was an agreeable and expressive bass, which satisfied the ear, and sounded full upon the heart. It was impossible to possess a more equal and pleasing vivacity, or more real and unaffected gracefulness, more natural talents, or cultivated with greater taste; join to all these good qualities an affectionate heart, but loving rather too diffusively, and bestowing his favors with too little caution; serving his friends with zeal, or rather making himself the friend of every one he could serve, yet contriving very dexterously to manage his own affairs, while warmly pursuing the interests of others.



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Gauffecourt was the son of a clock-maker, and would have been a clock-maker himself had not his person and desert called him to a superior situation. He became acquainted with M. de la Closure, the French Resident at Geneva, who conceived a friendship for him, and procured him some connections at Paris, which were useful, and through whose influence he obtained the privilege of furnishing the salts of Valais, which was worth twenty thousand livres a year. This very amply satisfied his wishes with respect to fortune, but with regard to women he was more difficult; he had to provide for his own happiness, and did what he supposed most conducive to it. What renders his character most remarkable, and does him the greatest honor, is, that though connected with all conditions, he was universally esteemed and sought after without being envied or hated by any one, and I really believe he passed through life without a single enemy.—Happy man!

He went every year to the baths of Aix, where the best company from the neighboring countries resorted, and being on terms of friendship with all the nobility of Savoy, came from Aix to Chambery to see the young Count de Bellegarde and his father the Marquis of Antremont. It was here Madam de Warrens introduced me to him, and this acquaintance, which appeared at that time to end in nothing, after many years had elapsed, was renewed on an occasion which I should relate, when it became a real friendship. I apprehend I am sufficiently authorized in speaking of a man to whom I was so firmly attached, but I had no personal interest in what concerned him; he was so truly amiable, and born with so many natural good qualities that, for the honor of human nature, I should think it necessary to preserve his memory. This man, estimable as he certainly was, had, like other mortals, some failings, as will be seen hereafter; perhaps had it not been so, he would have been less amiable, since, to render him as interesting as possible, it was necessary he should sometimes act in such a manner as to require a small portion of indulgence.

Another connection of the same time, that is not yet extinguished, and continues to flatter me with the idea of temporal happiness, which it is so difficult to obliterate from the human heart, is Monsieur de Conzie, a Savoyard gentleman, then young and amiable, who had a fancy to learn music, or rather to be acquainted with the person who taught it. With great understanding and taste for polite acquirements, M. de Conzie possessed a mildness of disposition which rendered him extremely attractive, and my temper being somewhat similar, when it found a counterpart, our friendship was soon formed. The seeds of literature and philosophy, which began to ferment in my brain, and only waited for culture and emulation to spring up, found in him exactly what was wanting to render them prolific. M. de Conzie had no great inclination to music, and even this was useful to me, for the hours destined for lessons were passed anyhow rather than musically; we breakfasted, chatted, and read new publications, but not a word of music.



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The correspondence between Voltaire and the Prince Royal of Prussia, then made a noise in the world, and these celebrated men were frequently the subject of our conversation, one of whom recently seated on a throne, already indicated what he would prove himself hereafter, while the other, as much disgraced as he is now admired, made us sincerely lament the misfortunes that seemed to pursue him, and which are so frequently the appendage of superior talents. The Prince of Prussia had not been happy in his youth, and it appeared that Voltaire was formed never to be so. The interest we took in both parties extended to all that concerned them, and nothing that Voltaire wrote escaped us. The inclination I felt for these performances inspired me with a desire to write elegantly, and caused me to endeavor to imitate the colorings of that author, with whom I was so much enchanted. Some time after, his philosophical letters (though certainly not his best work) greatly augmented my fondness for study; it was a rising inclination, which, from that time, has never been extinguished.

But the moment was not yet arrived when I should give into it entirely; my rambling disposition (rather contracted than eradicated) being kept alive by our manner of living at Madam de Warrens, which was too unsettled for one of my solitary temper. The crowd of strangers who daily swarmed about her from all parts, and the certainty I was in that these people sought only to dupe her, each in his particular mode, rendered home disagreeable. Since I had succeeded Anet in the confidence of his mistress, I had strictly examined her circumstances, and saw their evil tendency with horror. I had remonstrated a hundred times, prayed, argued, conjured, but all to no purpose. I had thrown myself at her feet, and strongly represented the catastrophe that threatened her, had earnestly entreated that she would reform her expenses, and begin with myself, representing that it was better to suffer something while she was yet young, than by multiplying her debts and creditors, expose her old age to vexation and misery.

Sensible of the sincerity of my zeal, she was frequently affected, and would then make the finest promises in the world: but only let an artful schemer arrive, and in an instant all her good resolutions were forgotten. After a thousand proofs of the inefficacy of my remonstrances, what remained but to turn away my eyes from the ruin I could not prevent; and fly myself from the door I could not guard! I made therefore little journeys to Geneva and Lyons, which diverted my mind in some measure from this secret uneasiness, though it increased the cause by these additional expenses. I can truly aver that I should have acquiesced with pleasure in every retrenchment, had Madam de Warrens really profited by it, but being persuaded that what I might refuse myself would be distributed among a set of interested villains, I took advantage of her easiness to partake with them, and, like the dog returning from the shambles, carried off a portion of that morsel which I could not protect.



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Pretences were not wanting for all these journeys; even Madam de Warrens would alone have supplied me with more than were necessary, having plenty of connections, negotiations, affairs, and commissions, which she wished to have executed by some trusty hand. In these cases she usually applied to me; I was always willing to go, and consequently found occasions enough to furnish out a rambling kind of life. These excursions procured me some good connections, which have since been agreeable or useful to me. Among others, I met at Lyons, with M. Perrichon, whose friendship I accuse myself with not having sufficiently cultivated, considering the kindness he had for me; and that of the good Parisot, which I shall speak of in its place, at Grenoble, that of Madam Deybens and Madam la Presidente de Bardouanche, a woman of great understanding, and who would have entertained a friendship for me had it been in my power to have seen her oftener; at Geneva, that of M. de Closure, the French Resident, who often spoke to me of my mother, the remembrance of whom neither death nor time had erased from his heart; likewise those of the two Barillots, the father, who was very amiable, a good companion, and one of the most worthy men I ever met, calling me his grandson. During the troubles of the republic, these two citizens took contrary sides, the son siding with the people, the father with the magistrates. When they took up arms in 1737, I was at Geneva, and saw the father and son quit the same house armed, the one going to the townhouse, the other to his quarters, almost certain to meet face to face in the course of two hours, and prepared to give or receive death from each other. This unnatural sight made so lively an impression on me, that I solemnly vowed never to interfere in any civil war, nor assist in deciding our internal dispute by arms, either personally or by my influence, should I ever enter into my rights as a citizen. I can bring proofs of having kept this oath on a very delicate occasion, and it will be confessed (at least I should suppose so) that this moderation was of some worth.

But I had not yet arrived at that fermentation of patriotism which the first sight of Geneva in arms has since excited in my heart, as may be conjectured by a very grave fact that will not tell to my advantage, which I forgot to put in its proper place, but which ought not to be omitted.

My uncle Bernard died at Carolina, where he had been employed some years in the building of Charles Town, which he had formed the plan of. My poor cousin, too, died in the Prussian service; thus my aunt lost, nearly at the same period, her son and husband. These losses reanimated in some measure her affection for the nearest relative she had remaining, which was myself. When I went to Geneva, I reckoned her house my home, and amused myself with rummaging and turning over the books and papers my uncle had left. Among them I found some curious ones, and



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some letters which they certainly little thought of. My aunt, who set no store by these dusty papers, would willingly have given the whole to me, but I contented myself with two or three books, with notes written by the Minister Bernard, my grandfather, and among the rest, the posthumous works of Rohault in quarto, the margins of which were full of excellent commentaries, which gave me an inclination to the mathematics. This book remained among those of Madam de Warrens, and I have since lamented that I did not preserve it. To these I added five or six memorials in manuscript, and a printed one, composed by the famous Micheli Ducret, a man of considerable talents, being both learned and enlightened, but too much, perhaps, inclined to sedition, for which he was cruelly treated by the magistrates of Geneva, and lately died in the fortress of Arberg, where he had been confined many years, for being, as it was said, concerned in the conspiracy of Berne.

This memorial was a judicious critique on the extensive but ridiculous plan of fortification, which had been adopted at Geneva, though censured by every person of judgment in the art, who was unacquainted with the secret motives of the council, in the execution of this magnificent enterprise. Monsieur de Micheli, who had been excluded from the committee of fortification for having condemned this plan, thought that, as a citizen, and a member of the two hundred, he might give his advice, at large, and therefore, did so in this memorial, which he was imprudent enough to have printed, though he never published it, having only those copies struck off which were meant for the two hundred, and which were all intercepted at the post-house by order of the Senate.

[The grand council of Geneva in December, 1728, pronounced this paper highly disrespectful to the councils, and injurious to the committee of fortification.]

I found this memorial among my uncle's papers, with the answer he had been ordered to make to it, and took both. This was soon after I had left my place at the survey, and I yet remained on good terms with the Counsellor de Coccelli, who had the management of it. Some time after, the director of the custom-house entreated me to stand godfather to his child, with Madam Coccelli, who was to be godmother: proud of being placed on such terms of equality with the counsellor, I wished to assume importance, and show myself worthy of that honor.

Full of this idea, I thought I could do nothing better than show him Micheli's memorial, which was really a scarce piece, and would prove I was connected with people of consequence in Geneva, who were intrusted with the secrets of the state, yet by a kind of reserve which I should find it difficult to account for, I did not show him my uncle's answer, perhaps, because it was manuscript, and nothing less than print was worthy to

approach the counsellor. He understood, however, so well the importance of this paper, which



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I had the folly to put into his hands, that I could never after get it into my possession, and being convinced that every effort for that purpose would be ineffectual, I made a merit of my forbearance, transforming the theft into a present. I made no doubt that this writing (more curious, however, than useful) answered his purpose at the court of Turin, where probably he took care to be reimbursed in some way or other for the expense which the acquisition of it might be supposed to have cost him. Happily, of all future contingencies, the least probable, is, that ever the King of Sardina should besiege Geneva, but as that event is not absolutely impossible, I shall ever reproach my foolish vanity with having been the means of pointing out the greatest defects of that city to its most ancient enemy.

I passed three or four years in this manner, between music, magestry, projects, and journeys, floating incessantly from one object to another, and wishing to fix though I knew not on what, but insensibly inclining towards study. I was acquainted with men of letters, I had heard them speak of literature, and sometimes mingled in the conversation, yet rather adopted the jargon of books, than the knowledge they contained. In my excursions to Geneva, I frequently called on my good old friend Monsieur Simon, who greatly promoted my rising emulation by fresh news from the republic of letters, extracted from Baillet on Colomies. I frequently saw too, at Chambery, a Dominican professor of physic, a good kind of friar, whose name I have forgotten, who often made little chemical experiments which greatly amused me. In imitation of him, I attempted to make some sympathetic ink, and having for that purpose more than half filled a bottle with quicklime, orpiment, and water, the effervescence immediately became extremely violent; I ran to unstop the bottle, but had not time to effect it, for, during the attempt, it burst in my face like a bomb, and I swallowed so much of the orpiment and lime, that it nearly cost me my life. I remained blind for six weeks, and by the event of this experiment learned to meddle no more with experimental Chemistry while the elements were unknown to me.

This adventure happened very unluckily for my health, which, for some time past, had been visibly on the decline. This was rather extraordinary, as I was guilty of no kind of excess; nor could it have been expected from my make, for my chest, being well formed and rather capacious, seemed to give my lungs full liberty to play; yet I was short breathed, felt a very sensible oppression, sighed involuntarily, had palpitations of the heart, and spitting of blood, accompanied with a lingering fever, which I have never since entirely overcome. How is it possible to fall into such a state in the flower of one's age, without any inward decay, or without having done anything to destroy health?



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It is sometimes said, "the sword wears the scabbard," this was truly the case with me: the violence of my passions both kept me alive and hastened my dissolution. What passions? will be asked: mere nothings: the most trivial objects in nature, but which affected me as forcibly as if the acquisition of a Helen, or the throne of the universe were at stake. My senses, for instance, were at ease with one woman, but my heart never was, and the necessities of love consumed me in the very bosom of happiness. I had a tender, respected and lovely friend, but I sighed for a mistress; my prolific fancy painted her as such, and gave her a thousand forms, for had I conceived that my endearments had been lavished on Madam de Warrens, they would not have been less tender, though infinitely more tranquil. But is it possible for man to taste, in their utmost extent, the delights of love? I cannot tell, but I am persuaded my frail existence would have sunk under the weight of them.

I was, therefore, dying for love without an object, and this state, perhaps, is, of all others, the most dangerous. I was likewise uneasy, tormented at the bad state of poor Madam de Warrens' circumstances, and the imprudence of her conduct, which could not fail to bring them, in a short time, to total ruin. My tortured imagination (which ever paints misfortunes in the extremity) continually beheld this in its utmost excess, and in all the horror of its consequences. I already saw myself forced by want to quit her—to whom I had consecrated my future life, and without whom I could not hope for happiness: thus was my soul continually agitated, and hopes and fears devoured me alternately.

Music was a passion less turbulent, but not less consuming, from the ardor with which I attached myself to it, by the obstinate study of the obscure books of Rameau; by an invincible resolution to charge my memory with rules it could not contain; by continual application, and by long and immense compilations which I frequently passed whole nights in copying: but why dwell on these particularly, while every folly that took possession of my wandering brain, the most transient ideas of a single day, a journey, a concert, a supper, a walk, a novel to read, a play to see, things in the world the least premeditated in my pleasures or occupation became for me the most violent passions, which by their ridiculous impetuosity conveyed the most serious torments; even the imaginary misfortunes of Cleveland, read with avidity and frequent interruption, have, I am persuaded, disordered me more than my own.



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There was a Genevese, named Bagueret, who had been employed under Peter the Great, of the court of Russia, one of the most worthless, senseless fellows I ever met with; full of projects as foolish as himself, which were to rain down millions on those who took part in them. This man, having come to Chambéry on account of some suit depending before the senate, immediately got acquainted with Madam de Warrens, and with great reason on his side, since for those imaginary treasures that cost him nothing, and which he bestowed with the utmost prodigality, he gained, in exchange, the unfortunate crown pieces one by one out of her pocket. I did not like him, and he plainly perceived this, for with me it is not a very difficult discovery, nor did he spare any sort of meanness to gain my good will, and among other things proposed teaching me to play at chess, which game he understood something of. I made an attempt, though almost against my inclination, and after several efforts, having learned the march, my progress was so rapid, that before the end of the first sitting I gave him the rook, which in the beginning he had given me. Nothing more was necessary; behold me fascinated with chess! I buy a board, with the rest of the apparatus, and shutting myself up in my chamber, pass whole days and nights in studying all the varieties of the game, being determined by playing alone, without end or relaxation, to drive them into my head, right or wrong. After incredible efforts, during two or three months passed in this curious employment, I go to the coffee-house, thin, sallow, and almost stupid; I seat myself, and again attack M. Bagueret: he beats me, once, twice, twenty times; so many combinations were fermenting in my head, and my imagination was so stupefied, that all appeared confusion. I tried to exercise myself with Phitidor's or Stamina's book of instructions, but I was still equally perplexed, and, after having exhausted myself with fatigue, was further to seek than ever, and whether I abandoned my chess for a time, or resolved to surmount every difficulty by unremitted practice, it was the same thing. I could never advance one step beyond the improvement of the first sitting, nay, I am convinced that had I studied it a thousand ages, I should have ended by being able to give Bagueret the rook and nothing more.

It will be said my time was well employed, and not a little of it passed in this occupation, nor did I quit my first essay till unable to persist in it, for on leaving my apartment I had the appearance of a corpse, and had I continued this course much longer I should certainly have been one.



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Any one will allow that it would have been extraordinary, especially in the ardor of youth, that such a head should suffer the body to enjoy continued health; the alteration of mine had an effect on my temper, moderating the ardor of my chimerical fancies, for as I grew weaker they became more tranquil, and I even lost, in some measure, my rage for travelling. I was not seized with heaviness, but melancholy; vapors succeeded passions, languor became sorrow: I wept and sighed without cause, and felt my life ebbing away before I had enjoyed it. I only trembled to think of the situation in which I should leave my dear Madam de Warrens; and I can truly say, that quitting her, and leaving her in these melancholy circumstances, was my only concern. At length I fell quite ill, and was nursed by her as never mother nursed a child. The care she took of me was of real utility to her affairs, since it diverted her mind from schemes, and kept projectors at a distance. How pleasing would death have been at that time, when, if I had not tasted many of the pleasures of life, I had felt but few of its misfortunes. My tranquil soul would have taken her flight, without having experienced those cruel ideas of the injustice of mankind which embitters both life and death. I should have enjoyed the sweet consolation that I still survived in the dearer part of myself: in the situation I then was, it could hardly be called death; and had I been divested of my uneasiness on her account, it would have appeared but a gentle sleep; yet even these disquietudes had such an affectionate and tender turn, that their bitterness was tempered by a pleasing sensibility. I said to her, "You are the depository of my whole being, act so that I may be happy." Two or three times, when my disorder was most violent, I crept to her apartment to give her my advice respecting her future conduct; and I dare affirm these admonitions were both wise and equitable, in which the interest I took in her future concerns was strongly marked. As if tears had been both nourishment and medicine, I found myself the better for those I shed with her, while seated on her bed-side, and holding her hands between mine. The hours crept insensibly away in these nocturnal discourses; I returned to my chamber better than I had quitted it, being content and calmed by the promises she made, and the hopes with which she had inspired me: I slept on them with my heart at peace, and fully resigned to the dispensations of Providence. God grant, that after having had so many reasons to hate life, after being agitated with so many storms, after it has even become a burden, that death, which must terminate all, may be no more terrible than it would have been at that moment!



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By inconceivable care and vigilance, she saved my life; and I am convinced she alone could have done this. I have little faith in the skill of physicians, but depend greatly on the assistance of real friends, and am persuaded that being easy in those particulars on which our happiness depends, is more salutary than any other application. If there is a sensation in life peculiarly delightful, we experienced it in being restored to each other; our mutual attachment did not increase, for that was impossible, but it became, I know not how, more exquisitely tender, fresh softness being added to its former simplicity. I became in a manner her work; we got into the habit, though without design, of being continually with each other, and enjoying, in some measure, our whole existence together, feeling reciprocally that we were not only necessary, but entirely sufficient for each other's happiness. Accustomed to think of no subject foreign to ourselves, our happiness and all our desires were confined to that pleasing and singular union, which, perhaps, had no equal, which is not, as I have before observed, love, but a sentiment inexpressibly more intimate, neither depending on the senses, age, nor figure, but an assemblage of every endearing sensation that composes our rational existence and which can cease only with our being.

How was it that this delightful crisis did not secure our mutual felicity for the remainder of her life and mine? I have the consoling conviction that it was not my fault; nay, I am persuaded, she did not wilfully destroy it; the invincible peculiarity of my disposition was doomed soon to regain its empire; but this fatal return was not suddenly accomplished, there was, thank Heaven, a short but precious interval, that did not conclude by my fault, and which I cannot reproach myself with having employed amiss.

Though recovered from my dangerous illness, I did not regain my strength; my stomach was weak, some remains of the fever kept me in a languishing condition, and the only inclination I was sensible of, was to end my days near one so truly dear to me; to confirm her in those good resolutions she had formed; to convince her in what consisted the real charms of a happy life, and, as far as depended on me, to render hers so; but I foresaw that in a gloomy, melancholy house, the continual solitude of our *tete-a-tetes* would at length become too dull and monotonous: a remedy presented itself: Madam de Warrens had prescribed milk for me, and insisted that I should take it in the country; I consented, provided she would accompany me; nothing more was necessary to gain her compliance, and whither we should go was all that remained to be determined on. Our garden (which I have before mentioned) was not properly in the country, being surrounded by houses and other gardens, and possessing none of those attractions so desirable in a rural retreat; besides, after the death of Anet, we had given up this place from economical principles, feeling no



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longer a desire to rear plants, and other views making us not regret the loss of that little retreat. Improving the distaste I found she began to imbibe for the town, I proposed to abandon it entirely, and settle ourselves in an agreeable solitude, in some small house, distant enough from the city to avoid the perpetual intrusion of her hangers-on. She followed my advice, and this plan, which her good angel and mine suggested, might fully have secured our happiness and tranquility till death had divided us—but this was not the state we were appointed to; Madam de Warrens was destined to endure all the sorrows of indigence and poverty, after having passed the former part of her life in abundance, that she might learn to quit it with the less regret; and myself, by an assemblage of misfortunes of all kinds, was to become a striking example to those who, inspired with a love of justice and the public good, and trusting too implicitly to their own innocence, shall openly dare to assert truth to mankind, unsupported by cabals, or without having previously formed parties to protect them.

An unhappy fear furnished some objections to our plan: she did not dare to quit her ill-contrived house, for fear of displeasing the proprietor. “Your proposed retirement is charming,” said she, “and much to my taste, but we are necessitated to remain here, for, on quitting this dungeon, I hazard losing the very means of life, and when these fail us in the woods, we must again return to seek them in the city. That we may have the least possible cause for being reduced to this necessity, let us not leave this house entirely, but pay a small pension to the Count of Saint-Laurent, that he may continue mine. Let us seek some little habitation, far enough from the town to be at peace, yet near enough to return when it may appear convenient.”

This mode was finally adopted; and after some small search, we fixed at Charmettes, on an estate belonging to M. de Conzie, at a very small distance from Chambery; but as retired and solitary as if it had been a hundred leagues off. The spot we had concluded on was a valley between two tolerably high hills, which ran north and south; at the bottom, among the trees and pebbles, ran a rivulet, and above the declivity, on either side, were scattered a number of houses, forming altogether a beautiful retreat for those who love a peaceful romantic asylum. After having examined two or three of these houses, we chose that which we thought the most pleasing, which was the property of a gentleman of the army, called M. Noiret. This house was in good condition, before it a garden, forming a terrace; below that on the declivity an orchard, and on the ascent, behind the house, a vineyard: a little wood of chestnut trees opposite; a fountain just by, and higher up the hill, meadows for the cattle; in short, all that could be thought necessary for the country retirement we proposed to establish. To the best of my remembrance, we took possession of it toward the latter end of the summer Of 1736. I was delighted on going to sleep there—“Oh!” said I, to this dear friend, embracing her with tears of tenderness and delight, “this is the abode of happiness and innocence; if we do not find them here together it will be in vain to seek them elsewhere.”