

# **Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, the — Volume 07 eBook**

## **Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, the — Volume 07 by Jean-Jacques Rousseau**

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## BOOK VII.

After two years' silence and patience, and notwithstanding my resolutions, I again take up my pen: Reader, suspend your judgment as to the reasons which force me to such a step: of these you can be no judge until you shall have read my book.

My peaceful youth has been seen to pass away calmly and agreeably without any great disappointments or remarkable prosperity. This mediocrity was mostly owing to my ardent yet feeble nature, less prompt in undertaking than easy to discourage; quitting repose for violent agitations, but returning to it from lassitude and inclinations, and which, placing me in an idle and tranquil state for which alone I felt I was born, at a distance from the paths of great virtues and still further from those of great vices, never permitted me to arrive at anything great, either good or bad. What a different account will I soon have to give of myself! Fate, which for thirty years forced my inclinations, for thirty others has seemed to oppose them; and this continued opposition, between my situation and inclinations, will appear to have been the source of enormous faults, unheard of misfortunes, and every virtue except that fortitude which alone can do honor to adversity.

The history of the first part of my life was written from memory, and is consequently full of errors. As I am obliged to write the second part from memory also, the errors in it will probably be still more numerous. The agreeable remembrance of the finest portion of my years, passed with so much tranquillity and innocence, has left in my heart a thousand charming impressions which I love incessantly to call to my recollection. It will soon appear how different from these those of the rest of my life have been. To recall them to my mind would be to renew their bitterness. Far from increasing that of my situation by these sorrowful reflections, I repel them as much as possible, and in this endeavor often succeed so well as to be unable to find them at will. This facility of forgetting my misfortunes is a consolation which Heaven has reserved to me in the midst of those which fate has one day to accumulate upon my head. My memory, which presents to me no objects but such as are agreeable, is the happy counterpoise of my terrified imagination, by which I foresee nothing but a cruel futurity.

All the papers I had collected to aid my recollection, and guide me in this undertaking, are no longer in my possession, nor can I ever again hope to regain them.

I have but one faithful guide on which I can depend: this is the chain of the sentiments by which the succession of my existence has been marked, and by these the events which have been either the cause or the effect of the manner of it. I easily forget my misfortunes, but I cannot forget my faults, and still less my virtuous sentiments. The remembrance of these is too dear to me ever to suffer them to be effaced from my



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mind. I may omit facts, transpose events, and fall into some errors of dates; but I cannot be deceived in what I have felt, nor in that which from sentiment I have done; and to relate this is the chief end of my present work. The real object of my confessions is to communicate an exact knowledge of what I interiorly am and have been in every situation of my life. I have promised the history of my mind, and to write it faithfully I have no need of other memoirs: to enter into my own heart, as I have hitherto done, will alone be sufficient.

There is, however, and very happily, an interval of six or seven years, relative to which I have exact references, in a collection of letters copied from the originals, in the hands of M. du Peyrou. This collection, which concludes in 1760, comprehends the whole time of my residence at the hermitage, and my great quarrel with those who called themselves my friends; that memorable epocha of my life, and the source of all my other misfortunes. With respect to more recent original letters which may remain in my possession, and are but few in number, instead of transcribing them at the end of this collection, too voluminous to enable me to deceive the vigilance of my Arguses, I will copy them into the work whenever they appear to furnish any explanation, be this either for or against myself; for I am not under the least apprehension lest the reader should forget I make my confession, and be induced to believe I make my apology; but he cannot expect I shall conceal the truth when it testifies in my favor.

The second part, it is likewise to be remembered, contains nothing in common with the first, except truth; nor has any other advantage over it, but the importance of the facts; in everything else, it is inferior to the former. I wrote the first with pleasure, with satisfaction, and at my ease, at Wootton, or in the castle Trie: everything I had to recollect was a new enjoyment. I returned to my closet with an increased pleasure, and, without constraint, gave that turn to my descriptions which most flattered my imagination.

At present my head and memory are become so weak as to render me almost incapable of every kind of application: my present undertaking is the result of constraint, and a heart full of sorrow. I have nothing to treat of but misfortunes, treacheries, perfidies, and circumstances equally afflicting. I would give the world, could I bury in the obscurity of time, every thing I have to say, and which, in spite of myself, I am obliged to relate. I am, at the same time, under the necessity of being mysterious and subtle, of endeavoring to impose and of descending to things the most foreign to my nature. The ceiling under which I write has eyes; the walls of my chamber have ears. Surrounded by spies and by vigilant and malevolent inspectors, disturbed, and my attention diverted, I hastily commit to paper a few broken sentences, which I have scarcely time to

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read, and still less to correct. I know that, notwithstanding the barriers which are multiplied around me, my enemies are afraid truth should escape by some little opening. What means can I take to introduce it to the world? This, however, I attempt with but few hopes of success. The reader will judge whether or not such a situation furnishes the means of agreeable descriptions, or of giving them a seductive coloring! I therefore inform such as may undertake to read this work, that nothing can secure them from weariness in the prosecution of their task, unless it be the desire of becoming more fully acquainted with a man whom they already know, and a sincere love of justice and truth.

In my first part I brought down my narrative to my departure with infinite regret from Paris, leaving my heart at Charmettes, and, there building my last castle in the air, intending some day to return to the feet of mamma, restored to herself, with the treasures I should have acquired, and depending upon my system of music as upon a certain fortune.

I made some stay at Lyons to visit my acquaintance, procure letters of recommendation to Paris, and to sell my books of geometry which I had brought with me. I was well received by all whom I knew. M. and Madam de Malby seemed pleased to see me again, and several times invited me to dinner. At their house I became acquainted with the Abbe de Malby, as I had already done with the Abbe de Condillac, both of whom were on a visit to their brother. The Abbe de Malby gave me letters to Paris; among others, one to M. de Pontenelle, and another to the Comte de Caylus. These were very agreeable acquaintances, especially the first, to whose friendship for me his death only put a period, and from whom, in our private conversations, I received advice which I ought to have more exactly followed.

I likewise saw M. Bordes, with whom I had been long acquainted, and who had frequently obliged me with the greatest cordiality and the most real pleasure. He it was who enabled me to sell my books; and he also gave me from himself good recommendations to Paris. I again saw the intendant for whose acquaintance I was indebted to M. Bordes, and who introduced me to the Duke de Richelieu, who was then passing through Lyons. M. Pallu presented me. The Duke received me well, and invited me to come and see him at Paris; I did so several times; although this great acquaintance, of which I shall frequently have occasion to speak, was never of the most trifling utility to me.

I visited the musician David, who, in one of my former journeys, and in my distress, had rendered me service. He had either lent or given me a cap and a pair of stockings, which I have never returned, nor has he ever asked me for them, although we have since that time frequently seen each other. I, however, made him a present, something like an equivalent. I would say more upon this subject, were what I have owned in

question; but I have to speak of what I have done, which, unfortunately, is far from being the same thing.



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I also saw the noble and generous Perrichon, and not without feeling the effects of his accustomed munificence; for he made me the same present he had previously done to the elegant Bernard, by paying for my place in the diligence. I visited the surgeon Parisot, the best and most benevolent of men; as also his beloved Godefroi, who had lived with him ten years, and whose merit chiefly consisted in her gentle manners and goodness of heart. It was impossible to see this woman without pleasure, or to leave her without regret. Nothing better shows the inclinations of a man, than the nature of his attachments.

[Unless he be deceived in his choice, or that she, to whom he attaches himself, changes her character by an extraordinary concurrence of causes, which is not absolutely impossible. Were this consequence to be admitted without modification, Socrates must be judged of by his wife Xantippe, and Dion by his friend Calippus, which would be the most false and iniquitous judgment ever made. However, let no injurious application be here made to my wife. She is weak and more easily deceived than I at first imagined, but by her pure and excellent character she is worthy of all my esteem.]

Those who had once seen the gentle Godefroi, immediately knew the good and amiable Parisot.

I was much obliged to all these good people, but I afterwards neglected them all; not from ingratitude, but from that invincible indolence which so often assumes its appearance. The remembrance of their services has never been effaced from my mind, nor the impression they made from my heart; but I could more easily have proved my gratitude, than assiduously have shown them the exterior of that sentiment. Exactitude in correspondence is what I never could observe; the moment I began to relax, the shame and embarrassment of repairing my fault made me aggravate it, and I entirely desist from writing; I have, therefore, been silent, and appeared to forget them. Parisot and Perrichon took not the least notice of my negligence, and I ever found them the same. But, twenty years afterwards it will be seen, in M. Bordes, to what a degree the self-love of a wit can make him carry his vengeance when he feels himself neglected.

Before I leave Lyons, I must not forget an amiable person, whom I again saw with more pleasure than ever, and who left in my heart the most tender remembrance. This was Mademoiselle Serre, of whom I have spoken in my first part; I renewed my acquaintance with her whilst I was at M. de Malby's.

Being this time more at leisure, I saw her more frequently, and she made the most sensible impressions on my heart. I had some reason to believe her own was not unfavorable to my pretensions; but she honored me with her confidence so far as to remove from me all temptation to allure her partiality.



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She had no fortune, and in this respect exactly resembled myself; our situations were too similar to permit us to become united; and with the views I then had, I was far from thinking of marriage. She gave me to understand that a young merchant, one M. Geneve, seemed to wish to obtain her hand. I saw him once or twice at her lodgings; he appeared to me to be an honest man, and this was his general character. Persuaded she would be happy with him, I was desirous he should marry her, which he afterwards did; and that I might not disturb their innocent love, I hastened my departure; offering up, for the happiness of that charming woman, prayers, which, here below were not long heard. Alas! her time was very short, for I afterwards heard she died in the second or third year after her marriage. My mind, during the journey, was wholly absorbed in tender regret. I felt, and since that time, when these circumstances have been present to my recollection, have frequently done the same; that although the sacrifices made to virtue and our duty may sometimes be painful, we are well rewarded by the agreeable remembrance they leave deeply engravers in our hearts.

I this time saw Paris in as favorable a point of view as it had appeared to me in an unfavorable one at my first journey; not that my ideas of its brilliancy arose from the splendor of my lodgings; for in consequence of an address given me by M. Bordes, I resided at the Hotel St. Quentin, Rue des Cordier, near the Sorbonne; a vile street, a miserable hotel, and a wretched apartment: but nevertheless a house in which several men of merit, such as Gresset, Bordes, Abbe Malby, Condillac, and several others, of whom unfortunately I found not one, had taken up their quarters; but I there met with M. Bonnefond, a man unacquainted with the world, lame, litigious, and who affected to be a purist. To him I owe the acquaintance of M. Roguin, at present the oldest friend I have and by whose means I became acquainted with Diderot, of whom I shall soon have occasion to say a good deal.

I arrived at Paris in the autumn of 1741, with fifteen louis in my purse, and with my comedy of Narcissus and my musical project in my pocket. These composed my whole stock; consequently I had not much time to lose before I attempted to turn the latter to some advantage. I therefore immediately thought of making use of my recommendations.

A young man who arrives at Paris, with a tolerable figure, and announces himself by his talents, is sure to be well received. This was my good fortune, which procured me some pleasure without leading to anything solid. Of all the persons to whom I was recommended, three only were useful to me. M. Damesin, a gentleman of Savoy, at that time equerry, and I believe favorite, of the Princess of Carignan; M. de Boze, Secretary of the Academy of Inscriptions, and keeper of the medals of the king's cabinet; and Father Castel, a Jesuit, author of the 'Clavecin oculaire'.—[ocular harpsichord.]



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All these recommendations, except that to M. Damesin, were given me by the Abbe de Malby.

M. Damesin provided me with that which was most needful, by means of two persons with whom he brought me acquainted. One was M. Gase, 'president a mortier' of the parliament of Bordeaux, and who played very well upon the violin; the other, the Abbe de Leon, who then lodged in the Sorbonne, a young nobleman; extremely amiable, who died in the flower of his age, after having, for a few moments, made a figure in the world under the name of the Chevalier de Rohan. Both these gentlemen had an inclination to learn composition. In this I gave them lessons for a few months, by which means my decreasing purse received some little aid. The Abbe Leon conceived a friendship for me, and wished me to become his secretary; but he was far from being rich, and all the salary he could offer me was eight hundred livres, which, with infinite regret, I refused; since it was insufficient to defray the expenses of my lodging, food, and clothing.

I was well received by M. de Boze. He had a thirst for knowledge, of which he possessed not a little, but was somewhat pedantic. Madam de Boze much resembled him; she was lively and affected. I sometimes dined with them, and it is impossible to be more awkward than I was in her presence. Her easy manner intimidated me, and rendered mine more remarkable. When she presented me a plate, I modestly put forward my fork to take one of the least bits of what she offered me, which made her give the plate to her servant, turning her head aside that I might not see her laugh. She had not the least suspicion that in the head of the rustic with whom she was so diverted there was some small portion of wit. M. de Boze presented me to M. de Reaumur, his friend, who came to dine with him every Friday, the day on which the Academy of Sciences met. He mentioned to him my project, and the desire I had of having it examined by the academy. M. de Reaumur consented to make the proposal, and his offer was accepted. On the day appointed I was introduced and presented by M. de Reaumur, and on the same day, August 22d, 1742, I had the honor to read to the academy the memoir I had prepared for that purpose. Although this illustrious assembly might certainly well be expected to inspire me with awe, I was less intimidated on this occasion than I had been in the presence of Madam de Boze, and I got tolerably well through my reading and the answers I was obliged to give. The memoir was well received, and acquired me some compliments by which I was equally surprised and flattered, imagining that before such an assembly, whoever was not a member of it could not have commonsense. The persons appointed to examine my system were M. Mairan, M. Hellot, and M. de Fouchy, all three men of merit, but not one of them understood music, at least not enough of composition to enable them to judge of my project.

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During my conference with these gentlemen, I was convinced with no less certainty than surprise, that if men of learning have sometimes fewer prejudices than others, they more tenaciously retain those they have. However weak or false most of their objections were, and although I answered them with great timidity, and I confess, in bad terms, yet with decisive reasons, I never once made myself understood, or gave them any explanation in the least satisfactory. I was constantly surprised at the facility with which, by the aid of a few sonorous phrases, they refuted, without having comprehended me. They had learned, I know not where, that a monk of the name of Souhaitti had formerly invented a mode of noting the gamut by ciphers: a sufficient proof that my system was not new. This might, perhaps, be the case; for although I had never heard of Father Souhaitti, and notwithstanding his manner of writing the seven notes without attending to the octaves was not, under any point of view, worthy of entering into competition with my simple and commodious invention for easily noting by ciphers every possible kind of music, keys, rests, octaves, measure, time, and length of note; things on which Souhaitti had never thought it was nevertheless true, that with respect to the elementary expression of the seven notes, he was the first inventor.

But besides their giving to this primitive invention more importance than was due to it, they went still further, and, whenever they spoke of the fundamental principles of the system, talked nonsense. The greatest advantage of my scheme was to supersede transpositions and keys, so that the same piece of music was noted and transposed at will by means of the change of a single initial letter at the head of the air. These gentlemen had heard from the music—masters of Paris that the method of executing by transposition was a bad one; and on this authority converted the most evident advantage of my system into an invincible objection against it, and affirmed that my mode of notation was good for vocal music, but bad for instrumental; instead of concluding as they ought to have done, that it was good for vocal, and still better for instrumental. On their report the academy granted me a certificate full of fine compliments, amidst which it appeared that in reality it judged my system to be neither new nor useful. I did not think proper to ornament with such a paper the work entitled ‘Dissertation sur la musique moderne’, by which I appealed to the public.

I had reason to remark on this occasion that, even with a narrow understanding, the sole but profound knowledge of a thing is preferable for the purpose of judging of it, to all the lights resulting from a cultivation of the sciences, when to these a particular study of that in question has not been joined. The only solid objection to my system was made by Rameau. I had scarcely explained it to him before he discovered its weak part. “Your signs,”

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said he, "are very good inasmuch as they clearly and simply determine the length of notes, exactly represent intervals, and show the simple in the double note, which the common notation does not do; but they are objectionable on account of their requiring an operation of the mind, which cannot always accompany the rapidity of execution. The position of our notes," continued he, "is described to the eye without the concurrence of this operation. If two notes, one very high and the other very low, be joined by a series of intermediate ones, I see at the first glance the progress from one to the other by conjoined degrees; but in your system, to perceive this series, I must necessarily run over your ciphers one after the other; the glance of the eye is here useless." The objection appeared to me insurmountable, and I instantly assented to it. Although it be simple and striking, nothing can suggest it but great knowledge and practice of the art, and it is by no means astonishing that not one of the academicians should have thought of it. But what creates much surprise is, that these men of great learning, and who are supposed to possess so much knowledge, should so little know that each ought to confine his judgment to that which relates to the study with which he has been conversant.

My frequent visits to the literati appointed to examine my system and the other academicians gave me an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the most distinguished men of letters in Paris, and by this means the acquaintance that would have been the consequence of my sudden admission amongst them, which afterwards came to pass, was already established. With respect to the present moment, absorbed in my new system of music, I obstinately adhered to my intention of effecting a revolution in the art, and by that means of acquiring a celebrity which, in the fine arts, is in Paris mostly accompanied by fortune. I shut myself in my chamber and labored three or four months with inexpressible ardor, in forming into a work for the public eye, the memoir I had read before the academy. The difficulty was to find a bookseller to take my manuscript; and this on account of the necessary expenses for new characters, and because booksellers give not their money by handfuls to young authors; although to me it seemed but just my work should render me the bread I had eaten while employed in its composition.

Bonnefond introduced me to Quillau the father, with whom I agreed to divide the profits, without reckoning the privilege, of which I paid the whole expense. Such were the future proceedings of this Quillau that I lost the expenses of my privilege, never having received a farthing from that edition; which, probably, had but very middling success, although the Abbe des Fontaines promised to give it celebrity, and, notwithstanding the other journalists, had spoken of it very favorably.

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The greatest obstacle to making the experiment of my system was the fear, in case of its not being received, of losing the time necessary to learn it. To this I answered, that my notes rendered the ideas so clear, that to learn music by means of the ordinary characters, time would be gained by beginning with mine. To prove this by experience, I taught music gratis to a young American lady, Mademoiselle des Roulins, with whom M. Roguin had brought me acquainted. In three months she read every kind of music, by means of my notation, and sung at sight better than I did myself, any piece that was not too difficult. This success was convincing, but not known; any other person would have filled the journals with the detail, but with some talents for discovering useful things, I never have possessed that of setting them off to advantage.

Thus was my airy castle again overthrown; but this time I was thirty years of age, and in Paris, where it is impossible to live for a trifle. The resolution I took upon this occasion will astonish none but those by whom the first part of these memoirs has not been read with attention. I had just made great and fruitless efforts, and was in need of relaxation. Instead of sinking with despair I gave myself up quietly to my indolence and to the care of Providence; and the better to wait for its assistance with patience, I lay down a frugal plan for the slow expenditure of a few louis, which still remained in my possession, regulating the expense of my supine pleasures without retrenching it; going to the coffee-house but every other day, and to the theatre but twice a week. With respect to the expenses of girls of easy virtue, I had no retrenchment to make; never having in the whole course of my life applied so much as a farthing to that use except once, of which I shall soon have occasion to speak. The security, voluptuousness, and confidence with which I gave myself up to this indolent and solitary life, which I had not the means of continuing for three months, is one of the singularities of my life, and the oddities of my disposition. The extreme desire I had, the public should think of me was precisely what discouraged me from showing myself; and the necessity of paying visits rendered them to such a degree insupportable, that I ceased visiting the academicians and other men of letters, with whom I had cultivated an acquaintance. Marivaux, the Abbe Malby, and Fontenelle, were almost the only persons whom I sometimes went to see. To the first I showed my comedy of Narcissus. He was pleased with it, and had the goodness to make in it some improvements. Diderot, younger than these, was much about my own age. He was fond of music, and knew it theoretically; we conversed together, and he communicated to me some of his literary projects. This soon formed betwixt us a more intimate connection, which lasted fifteen years, and which probably would still exist were not I, unfortunately, and by his own fault, of the same profession with himself.

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It would be impossible to imagine in what manner I employed this short and precious interval which still remained to me, before circumstances forced me to beg my bread:— in learning by memory passages from the poets which I had learned and forgotten a hundred times. Every morning at ten o'clock, I went to walk in the Luxembourg with a Virgil and a Rousseau in my pocket, and there, until the hour of dinner, I passed away the time in restoring to my memory a sacred ode or a bucolic, without being discouraged by forgetting, by the study of the morning, what I had learned the evening before. I recollected that after the defeat of Nicias at Syracuse the captive Athenians obtained a livelihood by reciting the poems of Homer. The use I made of this erudition to ward off misery was to exercise my happy memory by learning all the poets by rote.

I had another expedient, not less solid, in the game of chess, to which I regularly dedicated, at Maugis, the evenings on which I did not go to the theatre. I became acquainted with M. de Legal, M. Husson, Philidor, and all the great chess players of the day, without making the least improvement in the game. However, I had no doubt but, in the end, I should become superior to them all, and this, in my own opinion, was a sufficient resource. The same manner of reasoning served me in every folly to which I felt myself inclined. I said to myself: whoever excels in anything is sure to acquire a distinguished reception in society. Let us therefore excel, no matter in what, I shall certainly be sought after; opportunities will present themselves, and my own merit will do the rest. This childishness was not the sophism of my reason; it was that of my indolence. Dismayed at the great and rapid efforts which would have been necessary to call forth my endeavors, I strove to flatter my idleness, and by arguments suitable to the purpose, veiled from my own eyes the shame of such a state.

I thus calmly waited for the moment when I was to be without money; and had not Father Castel, whom I sometimes went to see in my way to the coffee-house, roused me from my lethargy, I believe I should have seen myself reduced to my last farthing without the least emotion. Father Castel was a madman, but a good man upon the whole; he was sorry to see me thus impoverish myself to no purpose. "Since musicians and the learned," said he, "do not sing by your scale, change the string, and apply to the women. You will perhaps succeed better with them. I have spoken of you to Madam de Beuzenval; go to her from me; she is a good woman who will be glad to see the countryman of her son and husband. You will find at her house Madam de Broglie, her daughter, who is a woman of wit. Madam Dupin is another to whom I also have mentioned you; carry her your work; she is desirous of seeing you, and will receive you well. No thing is done in Paris without the women. They are the curves, of which the wise are the asymptotes; they incessantly approach each other, but never touch."



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After having from day to day delayed these very disagreeable steps, I at length took courage, and called upon Madam de Beuzenval. She received me with kindness; and Madam de Broglie entering the chamber, she said to her: "Daughter, this is M. Rousseau, of whom Father Castel has spoken to us." Madam de Broglie complimented me upon my work, and going to her harpsichord proved to me she had already given it some attention. Perceiving it to be about one o'clock, I prepared to take my leave. Madam de Beuzenval said to me: "You are at a great distance from the quarter of the town in which you reside; stay and dine here." I did not want asking a second time. A quarter of an hour afterwards, I understood, by a word, that the dinner to which she had invited me was that of her servants' hall. Madam de Beuzenval was a very good kind of woman, but of a confined understanding, and too full of her illustrious Polish nobility: she had no idea of the respect due to talents. On this occasion, likewise, she judged me by my manner rather than by my dress, which, although very plain, was very neat, and by no means announced a man to dine with servants. I had too long forgotten the way to the place where they eat to be inclined to take it again. Without suffering my anger to appear, I told Madam de Beuzenval that I had an affair of a trifling nature which I had just recollected obliged me to return home, and I immediately prepared to depart. Madam de Broglie approached her mother, and whispered in her ear a few words which had their effect. Madam de Beuzenval rose to prevent me from going, and said, "I expect that you will do us the honor to dine with us." In this case I thought to show pride would be a mark of folly, and I determined to stay. The goodness of Madam de Broglie had besides made an impression upon me, and rendered her interesting in my eyes. I was very glad to dine with her, and hoped, that when she knew me better, she would not regret having procured me that honor. The President de Lamoignon, very intimate in the family, dined there also. He, as well as Madam de Broglie, was a master of all the modish and fashionable small talk jargon of Paris. Poor Jean Jacques was unable to make a figure in this way. I had sense enough not to pretend to it, and was silent. Happy would it have been for me, had I always possessed the same wisdom; I should not be in the abyss into which I am now fallen. I was vexed at my own stupidity, and at being unable to justify to Madam de Broglie what she had done in my favor.

After dinner I thought of my ordinary resource. I had in my pocket an epistle in verse, written to Parisot during my residence at Lyons. This fragment was not without some fire, which I increased by my manner of reading, and made them all three shed tears. Whether it was vanity, or really the truth, I thought the eyes of Madam de Broglie seemed to say to her mother: "Well, mamma, was I wrong in telling

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you this man was fitter to dine with us than with your women?" Until then my heart had been rather burdened, but after this revenge I felt myself satisfied. Madam de Broglie, carrying her favorable opinion of me rather too far, thought I should immediately acquire fame in Paris, and become a favorite with fine ladies. To guide my inexperience she gave me the confessions of the Count de ----. "This book," said she, "is a Mentor, of which you will stand in need in the great world. You will do well by sometimes consulting it." I kept the book upwards of twenty years with a sentiment of gratitude to her from whose hand I had received it, although I frequently laughed at the opinion the lady seemed to have of my merit in gallantry. From the moment I had read the work, I was desirous of acquiring the friendship of the author. My inclination led me right; he is the only real friend I ever possessed amongst men of letters.

[I have so long been of the same opinion, and so perfectly convinced of its being well founded, that since my return to Paris I confided to him the manuscript of my confessions. The suspicious J. J. never suspected perfidy and falsehood until he had been their victim.]

From this time I thought I might depend on the services of Madam the Baroness of Beuzenval, and the Marchioness of Broglie, and that they would not long leave me without resource. In this I was not deceived. But I must now speak of my first visit to Madam Dupin, which produced more lasting consequences.

Madam Dupin was, as every one in Paris knows, the daughter of Samuel Bernard and Madam Fontaine. There were three sisters, who might be called the three graces. Madam de la Touche who played a little prank, and went to England with the Duke of Kingston. Madam Darby, the eldest of the three; the friend, the only sincere friend of the Prince of Conti; an adorable woman, as well by her sweetness and the goodness of her charming character, as by her agreeable wit and incessant cheerfulness. Lastly, Madam Dupin, more beautiful than either of her sisters, and the only one who has not been reproached with some levity of conduct.

She was the reward of the hospitality of M. Dupin, to whom her mother gave her in marriage with the place of farmer general and an immense fortune, in return for the good reception he had given her in his province. When I saw her for the first time, she was still one of the finest women in Paris. She received me at her toilette, her arms were uncovered, her hair dishevelled, and her combing-cloth ill-arranged. This scene was new to me; it was too powerful for my poor head, I became confused, my senses wandered; in short, I was violently smitten by Madam Dupin.



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My confusion was not prejudicial to me; she did not perceive it. She kindly received the book and the author; spoke with information of my plan, sung, accompanied herself on the harpsichord, kept me to dinner, and placed me at table by her side. Less than this would have turned my brain; I became mad. She permitted me to visit her, and I abused the permission. I went to see her almost every day, and dined with her twice or thrice a week. I burned with inclination to speak, but never dared attempt it. Several circumstances increased my natural timidity. Permission to visit in an opulent family was a door open to fortune, and in my situation I was unwilling to run the risk of shutting it against myself.

Madam Dupin, amiable as she was, was serious and unanimated; I found nothing in her manners sufficiently alluring to embolden me. Her house, at that time, as brilliant as any other in Paris, was frequented by societies the less numerous, as the persons by whom they were composed were chosen on account of some distinguished merit. She was fond of seeing every one who had claims to a marked superiority; the great men of letters, and fine women. No person was seen in her circle but dukes, ambassadors, and blue ribbons. The Princess of Rohan, the Countess of Forcalquier, Madam de Mirepoix, Madam de Brignole, and Lady Hervey, passed for her intimate friends. The Abbes de Fontenelle, de Saint Pierre, and Saltier, M. de Fourmont, M. de Berms, M. de Buffon, and M. de Voltaire, were of her circle and her dinners. If her reserved manner did not attract many young people, her society inspired the greater awe, as it was composed of graver persons, and the poor Jean-Jacques had no reason to flatter himself he should be able to take a distinguished part in the midst of such superior talents. I therefore had not courage to speak; but no longer able to contain myself, I took a resolution to write. For the first two days she said not a word to me upon the subject. On the third day, she returned me my letter, accompanying it with a few exhortations which froze my blood. I attempted to speak, but my words expired upon my lips; my sudden passion was extinguished with my hopes, and after a declaration in form I continued to live with her upon the same terms as before, without so much as speaking to her even by the language of the eyes.

I thought my folly was forgotten, but I was deceived. M. de Francueil, son to M. Dupin, and son-in-law to Madam Dupin, was much the same with herself and me. He had wit, a good person, and might have pretensions. This was said to be the case, and probably proceeded from his mother-in-law's having given him an ugly wife of a mild disposition, with whom, as well as with her husband, she lived upon the best of terms. M. de Francueil was fond of talents in others, and cultivated those he possessed. Music, which he understood very well, was a means of producing a connection between us. I frequently



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saw him, and he soon gained my friendship. He, however, suddenly gave me to understand that Madam Dupin thought my visits too frequent, and begged me to discontinue them. Such a compliment would have been proper when she returned my letter; but eight or ten days afterwards, and without any new cause, it appeared to me ill-timed. This rendered my situation the more singular, as M. and Madam de Francueil still continued to give me the same good reception as before.

I however made the intervals between my visits longer, and I should entirely have ceased calling on them, had not Madam Dupin, by another unexpected caprice, sent to desire I would for a few days take care of her son, who changing his preceptor, remained alone during that interval. I passed eight days in such torments as nothing but the pleasure of obeying Madam Dupin could render supportable: I would not have undertaken to pass eight other days like them had Madam Dupin given me herself for the recompense.

M. de Francueil conceived a friendship for me, and I studied with him. We began together a course of chemistry at Rouelles. That I might be nearer at hand, I left my hotel at Quentin, and went to lodge at the Tennis Court, Rue Verdelet, which leads into the Rue Platiere, where M. Dupin lived. There, in consequence of a cold neglected, I contracted an inflammation of the lungs that had liked to have carried me off. In my younger days I frequently suffered from inflammatory disorders, pleurisies, and especially quinsies, to which I was very subject, and which frequently brought me near enough to death to familiarize me to its image.

During my convalescence I had leisure to reflect upon my situation, and to lament my timidity, weakness and indolence; these, notwithstanding the fire with which I found myself inflamed, left me to languish in an inactivity of mind, continually on the verge of misery. The evening preceding the day on which I was taken ill, I went to an opera by Royer; the name I have forgotten. Notwithstanding my prejudice in favor of the talents of others, which has ever made me distrustful of my own, I still thought the music feeble, and devoid of animation and invention. I sometimes had the vanity to flatter myself: I think I could do better than that. But the terrible idea I had formed of the composition of an opera, and the importance I heard men of the profession affix to such an undertaking, instantly discouraged me, and made me blush at having so much as thought of it. Besides, where was I to find a person to write the words, and one who would give himself the trouble of turning the poetry to my liking? These ideas of music and the opera had possession of my mind during my illness, and in the delirium of my fever I composed songs, duets, and choruses. I am certain I composed two or three little pieces, 'di prima infenzione', perhaps worthy of the admiration of masters, could they have heard them executed. Oh, could an account be taken of the dreams of a man in a fever, what great and sublime things would sometimes proceed from his delirium!



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These subjects of music and opera still engaged my attention during my convalescence, but my ideas were less energetic. Long and frequent meditations, and which were often involuntary, and made such an impression upon my mind that I resolved to attempt both words and music. This was not the first time I had undertaken so difficult a task. Whilst I was at Chambery I had composed an opera entitled 'Iphis and Anaxarete', which I had the good sense to throw into the fire. At Lyons I had composed another, entitled 'La Decouverte du Nouveau Monde', which, after having read it to M. Bordes, the Abbes Malby, Trublet, and others, had met the same fate, notwithstanding I had set the prologue and the first act to music, and although David, after examining the composition, had told me there were passages in it worthy of Buononcini.

Before I began the work I took time to consider of my plan. In a heroic ballet I proposed three different subjects, in three acts, detached from each other, set to music of a different character, taking for each subject the amours of a poet. I entitled this opera *Les Muses Galantes*. My first act, in music strongly characterized, was Tasso; the second in tender harmony, Ovid; and the third, entitled *Anacreon*, was to partake of the gayety of the dithyrambus. I tried my skill on the first act, and applied to it with an ardor which, for the first time, made me feel the delightful sensation produced by the creative power of composition. One evening, as I entered the opera, feeling myself strongly incited and overpowered by my ideas, I put my money again into my pocket, returned to my apartment, locked the door, and, having close drawn all the curtains, that every ray of light might be excluded, I went to bed, abandoning myself entirely to this musical and poetical 'oestrum', and in seven or eight hours rapidly composed the greatest part of an act. I can truly say my love for the Princess of Ferrara (for I was Tasso for the moment) and my noble and lofty sentiment with respect to her unjust brother, procured me a night a hundred times more delicious than one passed in the arms of the princess would have been. In the morning but a very little of what I had done remained in my head, but this little, almost effaced by sleep and lassitude, still sufficiently evinced the energy of the pieces of which it was the scattered remains.

I this time did, not proceed far with my undertaking, being interrupted by other affairs. Whilst I attached myself to the family of Dupin, Madam de Beuzenval and Madam de Broglie, whom I continued to visit, had not forgotten me. The Count de Montaigu, captain in the guards, had just been appointed ambassador to Venice. He was an ambassador made by Barjac, to whom he assiduously paid his court. His brother, the Chevalier de Montaigu, 'gentilhomme de la manche' to the dauphin, was acquainted with these ladies, and with the Abbe Alary of the French academy, whom I sometimes visited. Madam de Broglie

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having heard the ambassador was seeking a secretary, proposed me to him. A conference was opened between us. I asked a salary of fifty guineas, a trifle for an employment which required me to make some appearance. The ambassador was unwilling to give more than a thousand livres, leaving me to make the journey at my own expense. The proposal was ridiculous. We could not agree, and M. de Francueil, who used all his efforts to prevent my departure, prevailed.

I stayed, and M. de Montaigu set out on his journey, taking with him another secretary, one M. Follau, who had been recommended to him by the office of foreign affairs. They no sooner arrived at Venice than they quarrelled. Bollau perceiving he had to do with a madman, left him there, and M. de Montaigu having nobody with him, except a young abbe of the name of Binis, who wrote under the secretary, and was unfit to succeed him, had recourse to me. The chevalier, his brother, a man of wit, by giving me to understand there were advantages annexed to the place of secretary, prevailed upon me to accept the thousand livres. I was paid twenty louis in advance for my journey, and immediately departed.

At Lyons I would most willingly have taken the road to Mount Cenis, to see my poor mamma. But I went down the Rhone, and embarked at Toulon, as well on account of the war, and from a motive of economy, as to obtain a passport from M. de Mirepoix, who then commanded in Provence, and to whom I was recommended. M. de Montaigu not being able to do without me, wrote letter after letter, desiring I would hasten my journey; this, however, an accident considerably prolonged.

It was at the time of the plague at Messina, and the English fleet had anchored there, and visited the Felucca, on board of which I was, and this circumstance subjected us, on our arrival, after a long and difficult voyage, to a quarantine of one—and—twenty days.

The passengers had the choice of performing it on board or in the Lazaretto, which we were told was not yet furnished. They all chose the Felucca. The insupportable heat, the closeness of the vessel, the impossibility of walking in it, and the vermin with which it swarmed, made me at all risks prefer the Lazaretto. I was therefore conducted to a large building of two stories, quite empty, in which I found neither window, bed, table, nor chair, not so much as even a joint-stool or bundle of straw. My night sack and my two trunks being brought me, I was shut in by great doors with huge locks, and remained at full liberty to walk at my ease from chamber to chamber and story to story, everywhere finding the same solitude and nakedness.



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This, however, did not induce me to repent that I had preferred the Lazaretto to the Felucca; and, like another Robinson Crusoe, I began to arrange myself for my one-and twenty days, just as I should have done for my whole life. In the first place, I had the amusement of destroying the vermin I had caught in the Felucca. As soon as I had got clear of these, by means of changing my clothes and linen, I proceeded to furnish the chamber I had chosen. I made a good mattress with my waistcoats and shirts; my napkins I converted, by sewing them together, into sheets; my robe de chambre into a counterpane; and my cloak into a pillow. I made myself a seat with one of my trunks laid flat, and a table with the other. I took out some writing paper and an inkstand, and distributed, in the manner of a library, a dozen books which I had with me. In a word, I so well arranged my few movables, that except curtains and windows, I was almost as commodiously lodged in this Lazaretto, absolutely empty as it was, as I had been at the Tennis Court in the Rue Verdelet. My dinners were served with no small degree of pomp; they were escorted by two grenadiers with bayonets fixed; the staircase was my dining—room, the landing-place my table, and the steps served me for a seat; and as soon as my dinner was served up a little bell was rung to inform me I might sit down to table.

Between my repasts, when I did not either read or write or work at the furnishing of my apartment, I went to walk in the burying-ground of the Protestants, which served me as a courtyard. From this place I ascended to a lanthorn which looked into the harbor, and from which I could see the ships come in and go out. In this manner I passed fourteen days, and should have thus passed the whole time of the quarantine without the least weariness had not M. Joinville, envoy from France, to whom I found means to send a letter, vinegared, perfumed, and half burnt, procured eight days of the time to be taken off: these I went and spent at his house, where I confess I found myself better lodged than in the Lazaretto. He was extremely civil to me. Dupont, his secretary, was a good creature: he introduced me, as well at Genoa as in the country, to several families, the company of which I found very entertaining and agreeable; and I formed with him an acquaintance and a correspondence which we kept up for a considerable length of time. I continued my journey, very agreeably, through Lombardy. I saw Milan, Verona, Brescie, and Padua, and at length arrived at Venice, where I was impatiently expected by the ambassador.



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I found there piles of despatches, from the court and from other ambassadors, the ciphered part of which he had not been able to read, although he had all the ciphers necessary for that purpose, never having been employed in any office, nor even seen the cipher of a minister. I was at first apprehensive of meeting with some embarrassment; but I found nothing could be more easy, and in less than a week I had deciphered the whole, which certainly was not worth the trouble; for not to mention the little activity required in the embassy of Venice, it was not to such a man as M. de Montaignu that government would confide a negotiation of even the most trifling importance. Until my arrival he had been much embarrassed, neither knowing how to dictate nor to write legibly. I was very useful to him, of which he was sensible; and he treated me well. To this he was also induced by another motive. Since the time of M. de Froulay, his predecessor, whose head became deranged, the consul from France, M. le Blond, had been charged with the affairs of the embassy, and after the arrival of M. de Montaignu, continued to manage them until he had put him into the track. M. de Montaignu, hurt at this discharge of his duty by another, although he himself was incapable of it, became disgusted with the consul, and as soon as I arrived deprived him of the functions of secretary to the embassy to give them to me. They were inseparable from the title, and he told me to take it. As long as I remained with him he never sent any person except myself under this title to the senate, or to conference, and upon the whole it was natural enough he should prefer having for secretary to the embassy a man attached to him, to a consul or a clerk of office named by the court.

This rendered my situation very agreeable, and prevented his gentlemen, who were Italians, as well as his pages, and most of his suite from disputing precedence with me in his house. I made an advantageous use of the authority annexed to the title he had conferred upon me, by maintaining his right of protection, that is, the freedom of his neighborhood, against the attempts several times made to infringe it; a privilege which his Venetian officers took no care to defend. But I never permitted banditti to take refuge there, although this would have produced me advantages of which his excellency would not have disdained to partake. He thought proper, however, to claim a part of those of the secretaryship, which is called the chancery. It was in time of war, and there were many passports issued. For each of these passports a sequin was paid to the secretary who made it out and countersigned it. All my predecessors had been paid this sequin by Frenchmen and others without distinction. I thought this unjust, and although I was not a Frenchman, I abolished it in favor of the French; but I so rigorously demanded my right from persons of every other nation, that the Marquis de Scotti, brother to the favorite

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of the Queen of Spain, having asked for a passport without taking notice of the sequin: I sent to demand it; a boldness which the vindictive Italian did not forget. As soon as the new regulation I had made, relative to passports, was known, none but pretended Frenchmen, who in a gibberish the most mispronounced, called themselves Provençals, Picards, or Burgundians, came to demand them. My ear being very fine, I was not thus made a dupe, and I am almost persuaded that not a single Italian ever cheated me of my sequin, and that not one Frenchman ever paid it. I was foolish enough to tell M. de Montaigu, who was ignorant of everything that passed, what I had done. The word sequin made him open his ears, and without giving me his opinion of the abolition of that tax upon the French, he pretended I ought to account with him for the others, promising me at the same time equivalent advantages. More filled with indignation at this meanness, than concern for my own interest, I rejected his proposal. He insisted, and I grew warm. "No, sir," said I, with some heat, "your excellency may keep what belongs to you, but do not take from me that which is mine; I will not suffer you to touch a penny of the perquisites arising from passports." Perceiving he could gain nothing by these means he had recourse to others, and blushed not to tell me that since I had appropriated to myself the profits of the chancery, it was but just I should pay the expenses. I was unwilling to dispute upon this subject, and from that time I furnished at my own expense, ink, paper, wax, wax-candle, tape, and even a new seal, for which he never reimbursed me to the amount of a farthing. This, however, did not prevent my giving a small part of the produce of the passports to the Abbe de Binis, a good creature, and who was far from pretending to have the least right to any such thing. If he was obliging to me my politeness to him was an equivalent, and we always lived together on the best of terms.

On the first trial I made of his talents in my official functions, I found him less troublesome than I expected he would have been, considering he was a man without experience, in the service of an ambassador who possessed no more than himself, and whose ignorance and obstinacy constantly counteracted everything with which common-sense and some information inspired me for his service and that of the king. The next thing the ambassador did was to connect himself with the Marquis Mari, ambassador from Spain, an ingenious and artful man, who, had he wished so to do, might have led him by the nose, yet on account of the union of the interests of the two crowns he generally gave him good advice, which might have been of essential service, had not the other, by joining his own opinion, counteracted it in the execution. The only business they had to conduct in concert with each other was to engage the Venetians to maintain their neutrality. These did not neglect to give the strongest assurances



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of their fidelity to their engagement at the same time that they publicly furnished ammunition to the Austrian troops, and even recruits under pretense of desertion. M. de Montaigu, who I believe wished to render himself agreeable to the republic, failed not on his part, notwithstanding my representation to make me assure the government in all my despatches, that the Venetians would never violate an article of the neutrality. The obstinacy and stupidity of this poor wretch made me write and act extravagantly: I was obliged to be the agent of his folly, because he would have it so, but he sometimes rendered my employment insupportable and the functions of it almost impracticable. For example, he insisted on the greatest part of his despatches to the king, and of those to the minister, being written in cipher, although neither of them contained anything that required that precaution. I represented to him that between the Friday, the day the despatches from the court arrived, and Saturday, on which ours were sent off, there was not sufficient time to write so much in cipher, and carry on the considerable correspondence with which I was charged for the same courier. He found an admirable expedient, which was to prepare on Thursday the answer to the despatches we were expected to receive on the next day. This appeared to him so happily imagined, that notwithstanding all I could say on the impossibility of the thing, and the absurdity of attempting its execution, I was obliged to comply during the whole time I afterwards remained with him, after having made notes of the few loose words he spoke to me in the course of the week, and of some trivial circumstances which I collected by hurrying from place to place. Provided with these materials I never once failed carrying to him on the Thursday morning a rough draft of the despatches which were to be sent off on Saturday, excepting the few additions and corrections I hastily made in answer to the letters which arrived on the Friday, and to which ours served for answer. He had another custom, diverting enough and which made his correspondence ridiculous beyond imagination. He sent back all information to its respective source, instead of making it follow its course. To M. Amelot he transmitted the news of the court; to M. Maurepas, that of Paris; to M. d' Havrincourt, the news from Sweden; to M. de Chetardie, that from Petersbourg; and sometimes to each of those the news they had respectively sent to him, and which I was employed to dress up in terms different from those in which it was conveyed to us. As he read nothing of what I laid before him, except the despatches for the court, and signed those to other ambassadors without reading them, this left me more at liberty to give what turn I thought proper to the latter, and in these therefore I made the articles of information cross each other. But it was impossible for-me to do the same by despatches of importance; and I thought myself happy when M.



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de Montaigne did not take it into his head to cram into them an impromptu of a few lines after his manner. This obliged me to return, and hastily transcribe the whole despatch decorated with his new nonsense, and honor it with the cipher, without which he would have refused his signature. I was frequently almost tempted, for the sake of his reputation, to cipher something different from what he had written, but feeling that nothing could authorize such a deception, I left him to answer for his own folly, satisfying myself with having spoken to him with freedom, and discharged at my own peril the duties of my station. This is what I always did with an uprightness, a zeal and courage, which merited on his part a very different recompense from that which in the end I received from him. It was time I should once be what Heaven, which had endowed me with a happy disposition, what the education that had been given me by the best of women, and that I had given myself, had prepared me for, and I became so. Left to my own reflections, without a friend or advice, without experience, and in a foreign country, in the service of a foreign nation, surrounded by a crowd of knaves, who, for their own interest, and to avoid the scandal of good example, endeavored to prevail upon me to imitate them; far from yielding to their solicitations, I served France well, to which I owed nothing, and the ambassador still better, as it was right and just I should do to the utmost of my power. Irreproachable in a post, sufficiently exposed to censure, I merited and obtained the esteem of the republic, that of all the ambassadors with whom we were in correspondence, and the affection of the French who resided at Venice, not even excepting the consul, whom with regret I supplanted in the functions which I knew belonged to him, and which occasioned me more embarrassment than they afforded me satisfaction.

M. de Montaigne, confiding without reserve to the Marquis Mari, who did not thoroughly understand his duty, neglected it to such a degree that without me the French who were at Venice would not have perceived that an ambassador from their nation resided there. Always put off without being heard when they stood in need of his protection, they became disgusted and no longer appeared in his company or at his table, to which indeed he never invited them. I frequently did from myself what it was his duty to have done; I rendered to the French, who applied to me, all the services in my power. In any other country I should have done more, but, on account of my employment, not being able to see persons in place, I was often obliged to apply to the consul, and the consul, who was settled in the country with his family, had many persons to oblige, which prevented him from acting as he otherwise would have done. However, perceiving him unwilling and afraid to speak, I ventured hazardous measures, which sometimes succeeded. I recollect one which still makes me laugh. No person would



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suspect it was to me, the lovers of the theatre at Paris, owe Coralline and her sister Camille, nothing however, can be more true. Veronese, their father, had engaged himself with his children in the Italian company, and after having received two thousand livres for the expenses of his journey, instead of setting out for France, quietly continued at Venice, and accepted an engagement in the theatre of Saint Luke, to which Coralline, a child as she still was, drew great numbers of people. The Duke de Greves, as first gentleman of the chamber, wrote to the ambassador to claim the father and the daughter. M. de Montaigu when he gave me the letter, confined his instructions to saying, 'voyez cela', examine and pay attention to this. I went to M. Blond to beg he would speak to the patrician, to whom the theatre belonged, and who, I believe, was named Zustinian, that he might discharge Veronese, who had engaged in the name of the king. Le Blond, to whom the commission was not very agreeable, executed it badly.

Zustinian answered vaguely, and Veronese was not discharged. I was piqued at this. It was during the carnival, and having taken the bahute and a mask, I set out for the palace Zustinian. Those who saw my gondola arrive with the livery of the ambassador, were lost in astonishment. Venice had never seen such a thing. I entered, and caused myself to be announced by the name of 'Una Siora Masehera'. As soon as I was introduced I took off my mask and told my name. The senator turned pale and appeared stupefied with surprise. "Sir;" said I to him in Venetian, "it is with much regret I importune your excellency with this visit; but you have in your theatre of Saint Luke, a man of the name of Veronese, who is engaged in the service of the king, and whom you have been requested, but in vain, to give up: I come to claim him in the name of his majesty." My short harangue was effectual. I had no sooner left the palace than Zustinian ran to communicate the adventure to the state inquisitors, by whom he was severely reprehended. Veronese was discharged the same day. I sent him word that if he did not set off within a week I would have him arrested. He did not wait for my giving him this intimation a second time.

On another occasion I relieved from difficulty solely by my own means, and almost without the assistance of any other person, the captain of a merchant-ship. This was one Captain Olivet, from Marseilles; the name of the vessel I have forgotten. His men had quarreled with the Sclavonians in the service of the republic, some violence had been committed, and the vessel was under so severe an embargo that nobody except the master was suffered to go on board or leave it without permission. He applied to the ambassador, who would hear nothing he had to say. He afterwards went to the consul, who told him it was not an affair of commerce, and that he could not interfere in it. Not knowing what further steps



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to take he applied to me. I told M. de Montaigne he ought to permit me to lay before the senate a memoir on the subject. I do not recollect whether or not he consented, or that I presented the memoir; but I perfectly remember that if I did it was ineffectual, and the embargo still continuing, I took another method, which succeeded. I inserted a relation of the affairs in one of our letters to M. de Maurepas, though I had difficulty in prevailing upon M. de Montaigne to suffer the article to pass.

I knew that our despatches, although their contents were insignificant, were opened at Venice. Of this I had a proof by finding the articles they contained, verbatim in the gazette, a treachery of which I had in vain attempted to prevail upon the ambassador to complain. My object in speaking of the affair in the letter was to turn the curiosity of the ministers of the republic to advantage, to inspire them with some apprehensions, and to induce the state to release the vessel: for had it been necessary to this effect to wait for an answer from the court, the captain would have been ruined before it could have arrived. I did still more, I went alongside the vessel to make inquiries of the ship's company. I took with me the Abbe Patizel, chancellor of the consulship, who would rather have been excused, so much were these poor creatures afraid of displeasing the Senate. As I could not go on board, on account of the order from the states, I remained in my gondola, and there took the depositions successively, interrogating each of the mariners, and directing my questions in such a manner as to produce answers which might be to their advantage. I wished to prevail upon Patizel to put the questions and take depositions himself, which in fact was more his business than mine; but to this he would not consent; he never once opened his mouth and refused to sign the depositions after me. This step, somewhat bold, was however, successful, and the vessel was released long before an answer came from the minister. The captain wished to make me a present; but without being angry with him on that account, I tapped him on the shoulder, saying, "Captain Olivet, can you imagine that he who does not receive from the French his perquisite for passports, which he found his established right, is a man likely to sell them the king's protection?" He, however, insisted on giving me a dinner on board his vessel, which I accepted, and took with me the secretary to the Spanish embassy, M. Carrio, a man of wit and amiable manners, to partake of it: he has since been secretary to the Spanish embassy at Paris and charge des affaires. I had formed an intimate connection with him after the example of our ambassadors.



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Happy should I have been, if, when in the most disinterested manner I did all the service I could, I had known how to introduce sufficient order into all these little details, that I might not have served others at my own expense. But in employments similar to that I held, in which the most trifling faults are of consequence, my whole attention was engaged in avoiding all such mistakes as might be detrimental to my service. I conducted, till the last moment, everything relative to my immediate duty, with the greatest order and exactness. Excepting a few errors which a forced precipitation made me commit in ciphering, and of which the clerks of M. Amelot once complained, neither the ambassador nor any other person had ever the least reason to reproach me with negligence in any one of my functions. This is remarkable in a man so negligent as I am. But my memory sometimes failed me, and I was not sufficiently careful in the private affairs with which I was charged; however, a love of justice always made me take the loss on myself, and this voluntarily, before anybody thought of complaining. I will mention but one circumstance of this nature; it relates to my departure from Venice, and I afterwards felt the effects of it in Paris.

Our cook, whose name was Rousselot, had brought from France an old note for two hundred livres, which a hairdresser, a friend of his, had received from a noble Venetian of the name of Zanetto Nani, who had had wigs of him to that amount. Rousselot brought me the note, begging I would endeavor to obtain payment of some part of it, by way of accommodation. I knew, and he knew it also, that the constant custom of noble Venetians was, when once returned to their country, never to pay the debts they had contracted abroad. When means are taken to force them to payment, the wretched creditor finds so many delays, and incurs such enormous expenses, that he becomes disgusted and concludes by giving up his debtor accepting the most trifling composition. I begged M. le Blond to speak to Zanetto. The Venetian acknowledged the note, but did not agree to payment. After a long dispute he at length promised three sequins; but when Le Blond carried him the note even these were not ready, and it was necessary to wait. In this interval happened my quarrel with the ambassador and I quitted his service. I had left the papers of the embassy in the greatest order, but the note of Rousselot was not to be found. M. le Blond assured me he had given it me back. I knew him to be too honest a man to have the least doubt of the matter; but it was impossible for me to recollect what I had done with it. As Zanetto had acknowledged the debt, I desired M. le Blond to endeavor to obtain from him the three sequins on giving him a receipt for the amount, or to prevail upon him to renew the note by way of duplicate. Zanetto, knowing the note to be lost, would not agree to either. I offered Rousselot the three sequins from my own purse,



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as a discharge of the debt. He refused them, and said I might settle the matter with the creditor at Paris, of whom he gave me the address. The hair-dresser, having been informed of what had passed, would either have his note or the whole sum for which it was given. What, in my indignation, would I have given to have found this vexatious paper! I paid the two hundred livres, and that in my greatest distress. In this manner the loss of the note produced to the creditor the payment of the whole sum, whereas had it, unfortunately for him, been found, he would have had some difficulty in recovering even the ten crowns, which his excellency, Zanetto Nani, had promised to pay.

The talents I thought I felt in myself for my employment made me discharge the functions of it with satisfaction, and except the society of my friend de Carrio, that of the virtuous Altuna, of whom I shall soon have an occasion to speak, the innocent recreations of the place Saint Mark, of the theatre, and of a few visits which we, for the most part, made together, my only pleasure was in the duties of my station. Although these were not considerable, especially with the aid of the Abbe de Binis, yet as the correspondence was very extensive and there was a war, I was a good deal employed. I applied to business the greatest part of every morning, and on the days previous to the departure of the courier, in the evenings, and sometimes till midnight. The rest of my time I gave to the study of the political professions I had entered upon, and in which I hoped, from my successful beginning, to be advantageously employed. In fact I was in favor with every one; the ambassador himself spoke highly of my services, and never complained of anything I did for him; his dissatisfaction proceeded from my having insisted on quitting him, in consequence of the useless complaints I had frequently made on several occasions. The ambassadors and ministers of the king with whom we were in correspondence complimented him on the merit of his secretary, in a manner by which he ought to have been flattered, but which in his poor head produced quite a contrary effect. He received one in particular relative to an affair of importance, for which he never pardoned me.

He was so incapable of bearing the least constraint, that on the Saturday, the day of the despatches for most of the courts he could not contain himself, and wait till the business was done before he went out, and incessantly pressing me to hasten the despatches to the king and ministers, he signed them with precipitation, and immediately went I know not where, leaving most of the other letters without signing; this obliged me, when these contained nothing but news, to convert them into journals; but when affairs which related to the king were in question it was necessary somebody should sign, and I did it. This once happened relative to some important advice we had just received from M. Vincent, charge des affaires from the king,



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at Vienna. The Prince Lobkowitz was then marching to Naples, and Count Gages had just made the most memorable retreat, the finest military manoeuvre of the whole century, of which Europe has not sufficiently spoken. The despatch informed us that a man, whose person M. Vincent described, had set out from Vienna, and was to pass by Venice, in his way into Abruzzo, where he was secretly to stir up the people at the approach of the Austrians.

In the absence of M. le Comte de Montaigu, who did not give himself the least concern about anything, I forwarded this advice to the Marquis de l'Hopital, so apropos, that it is perhaps to the poor Jean Jacques, so abused and laughed at, that the house of Bourbon owes the preservation of the kingdom of Naples.

The Marquis de l'Hopital, when he thanked his colleague, as it was proper he should do, spoke to him of his secretary, and mentioned the service he had just rendered to the common cause. The Comte de Montaigu, who in that affair had to reproach himself with negligence, thought he perceived in the compliment paid him by M. de l'Hopital, something like a reproach, and spoke of it to me with signs of ill-humor. I found it necessary to act in the same manner with the Count de Castellane, ambassador at Constantinople, as I had done with the Marquis de l'Hopital, although in things of less importance. As there was no other conveyance to Constantinople than by couriers, sent from time to time by the senate to its Bailli, advice of their departure was given to the ambassador of France, that he might write by them to his colleague, if he thought proper so to do. This advice was commonly sent a day or two beforehand; but M. de Montaigu was held in so little respect, that merely for the sake of form he was sent to, a couple of hours before the couriers set off. This frequently obliged me to write the despatch in his absence. M. de Castellane, in his answer made honorable mention of me; M. de Jonville, at Genoa, did the same, and these instances of their regard and esteem became new grievances.

I acknowledge I did not neglect any opportunity of making myself known; but I never sought one improperly, and in serving well I thought I had a right to aspire to the natural return for essential services; the esteem of those capable of judging of, and rewarding them. I will not say whether or not my exactness in discharging the duties of my employment was a just subject of complaint from the ambassador; but I cannot refrain from declaring that it was the sole grievance he ever mentioned previous to our separation.



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His house, which he had never put on a good footing, was constantly filled with rabble; the French were ill-treated in it, and the ascendancy was given to the Italians; of these even, the more honest part, they who had long been in the service of the embassy, were indecently discharged, his first gentleman in particular, whom he had taken from the Comte de Froulay, and who, if I remember right, was called Comte de Peati, or something very like that name. The second gentleman, chosen by M. de Montaigu, was an outlaw highwayman from Mantua, called Dominic Vitali, to whom the ambassador intrusted the care of his house, and who had by means of flattery and sordid economy, obtained his confidence, and became his favorite to the great prejudice of the few honest people he still had about him, and of the secretary who was at their head. The countenance of an upright man always gives inquietude to knaves. Nothing more was necessary to make Vitali conceive a hatred against me: but for this sentiment there was still another cause which rendered it more cruel. Of this I must give an account, that I may be condemned if I am found in the wrong.

The ambassador had, according to custom, a box at each of the theaters. Every day at dinner he named the theater to which it was his intention to go: I chose after him, and the gentlemen disposed of the other boxes. When I went out I took the key of the box I had chosen. One day, Vitali not being in the way, I ordered the footman who attended on me, to bring me the key to a house which I named to him. Vitali, instead of sending the key, said he had disposed of it. I was the more enraged at this as the footman delivered his message in public. In the evening Vitali wished to make me some apology, to which however I would not listen. "To—morrow, sir," said I to him, "you will come at such an hour and apologize to me in the house where I received the affront, and in the presence of the persons who were witnesses to it; or after to—morrow, whatever may be the consequences, either you or I will leave the house." This firmness intimidated him. He came to the house at the hour appointed, and made me a public apology, with a meanness worthy of himself. But he afterwards took his measures at leisure, and at the same time that he cringed to me in public, he secretly acted in so vile a manner, that although unable to prevail on the ambassador to give me my dismissal, he laid me under the necessity of resolving to leave him.

A wretch like him, certainly, could not know me, but he knew enough of my character to make it serviceable to his purposes. He knew I was mild to an excess, and patient in bearing involuntary wrongs; but haughty and impatient when insulted with premeditated offences; loving decency and dignity in things in which these were requisite, and not more exact in requiring the respect due to myself, than attentive in rendering that which I owed to others. In this he undertook



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to disgust me, and in this he succeeded. He turned the house upside down, and destroyed the order and subordination I had endeavored to establish in it. A house without a woman stands in need of rather a severe discipline to preserve that modesty which is inseparable from dignity. He soon converted ours into a place of filthy debauch and scandalous licentiousness, the haunt of knaves and debauchees. He procured for second gentleman to his excellency, in the place of him whom he got discharged, another pimp like himself, who kept a house of ill—fame, at the Cross of Malta; and the indecency of these two rascals was equalled by nothing but their insolence. Except the bed-chamber of the ambassador, which, however, was not in very good order, there was not a corner in the whole house supportable to an modest man.

As his excellency did not sup, the gentleman and myself had a private table, at which the Abbe Binis and the pages also eat. In the most paltry ale-house people are served with more cleanliness and decency, have cleaner linen, and a table better supplied. We had but one little and very filthy candle, pewter plates, and iron forks.

I could have overlooked what passed in secret, but I was deprived of my gondola. I was the only secretary to an ambassador, who was obliged to hire one or go on foot, and the livery of his excellency no longer accompanied me, except when I went to the senate. Besides, everything which passed in the house was known in the city. All those who were in the service of the other ambassadors loudly exclaimed; Dominic, the only cause of all, exclaimed louder than anybody, well knowing the indecency with which we were treated was more affecting to me than to any other person. Though I was the only one in the house who said nothing of the matter abroad, I complained loudly of it to the ambassador, as well as of himself, who, secretly excited by the wretch, entirely devoted to his will, daily made me suffer some new affront. Obligated to spend a good deal to keep up a footing with those in the same situation with myself, and to make are appearance proper to my employment, I could not touch a farthing of my salary, and when I asked him for money, he spoke of his esteem for me, and his confidence, as if either of these could have filled my purse, and provided for everything.

These two banditti at length quite turned the head of their master, who naturally had not a good one, and ruined him by a continual traffic, and by bargains, of which he was the dupe, whilst they persuaded him they were greatly in his favor. They persuaded him to take upon the Brenta, a Palazzo, at twice the rent it was worth, and divided the surplus with the proprietor. The apartments were inlaid with mosaic, and ornamented with columns and pilasters, in the taste of the country. M. de Montaignu, had all these superbly masked by fir wainscoting, for no other reason than because at Paris apartments were thus fitted up. It was for a similar reason that he only, of all the ambassadors who were at Venice, took from his pages their swords, and from his footmen their canes. Such was the man, who, perhaps from the same motive took a dislike to me on account of my serving him faithfully.



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I patiently endured his disdain, his brutality, and ill-treatment, as long as, perceiving them accompanied by ill-humor, I thought they had in them no portion of hatred; but the moment I saw the design formed of depriving me of the honor I merited by my faithful services, I resolved to resign my employment. The first mark I received of his ill will was relative to a dinner he was to give to the Duke of Modena and his family, who were at Venice, and at which he signified to me I should not be present. I answered, piqued, but not angry, that having the honor daily to dine at his table, if the Duke of Modena, when he came, required I should not appear at it, my duty as well as the dignity of his excellency would not suffer me to consent to such a request. "How;" said he passionately, "my secretary, who is not a gentleman, pretends to dine with a sovereign when my gentlemen do not!" "Yes, sir," replied I, "the post with which your excellency has honored me, as long as I discharge the functions of it, so far ennobles me that my rank is superior to that of your gentlemen or of the persons calling themselves such; and I am admitted where they cannot appear. You cannot but know that on the day on which you shall make your public entry, I am called to the ceremony by etiquette; and by an immemorial custom, to follow you in a dress of ceremony, and afterwards to dine with you at the palace of St. Mark; and I know not why a man who has a right and is to eat in public with the doge and the senate of Venice should not eat in private with the Duke of Modena." Though this argument was unanswerable, it did not convince the ambassador; but we had no occasion to renew the dispute, as the Duke of Modena did not come to dine with him.

From that moment he did everything in his power to make things disagreeable to me; and endeavored unjustly to deprive me of my rights, by taking from me the pecuniary advantages annexed to my employment, to give them to his dear Vitali; and I am convinced that had he dared to send him to the senate, in my place, he would have done it. He commonly employed the Abbe Binis in his closet, to write his private letters: he made use of him to write to M. de Maurepas an account of the affair of Captain Olivet, in which, far from taking the least notice of me, the only person who gave himself any concern about the matter, he deprived me of the honor of the depositions, of which he sent him a duplicate, for the purpose of attributing them to Patizel, who had not opened his mouth. He wished to mortify me, and please his favorite; but had no desire to dismiss me his service. He perceived it would be more difficult to find me a successor, than M. Follau, who had already made him known to the world. An Italian secretary was absolutely necessary to him, on account of the answers from the senate; one who could write all his despatches, and conduct his affairs, without his giving himself the least trouble about anything; a person



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who, to the merit of serving him well, could join the baseness of being the toad-eater of his gentlemen, without honor, merit, or principles. He wished to retain, and humble me, by keeping me far from my country, and his own, without money to return to either, and in which he would, perhaps, had succeeded, had he began with more moderation: but Vitali, who had other views, and wished to force me to extremities, carried his point. The moment I perceived, I lost all my trouble, that the ambassador imputed to me my services as so many crimes, instead of being satisfied with them; that with him I had nothing to expect, but things disagreeable at home, and injustice abroad; and that, in the general disesteem into which he was fallen, his ill offices might be prejudicial to me, without the possibility of my being served by his good ones; I took my resolution, and asked him for my dismissal, leaving him sufficient time to provide himself with another secretary. Without answering yes or no, he continued to treat me in the same manner, as if nothing had been said. Perceiving things to remain in the same state, and that he took no measures to procure himself a new secretary, I wrote to his brother, and, explaining to him my motives, begged he would obtain my dismissal from his excellency, adding that whether I received it or not, I could not possibly remain with him. I waited a long time without any answer, and began to be embarrassed: but at length the ambassador received a letter from his brother, which must have remonstrated with him in very plain terms; for although he was extremely subject to ferocious rage, I never saw him so violent as on this occasion. After torrents of unsufferable reproaches, not knowing what more to say, he accused me of having sold his ciphers. I burst into a loud laughter, and asked him, in a sneering manner, if he thought there was in Venice a man who would be fool enough to give half a crown for them all. He threatened to call his servants to throw me out of the window. Until then I had been very composed; but on this threat, anger and indignation seized me in my turn. I sprang to the door, and after having turned a button which fastened it within: "No, count," said I, returning to him with a grave step, "Your servants shall have nothing to do with this affair; please to let it be settled between ourselves." My action and manner instantly made him calm; fear and surprise were marked in his countenance. The moment I saw his fury abated, I bid him adieu in a very few words, and without waiting for his answer, went to the door, opened it, and passed slowly across the antechamber, through the midst of his people, who rose according to custom, and who, I am of opinion, would rather have lent their assistance against him than me. Without going back to my apartment, I descended the stairs, and immediately went out of the palace never more to enter it.



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I hastened immediately to M. le Blond and related to him what had happened. Knowing the man, he was but little surprised. He kept me to dinner. This dinner, although without preparation, was splendid. All the French of consequence who were at Venice, partook of it. The ambassador had not a single person. The consul related my case to the company. The cry was general, and by no means in favor of his excellency. He had not settled my account, nor paid me a farthing, and being reduced to the few louis I had in my pocket, I was extremely embarrassed about my return to France. Every purse was opened to me. I took twenty sequins from that of M. le Blond, and as many from that of M. St. Cyr, with whom, next to M. le Blond, I was the most intimately connected. I returned thanks to the rest; and, till my departure, went to lodge at the house of the chancellor of the consulship, to prove to the public, the nation was not an accomplice in the injustice of the ambassador.

His excellency, furious at seeing me taken notice of in my misfortune, at the same time that, notwithstanding his being an ambassador, nobody went near his house, quite lost his senses and behaved like a madman. He forgot himself so far as to present a memoir to the senate to get me arrested. On being informed of this by the Abbe de Binis, I resolved to remain a fortnight longer, instead of setting off the next day as I had intended. My conduct had been known and approved of by everybody; I was universally esteemed. The senate did not deign to return an answer to the extravagant memoir of the ambassador, but sent me word I might remain in Venice as long as I thought proper, without making myself uneasy about the attempts of a madman. I continued to see my friends: I went to take leave of the ambassador from Spain, who received me well, and of the Comte de Finochietti, minister from Naples, whom I did not find at home. I wrote him a letter and received from his excellency the most polite and obliging answer. At length I took my departure, leaving behind me, notwithstanding my embarrassment, no other debts than the two sums I had borrowed, and of which I have just spoken; and an account of fifty crowns with a shopkeeper, of the name of Morandi, which Carrio promised to pay, and which I have never reimbursed him, although we have frequently met since that time; but with respect to the two sums of money, I returned them very exactly the moment I had it in my power.

I cannot take leave of Venice without saying something of the celebrated amusements of that city, or at least of the little part of them of which I partook during my residence there. It has been seen how little in my youth I ran after the pleasures of that age, or those that are so called. My inclinations did not change at Venice, but my occupations, which moreover would have prevented this, rendered more agreeable to me the simple recreations I permitted myself. The first and most pleasing of all was the society



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of men of merit. M. le Blond, de St. Cyr, Carrio Altuna, and a Forlinian gentleman, whose name I am very sorry to have forgotten, and whom I never call to my recollection without emotion: he was the man of all I ever knew whose heart most resembled my own. We were connected with two or three Englishmen of great wit and information, and, like ourselves, passionately fond of music. All these gentlemen had their wives, female friends, or mistresses: the latter were most of them women of talents, at whose apartments there were balls and concerts. There was but little play; a lively turn, talents, and the theatres rendered this amusement incipid. Play is the resource of none but men whose time hangs heavy on their hands. I had brought with me from Paris the prejudice of that city against Italian music; but I had also received from nature a sensibility and niceness of distinction which prejudice cannot withstand. I soon contracted that passion for Italian music with which it inspires all those who are capable of feeling its excellence. In listening to barcaroles, I found I had not yet known what singing was, and I soon became so fond of the opera that, tired of babbling, eating, and playing in the boxes when I wished to listen, I frequently withdrew from the company to another part of the theater. There, quite alone, shut up in my box, I abandoned myself, notwithstanding the length of the representation, to the pleasure of enjoying it at ease unto the conclusion. One evening at the theatre of Saint Chrysostom, I fell into a more profound sleep than I should have done in my bed. The loud and brilliant airs did not disturb my repose. But who can explain the delicious sensations given me by the soft harmony of the angelic music, by which I was charmed from sleep; what an awaking! what ravishment! what ecstasy, when at the same instant I opened my ears and eyes! My first idea was to believe I was in paradise. The ravishing air, which I still recollect and shall never forget, began with these words:

Conservami la bella,  
Che si m'accende il cor.

I was desirous of having it; I had and kept it for a time; but it was not the same thing upon paper as in my head. The notes were the same but the thing was different. This divine composition can never be executed but in my mind, in the same manner as it was the evening on which it woke me from sleep.

A kind of music far superior, in my opinion, to that of operas, and which in all Italy has not its equal, nor perhaps in the whole world, is that of the 'scuole'. The 'scuole' are houses of charity, established for the education of young girls without fortune, to whom the republic afterwards gives a portion either in marriage or for the cloister. Amongst talents cultivated in these young girls, music is in the first rank. Every Sunday at the church of each of the four 'scuole', during vespers, motettos



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or anthems with full choruses, accompanied by a great orchestra, and composed and directed by the best masters in Italy, are sung in the galleries by girls only; not one of whom is more than twenty years of age. I have not an idea of anything so voluptuous and affecting as this music; the richness of the art, the exquisite taste of the vocal part, the excellence of the voices, the justness of the execution, everything in these delightful concerts concurs to produce an impression which certainly is not the mode, but from which I am of opinion no heart is secure. Carrio and I never failed being present at these vespers of the 'Mendicanti', and we were not alone. The church was always full of the lovers of the art, and even the actors of the opera came there to form their tastes after these excellent models. What vexed me was the iron grate, which suffered nothing to escape but sounds, and concealed from me the angels of which they were worthy. I talked of nothing else. One day I spoke of it at Le Blond's; "If you are so desirous," said he, "to see those little girls, it will be an easy matter to satisfy your wishes. I am one of the administrators of the house, I will give you a collation with them." I did not let him rest until he had fulfilled his promise. In entering the saloon, which contained these beauties I so much sighed to see, I felt a trembling of love which I had never before experienced. M. le Blond presented to me one after the other, these celebrated female singers, of whom the names and voices were all with which I was acquainted. Come, Sophia,—she was horrid. Come, Cattina,—she had but one eye. Come, Bettina,—the small-pox had entirely disfigured her. Scarcely one of them was without some striking defect.

Le Blond laughed at my surprise; however, two or three of them appeared tolerable; these never sung but in the choruses; I was almost in despair. During the collation we endeavored to excite them, and they soon became enlivened; ugliness does not exclude the graces, and I found they possessed them. I said to myself, they cannot sing in this manner without intelligence and sensibility, they must have both; in fine, my manner of seeing them changed to such a degree that I left the house almost in love with each of these ugly faces. I had scarcely courage enough to return to vespers. But after having seen the girls, the danger was lessened. I still found their singing delightful; and their voices so much embellished their persons that, in spite of my eyes, I obstinately continued to think them beautiful.

Music in Italy is accompanied with so trifling an expense, that it is not worth while for such as have a taste for it to deny themselves the pleasure it affords. I hired a harpsichord, and, for half a crown, I had at my apartment four or five symphonists, with whom I practised once a week in executing such airs, *etc.*, as had given me most pleasure at the opera. I also had some symphonies performed from



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my 'Muses Galantes'. Whether these pleased the performers, or the ballet-master of St. John Chrysostom wished to flatter me, he desired to have two of them; and I had afterwards the pleasure of hearing these executed by that admirable orchestra. They were danced to by a little Bettina, pretty and amiable, and kept by a Spaniard, M. Fagoaga, a friend of ours with whom we often went to spend the evening. But apropos of girls of easy virtue: it is not in Venice that a man abstains from them. Have you nothing to confess, somebody will ask me, upon this subject? Yes: I have something to say upon it, and I will proceed to the confession with the same ingenuousness with which I have made my former ones.

I always had a disinclination to girls of pleasure, but at Venice those were all I had within my reach; most of the houses being shut against me on account of my place. The daughters of M. le Blond were very amiable, but difficult of access; and I had too much respect for the father and mother ever once to have the least desire for them.

I should have had a much stronger inclination to a young lady named Mademoiselle de Cataneo, daughter to the agent from the King of Prussia, but Carrio was in love with her there was even between them some question of marriage. He was in easy circumstances, and I had no fortune: his salary was a hundred louis (guineas) a year, and mine amounted to no more than a thousand livres (about forty pounds sterling) and, besides my being unwilling to oppose a friend, I knew that in all places, and especially at Venice, with a purse so ill furnished as mine was, gallantry was out of the question. I had not lost the pernicious custom of deceiving my wants. Too busily employed forcibly to feel those proceeding from the climate, I lived upwards of a year in that city as chastely as I had done in Paris, and at the end of eighteen months I quitted it without having approached the sex, except twice by means of the singular opportunities of which I am going to speak.

The first was procured me by that honest gentleman, Vitali, some time after the formal apology I obliged him to make me. The conversation at the table turned on the amusements of Venice. These gentlemen reproached me with my indifference with regard to the most delightful of them all; at the same time extolling the gracefulness and elegant manners of the women of easy virtue of Venice; and adding that they were superior to all others of the same description in any other part of the world. "Dominic," said I, "(I) must make an acquaintance with the most amiable of them all," he offered to take me to her apartments, and assured me I should be pleased with her. I laughed at this obliging offer: and Count Piati, a man in years and venerable, observed to me, with more candor than I should have expected from an Italian, that he thought me too prudent to suffer myself to be taken to such a place by my enemy. In fact I had no inclination to do it: but notwithstanding



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this, by an incoherence I cannot myself comprehend, I at length was prevailed upon to go, contrary to my inclination, the sentiment of my heart, my reason, and even my will; solely from weakness, and being ashamed to show an appearance to the least mistrust; and besides, as the expression of the country is, 'per non parer troppo coglione'—[Not to appear too great a blockhead.]—The 'Padoana' whom we went to visit was pretty, she was even handsome, but her beauty was not of that kind that pleased me. Dominic left me with her, I sent for Sorbetti, and asked her to sing. In about half an hour I wished to take my leave, after having put a ducat on the table, but this by a singular scruple she refused until she had deserved it, and I from as singular a folly consented to remove her doubts. I returned to the palace so fully persuaded that I should feel the consequences of this step, that the first thing I did was to send for the king's surgeon to ask him for pitisans. Nothing can equal the uneasiness of mind I suffered for three weeks, without its being justified by any real inconvenience or apparent sign. I could not believe it was possible to withdraw with impunity from the arms of the 'padoana'. The surgeon himself had the greatest difficulty in removing my apprehensions; nor could he do this by any other means than by persuading me I was formed in such a manner as not to be easily infected: and although in the experiment I exposed myself less than any other man would have done, my health in that respect never having suffered the least inconvenience, in my opinion a proof the surgeon was right. However, this has never made me imprudent, and if in fact I have received such an advantage from nature I can safely assert I have never abused it.

My second adventure, although likewise with a common girl, was of a nature very different, as well in its origin as in its effects; I have already said that Captain Olivet gave me a dinner on board his vessel, and that I took with me the secretary of the Spanish embassy. I expected a salute of cannon.

The ship's company was drawn up to receive us, but not so much as a priming was burnt, at which I was mortified, on account of Carrio, whom I perceived to be rather piqued at the neglect. A salute of cannon was given on board merchant-ships to people of less consequence than we were; I besides thought I deserved some distinguished mark of respect from the captain. I could not conceal my thoughts, because this at all times was impossible to me, and although the dinner was a very good one, and Olivet did the honors of it perfectly well, I began it in an ill humor, eating but little, and speaking still less. At the first health, at least, I expected a volley; nothing. Carrio, who read what passed within, me, laughed at hearing me grumble like a child. Before dinner was half over I saw a gondola approach the vessel. "Bless me, sir," said the captain, "take care of yourself, the enemy



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approaches." I asked him what he meant, and he answered jocosely. The gondola made the ship's side, and I observed a gay young damsel come on board very lightly, and coquettishly dressed, and who at three steps was in the cabin, seated by my side, before I had time to perceive a cover was laid for her. She was equally charming and lively, a brunette, not more than twenty years of age. She spoke nothing but Italian, and her accent alone was sufficient to turn my head. As she eat and chattered she cast her eyes upon me; steadfastly looked at me for a moment, and then exclaimed, "Good Virgin! Ah, my dear Bremond, what an age it is since I saw thee!" Then she threw herself into my arms, sealed her lips to mine, and pressed me almost to strangling. Her large black eyes, like those of the beauties of the East, darted fiery shafts into my heart, and although the surprise at first stupefied my senses, voluptuousness made a rapid progress within, and this to such a degree that the beautiful seducer herself was, notwithstanding the spectators, obliged to restrain my ardor, for I was intoxicated, or rather become furious. When she perceived she had made the impression she desired, she became more moderate in her caresses, but not in her vivacity, and when she thought proper to explain to us the real or false cause of all her petulance, she said I resembled M. de Bremond, director of the customs of Tuscany, to such a degree as to be mistaken for him; that she had turned this M. de Bremond's head, and would do it again; that she had quitted him because he was a fool; that she took me in his place; that she would love me because it pleased her so to do, for which reason I must love her as long as it was agreeable to her, and when she thought proper to send me about my business, I must be patient as her dear Bremond had been. What was said was done. She took possession of me as of a man that belonged to her, gave me her gloves to keep, her fan, her cinda, and her coif, and ordered me to go here or there, to do this or that, and I instantly obeyed her. She told me to go and send away her gondola, because she chose to make use of mine, and I immediately sent it away; she bid me to move from my place, and pray Carrio to sit down in it, because she had something to say to him; and I did as she desired. They chatted a good while together, but spoke low, and I did not interrupt them. She called me, and I approached her. "Hark thee, Zanetto," said she to me, "I will not be loved in the French manner; this indeed will not be well. In the first moment of lassitude, get thee gone: but stay not by the way, I caution thee." After dinner we went to see the glass manufactory at Murano. She bought a great number of little curiosities; for which she left me to pay without the least ceremony. But she everywhere gave away little trinkets to a much greater amount than of the things we had purchased. By the indifference with which she threw away her money, I perceived she annexed to it but little value. When she insisted upon a payment, I am of opinion it was more from a motive of vanity than avarice. She was flattered by the price her admirers set upon her favors.



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In the evening we conducted her to her apartments. As we conversed together, I perceived a couple of pistols upon her toilette. "Ah! Ah!" said I, taking one of them up, "this is a patchbox of a new construction: may I ask what is its use? I know you have other arms which give more fire than those upon your table." After a few pleasantries of the same kind, she said to us, with an ingenuousness which rendered her still more charming, "When I am complaisant to persons whom I do not love, I make them pay for the weariness they cause me; nothing can be more just; but if I suffer their caresses, I will not bear their insults; nor miss the first who shall be wanting to me in respect."

At taking leave of her, I made another appointment for the next day. I did not make her wait. I found her in 'vestito di conidenza', in an undress more than wanton, unknown to northern countries, and which I will not amuse myself in describing, although I recollect it perfectly well. I shall only remark that her ruffles and collar were edged with silk network ornamented with rose-colored pompons. This, in my eyes, much enlivened a beautiful complexion. I afterwards found it to be the mode at Venice, and the effect is so charming that I am surprised it has never been introduced in France. I had no idea of the transports which awaited me. I have spoken of Madam de Larnage with the transport which the remembrance of her still sometimes gives me; but how old, ugly and cold she appeared, compared with my Zuletta! Do not attempt to form to yourself an idea of the charms and graces of this enchanting girl, you will be far too short of truth. Young virgins in cloisters are not so fresh: the beauties of the seraglio are less animated: the houris of paradise less engaging. Never was so sweet an enjoyment offered to the heart and senses of a mortal. Ah! had I at least been capable of fully tasting of it for a single moment! I had tasted of it, but without a charm. I enfeebled all its delights: I destroyed them as at will. No; Nature has not made me capable of enjoyment. She has infused into my wretched head the poison of that ineffable happiness, the desire of which she first placed in my heart.

If there be a circumstance in my life, which describes my nature, it is that which I am going to relate. The forcible manner in which I at this moment recollect the object of my book, will here make me hold in contempt the false delicacy which would prevent me from fulfilling it. Whoever you may be who are desirous of knowing a man, have the courage to read the two or three following pages, and you will become fully acquainted with J. J. Rousseau.

I entered the chamber of a woman of easy virtue, as the sanctuary of love and beauty: and in her person, I thought I saw the divinity. I should have been inclined to think that without respect and esteem it was impossible to feel anything like that which she made me experience. Scarcely had I, in her first familiarities, discovered the force of her charms and caresses, before I wished, for fear of losing the fruit of them, to gather it beforehand. Suddenly, instead of the flame which consumed me, I felt a mortal cold run through all my veins; my legs failed me; and ready to faint away, I sat down and wept like a child.



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Who would guess the cause of my tears, and what, at this moment, passed within me? I said to myself: the object in my power is the masterpiece of love; her wit and person equally approach perfection; she is as good and generous as she is amiable and beautiful. Yet she is a miserable prostitute, abandoned to the public. The captain of a merchantship disposed of her at will; she has thrown herself into my arms, although she knows I have nothing; and my merit with which she cannot be acquainted, can be to her no inducement. In this there is something inconceivable. Either my heart deceives me, fascinates my senses, and makes me the dupe of an unworthy slut, or some secret defect, of which I am ignorant, destroys the effect of her charms, and renders her odious in the eyes of those by whom her charms would otherwise be disputed. I endeavored, by an extraordinary effort of mind, to discover this defect, but it did not so much as strike me that even the consequences to be apprehended, might possibly have some influence. The clearness of her skin, the brilliancy of her complexion, her white teeth, sweet breath, and the appearance of neatness about her person, so far removed from me this idea, that, still in doubt relative to my situation after the affair of the 'padoana', I rather apprehended I was not sufficiently in health for her: and I am firmly persuaded I was not deceived in my opinion. These reflections, so apropos, agitated me to such a degree as to make me shed tears. Zuliette, to whom the scene was quite novel, was struck speechless for a moment. But having made a turn in her chamber, and passing before her glass, she comprehended, and my eyes confirmed her opinion, that disgust had no part in what had happened. It was not difficult for her to recover me and dispel this shamefacedness.

But, at the moment in which I was ready to faint upon a bosom, which for the first time seemed to suffer the impression of the hand and lips of a man, I perceived she had a withered 'teton'. I struck my forehead: I examined, and thought I perceived this teton was not formed like the other. I immediately began to consider how it was possible to have such a defect, and persuaded of its proceeding from some great natural vice, I was clearly convinced, that, instead of the most charming person of whom I could form to myself an idea, I had in my arms a species of a monster, the refuse of nature, of men and of love. I carried my stupidity so far as to speak to her of the discovery I had made. She, at first, took what I said jocosely; and in her frolicsome humor, did and said things which made me die of love. But perceiving an inquietude I could not conceal, she at length reddened, adjusted her dress, raised herself up, and without saying a word, went and placed herself at a window. I attempted to place myself by her side: she withdrew to a sofa, rose from it the next moment, and fanning herself as she walked about the chamber, said to me in a reserved and disdainful tone of voice, "Zanetto, 'lascia le donne, a studia la matematica.'"—[Leave women and study mathematics.]



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Before I took leave I requested her to appoint another rendezvous for the next day, which she postponed for three days, adding, with a satirical smile, that I must needs be in want of repose. I was very ill at ease during the interval; my heart was full of her charms and graces; I felt my extravagance, and reproached myself with it, regretting the loss of the moments I had so ill employed, and which, had I chosen, I might have rendered more agreeable than any in my whole life; waiting with the most burning impatience for the moment in which I might repair the loss, and yet, notwithstanding all my reasoning upon what I had discovered, anxious to reconcile the perfections of this adorable girl with the indignity of her situation. I ran, I flew to her apartment at the hour appointed. I know not whether or not her ardor would have been more satisfied with this visit, her pride at least would have been flattered by it, and I already rejoiced at the idea of my convincing her, in every respect, that I knew how to repair the wrongs I had done. She spared me this justification. The gondolier whom I had sent to her apartment brought me for answer that she had set off, the evening before, for Florence. If I had not felt all the love I had for her person when this was in my possession, I felt it in the most cruel manner on losing her. Amiable and charming as she was in my eyes, I could not console myself for the loss of her; but this I have never been able to do relative to the contemptuous idea which at her departure she must have had of me.

These are my two narratives. The eighteen months I passed at Venice furnished me with no other of the same kind, except a simple prospect at most. Carrio was a gallant. Tired of visiting girls engaged to others, he took a fancy to have one to himself, and, as we were inseparable, he proposed to mean arrangement common enough at Venice, which was to keep one girl for us both. To this I consented. The question was, to find one who was safe. He was so industrious in his researches that he found out a little girl from eleven to twelve years of age, whom her infamous mother was endeavoring to sell, and I went with Carrio to see her. The sight of the child moved me to the most lively compassion. She was fair and as gentle as a lamb. Nobody would have taken her for an Italian. Living is very cheap in Venice; we gave a little money to the mother, and provided for the subsistence of her daughter. She had a voice, and to procure her some resource we gave her a spinnet, and a singing—master. All these expenses did not cost each of us more than two sequins a month, and we contrived to save a much greater sum in other matters; but as we were obliged to wait until she became of a riper age, this was sowing a long time before we could possibly reap. However, satisfied with passing our evenings, chatting and innocently playing with the child, we perhaps enjoyed greater pleasure than if we had received the last favors.



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So true is it that men are more attached to women by a certain pleasure they have in living with them, than by any kind of libertinism. My heart became insensibly attached to the little Anzoletta, but my attachment was paternal, in which the senses had so little share, that in proportion as the former increased, to have connected it with the latter would have been less possible; and I felt I should have experienced, at approaching this little creature when become nubile, the same horror with which the abominable crime of incest would have inspired me. I perceived the sentiments of Carrio take, unobserved by himself, exactly the same turn. We thus prepared for ourselves, without intending it, pleasure not less delicious, but very different from that of which we first had an idea; and I am fully persuaded that however beautiful the poor child might have become, far from being the corrupters of her innocence we should have been the protectors of it. The circumstance which shortly afterwards befell me deprived me, of the happiness of taking a part in this good work, and my only merit in the affair was the inclination of my heart.

I will now return to my journey.

My first intentions after leaving M. de Montaigu, was to retire to Geneva, until time and more favorable circumstances should have removed the obstacles which prevented my union with my poor mamma; but the quarrel between me and M. de Montaigu being become public, and he having had the folly to write about it to the court, I resolved to go there to give an account of my conduct and complain of that of a madman. I communicated my intention, from Venice, to M. du Theil, charged per interim with foreign affairs after the death of M. Amelot. I set off as soon as my letter, and took my route through Bergamo, Como, and Domo D'Oscela, and crossing Saint Plomb. At Sion, M. de Chaignon, charge des affaires from France, showed me great civility; at Geneva M. de la Closure treated me with the same polite attention. I there renewed my acquaintance with M. de Gauffecourt, from whom I had some money to receive. I had passed through Nion without going to see my father: not that this was a matter of indifference to me, but because I was unwilling to appear before my mother-in-law, after the disaster which had befallen me, certain of being condemned by her without being heard. The bookseller, Du Villard, an old friend of my father's, reproached me severely with this neglect. I gave him my reasons for it, and to repair my fault, without exposing myself to meet my mother-in-law, I took a chaise and we went together to Nion and stopped at a public house. Du Villard went to fetch my father, who came running to embrace me. We supped together, and, after passing an evening very agreeable to the wishes of my heart, I returned the next morning to Geneva with Du Villard, for whom I have ever since retained a sentiment of gratitude in return for the service he did me on this occasion.



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Lyons was a little out of my direct road, but I was determined to pass through that city in order to convince myself of a knavish trick played me by M. de Montaigu. I had sent me from Paris a little box containing a waistcoat, embroidered with gold, a few pairs of ruffles, and six pairs of white silk stockings; nothing more. Upon a proposition made me by M. de Montaigu, I ordered this box to be added to his baggage. In the apothecary's bill he offered me in payment of my salary, and which he wrote out himself, he stated the weight of this box, which he called a bale, at eleven hundred pounds, and charged me with the carriage of it at an enormous rate. By the cares of M. Boy de la Tour, to whom I was recommended by M. Roquin, his uncle, it was proved from the registers of the customs of Lyons and Marseilles, that the said bale weighed no more than forty-five pounds, and had paid carriage according to that weight. I joined this authentic extract to the memoir of M. de Montaigu, and provided with these papers and others containing stronger facts, I returned to Paris, very impatient to make use of them. During the whole of this long journey I had little adventures; at Como, in Valais, and elsewhere. I there saw many curious things, amongst others the Boroma islands, which are worthy of being described. But I am pressed by time, and surrounded by spies. I am obliged to write in haste, and very imperfectly, a work which requires the leisure and tranquility I do not enjoy. If ever providence in its goodness grants me days more calm, I shall destine them to new modelling this work, should I be able to do it, or at least to giving a supplement, of which I perceive it stands in the greatest need.—[I have given up this project.]

The news of my quarrel had reached Paris before me and on my arrival I found the people in all the offices, and the public in general, scandalized at the follies of the ambassador.

Notwithstanding this, the public talk at Venice, and the unanswerable proof I exhibited, I could not obtain even the shadow of justice. Far from obtaining satisfaction or reparation, I was left at the discretion of the ambassador for my salary, and this for no other reason than because, not being a Frenchman, I had no right to national protection, and that it was a private affair between him and myself. Everybody agreed I was insulted, injured, and unfortunate; that the ambassador was mad, cruel, and iniquitous, and that the whole of the affair dishonored him forever. But what of this! He was the ambassador, and I was nothing more than the secretary.

Order, or that which is so called, was in opposition to my obtaining justice, and of this the least shadow was not granted me. I supposed that, by loudly complaining, and by publicly treating this madman in the manner he deserved, I should at length be told to hold my tongue; this was what I wished for, and I was fully determined not to obey until I had obtained redress. But at that time there was no minister for foreign affairs. I was suffered to exclaim, nay, even encouraged to do it, and joined with; but the affair still remained in the same state, until, tired of being in the right without obtaining justice, my courage at length failed me, and let the whole drop.



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The only person by whom I was ill received, and from whom I should have least expected such an injustice, was Madam de Beuzenval. Full of the prerogatives of rank and nobility, she could not conceive it was possible an ambassador could ever be in the wrong with respect to his secretary. The reception she gave me was conformable to this prejudice. I was so piqued at it that, immediately after leaving her, I wrote her perhaps one of the strongest and most violent letters that ever came from my pen, and since that time I never once returned to her house. I was better received by Father Castel; but, in the midst of his Jesuitical wheedling I perceived him faithfully to follow one of the great maxims of his society, which is to sacrifice the weak to the powerful. The strong conviction I felt of the justice of my cause, and my natural greatness of mind did not suffer me patiently to endure this partiality. I ceased visiting Father Castel, and on that account, going to the college of the Jesuits, where I knew nobody but himself. Besides the intriguing and tyrannical spirit of his brethren, so different from the cordiality of the good Father Hemet, gave me such a disgust for their conversation that I have never since been acquainted with, nor seen anyone of them except Father Berthier, whom I saw twice or thrice at M. Dupin's, in conjunction with whom he labored with all his might at the refutation of Montesquieu.

That I may not return to the subject, I will conclude what I have to say of M. de Montaigu. I had told him in our quarrels that a secretary was not what he wanted, but an attorney's clerk. He took the hint, and the person whom he procured to succeed me was a real attorney, who in less than a year robbed him of twenty or thirty thousand livres. He discharged him, and sent him to prison, dismissed his gentleman with disgrace, and, in wretchedness, got himself everywhere into quarrels, received affronts which a footman would not have put up with, and, after numerous follies, was recalled, and sent from the capital. It is very probable that among the reprimands he received at court, his affair with me was not forgotten. At least, a little time after his return he sent his maitre d' hotel, to settle my account, and give me some money. I was in want of it at that moment; my debts at Venice, debts of honor, if ever there were any, lay heavy upon my mind. I made use of the means which offered to discharge them, as well as the note of Zanetto Nani. I received what was offered me, paid all my debts, and remained as before, without a farthing in my pocket, but relieved from a weight which had become insupportable. From that time I never heard speak of M. de Montaigu until his death, with which I became acquainted by means of the Gazette. The peace of God be with that poor man! He was as fit for the functions of an ambassador as in my infancy I had been for those of Grapignan.—[I have not been able to find this word in any dictionary, nor does any Frenchman of letters of my acquaintance know what it means. —T.]— However, it was in his power to have honorably supported himself by my services, and rapidly to have advanced me in a career to which the Comte de Gauvon had destined me in my youth, and of the functions of which I had in a more advanced age rendered myself capable.



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The justice and inutility of my complaints, left in my mind seeds of indignation against our foolish civil institutions, by which the welfare of the public and real justice are always sacrificed to I know not what appearance of order, and which does nothing more than add the sanction of public authority to the oppression of the weak, and the iniquity of the powerful. Two things prevented these seeds from putting forth at that time as they afterwards did: one was, myself being in question in the affair, and private interest, whence nothing great or noble ever proceeded, could not draw from my heart the divine soarings, which the most pure love, only of that which is just and sublime, can produce. The other was the charm of friendship which tempered and calmed my wrath by the ascendancy of a more pleasing sentiment. I had become acquainted at Venice with a Biscayan, a friend of my friend Carrio's, and worthy of being that of every honest man. This amiable young man, born with every talent and virtue, had just made the tour of Italy to gain a taste for the fine arts, and, imagining he had nothing more to acquire, intended to return by the most direct road to his own country. I told him the arts were nothing more than a relaxation to a genius like his, fit to cultivate the sciences; and to give him a taste for these, I advised him to make a journey to Paris and reside there for six months. He took my advice, and went to Paris. He was there and expected me when I arrived. His lodging was too considerable for him, and he offered me the half of it, which I instantly accepted. I found him absorbed in the study of the sublimest sciences. Nothing was above his reach. He digested everything with a prodigious rapidity. How cordially did he thank me for having procured him this food for his mind, which was tormented by a thirst after knowledge, without his being aware of it! What a treasure of light and virtue I found in the vigorous mind of this young man! I felt he was the friend I wanted. We soon became intimate. Our tastes were not the same, and we constantly disputed. Both opinionated, we never could agree about anything. Nevertheless we could not separate; and, notwithstanding our reciprocal and incessant contradiction, we neither of us wished the other to be different from what he was.

Ignacio Emanuel de Altuna was one of those rare beings whom only Spain produces, and of whom she produces too few for her glory. He had not the violent national passions common in his own country. The idea of vengeance could no more enter his head, than the desire of it could proceed from his heart. His mind was too great to be vindictive, and I have frequently heard him say, with the greatest coolness, that no mortal could offend him. He was gallant, without being tender. He played with women as with so many pretty children. He amused himself with the mistresses of his friends, but I never knew him to have one of his own, nor the least desire for it. The emanations from the virtue with which his heart was stored, never permitted the fire of the passions to excite sensual desires.



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After his travels he married, died young, and left children; and, I am as convinced as of my existence, that his wife was the first and only woman with whom he ever tasted of the pleasures of love.

Externally he was devout, like a Spaniard, but in his heart he had the piety of an angel. Except myself, he is the only man I ever saw whose principles were not intolerant. He never in his life asked any person his opinion in matters of religion. It was not of the least consequence to him whether his friend was a Jew, a Protestant, a Turk, a Bigot, or an Atheist, provided he was an honest man. Obstinate and headstrong in matters of indifference, but the moment religion was in question, even the moral part, he collected himself, was silent, or simply said: "I am charged with the care of myself, only." It is astonishing so much elevation of mind should be compatible with a spirit of detail carried to minuteness. He previously divided the employment of the day by hours, quarters and minutes; and so scrupulously adhered to this distribution, that had the clock struck while he was reading a phrase, he would have shut his book without finishing it. His portions of time thus laid out, were some of them set apart to studies of one kind, and others to those of another: he had some for reflection, conversation, divine service, the reading of Locke, for his rosary, for visits, music and painting; and neither pleasure, temptation, nor complaisance, could interrupt this order: a duty he might have had to discharge was the only thing that could have done it. When he gave me a list of his distribution, that I might conform myself thereto, I first laughed, and then shed tears of admiration. He never constrained anybody nor suffered constraint: he was rather rough with people, who from politeness, attempted to put it upon him. He was passionate without being sullen. I have often seen him warm, but never saw him really angry with any person. Nothing could be more cheerful than his temper: he knew how to pass and receive a joke; raillery was one of his distinguished talents, and with which he possessed that of pointed wit and repartee. When he was animated, he was noisy and heard at a great distance; but whilst he loudly inveighed, a smile was spread over his countenance, and in the midst of his warmth he used some diverting expression which made all his hearers break out into a loud laugh. He had no more of the Spanish complexion than of the phlegm of that country. His skin was white, his cheeks finely colored, and his hair of a light chestnut. He was tall and well made; his body was well formed for the residence of his mind.



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This wise—hearted as well as wise—headed man, knew mankind, and was my friend; this was my only answer to such as are not so. We were so intimately united, that our intention was to pass our days together. In a few years I was to go to Ascoytia to live with him at his estate; every part of the project was arranged the eve of his departure; nothing was left undetermined, except that which depends not upon men in the best concerted plans, posterior events. My disasters, his marriage, and finally, his death, separated us forever. Some men would be tempted to say, that nothing succeeds except the dark conspiracies of the wicked, and that the innocent intentions of the good are seldom or never accomplished. I had felt the inconvenience of dependence, and took a resolution never again to expose myself to it; having seen the projects of ambition, which circumstances had induced me to form, overturned in their birth. Discouraged in the career I had so well begun, from which, however, I had just been expelled, I resolved never more to attach myself to any person, but to remain in an independent state, turning my talents to the best advantage: of these I at length began to feel the extent, and that I had hitherto had too modest an opinion of them. I again took up my opera, which I had laid aside to go to Venice; and that I might be less interrupted after the departure of Altuna, I returned to my old hotel St. Quentin; which, in a solitary part of the town, and not far from the Luxembourg, was more proper for my purpose than noisy Rue St. Honor.

There the only consolation which Heaven suffered me to taste in my misery, and the only one which rendered it supportable, awaited me. This was not a transient acquaintance; I must enter into some detail relative to the manner in which it was made.

We had a new landlady from Orleans; she took for a needlewoman a girl from her own country, of between twenty—two and twenty—three years of age, and who, as well as the hostess, ate at our table. This girl, named Theresa le Vasseur, was of a good family; her father was an officer in the mint of Orleans, and her mother a shopkeeper; they had many children. The function of the mint of Orleans being suppressed, the father found himself without employment; and the mother having suffered losses, was reduced to narrow circumstances. She quitted her business and came to Paris with her husband and daughter, who, by her industry, maintained all the three.

The first time I saw this girl at table, I was struck with her modesty; and still more so with her lively yet charming look, which, with respect to the impression it made upon me, was never equalled. Beside M. de Bonnefond, the company was composed of several Irish priests, Gascons and others of much the same description. Our hostess herself had not made the best possible use of her time, and I was the only person at the table who spoke and behaved with decency.



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Allurements were thrown out to the young girl. I took her part, and the joke was then turned against me. Had I had no natural inclination to the poor girl, compassion and contradiction would have produced it in me: I was always a great friend to decency in manners and conversation, especially in the fair sex. I openly declared myself her champion, and perceived she was not insensible of my attention; her looks, animated by the gratitude she dared not express by words, were for this reason still more penetrating.

She was very timid, and I was as much so as herself. The connection which this disposition common to both seemed to remove to a distance, was however rapidly formed. Our landlady perceiving its progress, became furious, and her brutality forwarded my affair with the young girl, who, having no person in the house except myself to give her the least support, was sorry to see me go from home, and sighed for the return of her protector. The affinity our hearts bore to each other, and the similarity of our dispositions, had soon their ordinary effect. She thought she saw in me an honest man, and in this she was not deceived. I thought I perceived in her a woman of great sensibility, simple in her manners, and devoid of all coquetry:—I was no more deceived in her than she in me. I began by declaring to her that I would never either abandon or marry her. Love, esteem, artless sincerity were the ministers of my triumph, and it was because her heart was tender and virtuous, that I was happy without being presuming.

The apprehensions she was under of my not finding in her that for which I sought, retarded my happiness more than every other circumstance. I perceived her disconcerted and confused before she yielded her consent, wishing to be understood and not daring to explain herself. Far from suspecting the real cause of her embarrassment, I falsely imagined it to proceed from another motive, a supposition highly insulting to her morals, and thinking she gave me to understand my health might be exposed to danger, I fell into so perplexed a state that, although it was no restraint upon me, it poisoned my happiness during several days. As we did not understand each other, our conversations upon this subject were so many enigmas more than ridiculous. She was upon the point of believing I was absolutely mad; and I on my part was as near not knowing what else to think of her. At last we came to an explanation; she confessed to me with tears the only fault of the kind of her whole life, immediately after she became nubile; the fruit of her ignorance and the address of her seducer. The moment I comprehended what she meant, I gave a shout of joy. “A Hymen!” exclaimed I; “sought for at Paris, and at twenty years of age! Ah my Theresa! I am happy in possessing thee, virtuous and healthy as thou art, and in not finding that for which I never sought.”



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At first amusement was my only object; I perceived I had gone further and had given myself a companion. A little intimate connection with this excellent girl, and a few reflections upon my situation, made me discover that, while thinking of nothing more than my pleasures, I had done a great deal towards my happiness. In the place of extinguished ambition, a life of sentiment, which had entire possession of my heart, was necessary to me. In a word, I wanted a successor to mamma: since I was never again to live with her, it was necessary some person should live with her pupil, and a person, too, in whom I might find that simplicity and docility of mind and heart which she had found in me. It was, moreover, necessary that the happiness of domestic life should indemnify me for the splendid career I had just renounced. When I was quite alone there was a void in my heart, which wanted nothing more than another heart to fill it up. Fate had deprived me of this, or at least in part alienated me from that for which by nature I was formed. From that moment I was alone, for there never was for me the least thing intermediate between everything and nothing. I found in Theresa the supplement of which I stood in need; by means of her I lived as happily as I possibly could do, according to the course of events.

I at first attempted to improve her mind. In this my pains were useless. Her mind is as nature formed it: it was not susceptible of cultivation. I do not blush in acknowledging she never knew how to read well, although she writes tolerably. When I went to lodge in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs, opposite to my windows at the Hotel de Ponchartrain, there was a sun-dial, on which for a whole month I used all my efforts to teach her to know the hours; yet, she scarcely knows them at present. She never could enumerate the twelve months of the year in order, and cannot distinguish one numeral from another, notwithstanding all the trouble I took endeavoring to teach them to her. She neither knows how to count money, nor to reckon the price of anything. The word which when she speaks, presents itself to her mind, is frequently opposite to that of which she means to make use. I formerly made a dictionary of her phrases, to amuse M. de Luxembourg, and her 'qui pro quos' often became celebrated among those with whom I was most intimate. But this person, so confined in her intellects, and, if the world pleases, so stupid, can give excellent advice in cases of difficulty. In Switzerland, in England and in France, she frequently saw what I had not myself perceived; she has often given me the best advice I could possibly follow; she has rescued me from dangers into which I had blindly precipitated myself, and in the presence of princes and the great, her sentiments, good sense, answers, and conduct have acquired her universal esteem, and myself the most sincere congratulations on her merit. With persons whom we love, sentiment fortifies the mind as well as the heart; and they who are thus attached, have little need of searching for ideas elsewhere.



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I lived with my Theresa as agreeably as with the finest genius in the world. Her mother, proud of having been brought up under the Marchioness of Monpipeau, attempted to be witty, wished to direct the judgment of her daughter, and by her knavish cunning destroyed the simplicity of our intercourse.

The fatigue of this opportunity made me in some degree surmount the foolish shame which prevented me from appearing with Theresa in public; and we took short country walks, *tete-a-tete*, and partook of little collations, which, to me, were delicious. I perceived she loved me sincerely, and this increased my tenderness. This charming intimacy left me nothing to wish; futurity no longer gave me the least concern, or at most appeared only as the present moment prolonged: I had no other desire than that of insuring its duration.

This attachment rendered all other dissipation superfluous and insipid to me. As I only went out for the purpose of going to the apartment of Theresa, her place of residence almost became my own. My retirement was so favorable to the work I had undertaken, that, in less than three months, my opera was entirely finished, both words and music, except a few accompaniments, and fillings up which still remained to be added. This maneuvering business was very fatiguing to me. I proposed it to Philidor, offering him at the same time a part of the profits. He came twice, and did something to the middle parts in the act of Ovid; but he could not confine himself to an assiduous application by the allurements of advantages which were distant and uncertain. He did not come a third time, and I finished the work myself.

My opera completed, the next thing was to make something of it: this was by much the more difficult task of the two. A man living in solitude in Paris will never succeed in anything. I was on the point of making my way by means of M. de la Popliniere, to whom Gauffecourt, at my return to Geneva had introduced me. M. de la Popliniere was the Mecaenas of Rameau; Madam de la Popliniere his very humble scholar. Rameau was said to govern in that house. Judging that he would with pleasure protect the work of one of his disciples, I wished to show him what I had done. He refused to examine it; saying he could not read score, it was too fatiguing to him. M. de la Popliniere, to obviate this difficulty, said he might hear it; and offered me to send for musicians to execute certain detached pieces. I wished for nothing better. Rameau consented with an ill grace, incessantly repeating that the composition of a man not regularly bred to the science, and who had learned music without a master, must certainly be very fine! I hastened to copy into parts five or six select passages. Ten symphonies were procured, and Albert, Berard, and Mademoiselle Bourbonois undertook the vocal part. Rameau, the moment he heard the overture, was purposely extravagant in his eulogium, by which



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he intended it should be understood it could not be my composition. He showed signs of impatience at every passage: but after a counter tenor song, the air of which was noble and harmonious, with a brilliant accompaniment, he could no longer contain himself; he apostrophised me with a brutality at which everybody was shocked, maintaining that a part of what he had heard was by a man experienced in the art, and the rest by some ignorant person who did not so much as understand music. It is true my composition, unequal and without rule, was sometimes sublime, and at others insipid, as that of a person who forms himself in an art by the soarings of his own genius, unsupported by science, must necessarily be. Rameau pretended to see nothing in me but a contemptible pilferer, without talents or taste. The rest of the company, among whom I must distinguish the master of the house, were of a different opinion. M. de Richelieu, who at that time frequently visited M. and Madam de la Popliniere, heard them speak of my work, and wished to hear the whole of it, with an intention, if it pleased him, to have it performed at court. The opera was executed with full choruses, and by a great orchestra, at the expense of the king, at M. de Bonneval's intendant of the Menus; Francoeur directed the band. The effect was surprising: the duke never ceased to exclaim and applaud; and, at the end of one of the choruses, in the act of Tasso, he arose and came to me, and, pressing my hand, said: "M. Rousseau, this is transporting harmony. I never heard anything finer. I will get this performed at Versailles."

Madam de la Poliniere, who was present, said not a word. Rameau, although invited, refused to come. The next day, Madam de la Popliniere received me at her toilette very ungraciously, affected to undervalue my piece, and told me, that although a little false glitter had at first dazzled M. de Richelieu, he had recovered from his error, and she advised me not to place the least dependence upon my opera. The duke arrived soon after, and spoke to me in quite a different language. He said very flattering things of my talents, and seemed as much disposed as ever to have my composition performed before the king. "There is nothing," said he, "but the act of Tasso which cannot pass at court: you must write another." Upon this single word I shut myself up in my apartment; and in three weeks produced, in the place of Tasso, another act, the subject of which was Hesiod inspired by the muses. In this I found the secret of introducing a part of the history of my talents, and of the jealousy with which Rameau had been pleased to honor me. There was in the new act an elevation less gigantic and better supported than in the act of Tasso. The music was as noble and the composition better; and had the other two acts been equal to this, the whole piece would have supported a representation to advantage. But whilst I was endeavoring to give it the last



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finishing, another undertaking suspended the completion of that I had in my hand. In the winter which succeeded the battle of Fontenoi, there were many galas at Versailles, and several operas performed at the theater of the little stables. Among the number of the latter was the dramatic piece of Voltaire, entitled 'La Princesse de Navarre', the music by Rameau, the name of which has just been changed to that of 'Fetes de Ramire'. This new subject required several changes to be made in the divertissements, as well in the poetry as in the music.

A person capable of both was now sought after. Voltaire was in Lorraine, and Rameau also; both of whom were employed on the opera of the Temple of Glory, and could not give their attention to this. M. de Richelieu thought of me, and sent to desire I would undertake the alterations; and, that I might the better examine what there was to do, he gave me separately the poem and the music. In the first place, I would not touch the words without the consent of the author, to whom I wrote upon the subject a very polite and respectful letter, such a one as was proper; and received from him the following answer:

*"Sir:* In you two talents, which hitherto have always been separated, are united. These are two good reasons for me to esteem and to endeavor to love you. I am sorry, on your account, you should employ these talents in a work which is so little worthy of them. A few months ago the Duke de Richelieu commanded me to make, absolutely in the twinkling of an eye, a little and bad sketch of a few insipid and imperfect scenes to be adapted to divertissements which are not of a nature to be joined with them. I obeyed with the greatest exactness. I wrote very fast, and very ill. I sent this wretched production to M. de Richelieu, imagining he would make no use of it, or that I should have it again to make the necessary corrections. Happily it is in your hands, and you are at full liberty to do with it whatever you please: I have entirely lost sight of the thing. I doubt not but you will have corrected all the faults which cannot but abound in so hasty a composition of such a very simple sketch, and am persuaded you will have supplied whatever was wanting.

"I remember that, among other stupid inattentions, no account is given in the scenes which connect the divertissements of the manner in which the Grenadian prince immediately passes from a prison to a garden or palace. As it is not a magician but a Spanish nobleman who gives her the gala, I am of opinion nothing should be effected by enchantment.

"I beg, sir, you will examine this part, of which I have but a confused idea.

"You will likewise consider, whether or not it be necessary the prison should be opened, and the princess conveyed from it to a fine palace, gilt and varnished, and prepared for her. I know all this is wretched, and that it is beneath a thinking being to make a serious

affair of such trifles; but, since we must displease as little as possible, it is necessary we should conform to reason, even in a bad divertissement of an opera.



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“I depend wholly upon you and M. Ballot, and soon expect to have the honor of returning you my thanks, and assuring you how much I am, *etc.*”

There is nothing surprising in the great politeness of this letter, compared with the almost crude ones which he has since written to me. He thought I was in great favor with Madam Richelieu; and the courtly suppleness, which everyone knows to be the character of this author, obliged him to be extremely polite to a new comer, until he become better acquainted with the measure of the favor and patronage he enjoyed.

Authorized by M. de Voltaire, and not under the necessity of giving myself the least concern about M. Rameau, who endeavored to injure me, I set to work, and in two months my undertaking was finished. With respect to the poetry, it was confined to a mere trifle; I aimed at nothing more than to prevent the difference of style from being perceived, and had the vanity to think I had succeeded. The musical part was longer and more laborious. Besides my having to compose several preparatory pieces, and, amongst others, the overture, all the recitative, with which I was charged, was extremely difficult on account of the necessity there was of connecting, in a few verses, and by very rapid modulations, symphonies and choruses, in keys very different from each other; for I was determined neither to change nor transpose any of the airs, that Rameau might not accuse me of having disfigured them. I succeeded in the recitative; it was well accented, full of energy and excellent modulation. The idea of two men of superior talents, with whom I was associated, had elevated my genius, and I can assert, that in this barren and inglorious task, of which the public could have no knowledge, I was for the most part equal to my models.

The piece, in the state to which I had brought it, was rehearsed in the great theatre of the opera. Of the three authors who had contributed to the production, I was the only one present. Voltaire was not in Paris, and Rameau either did not come, or concealed himself. The words of the first monologue were very mournful; they began with:

O Mort! viens terminer les malheurs de ma vie.

[O Death! hasten to terminate the misfortunes of my life.]

To these, suitable music was necessary. It was, however, upon this that Madam de la Popliniere founded her censure; accusing me, with much bitterness, of having composed a funeral anthem. M. de Richelieu very judiciously began by informing himself who was the author of the poetry of this monologue; I presented him the manuscript he had sent me, which proved it was by Voltaire. “In that case,” said the duke, “Voltaire alone is to blame.” During the rehearsal, everything I had done was disapproved by Madam de la Popliniere, and approved of by M. de Richelieu; but I had afterwards to do with too powerful an adversary. It was signified to me that several parts of my composition wanted revising, and that on this it was necessary I should consult M. Rameau; my heart was wounded by such a conclusion, instead of the



eulogium I expected, and which certainly I merited, and I returned to my apartment overwhelmed with grief, exhausted with fatigue, and consumed by chagrin. I was immediately taken ill, and confined to my chamber for upwards of six weeks.



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Rameau, who was charged with the alterations indicated by Madam de la Popliniere, sent to ask me for the overture of my great opera, to substitute it to that I had just composed. Happily I perceived the trick he intended to play me, and refused him the overture. As the performance was to be in five or six days, he had not time to make one, and was obliged to leave that I had prepared. It was in the Italian taste, and in a style at that time quite new in France. It gave satisfaction, and I learned from M. de Valmalette, maitre d'hotel to the king, and son-in-law to M. Mussard, my relation and friend, that the connoisseurs were highly satisfied with my work, and that the public had not distinguished it from that of Rameau. However, he and Madam de la Popliniere took measures to prevent any person from knowing I had any concern in the matter. In the books distributed to the audience, and in which the authors are always named, Voltaire was the only person mentioned, and Rameau preferred the suppression of his own name to seeing it associated with mine.

As soon as I was in a situation to leave my room, I wished to wait upon M. de Richelieu, but it was too late; he had just set off for Dunkirk, where he was to command the expedition destined to Scotland. At his return, said I to myself, to authorize my idleness, it will be too late for my purpose, not having seen him since that time. I lost the honor of my work and the emoluments it should have produced me, besides considering my time, trouble, grief, and vexation, my illness, and the money this cost me, without ever receiving the least benefit, or rather, recompense. However, I always thought M. de Richelieu was disposed to serve me, and that he had a favorable opinion of my talents; but my misfortune, and Madam de la Popliniere, prevented the effect of his good wishes.

I could not divine the reason of the aversion this lady had to me. I had always endeavored to make myself agreeable to her, and regularly paid her my court. Gauffecourt explained to me the causes of her dislike: "The first," said he, "is her friendship for Rameau, of whom she is the declared panegyrist, and who will not suffer a competitor; the next is an original sin, which ruins you in her estimation, and which she will never forgive; you are a Genevese." Upon this he told me the Abbe Hubert, who was from the same city, and the sincere friend of M. de la Popliniere, had used all his efforts to prevent him from marrying this lady, with whose character and temper he was very well acquainted; and that after the marriage she had vowed him an implacable hatred, as well as all the Genevese. "Although La Popliniere has a friendship for you, do not," said he, "depend upon his protection: he is still in love with his wife: she hates you, and is vindictive and artful; you will never do anything in that house." All this I took for granted.



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The same Gauffecourt rendered me much about this time, a service of which I stood in the greatest need. I had just lost my virtuous father, who was about sixty years of age. I felt this loss less severely than I should have done at any other time, when the embarrassments of my situation had less engaged my attention. During his life-time I had never claimed what remained of the property of my mother, and of which he received the little interest. His death removed all my scruples upon this subject. But the want of a legal proof of the death of my brother created a difficulty which Gauffecourt undertook to remove, and this he effected by means of the good offices of the advocate De Lolme. As I stood in need of the little resource, and the event being doubtful, I waited for a definitive account with the greatest anxiety.

One evening on entering my apartment I found a letter, which I knew to contain the information I wanted, and I took it up with an impatient trembling, of which I was inwardly ashamed. What? said I to myself, with disdain, shall Jean Jacques thus suffer himself to be subdued by interest and curiosity? I immediately laid the letter again upon the chimney-piece. I undressed myself, went to bed with great composure, slept better than ordinary, and rose in the morning at a late hour, without thinking more of my letter. As I dressed myself, it caught my eye; I broke the seal very leisurely, and found under the envelope a bill of exchange. I felt a variety of pleasing sensations at the same time: but I can assert, upon my honor, that the most lively of them all was that proceeding from having known how to be master of myself.

I could mention twenty such circumstances in my life, but I am too much pressed for time to say everything. I sent a small part of this money to my poor mamma; regretting, with my eyes suffused with tears, the happy time when I should have laid it all at her feet. All her letters contained evident marks of her distress. She sent me piles of recipes, and numerous secrets, with which she pretended I might make my fortune and her own. The idea of her wretchedness already affected her heart and contracted her mind. The little I sent her fell a prey to the knaves by whom she was surrounded; she received not the least advantage from anything. The idea of dividing what was necessary to my own subsistence with these wretches disgusted me, especially after the vain attempt I had made to deliver her from them, and of which I shall have occasion to speak. Time slipped away, and with it the little money I had; we were two, or indeed, four persons; or, to speak still more correctly, seven or eight. Although Theresa was disinterested to a degree of which there are but few examples, her mother was not so. She was no sooner a little relieved from her necessities by my cares, than she sent for her whole family to partake of the fruits of them. Her sisters, sons, daughters,



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all except her eldest daughter, married to the director of the coaches of Augers, came to Paris. Everything I did for Theresa, her mother diverted from its original destination in favor of these people who were starving. I had not to do with an avaricious person; and, not being under the influence of an unruly passion, I was not guilty of follies. Satisfied with genteelly supporting Theresa without luxury, and unexposed to pressing wants, I readily consented to let all the earnings of her industry go to the profit of her mother; and to this even I did not confine myself; but, by a fatality by which I was pursued, whilst mamma was a prey to the rascals about her Theresa was the same to her family; and I could not do anything on either side for the benefit of her to whom the succor I gave was destined. It was odd enough the youngest child of M. de la Vasseur, the only one who had not received a marriage portion from her parents, should provide for their subsistence; and that, after having along time been beaten by her brothers, sisters, and even her nieces, the poor girl should be plundered by them all, without being more able to defend herself from their thefts than from their blows. One of her nieces, named Gorton le Duc, was of a mild and amiable character; although spoiled by the lessons and examples of the others. As I frequently saw them together, I gave them names, which they afterwards gave to each other; I called the niece my niece, and the aunt my aunt; they both called me uncle. Hence the name of aunt, by which I continued to call Theresa, and which my friends sometimes jocosely repeated. It will be judged that in such a situation I had not a moment to lose, before I attempted to extricate myself. Imagining M. de Richelieu had forgotten me, and having no more hopes from the court, I made some attempts to get my opera brought out at Paris; but I met with difficulties which could not immediately be removed, and my situation became daily more painful. I presented my little comedy of Narcisse to the Italians; it was received, and I had the freedom of the theatre, which gave much pleasure. But this was all; I could never get my piece performed, and, tired of paying my court to players, I gave myself no more trouble about them. At length I had recourse to the last expedient which remained to me, and the only one of which I ought to have made use. While frequenting the house of M. de la Popliniere, I had neglected the family of Dupin. The two ladies, although related, were not on good terms, and never saw each other. There was not the least intercourse between the two families, and Thieriot was the only person who visited both. He was desired to endeavor to bring me again to M. Dupin's. M. de Francueil was then studying natural history and chemistry, and collecting a cabinet. I believe he aspired to become a member of the Academy of Sciences; to this effect he intended to write a book, and judged I might be of use to him in the undertaking. Madam de Dupin, who, on her part, had another work in contemplation, had much the same views in respect to me. They wished to have me in common as a kind of secretary, and this was the reason of the invitations of Thieriot.



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I required that M. de Francueil should previously employ his interest with that of Jelyote to get my work rehearsed at the operahouse; to this he consented. The Muses Galantes were several times rehearsed, first at the Magazine, and afterwards in the great theatre. The audience was very numerous at the great rehearsal, and several parts of the composition were highly applauded. However, during this rehearsal, very ill-conducted by Rebel, I felt the piece would not be received; and that, before it could appear, great alterations were necessary. I therefore withdrew it without saying a word, or exposing myself to a refusal; but I plainly perceived, by several indications, that the work, had it been perfect, could not have succeeded. M. de Francueil had promised me to get it rehearsed, but not that it should be received. He exactly kept his word. I thought I perceived on this occasion, as well as many others, that neither Madam Dupin nor himself were willing I should acquire a certain reputation in the world, lest, after the publication of their books, it should be supposed they had grafted their talents upon mine. Yet as Madam Dupin always supposed those I had to be very moderate, and never employed me except it was to write what she dictated, or in researches of pure erudition, the reproach, with respect to her, would have been unjust.

This last failure of success completed my discouragement. I abandoned every prospect of fame and advancement; and, without further troubling my head about real or imaginary talents, with which I had so little success, I dedicated my whole time and cares to procure myself and Theresa a subsistence in the manner most pleasing to those to whom it should be agreeable to provide for it. I therefore entirely attached myself to Madam Dupin and M. de Francueil. This did not place me in a very opulent situation; for with eight or nine hundred livres, which I had the first two years, I had scarcely enough to provide for my primary wants; being obliged to live in their neighborhood, a dear part of the town, in a furnished lodging, and having to pay for another lodging at the extremity of Paris, at the very top of the Rue Saint Jacques, to which, let the weather be as it would, I went almost every evening to supper. I soon got into the track of my new occupations, and conceived a taste for them. I attached myself to the study of chemistry, and attended several courses of it with M. de Francueil at M. Rouelle's, and we began to scribble over paper upon that science, of which we scarcely possessed the elements. In 1717, we went to pass the autumn in Tourraine, at the castle of Chenonceaux, a royal mansion upon the Cher, built by Henry the II, for Diana of Poitiers, of whom the ciphers are still seen, and which is now in the possession of M. Dupin, a farmer general. We amused ourselves very agreeably in this beautiful place, and lived very well: I became as fat there as a monk. Music was a



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favorite relaxation. I composed several trios full of harmony, and of which I may perhaps speak in my supplement if ever I should write one. Theatrical performances were another resource. I wrote a comedy in fifteen days, entitled 'l'Engagement Temeraire',—[The Rash Engagement]—which will be found amongst my papers; it has no other merit than that of being lively. I composed several other little things: amongst others a poem entitled, 'l'Aliee de Sylvie', from the name of an alley in the park upon the bank of the Cher; and this without discontinuing my chemical studies, or interrupting what I had to do for Madam Dupin.

Whilst I was increasing my corpulency at Chenonceaux, that of my poor Theresa was augmented at Paris in another manner, and at my return I found the work I had put upon the frame in greater forwardness than I had expected. This, on account of my situation, would have thrown me into the greatest embarrassment, had not one of my messmates furnished me with the only resource which could relieve me from it. This is one of those essential narratives which I cannot give with too much simplicity; because, in making an improper use of their names, I should either excuse or inculpate myself, both of which in this place are entirely out of the question.

During the residence of Altuna at Paris, instead of going to eat at a 'Traiteurs', he and I commonly eat in the neighborhood, almost opposite the cul de sac of the opera, at the house of a Madam la Selle, the wife of a tailor, who gave but very ordinary dinners, but whose table was much frequented on account of the safe company which generally resorted to it; no person was received without being introduced by one of those who used the house. The commander, De Graville, an old debauchee, with much wit and politeness, but obscene in conversation, lodged at the house, and brought to it a set of riotous and extravagant young men; officers in the guards and mousquetaires. The Commander de Nonant, chevalier to all the girls of the opera, was the daily oracle, who conveyed to us the news of this motley crew. M. du Plessis, a lieutenant-colonel, retired from the service, an old man of great goodness and wisdom; and M. Ancelet,

[It was to this M. Ancelet I gave a little comedy, after my own manner entitled 'les Prisouniers de Guerre', which I wrote after the disasters of the French in Bavaria and Bohemia: I dared not either avow this comedy or show it, and this for the singular reason that neither the King of France nor the French were ever better spoken of nor praised with more sincerity of heart than in my piece though written by a professed republican, I dared not declare myself the panegyrist of a nation, whose maxims were exactly the reverse of my own. More grieved at the misfortunes of France than the French themselves I was afraid the public would construe into flattery and mean complaisance the marks of a sincere attachment, of



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which in my first part I have mentioned the date and the cause, and which I was ashamed to show.]

an officer in the mousquetaires kept the young people in a certain kind of order. This table was also frequented by commercial people, financiers and contractors, but extremely polite, and such as were distinguished amongst those of the same profession. M. de Besse, M. de Forcade, and others whose names I have forgotten, in short, well-dressed people of every description were seen there; except abbés and men of the long robe, not one of whom I ever met in the house, and it was agreed not to introduce men of either of these professions. This table, sufficiently resorted to, was very cheerful without being noisy, and many of the guests were waggish, without descending to vulgarity. The old commander with all his smutty stories, with respect to the substance, never lost sight of the politeness of the old court; nor did any indecent expression, which even women would not have pardoned him, escape his lips. His manner served as a rule to every person at table; all the young men related their adventures of gallantry with equal grace and freedom, and these narratives were the more complete, as the seraglio was at the door; the entry which led to it was the same; for there was a communication between this and the shop of Le Duchapt, a celebrated milliner, who at that time had several very pretty girls, with whom our young people went to chat before or after dinner. I should thus have amused myself as well as the rest, had I been less modest: I had only to go in as they did, but this I never had courage enough to do. With respect to Madam de Selle, I often went to eat at her house after the departure of Altuna. I learned a great number of amusing anecdotes, and by degrees I adopted, thank God, not the morals, but the maxims I found to be established there. Honest men injured, husbands deceived, women seduced, were the most ordinary topics, and he who had best filled the foundling hospital was always the most applauded. I caught the manners I daily had before my eyes: I formed my manner of thinking upon that I observed to be the reigning one amongst amiable: and upon the whole, very honest people. I said to myself, since it is the custom of the country, they who live here may adopt it; this is the expedient for which I sought. I cheerfully determined upon it without the least scruple, and the only one I had to overcome was that of Theresa, whom, with the greatest imaginable difficulty, I persuaded to adopt this only means of saving her honor. Her mother, who was moreover apprehensive of a new embarrassment by an increase of family, came to my aid, and she at length suffered herself to be prevailed upon. We made choice of a midwife, a safe and prudent woman, Mademoiselle Gouin, who lived at the Point Saint Eustache, and when the time came, Theresa was conducted to her house by her mother.



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I went thither several times to see her, and gave her a cipher which I had made double upon two cards; one of them was put into the linen of the child, and by the midwife deposited with the infant in the office of the foundling hospital according to the customary form. The year following, a similar inconvenience was remedied by the same expedient, excepting the cipher, which was forgotten: no more reflection on my part, nor approbation on that of the mother; she obeyed with trembling. All the vicissitudes which this fatal conduct has produced in my manner of thinking, as well as in my destiny, will be successively seen. For the present, we will confine ourselves to this first period; its cruel and unforeseen consequences will but too frequently oblige me to refer to it.

I here mark that of my first acquaintance with Madam D'Epinay, whose name will frequently appear in these memoirs. She was a Mademoiselle D' Esclavelles, and had lately been married to M. D'Epinay, son of M. de Lalive de Bellegarde, a farmer general. She understood music, and a passion for the art produced between these three persons the greatest intimacy. Madam Prancueil introduced me to Madam D'Epinay, and we sometimes supped together at her house. She was amiable, had wit and talent, and was certainly a desirable acquaintance; but she had a female friend, a Mademoiselle d'Ette, who was said to have much malignancy in her disposition; she lived with the Chevalier de Valory, whose temper was far from being one of the best. I am of opinion, an acquaintance with these two persons was prejudicial to Madam D'Epinay, to whom, with a disposition which required the greatest attention from those about her, nature had given very excellent qualities to regulate or counterbalance her extravagant pretensions. M. de Francueil inspired her with a part of the friendship he had conceived for me, and told me of the connection between them, of which, for that reason, I would not now speak, were it not become so public as not to be concealed from M. D'Epinay himself.

M. de Francueil confided to me secrets of a very singular nature relative to this lady, of which she herself never spoke to me, nor so much as suspected my having a knowledge; for I never opened my lips to her upon the subject, nor will I ever do it to any person. The confidence all parties had in my prudence rendered my situation very embarrassing, especially with Madam de Francueil, whose knowledge of me was sufficient to remove from her all suspicion on my account, although I was connected with her rival. I did everything I could to console this poor woman, whose husband certainly did not return the affection she had for him. I listened to these three persons separately; I kept all their secrets so faithfully that not one of the three ever drew from me those of the two others, and this, without concealing from either of the women my attachment to each of them. Madam de Francueil, who frequently wished to make me an agent, received refusals in form, and Madam D'Epinay, once desiring me to charge myself with a letter to M. de Francueil received the same mortification, accompanied by a very express declaration, that if ever she wished to drive me forever from the house, she had only a second time to make me a like proposition.



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In justice to Madam D'Epinay, I must say, that far from being offended with me she spoke of my conduct to M. de Francueil in terms of the highest approbation, and continued to receive me as well, and as politely as ever. It was thus, amidst the heart-burnings of three persons to whom I was obliged to behave with the greatest circumspection, on whom I in some measure depended, and for whom I had conceived an attachment, that by conducting myself with mildness and complaisance, although accompanied with the greatest firmness, I preserved unto the last not only their friendship, but their esteem and confidence. Notwithstanding my absurdities and awkwardness, Madam D'Epinay would have me make one of the party to the Chevette, a country-house, near Saint Denis, belonging to M. de Bellegarde. There was a theatre, in which performances were not unfrequent. I had a part given me, which I studied for six months without intermission, and in which, on the evening of the representation, I was obliged to be prompted from the beginning to the end. After this experiment no second proposal of the kind was ever made to me.

My acquaintance with M. D'Epinay procured me that of her sister-in-law, Mademoiselle de Bellegarde, who soon afterwards became Countess of Houdetot. The first time I saw her she was upon the point of marriage; when she conversed with me a long time, with that charming familiarity which was natural to her. I thought her very amiable, but I was far from perceiving that this young person would lead me, although innocently, into the abyss in which I still remain.

Although I have not spoken of Diderot since my return from Venice, no more than of my friend M. Roguin, I did not neglect either of them, especially the former, with whom I daily became more intimate. He had a Nannette, as well as I a Theresa; this was between us another conformity of circumstances. But my Theresa, as fine a woman as his Nannette, was of a mild and amiable character, which might gain and fix the affections of a worthy man; whereas Nannette was a vixen, a troublesome prater, and had no qualities in the eyes of others which in any measure compensated for her want of education. However he married her, which was well done of him, if he had given a promise to that effect. I, for my part, not having entered into any such engagement, was not in the least haste to imitate him.

I was also connected with the Abbe de Condillac, who had acquired no more literary fame than myself, but in whom there was every appearance of his becoming what he now is. I was perhaps the first who discovered the extent of his abilities, and esteemed them as they deserved. He on his part seemed satisfied with me, and, whilst shut up in my chamber in the Rue Jean Saint Denis, near the opera-house, I composed my act of Hesiod, he sometimes came to dine with me *tete-a-tete*. We sent for our dinner, and paid share and share alike. He was at that time employed



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on his Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge, which was his first work. When this was finished, the difficulty was to find a bookseller who would take it. The booksellers of Paris are shy of every author at his beginning, and metaphysics, not much then in vogue, were no very inviting subject. I spoke to Diderot of Condillac and his work, and I afterwards brought them acquainted with each other. They were worthy of each other's esteem, and were presently on the most friendly terms. Diderot persuaded the bookseller, Durand, to take the manuscript from the abbe, and this great metaphysician received for his first work, and almost as a favor, a hundred crowns, which perhaps he would not have obtained without my assistance. As we lived in a quarter of the town very distant from each other, we all assembled once a week at the Palais Royal, and went to dine at the Hotel du Panier Fleuri. These little weekly dinners must have been extremely pleasing to Diderot; for he who failed in almost all his appointments never missed one of these. At our little meeting I formed the plan of a periodical paper, entitled 'le Persifleur'—[The Jeerer]—which Diderot and I were alternately to write. I sketched out the first sheet, and this brought me acquainted with D'Alembert, to whom Diderot had mentioned it. Unforeseen events frustrated our intention, and the project was carried no further.

These two authors had just undertaken the 'Dictionnaire Encyclopedique', which at first was intended to be nothing more than a kind of translation of Chambers, something like that of the Medical Dictionary of James, which Diderot had just finished. Diderot was desirous I should do something in this second undertaking, and proposed to me the musical part, which I accepted. This I executed in great haste, and consequently very ill, in the three months he had given me, as well as all the authors who were engaged in the work. But I was the only person in readiness at the time prescribed. I gave him my manuscript, which I had copied by a laquais, belonging to M. de Francueil of the name of Dupont, who wrote very well. I paid him ten crowns out of my own pocket, and these have never been reimbursed me. Diderot had promised me a retribution on the part of the booksellers, of which he has never since spoken to me nor I to him.

This undertaking of the 'Encyclopedie' was interrupted by his imprisonment. The 'Pensees Philosophiques' drew upon him some temporary inconvenience which had no disagreeable consequences. He did not come off so easily on account of the 'Lettre sur les Aveugles', —[Letter concerning blind persons.]—in which there was nothing reprehensible, but some personal attacks with which Madam du Pre St. Maur, and M. de Raumur were displeased: for this he was confined in the dungeon of Vincennes. Nothing can describe the anguish I felt on account of the misfortunes of my friend. My wretched imagination, which always sees everything in the worst



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light, was terrified. I imagined him to be confined for the remainder of his life. I was almost distracted with the thought. I wrote to Madam de Pompadour, beseeching her to release him or obtain an order to shut me up in the same dungeon. I received no answer to my letter: this was too reasonable to be efficacious, and I do not flatter myself that it contributed to the alleviation which, some time afterwards, was granted to the severities of the confinement of poor Diderot. Had this continued for any length of time with the same rigor, I verily believe I should have died in despair at the foot of the hated dungeon. However, if my letter produced but little effect, I did not on account of it attribute to myself much merit, for I mentioned it but to very few people, and never to Diderot himself.