

The Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, Book 6

Jean Jacques Rousseau

Table of Contents

<u>The Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, Book 6</u>	1
<u>Jean Jacques Rousseau</u>	1
<u>BOOK VI</u>	1

The Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, Book 6

Jean Jacques Rousseau

This etext was produced by David Widger widger@cecomet.net

This page copyright © 2001 Blackmask Online.

<http://www.blackmask.com>

BOOK VI.

Hoc erat in votis: Modus agri non ila magnus
Hortus ubi, et leclo vicinus aqua fons;
Et paululum sylvae superhis forel.

I cannot add, 'auctius acque di melius fecere'; but no matter, the former is enough for my purpose; I had no occasion to have any property there, it was sufficient that I enjoyed it; for I have long since both said and felt, that the proprietor and possessor are two very different people, even leaving husbands and lovers out of the question.

At this moment began the short happiness of my life, those peaceful and rapid moments, which have given me a right to say, I have lived. Precious and ever—regretted moments! Ah! recommence your delightful course; pass more slowly through my memory, if possible, than you actually did in your fugitive succession. How shall I prolong, according to my inclination, this recital at once so pleasing and simple? How shall I continue to relate the same occurrences, without wearying my readers with the repetition, any more than I was satiated with the enjoyment? Again, if all this consisted of facts, actions, or words, I could somehow or other convey an idea of it; but how shall I describe what was neither said nor done, nor even thought, but enjoyed, felt, without being able to particularize any other object of my happiness than the bare idea? I rose with the sun, and was happy; I walked, and was happy; I saw Madam de Warrens, and was happy; I quitted her, and still was happy!—Whether I rambled through the woods, over the hills, or strolled along the valley; read, was idle, worked in the garden, or gathered fruits, happiness continually accompanied me; it was fixed on no particular object, it was within me, nor could I depart from it a single moment.

Nothing that passed during that charming epocha, nothing that I did, said, or thought, has escaped my memory. The time that preceded or followed it, I only recollect by intervals, unequally and confused; but here I remember all as distinctly as if it existed at this moment. Imagination, which in my youth was perpetually anticipating the future, but now takes a retrograde course, makes some amends by these charming recollections for the deprivation of hope, which I have lost forever. I no longer see anything in the future that can tempt my wishes, it is a recollection of the past alone that can flatter me, and the remembrance of the period I am now describing is so true and lively, that it sometimes makes me happy, even in spite of my misfortunes.

Of these recollections I shall relate one example, which may give some idea of their force and precision. The first day we went to sleep at Charmettes, the way being up—hill, and Madam de Warrens rather heavy, she was carried in a chair, while I followed on foot. Fearing the chairmen would be fatigued, she got out about half—way, designing to walk the rest of it. As we passed along, she saw something blue in the hedge, and said, "There's some periwinkle in flower yet!" I had never seen any before, nor did I stop to examine this: my sight is too short to distinguish plants on the ground, and I only cast a look at this as I passed: an interval of near thirty years had elapsed before I saw any more periwinkle, at least before I observed it, when being at Cressier in 1764, with my friend, M. du Peyrou, we went up a small mountain, on the summit of which there is a level spot, called, with

The Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, Book 6

reason, 'Belle—vue', I was then beginning to herbalize;—walking and looking among the bushes, I exclaimed with rapture, "Ah, there's some periwinkle!" Du Peyrou, who perceived my transport, was ignorant of the cause, but will some day be informed: I hope, on reading this. The reader may judge by this impression, made by so small an incident, what an effect must have been produced by every occurrence of that time.

Meantime, the air of the country did not restore my health; I was languishing and became more so; I could not endure milk, and was obliged to discontinue the use of it. Water was at this time the fashionable remedy for every complaint; accordingly I entered on a course of it, and so indiscreetly, that it almost released me, not only from my illness but also from my life. The water I drank was rather hard and difficult to pass, as water from mountains generally is; in short, I managed so well, that in the course of two months I totally ruined my stomach, which until that time had been very good, and no longer digesting anything properly, had no reason to expect a cure. At this time an accident happened, as singular in itself as in its subsequent consequences, which can only terminate with my existence.

One morning, being no worse than usual, while putting up the leaf of a small table, I felt a sudden and almost inconceivable revolution throughout my whole frame. I know not how to describe it better than as a kind of tempest, which suddenly rose in my blood, and spread in a moment over every part of my body. My arteries began beating so violently that I not only felt their motion, but even heard it, particularly that of the carotids, attended by a loud noise in my ears, which was of three, or rather four, distinct kinds. For instance, first a grave hollow buzzing; then a more distinct murmur, like the running of water; then an extremely sharp hissing, attended by the beating I before mentioned, and whose throbs I could easily count, without feeling my pulse, or putting a hand to any part of my body. This internal tumult was so violent that it has injured my auricular organs, and rendered me, from that time, not entirely deaf, but hard of hearing.

My surprise and fear may easily be conceived; imagining it was the stroke of death, I went to bed, and the physician being sent for, trembling with apprehension, I related my case; judging it past all cure. I believe the doctor was of the same opinion; however he performed his office, running over a long string of causes and effects beyond my comprehension, after which, in consequence of this sublime theory, he set about, 'in anima vili', the experimental part of his art, but the means he was pleased to adopt in order to effect a cure were so troublesome, disgusting, and followed by so little effect, that I soon discontinued it, and after some weeks, finding I was neither better nor worse, left my bed, and returned to my usual method of living; but the beating of my arteries and the buzzing in my ears has never quitted me a moment during the thirty years' time which has elapsed since that time.

Till now, I had been a great sleeper, but a total privation of repose, with other alarming symptoms which have accompanied it, even to this time, persuaded me I had but a short time to live. This idea tranquillized me for a time: I became less anxious about a cure, and being persuaded I could not prolong life, determined to employ the remainder of it as usefully as possible. This was practicable by a particular indulgence of Nature, which, in this melancholy state, exempted me from sufferings which it might have been supposed I should have experienced. I was incommoded by the noise, but felt no pain, nor was it accompanied by any habitual inconvenience, except nocturnal wakefulness, and at all times a shortness of breath, which is not violent enough to be called an asthma, but was troublesome when I attempted to run, or use any degree of exertion.

This accident, which seemed to threaten the dissolution of my body, only killed my passions, and I have reason to thank Heaven for the happy effect produced by it on my soul. I can truly say, I only began to live when I considered myself as entering the grave; for, estimating at their real value those things I was quitting; I began to employ myself on nobler objects, namely by anticipating those I hoped shortly to have the contemplation of, and which I had hitherto too much neglected. I had often made light of religion, but was never totally devoid of it; consequently, it cost me less pain to employ my thoughts on that subject, which is generally thought melancholy, though highly pleasing to those who make it an object of hope and consolation; Madam de Warrens, therefore, was more useful to me on this occasion than all the theologians in the world would have been.

The Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, Book 6

She, who brought everything into a system, had not failed to do as much by religion; and this system was composed of ideas that bore no affinity to each other. Some were extremely good, and others very ridiculous, being made up of sentiments proceeding from her disposition, and prejudices derived from education. Men, in general, make God like themselves; the virtuous make Him good, and the profligate make Him wicked; ill-tempered and bilious devotees see nothing but hell, because they would willingly damn all mankind; while loving and gentle souls disbelieve it altogether; and one of the astonishments I could never overcome, is to see the good Fenelon speak of it in his *Telemachus* as if he really gave credit to it; but I hope he lied in that particular, for however strict he might be in regard to truth, a bishop absolutely must lie sometimes. Madam de Warrens spoke truth with me, and that soul, made up without gall, who could not imagine a revengeful and ever angry God, saw only clemency and forgiveness, where devotees bestowed inflexible justice, and eternal punishment.

She frequently said there would be no justice in the Supreme Being should He be strictly just to us; because, not having bestowed what was necessary to render us essentially good, it would be requiring more than he had given. The most whimsical idea was, that not believing in hell, she was firmly persuaded of the reality of purgatory. This arose from her not knowing what to do with the wicked, being loathed to damn them utterly, nor yet caring to place them with the good till they had become so; and we must really allow, that both in this world and the next, the wicked are very troublesome company.

It is clearly seen that the doctrine of original sin and the redemption of mankind is destroyed by this system; consequently that the basis of the Christian dispensation, as generally received, is shaken, and that the Catholic faith cannot subsist with these principles; Madam de Warrens, notwithstanding, was a good Catholic, or at least pretended to be one, and certainly desired to become such, but it appeared to her that the Scriptures were too literally and harshly explained, supposing that all we read of everlasting torments were figurative threatenings, and the death of Jesus Christ an example of charity, truly divine, which should teach mankind to love God and each other; in a word, faithful to the religion she had embraced, she acquiesced in all its professions of faith, but on a discussion of each particular article, it was plain she thought diametrically opposite to that church whose doctrines she professed to believe. In these cases she exhibited simplicity of art, a frankness more eloquent than sophistry, which frequently embarrassed her confessor; for she disguised nothing from him. "I am a good Catholic," she would say, "and will ever remain so; I adopt with all the powers of my soul the decisions of our holy Mother Church; I am not mistress of my faith, but I am of my will, which I submit to you without reserve; I will endeavor to believe all,—what can you require more?"

Had there been no Christian morality established, I am persuaded she would have lived as if regulated by its principles, so perfectly did they seem to accord with her disposition. She did everything that was required; and she would have done the same had there been no such requisition: but all this morality was subordinate to the principles of M. Tavel, or rather she pretended to see nothing in religion that contradicted them; thus she would have favored twenty lovers in a day, without any idea of a crime, her conscience being no more moved in that particular than her passions. I know that a number of devotees are not more scrupulous, but the difference is, they are seduced by constitution, she was blinded by her sophisms. In the midst of conversations the most affecting, I might say the most edifying, she would touch on this subject, without any change of air or manner, and without being sensible of any contradiction in her opinions; so much was she persuaded that our restrictions on that head are merely political, and that any person of sense might interpret, apply, or make exceptions to them, without any danger of offending the Almighty.

Though I was far enough from being of the same opinion in this particular, I confess I dared not combat hers; indeed, as I was situated, it would have been putting myself in rather awkward circumstances, since I could only have sought to establish my opinion for others, myself being an exception. Besides, I entertained but little hopes of making her alter hers, which never had any great influence on her conduct, and at the time I am speaking of none; but I have promised faithfully to describe her principles, and I will perform my engagement—I now return to myself.

The Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, Book 6

Finding in her all those ideas I had occasion for to secure me from the fears of death and its future consequences, I drew confidence and security from this source; my attachment became warmer than ever, and I would willingly have transmitted to her my whole existence, which seemed ready to abandon me. From this redoubled attachment, a persuasion that I had but a short time to live, and profound security on my future state, arose an habitual and even pleasing serenity, which, calming every passion that extends our hopes and fears, made me enjoy without inquietude or concern the few days which I imagined remained for me. What contributed to render them still snore agreeable was an endeavor to encourage her rising taste for the country, by every amusement I could possibly devise, wishing to attach her to her garden, poultry, pigeons, and cows: I amused myself with them and these little occupations, which employed my time without injuring my tranquillity, were more serviceable than a milk diet, or all the remedies bestowed on my poor shattered machine, even to effecting the utmost possible reestablishment of it.

The vintage and gathering in our fruit employed the remainder of the year; we became more and more attached to a rustic life, and the society of our honest neighbors. We saw the approach of winter with regret, and returned to the city as if going into exile. To me this return was particularly gloomy, who never expected to see the return of spring, and thought I took an everlasting leave of Charmettes. I did not quit it without kissing the very earth and trees, casting back many a wishful look as I went towards Chambéry.

Having left my scholars for so long a time, and lost my relish for the amusements of the town, I seldom went out, conversing only with Madam de Warrens and a Monsieur Salomon, who had lately become our physician. He was an honest man, of good understanding, a great Cartesian, spoke tolerably well on the system of the world, and his agreeable and instructive conversations were more serviceable than his prescriptions. I could never bear that foolish trivial mode of conversation which is so generally adopted; but useful instructive discourse has always given me great pleasure, nor was I ever backward to join in it. I was much pleased with that of M. Salomon; it appeared to me, that when in his company, I anticipated the acquisition of that sublime knowledge which my soul would enjoy when freed from its mortal fetters. The inclination I had for him extended to the subjects which he treated on, and I began to look after books which might better enable me to understand his discourse. Those which mingled devotion with science were most agreeable to me, particularly Port Royal's Oratory, and I began to read or rather to devour them. One fell into my hands written by Father Lami, called 'Entretiens sur les Sciences', which was a kind of introduction to the knowledge of those books it treated of. I read it over a hundred times, and resolved to make this my guide; in short, I found (notwithstanding my ill state of health) that I was irresistibly drawn towards study, and though looking on each day as the last of my life, read with as much avidity as if certain I was to live forever.

I was assured that reading would injure me; but on the contrary, I am rather inclined to think it was serviceable, not only to my soul, but also to my body; for this application, which soon became delightful, diverted my thoughts from my disorders, and I soon found myself much less affected by them. It is certain, however, that nothing gave me absolute ease, but having no longer any acute pain, I became accustomed to languishment and wakefulness; to thinking instead of acting; in short, I looked on the gradual and slow decay of my body as inevitably progressive and only to be terminated by death.

This opinion not only detached me from all the vain cares of life, but delivered me from the importunity of medicine, to which hitherto, I had been forced to submit, though contrary to my inclination. Salomon, convinced that his drugs were unavailing, spared me the disagreeable task of taking them, and contented himself with amusing the grief of my poor Madam de Warrens by some of those harmless preparations, which serve to flatter the hopes of the patient and keep up the credit of the doctor. I discontinued the strict regimen I had latterly observed, resumed the use of wine, and lived in every respect like a man in perfect health, as far as my strength would permit, only being careful to run into no excess; I even began to go out and visit my acquaintance, particularly M. de Conzie, whose conversation was extremely pleasing to me. Whether it struck me as heroic to study to my last hour, or that some hopes of life yet lingered in the bottom of my heart, I cannot tell, but the apparent certainty of death, far from relaxing my inclination for improvement, seemed to animate it, and I

The Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, Book 6

hastened to acquire knowledge for the other world, as if convinced I should only possess that portion I could carry with me. I took a liking to the shop of a bookseller, whose name was Bouchard, which was frequented by some men of letters, and as the spring (whose return I had never expected to see again) was approaching, furnished myself with some books for Charmettes, in case I should have the happiness to return there.

I had that happiness, and enjoyed it to the utmost extent. The rapture with which I saw the trees put out their first bud, is inexpressible! The return of spring seemed to me like rising from the grave into paradise. The snow was hardly off the ground when we left our dungeon and returned to Charmettes, to enjoy the first warblings of the nightingale. I now thought no more of dying, and it is really singular, that from this time I never experienced any dangerous illness in the country. I have suffered greatly, but never kept my bed, and have often said to those about me, on finding myself worse than ordinary, "Should you see me at the point of death, carry me under the shade of an oak, and I promise you I shall recover."

Though weak, I resumed my country occupations, as far as my strength would permit, and conceived a real grief at not being able to manage our garden without help; for I could not take five or six strokes with the spade without being out of breath and overcome with perspiration; when I stooped the beating redoubled, and the blood flew with such violence to my head, that I was instantly obliged to stand upright. Being therefore confined to less fatiguing employments, I busied myself about the dove—house, and was so pleased with it that I sometimes passed several hours there without feeling a moment's weariness. The pigeon is very timid and difficult to tame, yet I inspired mine with so much confidence that they followed me everywhere, letting me catch them at pleasure, nor could I appear in the garden without having two or three on my arms or head in an instant, and notwithstanding the pleasure I took in them, their company became so troublesome that I was obliged to lessen the familiarity. I have ever taken great pleasure in taming animals, particularly those that are wild and fearful. It appeared delightful to me, to inspire them with a confidence which I took care never to abuse, wishing them to love me freely.

I have already mentioned that I purchased some books: I did not forget to read them, but in a manner more proper to fatigue than instruct me. I imagined that to read a book profitably, it was necessary to be acquainted with every branch of knowledge it even mentioned; far from thinking that the author did not do this himself, but drew assistance from other books, as he might see occasion. Full of this silly idea, I was stopped every moment, obliged to run from one book to another, and sometimes, before I could reach the tenth page of what I was studying, found it necessary to turn over a whole library. I was so attached to this ridiculous method, that I lost a prodigious deal of time and had bewildered my head to such a degree, that I was hardly capable of doing, seeing or comprehending anything. I fortunately perceived, at length, that I was in the wrong road, which would entangle me in an inextricable labyrinth, and quitted it before I was irrevocably lost.

When a person has any real taste for the sciences, the first thing he perceives in the pursuit of them is that connection by which they mutually attract, assist, and enlighten each other, and that it is impossible to attain one without the assistance of the rest. Though the human understanding cannot grasp all, and one must ever be regarded as the principal object, yet if the rest are totally neglected, the favorite study is generally obscure; I was convinced that my resolution to improve was good and useful in itself, but that it was necessary I should change my method; I, therefore, had recourse to the encyclopaedia. I began by a distribution of the general mass of human knowledge into its various branches, but soon discovered that I must pursue a contrary course, that I must take each separately, and trace it to that point where it united with the rest: thus I returned to the general synthetical method, but returned thither with a conviction that I was going right. Meditation supplied the want of knowledge, and a very natural reflection gave strength to my resolutions, which was, that whether I lived or died, I had no time to lose; for having learned but little before the age of five—and—twenty, and then resolving to learn everything, was engaging to employ the future time profitably. I was ignorant at what point accident or death might put a period to my endeavors, and resolved at all events to acquire with the utmost expedition some idea of every species of knowledge, as well to try my natural disposition, as to judge for myself what most deserved cultivation.

The Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, Book 6

In the execution of my plan, I experienced another advantage which I had never thought of; this was, spending a great deal of time profitably. Nature certainly never meant me for study, since attentive application fatigues me so much, that I find it impossible to employ myself half an hour together intently on any one subject; particularly while following another person's ideas, for it has frequently happened that I have pursued my own for a much longer period with success. After reading a few pages of an author with close application, my understanding is bewildered, and should I obstinately continue, I tire myself to no purpose, a stupefaction seizes me, and I am no longer conscious of what I read; but in a succession of various subjects, one relieves me from the fatigue of the other, and without finding respite necessary, I can follow them with pleasure.

I took advantage of this observation in the plan of my studies, taking care to intermingle them in such a manner that I was never weary: it is true that domestic and rural concerns furnished many pleasing relaxations; but as my eagerness for improvement increased, I contrived to find opportunities for my studies, frequently employing myself about two things at the same time, without reflecting that both were consequently neglected.

In relating so many trifling details, which delight me, but frequently tire my reader, I make use of the caution to suppress a great number, though, perhaps, he would have no idea of this, if I did not take care to inform him of it: for example, I recollect with pleasure all the different methods I adopted for the distribution of my time, in such a manner as to produce the utmost profit and pleasure. I may say, that the portion of my life which I passed in this retirement, though in continual ill-health, was that in which I was least idle and least wearied. Two or three months were thus employed in discovering the bent of my genius; meantime, I enjoyed, in the finest season of the year, and in a spot it rendered delightful, the charms of a life whose worth I was so highly sensible of, in such a society, as free as it was charming; if a union so perfect, and the extensive knowledge I purposed to acquire, can be called society. It seemed to me as if I already possessed the improvements I was only in pursuit of: or rather better, since the pleasure of learning constituted a great part of my happiness.

I must pass over these particulars, which were to me the height of enjoyment, but are too trivial to bear repeating: indeed, true happiness is indescribable, it is only to be felt, and this consciousness of felicity is proportionately more, the less able we are to describe it; because it does not absolutely result from a concurrence of favorable incidents, but is an affection of the mind itself. I am frequently guilty of repetitions, but should be infinitely more so, did I repeat the same thing as often as it recurs with pleasure to my mind. When at length my variable mode of life was reduced to a more uniform course, the following was nearly the distribution of time which I adopted: I rose every morning before the sun, and passed through a neighboring orchard into a pleasant path, which, running by a vineyard, led towards Chambery. While walking, I offered up my prayers, not by a vain motion of the lips, but a sincere elevation of my heart, to the Great Author of delightful nature, whose beauties were so charmingly spread out before me! I never love to pray in a chamber; it seems to me that the walls and all the little workmanship of man interposed between God and myself: I love to contemplate Him in his works, which elevate my soul, and raise my thoughts to Him. My prayers were pure, I can affirm it, and therefore worthy to be heard:—I asked for myself and her from whom my thoughts were never divided, only an innocent and quiet life, exempt from vice, sorrow and want; I prayed that we might die the death of the just, and partake of their lot hereafter: for the rest, it was rather admiration and contemplation than request, being satisfied that the best means to obtain what is necessary from the Giver of every perfect good, is rather to deserve than to solicit. Returning from my walk, I lengthened the way by taking a roundabout path, still contemplating with earnestness and delight the beautiful scenes with which I was surrounded, those only objects that never fatigue either the eye or the heart. As I approached our habitation, I looked forward to see if Madam de Warrens was stirring, and when I perceived her shutters open, I even ran with joy towards the house: if they were yet shut I went into the garden to wait their opening, amusing myself, meantime, by a retrospection of what I had read the preceding evening, or in gardening. The moment the shutter drew back I hastened to embrace her, frequently half asleep; and this salute, pure as it was affectionate, even from its innocence, possessed a charm which the senses can never bestow. We usually breakfasted on milk-coffee; this was the time of day when we had most leisure, and when we chatted with the greatest freedom. These sittings, which were usually pretty long, have given me a fondness for breakfasts, and I infinitely prefer those of England, or Switzerland, which are considered as a meal, at which all the family

The Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, Book 6

assemble, than those of France, where they breakfast alone in their several apartments, or more frequently have none at all. After an hour or two passed in discourse, I went to my study till dinner; beginning with some philosophical work, such as the logic of Port–Royal, Locke's Essays, Mallebranche, Leibnitz, Descartes, etc. I soon found that these authors perpetually contradict each other, and formed the chimerical project of reconciling them, which cost me much labor and loss of time, bewildering my head without any profit. At length (renouncing this idea) I adopted one infinitely more profitable, to which I attribute all the progress I have since made, notwithstanding the defects of my capacity; for 'tis certain I had very little for study. On reading each author, I acquired a habit of following all his ideas, without suffering my own or those of any other writer to interfere with them, or entering into any dispute on their utility. I said to myself, "I will begin by laying up a stock of ideas, true or false, but clearly conceived, till my understanding shall be sufficiently furnished to enable me to compare and make choice of those that are most estimable." I am sensible this method is not without its inconveniences, but it succeeded in furnishing me with a fund of instruction. Having passed some years in thinking after others, without reflection, and almost without reasoning, I found myself possessed of sufficient materials to set about thinking on my own account, and when journeys of business deprived me of the opportunities of consulting books, I amused myself with recollecting and comparing what I had read, weighing every opinion on the balance of reason, and frequently judging my masters. Though it was late before I began to exercise my judicial faculties, I have not discovered that they had lost their vigor, and on publishing my own ideas, have never been accused of being a servile disciple or of swearing 'in verba magistri'.

From these studies I passed to the elements of geometry, for I never went further, forcing my weak memory to retain them by going the same ground a hundred and a hundred times over. I did not admire Euclid, who rather seeks a chain of demonstration than a connection of ideas: I preferred the geometry of Father Lama, who from that time became one of my favorite authors, and whose works I yet read with pleasure. Algebra followed, and Father Lama was still my guide: when I made some progress, I perused Father Reynaud's Science of Calculation, and then his Analysis Demonstrated; but I never went far enough thoroughly to understand the application of algebra to geometry. I was not pleased with this method of performing operations by rule without knowing what I was about: resolving geometrical problems by the help of equations seemed like playing a tune by turning round a handle. The first time I found by calculation that the square of a binocular figure was composed of the square of each of its parts, and double the product of one by the other; though convinced that my multiplication was right, I could not be satisfied till I had made and examined the figure: not but I admire algebra when applied to abstract quantities, but when used to demonstrate dimensions, I wished to see the operation, and unless explained by lines, could not rightly comprehend it.

After this came Latin: it was my most painful study, and in which I never made great progress. I began by Port–Royal's Rudiments, but without success; I lost myself in a crowd of rules; and in studying the last forgot all that preceded it. A study of words is not calculated for a man without memory, and it was principally an endeavor to make my memory more retentive, that urged me obstinately to persist in this study, which at length I was obliged to relinquish. As I understood enough to read an easy author by the aid of a dictionary, I followed that method, and found it succeed tolerably well. I likewise applied myself to translation, not by writing, but mentally, and by exercise and perseverance attained to read Latin authors easily, but have never been able to speak or write that language, which has frequently embarrassed me when I have found myself (I know not by what means) enrolled among men of letters.

Another inconvenience that arose from this manner of learning is, that I never understood prosody, much less the rules of versification; yet, anxious to understand the harmony of the language, both in prose and verse, I have made many efforts to obtain it, but am convinced, that without a master it is almost impossible. Having learned the composition of the hexameter, which is the easiest of all verses, I had the patience to measure out the greater part of Virgil into feet and quantity, and whenever I was dubious whether a syllable was long or short, immediately consulted my Virgil. It may easily be conceived that I ran into many errors in consequence of those licenses permitted by the rules of versification; and it is certain, that if there is an advantage in studying alone, there are also great inconveniences and inconceivable labor, as I have experienced more than any one.

The Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, Book 6

At twelve I quitted my books, and if dinner was not ready, paid my friends, the pigeons, a visit, or worked in the garden till it was, and when I heard myself called, ran very willingly, and with a good appetite to partake of it, for it is very remarkable, that let me be ever so indisposed my appetite never fails. We dined very agreeably, chatting till Madam de Warrens could eat. Two or three times a week, when it was fine, we drank our coffee in a cool shady arbor behind the house, that I had decorated with hops, and which was very refreshing during the heat; we usually passed an hour in viewing our flowers and vegetables, or in conversation relative to our manner of life, which greatly increased the pleasure of it. I had another little family at the end of the garden; these were several hives of bees, which I never failed to visit once a day, and was frequently accompanied by Madam de Warrens. I was greatly interested in their labor, and amused myself seeing them return to the hives, their little thighs so loaded with the precious store that they could hardly walk. At first, curiosity made me indiscreet, and they stung me several times, but afterwards, we were so well acquainted, that let me approach as near as I would, they never molested me, though the hives were full and the bees ready to swarm. At these times I have been surrounded, having them on my hands and face without apprehending any danger. All animals are distrustful of man, and with reason, but when once assured he does not mean to injure them, their confidence becomes so great that he must be worse than a barbarian who abuses it.

After this I returned to my books; but my afternoon employment ought rather to bear the name of recreation and amusement, than labor or study. I have never been able to bear application after dinner, and in general any kind of attention is painful to me during the heat of the day. I employed myself, 'tis true, but without restraint or rule, and read without studying. What I most attended to at these times, was history and geography, and as these did not require intense application, made as much progress in them as my weak memory would permit. I had an inclination to study Father Petau, and launched into the gloom of chronology, but was disgusted at the critical part, which I found had neither bottom nor banks; this made me prefer the more exact measurement of time by the course of the celestial bodies. I should even have contracted a fondness for astronomy, had I been in possession of instruments, but was obliged to content myself with some of the elements of that art, learned from books, and a few rude observations made with a telescope, sufficient only to give me a general idea of the situation of the heavenly bodies; for my short sight is insufficient to distinguish the stars without the help of a glass.

I recollect an adventure on this subject, the remembrance of which has often diverted me. I had bought a celestial planisphere to study the constellations by, and, having fixed it on a frame, when the nights were fine and the sky clear, I went into the garden; and fixing the frame on four sticks, something higher than myself, which I drove into the ground, turned the planisphere downwards, and contrived to light it by means of a candle (which I put in a pail to prevent the wind from blowing it out) and then placed in the centre of the above—mentioned four supporters; this done, I examined the stars with my glass, and from time to time referring to my planisphere, endeavored to distinguish the various constellations. I think I have before observed that our garden was on a terrace, and lay open to the road. One night, some country people passing very late, saw me in a most grotesque habit, busily employed in these observations: the light, which struck directly on the planisphere, proceeding from a cause they could not divine (the candle being concealed by the sides of the pail), the four stakes supporting a large paper, marked over with various uncouth figures, with the motion of the telescope, which they saw turning backwards and forwards, gave the whole an air of conjuration that struck them with horror and amazement. My figure was by no means calculated to dispel their fears; a flapped hat put on over my nightcap, and a short cloak about my shoulder (which Madam de Warrens had obliged me to put on) presented in their idea the image of a real sorcerer. Being near midnight, they made no doubt but this was the beginning of some diabolical assembly, and having no curiosity to pry further into these mysteries, they fled with all possible speed, awakened their neighbors, and described this most dreadful vision. The story spread so fast that the next day the whole neighborhood was informed that a nocturnal assembly of witches was held in the garden that belonged to Monsieur Noiret, and I am ignorant what might have been the consequence of this rumor if one of the countrymen who had been witness to my conjurations had not the same day carried his complaint to two Jesuits, who frequently came to visit us, and who, without knowing the foundation of the story, undeceived and satisfied them. These Jesuits told us the whole affair, and I acquainted them with the cause of it, which altogether furnished us with a hearty laugh. However, I resolved for the future to make my observations without light, and consult my

The Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, Book 6

planisphere in the house. Those who have read Venetian magic, in the 'Letters from the Mountain', may find that I long since had the reputation of being a conjurer.

Such was the life I led at Charmettes when I had no rural employments, for they ever had the preference, and in those that did not exceed my strength, I worked like a peasant; but my extreme weakness left me little except the will; besides, as I have before observed, I wished to do two things at once, and therefore did neither well. I obstinately persisted in forcing my memory to retain a great deal by heart, and for that purpose, I always carried some book with me, which, while at work, I studied with inconceivable labor. I was continually repeating something, and am really amazed that the fatigue of these vain and continual efforts did not render me entirely stupid. I must have learned and relearned the Eclogues of Virgil twenty times over, though at this time I cannot recollect a single line of them. I have lost or spoiled a great number of books by a custom I had of carrying them with me into the dove-house, the garden, orchard or vineyard, when, being busy about something else, I laid my book at the foot of a tree, on the hedge, or the first place that came to hand, and frequently left them there, finding them a fortnight after, perhaps, rotted to pieces, or eaten by the ants or snails; and this ardor for learning became so far a madness that it rendered me almost stupid, and I was perpetually muttering some passage or other to myself.

The writings of Port-Royal, and those of the Oratory, being what I most read, had made me half a Jansenist, and, notwithstanding all my confidence, their harsh theology sometimes alarmed me. A dread of hell, which till then I had never much apprehended, by little and little disturbed my security, and had not Madam de Warrens tranquillized my soul, would at length have been too much for me. My confessor, who was hers likewise, contributed all in his power to keep up my hopes. This was a Jesuit, named Father Hemet; a good and wise old man, whose memory I shall ever hold in veneration. Though a Jesuit, he had the simplicity of a child, and his manners, less relaxed than gentle, were precisely what was necessary to balance the melancholy impressions made on me by Jansenism. This good man and his companion, Father Coppier, came frequently to visit us at Charmette, though the road was very rough and tedious for men of their age. These visits were very comfortable to me, which may the Almighty return to their souls, for they were so old that I cannot suppose them yet living. I sometimes went to see them at Chambery, became acquainted at their convent, and had free access to the library. The remembrance of that happy time is so connected with the idea of those Jesuits, that I love one on account of the other, and though I have ever thought their doctrines dangerous, could never find myself in a disposition to hate them cordially.

I should like to know whether there ever passed such childish notions in the hearts of other men as sometimes do in mine. In the midst of my studies, and of a life as innocent as man could lead, notwithstanding every persuasion to the contrary, the dread of hell frequently tormented me. I asked myself, "What state am I in? Should I die at this instant, must I be damned?" According to my Jansenists the matter was indubitable, but according to my conscience it appeared quite the contrary: terrified and floating in this cruel uncertainty, I had recourse to the most laughable expedient to resolve my doubts, for which I would willingly shut up any man as a lunatic should I see him practise the same folly. One day, meditating on this melancholy subject, I exercised myself in throwing stones at the trunks of trees, with my usual dexterity, that is to say, without hitting any of them. In the height of this charming exercise, it entered my mind to make a kind of prognostic, that might calm my inquietude; I said, "I will throw this stone at the tree facing me; if I hit my mark, I will consider it as a sign of salvation; if I miss, as a token of damnation." While I said this, I threw the stone with a trembling hand and beating breast but so happily that it struck the body of the tree, which truly was not a difficult matter, for I had taken care to choose one that was very large and very near me. From that moment I never doubted my salvation: I know not on recollecting this trait, whether I ought to laugh or shudder at myself. Ye great geniuses, who surely laugh at my folly, congratulate yourselves on your superior wisdom, but insult not my unhappiness, for I swear to you that I feel it most sensibly.

These troubles, these alarms, inseparable, perhaps, from devotion, were only at intervals; in general, I was tranquil, and the impression made on my soul by the idea of approaching death, was less that of melancholy than a peaceful languor, which even had its pleasures. I have found among my old papers a kind of congratulation and

exhortation which I made to myself on dying at an age when I had the courage to meet death with serenity, without having experienced any great evils, either of body or mind. How much justice was there in the thought! A preconception of what I had to suffer made me fear to live, and it seemed that I dreaded the fate which must attend my future days. I have never been so near wisdom as during this period, when I felt no great remorse for the past, nor tormenting fear for the future; the reigning sentiment of my soul being the enjoyment of the present. Serious people usually possess a lively sensuality, which makes them highly enjoy those innocent pleasures that are allowed them. Worldlings (I know not why) impute this to them as a crime: or rather, I well know the cause of this imputation, it is because they envy others the enjoyment of those simple and pure delights which they have lost the relish of. I had these inclinations, and found it charming to gratify them in security of conscience. My yet inexperienced heart gave in to all with the calm happiness of a child, or rather (if I dare use the expression) with the raptures of an angel; for in reality these pure delights are as serene as those of paradise. Dinners on the grass at Montagnole, suppers in our arbor, gathering in the fruits, the vintage, a social meeting with our neighbors; all these were so many holidays, in which Madam de Warrens took as much pleasure as myself. Solitary walks afforded yet purer pleasure, because in them our hearts expanded with greater freedom: one particularly remains in my memory; it was on a St. Louis' day, whose name Madam de Warrens bore: we set out together early and unattended, after having heard a mass at break of day in a chapel adjoining our house, from a Carmelite, who attended for that purpose. As I proposed walking over the hills opposite our dwelling, which we had not yet visited, we sent our provisions on before; the excursion being to last the whole day. Madam de Warrens, though rather corpulent, did not walk ill, and we rambled from hill to hill and wood to wood, sometimes in the sun, but oftener in the shade, resting from time to time, and regardless how the hours stole away; speaking of ourselves, of our union, of the gentleness of our fate, and offering up prayers for its duration, which were never heard. Everything conspired to augment our happiness: it had rained for several days previous to this, there was no dust, the brooks were full and rapid, a gentle breeze agitated the leaves, the air was pure, the horizon free from clouds, serenity reigned in the sky as in our hearts. Our dinner was prepared at a peasant's house, and shared with him and his family, whose benedictions we received. These poor Savoyards are the worthiest of people! After dinner we regained the shade, and while I was picking up bits of dried sticks, to boil our coffee, Madam de Warrens amused herself with herbalizing among the bushes, and with the flowers I had gathered for her in my way. She made me remark in their construction a thousand natural beauties, which greatly amused me, and which ought to have given me a taste for botany; but the time was not yet come, and my attention was arrested by too many other studies. Besides this, an idea struck me, which diverted my thoughts from flowers and plants: the situation of my mind at that moment, all that we had said or done that day, every object that had struck me, brought to my remembrance the kind of waking dream I had at Annecy seven or eight years before, and which I have given an account of in its place. The similarity was so striking that it affected me even to tears: in a transport of tenderness I embraced Madam de Warrens. "My dearest friend," said I, "this day has long since been promised me: I can see nothing beyond it: my happiness, by your means, is at its height; may it never decrease; may it continue as long as I am sensible of its value—then it can only finish with my life."

Thus happily passed my days, and the more happily as I perceived nothing that could disturb or bring them to a conclusion; not that the cause of my former uneasiness had absolutely ceased, but I saw it take another course, which I directed with my utmost care to useful objects, that the remedy might accompany the evil. Madam de Warrens naturally loved the country, and this taste did not cool while with me. By little and little she contracted a fondness for rustic employments, wished to make the most of her land, and had in that particular a knowledge which she practised with pleasure.

Not satisfied with what belonged to the house, she hired first a field, then a meadow, transferring her enterprising humor to the objects of agriculture, and instead of remaining unemployed in the house, was in the way of becoming a complete farmer. I was not greatly pleased to see this passion increase, and endeavored all I could to oppose it; for I was certain she would be deceived, and that her liberal extravagant disposition would infallibly carry her expenses beyond her profits; however, I consoled myself by thinking the produce could not be useless, and would at least help her to live. Of all the projects she could form, this appeared the least ruinous: without regarding it, therefore, in the light she did, as a profitable scheme, I considered it as a perpetual employment,

which would keep her from more ruinous enterprises, and out of the reach of impostors. With this idea, I ardently wished to recover my health and strength, that I might superintend her affairs, overlook her laborers, or, rather, be the principal one myself. The exercise this naturally obliged me to take, with the relaxation it procured me from books and study, was serviceable to my health.

The winter following, Barillot returning from Italy, brought me some books; and among others, the 'Bontempi' and 'la Cartella per Musica', of Father Banchieri; these gave me a taste for the history of music and for the theoretical researches of that pleasing art. Barillot remained some time with us, and as I had been of age some months, I determined to go to Geneva the following spring, and demand my mother's inheritance, or at least that part which belonged to me, till it could be ascertained what had become of my brother. This plan was executed as it had been resolved: I went to Geneva; my father met me there, for he had occasionally visited Geneva a long time since, without its being particularly noticed, though the decree that had been pronounced against him had never been reversed; but being esteemed for his courage, and respected for his probity, the situation of his affairs was pretended to be forgotten; or perhaps, the magistrates, employed with the great project that broke out some little time after, were not willing to alarm the citizens by recalling to their memory, at an improper time, this instance of their former partiality.

I apprehended that I should meet with difficulties, on account of having changed my religion, but none occurred; the laws of Geneva being less harsh in that particular than those of Berne, where, whoever changes his religion, not only loses his freedom, but his property. My rights, however, were not disputed: but I found my patrimony, I know not how, reduced to very little, and though it was known almost to a certainty that my brother was dead, yet, as there was no legal proof, I could not lay claim to his share, which I left without regret to my father, who enjoyed it as long as he lived. No sooner were the necessary formalities adjusted, and I had received my money, some of which I expended in books, than I flew with the remainder to Madam de Warrens; my heart beat with joy during the journey, and the moment in which I gave the money into her hands, was to me a thousand times more delightful than that which gave it into mine. She received this with a simplicity common to great souls, who, doing similar actions without effort, see them without admiration; indeed it was almost all expended for my use, for it would have been employed in the same manner had it come from any other quarter.

My health was not yet re-established; I decayed visibly, was pale as death, and reduced to an absolute skeleton; the beating of my arteries was extreme, my palpitations were frequent: I was sensible of a continual oppression, and my weakness became at length so great, that I could scarcely move or step without danger of suffocation, stoop without vertigoes, or lift even the smallest weight, which reduced me to the most tormenting inaction for a man so naturally stirring as myself. It is certain my disorder was in a great measure hypochondriacal. The vapors is a malady common to people in fortunate situations: the tears I frequently shed, without reason; the lively alarms I felt on the falling of a leaf, or the fluttering of a bird; inequality of humor in the calm of a most pleasing life; lassitude which made me weary even of happiness, and carried sensibility to extravagance, were an instance of this. We are so little formed for felicity, that when the soul and body do not suffer together, they must necessarily endure separate inconveniences, the good state of the one being almost always injurious to the happiness of the other. Had all the pleasure of life courted me, my weakened frame would not have permitted the enjoyment of them, without my being able to particularize the real seat of my complaint; yet in the decline of life; after having encountered very serious and real evils, my body seemed to regain its strength, as if on purpose to encounter additional misfortunes; and, at the moment I write this, though infirm, near sixty, and overwhelmed with every kind of sorrow, I feel more ability to suffer than I ever possessed for enjoyment when in the very flower of my age, and in the bosom of real happiness.

To complete me, I had mingled a little physiology among my other readings: I set about studying anatomy, and considering the multitude, movement, and wonderful construction of the various parts that composed the human machine; my apprehensions were instantly increased, I expected to feel mine deranged twenty times a day, and far from being surprised to find myself dying, was astonished that I yet existed! I could not read the description of any malady without thinking it mine, and, had I not been already indisposed, I am certain I should have become

so from this study. Finding in every disease symptoms similar to mine, I fancied I had them all, and, at length, gained one more troublesome than any I yet suffered, which I had thought myself delivered from; this was, a violent inclination to seek a cure; which it is very difficult to suppress, when once a person begins reading physical books. By searching, reflecting, and comparing, I became persuaded that the foundation of my complaint was a polypus at the heart, and Doctor Salomon appeared to coincide with the idea. Reasonably this opinion should have confirmed my former resolution of considering myself past cure; this, however, was not the case; on the contrary; I exerted every power of my understanding in search of a remedy for a polypus, resolving to undertake this marvellous cure.

In a journey which Anet had made to Montpellier, to see the physical garden there, and visit Monsieur Sauvages, the demonstrator, he had been informed that Monsieur Fizes had cured a polypus similar to that I fancied myself afflicted with: Madam de Warrens, recollecting this circumstance, mentioned it to me, and nothing more was necessary to inspire me with a desire to consult Monsieur Fizes. The hope of recovery gave me courage and strength to undertake the journey; the money from Geneva furnished the means; Madam de Warrens, far from dissuading, entreated me to go: behold me, therefore, without further ceremony, set out for Montpellier!—but it was not necessary to go so far to find the cure I was in search of.

Finding the motion of the horse too fatiguing, I had hired a chaise at Grenoble, and on entering Moirans, five or six other chaises arrived in a rank after mine. The greater part of these were in the train of a new married lady called Madam du Colombier; with her was a Madam de Larnage, not so young or handsome as the former, yet not less amiable. The bride was to stop at Romans, but the other lady was to pursue her route as far as Saint-Andiol, near the bridge du St. Esprit. With my natural timidity it will not be conjectured that I was very ready at forming an acquaintance with these fine ladies, and the company that attended them; but travelling the same road, lodging at the same inns, and being obliged to eat at the same table, the acquaintance seemed unavoidable, as any backwardness on my part would have got me the character of a very unsociable being: it was formed then, and even sooner than I desired, for all this bustle was by no means convenient to a person in ill health, particularly to one of my humor. Curiosity renders these vixens extremely insinuating; they accomplish their design of becoming acquainted with a man by endeavoring to turn his brain, and this was precisely what happened to me. Madam du Colombier was too much surrounded by her young gallants to have any opportunity of paying much attention to me; besides, it was not worthwhile, as we were to separate in so short a time; but Madam de Larnage (less attended to than her young friend) had to provide herself for the remainder of the journey; behold me, then, attacked by Madam de Larnage, and adieu to poor Jean Jacques, or rather farewell to fever, vapors, and polypus; all completely vanished when in her presence. The ill state of my health was the first subject of our conversation; they saw I was indisposed, knew I was going to Montpellier, but my air and manner certainly did not exhibit the appearance of a libertine, since it was clear by what followed they did not suspect I was going there for a reason that carries many that road.

In the morning they sent to inquire after my health and invite me to take chocolate with them, and when I made my appearance asked how I had passed the night. Once, according to my praiseworthy custom of speaking without thought, I replied, "I did not know," which answer naturally made them conclude I was a fool: but, on questioning me further; the examination turned out so far to my advantage, that I rather rose in their opinion, and I once heard Madam du Colombier say to her friend, "He is amiable, but not sufficiently acquainted with the world." These words were a great encouragement, and assisted me in rendering myself agreeable.

As we became more familiar, it was natural to give each other some little account of whence we came and who we were: this embarrassed me greatly, for I was sensible that in good company and among women of spirit, the very name of a new convert would utterly undo me. I know not by what whimsicality I resolved to pass for an Englishman; however, in consequence of that determination I gave myself out for a Jacobite, and was readily believed. They called me Monsieur Dudding, which was the name I assumed with my new character, and a cursed Marquis Torignan, who was one of the company, an invalid like myself, and both old and ill—tempered, took it in his head to begin a long conversation with me. He spoke of King James, of the Pretender, and the old court of

St. Germain's; I sat on thorns the whole time, for I was totally unacquainted with all these except what little I had picked up in the account of Earl Hamilton, and from the gazettes; however, I made such fortunate use of the little I did know as to extricate myself from this dilemma, happy in not being questioned on the English language, which I did not know a single word of.

The company were all very agreeable; we looked forward to the moment of separation with regret, and therefore made snails' journeys. We arrived one Sunday at St. Marcelein's; Madam de Larnage would go to mass; I accompanied her, and had nearly ruined all my affairs, for by my modest reserved countenance during the service, she concluded me a bigot, and conceived a very indifferent opinion of me, as I learned from her own account two days after. It required a great deal of gallantry on my part to efface this ill impression, or rather Madam de Larnage (who was not easily disheartened) determined to risk the first advances, and see how I should behave. She made several, but far from being presuming on my figure, I thought she was making sport of me: full of this ridiculous idea there was no folly I was not guilty of.

Madam de Larnage persisted in such caressing behavior, that a much wiser man than myself could hardly have taken it seriously. The more obvious her advances were, the more I was confirmed in my mistake, and what increased my torment, I found I was really in love with her. I frequently said to myself, and sometimes to her, sighing, "Ah! why is not all this real? then should I be the most fortunate of men." I am inclined to think my stupidity did but increase her resolution, and make her determined to get the better of it.

We left Madam du Colombier at Romans; after which Madam de Larnage, the Marquis de Torignan, and myself continued our route slowly, and in the most agreeable manner. The marquis, though indisposed, and rather ill-humored, was an agreeable companion, but was not best pleased at seeing the lady bestow all her attentions on me, while he passed unregarded; for Madam de Larnage took so little care to conceal her inclination, that he perceived it sooner than I did, and his sarcasms must have given me that confidence I could not presume to take from the kindness of the lady, if by a surmise, which no one but myself could have blundered on, I had not imagined they perfectly understood each other, and were agreed to turn my passion into ridicule. This foolish idea completed my stupidity, making me act the most ridiculous part, while, had I listened to the feelings of my heart, I might have been performing one far more brilliant. I am astonished that Madam de Larnage was not disgusted at my folly, and did not discard me with disdain; but she plainly perceived there was more bashfulness than indifference in my composition.

We arrived at Valence to dinner, and according to our usual custom passed the remainder of the day there. We lodged out of the city, at the St. James, an inn I shall never forget. After dinner, Madam de Larnage proposed a walk; she knew the marquis was no walker, consequently, this was an excellent plan for a *tete-a-tete*, which she was predetermined to make the most of. While we were walking round the city by the side of the moats, I entered on a long history of my complaint, to which she answered in so tender an accent, frequently pressing my arm, which she held to her heart, that it required all my stupidity not to be convinced of the sincerity of her attachment. I have already observed that she was amiable; love rendered her charming, adding all the loveliness of youth: and she managed her advances with so much art, that they were sufficient to have seduced the most insensible: I was, therefore, in very uneasy circumstances, and frequently on the point of making a declaration; but the dread of offending her, and the still greater of being laughed at, ridiculed, made *table-talk*, and complimented on my enterprise by the satirical marquis, had such unconquerable power over me, that, though ashamed of my ridiculous bashfulness, I could not take courage to surmount it. I had ended the history of my complaints, which I felt the ridiculousness of at this time; and not knowing how to look, or what to say, continued silent, giving the finest opportunity in the world for that ridicule I so much dreaded. Happily, Madam de Larnage took a more favorable resolution, and suddenly interrupted this silence by throwing her arms round my neck, while, at the same instant, her lips spoke too plainly on mine to be any longer misunderstood. This was reposing that confidence in me the want of which has almost always prevented me from appearing myself: for once I was at ease, my heart, eyes and tongue, spoke freely what I felt; never did I make better reparation for my mistakes, and if this little conquest had cost Madam de Larnage some difficulties, I have reason to believe she did not regret

them.

Was I to live a hundred years, I should never forget this charming woman. I say charming, for though neither young nor beautiful, she was neither old nor ugly, having nothing in her appearance that could prevent her wit and accomplishments from producing all their effects. It was possible to see her without falling in love, but those she favored could not fail to adore her; which proves, in my opinion, that she was not generally so prodigal of her favors. It is true, her inclination for me was so sudden and lively, that it scarce appears excusable; though from the short, but charming interval I passed with her, I have reason to think her heart was more influenced than her passions.

Our good intelligence did not escape the penetration of the marquis; not that he discontinued his usual raillery; on the contrary, he treated me as a sighing, hopeless swain, languishing under the rigors of his mistress; not a word, smile, or look escaped him by which I could imagine he suspected my happiness; and I should have thought him completely deceived, had not Madam de Larnage, who was more clear-sighted than myself, assured me of the contrary; but he was a well-bred man, and it was impossible to behave with more attention or greater civility, than he constantly paid me (notwithstanding his satirical sallies), especially after my success, which, as he was unacquainted with my stupidity, he perhaps gave me the honor of achieving. It has already been seen that he was mistaken in this particular; but no matter, I profited by his error, for being conscious that the laugh was on my side, I took all his sallies in good part, and sometimes parried them with tolerable success; for, proud of the reputation of wit which Madam de Larnage had thought fit to discover in me, I no longer appeared the same man.

We were both in a country and season of plenty, and had everywhere excellent cheer, thanks to the good cares of the marquis; though I would willingly have relinquished this advantage to have been more satisfied with the situation of our chambers; but he always sent his footman on to provide them; and whether of his own accord, or by the order of his master, the rogue always took care that the marquis' chamber should be close by Madam de Larnage's, while mine was at the further end of the house: but that made no great difference, or perhaps it rendered our rendezvous the more charming; this happiness lasted four or five days, during which time I was intoxicated with delight, which I tasted pure and serene without any alloy; an advantage I could never boast before; and, I may add, it is owing to Madam de Larnage that I did not go out of the world without having tasted real pleasure.

If the sentiment I felt for her was not precisely love, it was at least a very tender return of what she testified for me; our meetings were so delightful, that they possessed all the sweets of love; without that kind of delirium which affects the brain, and even tends to diminish our happiness. I never experienced true love but once in my life, and that was not with Madam de Larnage, neither did I feel that affection for her which I had been sensible of, and yet continued to possess, for Madam de Warrens; but for this very reason, our *tete-a-tetes* were a hundred times more delightful. When with Madam de Warrens, my felicity was always disturbed by a secret sadness, a compunction of heart, which I found it impossible to surmount. Instead of being delighted at the acquisition of so much happiness, I could not help reproaching myself for contributing to render her I loved unworthy: on the contrary, with Madam de Larnage, I was proud of my happiness, and gave in to it without repugnance, while my triumph redoubled every other charm.

I do not recollect exactly where we quitted the marquis, who resided in this country, but I know we were alone on our arrival at Montelimar, where Madam de Larnage made her chambermaid get into my chaise, and accommodate me with a seat in hers. It will easily be believed, that travelling in this manner was by no means displeasing to me, and that I should be very much puzzled to give any account of the country we passed through. She had some business at Montelimar, which detained her there two or three days; during this time she quitted me but one quarter of an hour, for a visit she could not avoid, which embarrassed her with a number of invitations she had no inclination to accept, and therefore excused herself by pleading some indisposition; though she took care this should not prevent our walking together every day, in the most charming country, and under the finest sky imaginable. Oh! these three days! what reason have I to regret them! Never did such happiness return again.

The Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, Book 6

The amours of a journey cannot be very durable: it was necessary we should part, and I must confess it was almost time; not that I was weary of my happiness, but I might as well have been. We endeavored to comfort each other for the pain of parting, by forming plans for our reunion; and it was concluded, that after staying five or six weeks at Montpellier (which would give Madam de Larnage time to prepare for my reception in such a manner as to prevent scandal) I should return to Saint-Andiol, and spend the winter under her direction. She gave me ample instruction on what it was necessary I should know, on what it would be proper to say; and how I should conduct myself. She spoke much and earnestly on the care of my health, conjured me to consult skilful physicians, and be attentive and exact in following their prescriptions whatever they might happen to be. I believe her concern was sincere, for she loved me, and gave proofs of her affection less equivocal than the prodigality of her favors; for judging by my mode of travelling, that I was not in very affluent circumstances (though not rich herself), on our parting, she would have had me share the contents of her purse, which she had brought pretty well furnished from Grenoble, and it was with great difficulty I could make her put up with a denial. In a word, we parted; my heart full of her idea, and leaving in hers (if I am not mistaken) a firm attachment to me.

While pursuing the remainder of my journey, remembrance ran over everything that had passed from the commencement of it, and I was well satisfied at finding myself alone in a comfortable chaise, where I could ruminate at ease on the pleasures I had enjoyed, and those which awaited my return. I only thought of Saint-Andiol; of the life I was to lead there; I saw nothing but Madam de Larnage, or what related to her; the whole universe besides was nothing to me—even Madam de Warrens was forgotten!—I set about combining all the details by which Madam de Larnage had endeavored to give me in advance an idea of her house, of the neighborhood, of her connections, and manner of life, finding everything charming.

She had a daughter, whom she had often described in the warmest terms of maternal affection: this daughter was fifteen lively, charming, and of an amiable disposition. Madam de Larnage promised me her friendship; I had not forgotten that promise, and was curious to know how Mademoiselle de Larnage would treat her mother's 'bon ami'. These were the subjects of my reveries from the bridge of St. Esprit to Remoulin: I had been advised to visit the Pont-du-Gard; hitherto I had seen none of the remaining monuments of Roman magnificence, and I expected to find this worthy the hands by which it was constructed; for once, the reality surpassed my expectation; this was the only time in my life it ever did so, and the Romans alone could have produced that effect. The view of this noble and sublime work, struck me the more forcibly, from being in the midst of a desert, where silence and solitude render the majestic edifice more striking, and admiration more lively, for though called a bridge it is nothing more than an aqueduct. One cannot help exclaiming, what strength could have transported these enormous stones so far from any quarry? And what motive could have united the labors of so many millions of men, in a place that no one inhabited? I remained here whole hours, in the most ravishing contemplation, and returned pensive and thoughtful to my inn. This reverie was by no means favorable to Madam de Larnage; she had taken care to forewarn me against the girls of Montpellier, but not against the Pont-du-Gard—it is impossible to provide for every contingency.

On my arrival at Nismes, I went to see the amphitheatre, which is a far more magnificent work than even the Pont-du-Gard, yet it made a much less impression on me, perhaps, because my admiration had been already exhausted on the former object; or that the situation of the latter, in the midst of a city, was less proper to excite it. This vast and superb circus is surrounded by small dirty houses, while yet smaller and dirtier fill up the area, in such a manner that the whole produces an unequal and confused effect, in which regret and indignation stifle pleasure and surprise. The amphitheatre at Verona is a vast deal smaller, and less beautiful than that at Nismes, but preserved with all possible care and neatness, by which means alone it made a much stronger and more agreeable impression on me. The French pay no regard to these things, respect no monument of antiquity; ever eager to undertake, they never finish, nor preserve anything that is already finished to their hands.

I was so much better, and had gained such an appetite by exercise, that I stopped a whole day at Pont-du-Lunel, for the sake of good entertainment and company, this being deservedly esteemed at that time the best inn in Europe; for those who kept it, knowing how to make its fortunate situation turn to advantage, took care to provide

The Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, Book 6

both abundance and variety. It was really curious to find in a lonely country-house, a table every day furnished with sea and fresh-water fish, excellent game, and choice wines, served up with all the attention and care, which are only to be expected among the great or opulent, and all this for thirty five sous each person: but the Pont-du-Lunel did not long remain on this footing, for the proprietor, presuming too much on its reputation, at length lost it entirely.

During this journey, I really forgot my complaints, but recollected them again on my arrival at Montpellier. My vapors were absolutely gone, but every other complaint remained, and though custom had rendered them less troublesome, they were still sufficient to make any one who had been suddenly seized with them, suppose himself attacked by some mortal disease. In effect they were rather alarming than painful, and made the mind suffer more than the body, though it apparently threatened the latter with destruction. While my attention was called off by the vivacity of my passions, I paid no attention to my health; but as my complaints were not altogether imaginary, I thought of them seriously when the tumult had subsided. Recollecting the salutary advice of Madam de Larnage, and the cause of my journey, I consulted the most famous practitioners, particularly Monsieur Fizes; and through superabundance of precaution boarded at a doctor's who was an Irishman, and named Fitz-Morris.

This person boarded a number of young gentlemen who were studying physic; and what rendered his house very commodious for an invalid, he contented himself with a moderate pension for provisions, lodging, etc., and took nothing of his boarders for attendance as a physician. He even undertook to execute the orders of M. Fizes, and endeavored to re-establish my health. He certainly acquitted himself very well in this employment; as to regimen, indigestions were not to be gained at his table; and though I am not much hurt at privations of that kind, the objects of comparison were so near, that I could not help thinking with myself sometimes, that M. de Torignan was a much better provider than M. Fitz-Morris; notwithstanding, as there was no danger of, dying with hunger, and all the youths were gay and good-humored, I believe this manner of living was really serviceable, and prevented my falling into those languors I had latterly been so subject to. I passed the morning in taking medicines, particularly, I know not what kind of waters, but believe they were those of Vals, and in writing to Madam de Larnage: for the correspondence was regularly kept up, and Rousseau kindly undertook to receive these letters for his good friend Dudding. At noon I took a walk to the Canourgue, with some of our young boarders, who were all very good lads; after this we assembled for dinner; when this was over, an affair of importance employed the greater part of us till night; this was going a little way out of town to take our afternoon's collation, and make up two or three parties at mall, or mallet. As I had neither strength nor skill, I did not play myself but I betted on the game, and, interested for the success of my wager, followed the players and their balls over rough and stony roads, procuring by this means both an agreeable and salutary exercise. We took our afternoon's refreshment at an inn out of the city. I need not observe that these meetings were extremely merry, but should not omit that they were equally innocent, though the girls of the house were very pretty. M. Fitz-Morris (who was a great mall player himself) was our president; and I must observe, notwithstanding the imputation of wildness that is generally bestowed on students, that I found more virtuous dispositions among these youths than could easily be found among an equal number of men: they were rather noisy than fond of wine, and more merry than libertine.

I accustomed myself so much to this mode of life, and it accorded so entirely with my humor, that I should have been very well content with a continuance of it. Several of my fellow-boarders were Irish, from whom I endeavored to learn some English words, as a precaution for Saint-Andiol. The time now drew near for my departure; every letter Madam de Larnage wrote, she entreated me not to delay it, and at length I prepared to obey her.

I was convinced that the physicians (who understood nothing of my disorder) looked on my complaint as imaginary, and treated me accordingly, with their waters and whey. In this respect physicians and philosophers differ widely from theologians; admitting the truth only of what they can explain, and making their knowledge the measure of possibilities. These gentlemen understood nothing of my illness, therefore concluded I could not be ill; and who would presume to doubt the profound skill of a physician? I plainly saw they only meant to amuse, and

The Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, Book 6

make me swallow my money; and judging their substitute at Saint–Andiol would do me quite as much service, and be infinitely more agreeable, I resolved to give her the preference; full, therefore, of this wise resolution, I quitted Montpelier.

I set off towards the end of November, after a stay of six weeks or two months in that city, where I left a dozen louis, without either my health or understanding being the better for it, except from a short course of anatomy begun under M. Fitz–Morris, which I was soon obliged to abandon, from the horrid stench of the bodies he dissected, which I found it impossible to endure.

Not thoroughly satisfied in my own mind on the rectitude of this expedition, as I advanced towards the Bridge of St. Esprit (which was equally the road to Saint–Andiol and to Chambery) I began to reflect on Madam de Warrens, the remembrance of whose letters, though less frequent than those from Madam de Larnage, awakened in my heart a remorse that passion had stifled in the first part of my journey, but which became so lively on my return, that, setting just estimate on the love of pleasure, I found myself in such a situation of mind that I could listen wholly to the voice of reason. Besides, in continuing to act the part of an adventurer, I might be less fortunate than I had been in the beginning; for it was only necessary that in all Saint–Andiol there should be one person who had been in England, or who knew the English or anything of their language, to prove me an impostor. The family of Madam de Larnage might not be pleased with me, and would, perhaps, treat me unpolitely; her daughter too made me uneasy, for, spite of myself, I thought more of her than was necessary. I trembled lest I should fall in love with this girl, and that very fear had already half done the business. Was I going, in return for the mother's kindness, to seek the ruin of the daughter? To sow dissension, dishonor, scandal, and hell itself, in her family? The very idea struck me with horror, and I took the firmest resolution to combat and vanquish this unhappy attachment, should I be so unfortunate as to experience it. But why expose myself to this danger? How miserable must the situation be to live with the mother, whom I should be weary of, and sigh for the daughter, without daring to make known my affection! What necessity was there to seek this situation, and expose myself to misfortunes, affronts and remorse, for the sake of pleasures whose greatest charm was already exhausted? For I was sensible this attachment had lost its first vivacity. With these thoughts were mingled reflections relative to my situation and duty to that good and generous friend, who already loaded with debts, would become more so from the foolish expenses I was running into, and whom I was deceiving so unworthily. This reproach at length became so keen that it triumphed over every temptation, and on approaching the bridge of St. Esprit I formed the resolution to burn my whole magazine of letters from Saint–Andiol, and continue my journey right forward to Chambery.

I executed this resolution courageously, with some sighs I confess, but with the heart–felt satisfaction, which I enjoyed for the first time in my life, of saying, "I merit my own esteem, and know how to prefer duty to pleasure." This was the first real obligation I owed my books, since these had taught me to reflect and compare. After the virtuous principles I had so lately adopted, after all the rules of wisdom and honor I had proposed to myself, and felt so proud to follow, the shame of possessing so little stability, and contradicting so egregiously my own maxims, triumphed over the allurements of pleasure. Perhaps, after all, pride had as much share in my resolution as virtue; but if this pride is not virtue itself, its effects are so similar that we are pardonable in deceiving ourselves.

One advantage resulting from good actions is that they elevate the soul to a disposition of attempting still better; for such is human weakness, that we must place among our good deeds an abstinence from those crimes we are tempted to commit. No sooner was my resolution confirmed than I became another man, or rather, I became what I was before I had erred, and saw in its true colors what the intoxication of the moment had either concealed or disguised. Full of worthy sentiments and wise resolutions, I continued my journey, intending to regulate my future conduct by the laws of virtue, and dedicate myself without reserve to that best of friends, to whom I vowed as much fidelity in future as I felt real attachment. The sincerity of this return to virtue appeared to promise a better destiny; but mine, alas! was fixed, and already begun: even at the very moment when my heart, full of good and virtuous sentiments, was contemplating only innocence and happiness through life, I touched on the fatal period

The Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, Book 6

that was to draw after it the long chain of my misfortunes!

My impatience to arrive at Chambery had made me use more diligence than I meant to do. I had sent a letter from Valence, mentioning the day and hour I should arrive, but I had gained half a day on this calculation, which time I passed at Chaparillan, that I might arrive exactly at the time I mentioned. I wished to enjoy to its full extent the pleasure of seeing her, and preferred deferring this happiness a little, that expectancy might increase the value of it. This precaution had always succeeded; hitherto my arrival had caused a little holiday; I expected no less this time, and these preparations, so dear to me, would have been well worth the trouble of contriving them.

I arrived then exactly at the hour, and while at a considerable distance, looked forward with an expectancy of seeing her on the road to meet me. The beating of my heart increased as I drew near the house; at length I arrived, quite out of breath; for I had left my chaise in the town. I see no one in the garden, at the door, or at the windows; I am seized with terror, fearful that some accident has happened. I enter; all is quiet; the laborers are eating their luncheon in the kitchen, and far from observing any preparation, the servants seem surprised to see me, not knowing I was expected. I go up—stairs, at length see her!—that dear friend! so tenderly, truly, and entirely beloved. I instantly ran towards her, and threw myself at her feet. "Ah! child!" said she, "art thou returned then!" embracing me at the same time. "Have you had a good journey? How do you do?" This reception amused me for some moments. I then asked, whether she had received my letter? she answered "Yes."—"I should have thought not," replied I; and the information concluded there. A young man was with her at this time. I recollected having seen him in the house before my departure, but at present he seemed established there; in short, he was so; I found my place already supplied!

This young man came from the country of Vaud; his father, named Vintzenried, was keeper of the prison, or, as he expressed himself, Captain of the Castle of Chillon. This son of the captain was a journeyman peruke-maker, and gained his living in that capacity when he first presented himself to Madam de Warrens, who received him kindly, as she did all comers, particularly those from her own country. He was a tall, fair, silly youth; well enough made, with an unmeaning face, and a mind of the same description, speaking always like the beau in a comedy, and mingling the manners and customs of his former situation with a long history of his gallantry and success; naming, according to his account, not above half the marchionesses who had favored him and pretending never to have dressed the head of a pretty woman, without having likewise decorated her husband's; vain, foolish, ignorant and insolent; such was the worthy substitute taken in my absence, and the companion offered me on my return!

O! if souls disengaged from their terrestrial bonds, yet view from the bosom of eternal light what passes here below, pardon, dear and respectable shade, that I show no more favor to your failings than my own, but equally unveil both. I ought and will be just to you as to myself; but how much less will you lose by this resolution than I shall! How much do your amiable and gentle disposition, your inexhaustible goodness of heart, your frankness and other amiable virtues, compensate for your foibles, if a subversion of reason alone can be called such. You had errors, but not vices; your conduct was reprehensible, but your heart was ever pure.

The new-comer had shown himself zealous and exact in all her little commissions, which were ever numerous, and he diligently overlooked the laborers. As noisy and insolent as I was quiet and forbearing, he was seen or rather heard at the plough, in the hay-loft, wood-house, stable, farm-yard, at the same instant. He neglected the gardening, this labor being too peaceful and moderate; his chief pleasure was to load or drive the cart, to saw or cleave wood; he was never seen without a hatchet or pick-axe in his hand, running, knocking and hallooing with all his might. I know not how many men's labor he performed, but he certainly made noise enough for ten or a dozen at least. All this bustle imposed on poor Madam de Warrens; she thought this young man a treasure, and, willing to attach him to herself, employed the means she imagined necessary for that purpose, not forgetting what she most depended on, the surrender of her person.

Those who have thus far read this work should be able to form some judgment of my heart; its sentiments were the most constant and sincere, particularly those which had brought me back to Chambery; what a sudden and

The Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, Book 6

complete overthrow was this to my whole being! but to judge fully of this, the reader must place himself for a moment in my situation. I saw all the future felicity I had promised myself vanish in a moment; all the charming ideas I had indulged so affectionately, disappear entirely; and I, who even from childhood had not been able to consider my existence for a moment as separate from hers, for the first time saw myself utterly alone. This moment was dreadful, and those that succeeded it were ever gloomy. I was yet young, but the pleasing sentiments of enjoyment and hope, which enliven youth, were extinguished. From that hour my existence seemed half annihilated. I contemplated in advance the melancholy remains of an insipid life, and if at any time an image of happiness glanced through my mind, it was not that which appeared natural to me, and I felt that even should I obtain it I must still be wretched.

I was so dull of apprehension, and my confidence in her was so great, that, notwithstanding the familiar tone of the new-comer, which I looked on as an effect of the easy disposition of Madam de Warrens, which rendered her free with everyone, I never should have suspected his real situation had not she herself informed me of it; but she hastened to make this avowal with a freedom calculated to inflame me with resentment, could my heart have turned to that point. Speaking of this connection as quite immaterial with respect to herself, she reproached me with negligence in the care of the family, and mentioned my frequent absence, as though she had been in haste to supply my place. "Ah!" said I, my heart bursting with the most poignant grief, "what do you dare to inform me of? Is this the reward of an attachment like mine? Have you so many times preserved my life, for the sole purpose of taking from me all that could render it desirable? Your infidelity will bring me to the grave, but you will regret my loss!" She answered with a tranquillity sufficient to distract me, that I talked like a child; that people did not die from such slight causes; that our friendship need be no less sincere, nor we any less intimate, for that her tender attachment to me could neither diminish nor end but with herself; in a word she gave me to understand that my happiness need not suffer any decrease from the good fortune of this new favorite.

Never did the purity, truth and force of my attachment to her appear more evident; never did I feel the sincerity and honesty of my soul more forcibly, than at that moment. I threw myself at her feet, embracing her knees with torrents of tears. "No, madam," replied I, with the most violent agitation, "I love you too much to disgrace you thus far, and too truly to share you; the regret that accompanied the first acquisition of your favors has continued to increase with my affection. I cannot preserve them by so violent an augmentation of it. You shall ever have my adoration: be worthy of it; to me that is more necessary than all you can bestow. It is to you, O my dearest friend! that I resign my rights; it is to the union of our hearts that I sacrifice my pleasure; rather would I perish a thousand times than thus degrade her I love."

I preserved this resolution with a constancy worthy, I may say, of the sentiment that gave it birth. From this moment I saw this beloved woman but with the eyes of a real son. It should be remarked here, that this resolve did not meet her private approbation, as I too well perceived; yet she never employed the least art to make me renounce it either by insinuating proposals, caresses, or any of those means which women so well know how to employ without exposing themselves to violent censure, and which seldom fail to succeed. Reduced to seek a fate independent of hers, and not able to devise one, I passed to the other extreme, placing my happiness so absolutely in her, that I became almost regardless of myself. The ardent desire to see her happy, at any rate, absorbed all my affections; it was in vain she endeavored to separate her felicity from mine, I felt I had a part in it, spite of every impediment.

Thus those virtues whose seeds in my heart begun to spring up with my misfortunes: they had been cultivated by study, and only waited the fermentation of adversity to become prolific. The first-fruit of this disinterested disposition was to put from my heart every sentiment of hatred and envy against him who had supplanted me. I even sincerely wished to attach myself to this young man; to form and educate him; to make him sensible of his happiness, and, if possible, render him worthy of it; in a word, to do for him what Anet had formerly done for me. But the similarity of dispositions was wanting. More insinuating and enlightened than Anet, I possessed neither his coolness, fortitude, nor commanding strength of character, which I must have had in order to succeed. Neither did the young man possess those qualities which Anet found in me; such as gentleness, gratitude, and above all,

The Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, Book 6

the knowledge of a want of his instructions, and an ardent desire to render them useful. All these were wanting; the person I wished to improve, saw in me nothing but an importunate, chattering pedant: while on the contrary he admired his own importance in the house, measuring the services he thought he rendered by the noise he made, and looking on his saws, hatchets, and pick-axes, as infinitely more useful than all my old books: and, perhaps, in this particular, he might not be altogether blamable; but he gave himself a number of airs sufficient to make anyone die with laughter. With the peasants he assumed the airs of a country gentleman; presently he did as much with me, and at length with Madam de Warrens herself. His name, Vintzenried, did not appear noble enough, he therefore changed it to that of Monsieur de Courtilles, and by the latter appellation he was known at Chambery, and in Maurienne, where he married.

At length this illustrious personage gave himself such airs of consequence, that he was everything in the house, and myself nothing. When I had the misfortune to displease him, he scolded Madam de Warrens, and a fear of exposing her to his brutality rendered me subservient to all his whims, so that every time he cleaved wood (an office which he performed with singular pride) it was necessary I should be an idle spectator and admirer of his prowess. This lad was not, however, of a bad disposition; he loved Madam de Warrens, indeed it was impossible to do otherwise; nor had he any aversion even to me, and when he happened to be out of his airs would listen to our admonitions, and frankly own he was a fool; yet notwithstanding these acknowledgements his follies continued in the same proportion. His knowledge was so contracted, and his inclinations so mean, that it was useless to reason, and almost impossible to be pleased with him. Not content with a most charming woman, he amused himself with an old red-haired, toothless waiting-maid, whose unwelcome service Madam de Warrens had the patience to endure, though it was absolutely disgusting. I soon perceived this new inclination, and was exasperated at it; but I saw something else, which affected me yet more, and made a deeper impression on me than anything had hitherto done; this was a visible coldness in the behavior of Madam de Warrens towards me.

The privation I had imposed on myself, and which she affected to approve, is one of those affronts which women scarcely ever forgive. Take the most sensible; the most philosophic female, one the least attached to pleasure, and slighting her favors, if within your reach, will be found the most unpardonable crime, even though she may care nothing for the man. This rule is certainly without exception; since a sympathy so natural and ardent was impaired in her, by an abstinence founded only on virtue, attachment and esteem, I no longer found with her that union of hearts which constituted all the happiness of mine; she seldom sought me but when we had occasion to complain of this new-comer, for when they were agreed, I enjoyed but little of her confidence, and, at length, was scarcely ever consulted in her affairs. She seemed pleased, indeed, with my company, but had I passed whole days without seeing her she would hardly have missed me.

Insensibly, I found myself desolate and alone in that house where I had formerly been the very soul; where, if I may so express myself, I had enjoyed a double life, and by degrees, I accustomed myself to disregard everything that, passed, and even those who dwelt there. To avoid continual mortifications, I shut myself up with my books, or else wept and sighed unnoticed in the woods. This life soon became insupportable; I felt that the presence of a woman so dear to me, while estranged from her heart, increased my unhappiness, and was persuaded, that, ceasing to see her, I should feel myself less cruelly separated.

I resolved, therefore, to quit the house, mentioned it to her, and she, far from opposing my resolution, approved it. She had an acquaintance at Grenoble, called Madam de Deybens, whose husband was on terms of friendship with Monsieur Malby, chief Provost of Lyons. M. Deybens proposed my educating M. Malby's children; I accepted this offer, and departed for Lyons without causing, and almost without feeling, the least regret at a separation, the bare idea of which, a few months before, would have given us both the most excruciating torments.

I had almost as much knowledge as was necessary for a tutor, and flattered myself that my method would be unexceptionable; but the year I passed at M. Malby's was sufficient to undeceive me in that particular. The natural gentleness of my disposition seemed calculated for the employment, if hastiness had not been mingled with it. While things went favorably, and I saw the pains (which I did not spare) succeed, I was an angel; but a devil when

The Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, Book 6

they went contrary. If my pupils did not understand me, I was hasty, and when they showed any symptoms of an untoward disposition, I was so provoked that I could have killed them; which behavior was not likely to render them either good or wise. I had two under my care, and they were of very different tempers. St. Marie, who was between eight and nine years old, had a good person and quick apprehension, was giddy, lively, playful and mischievous; but his mischief was ever good-humored. The younger one, named Condillac, appeared stupid and fretful, was headstrong as a mule, and seemed incapable of instruction. It may be supposed that between both I did not want employment, yet with patience and temper I might have succeeded; but wanting both, I did nothing worth mentioning, and my pupils profited very little. I could only make use of three means, which are very weak, and often pernicious with children; namely, sentiment, reasoning, passion. I sometimes exerted myself so much with St. Marie, that I could not refrain from tears, and wished to excite similar sensations in him; as if it was reasonable to suppose a child could be susceptible to such emotions. Sometimes I exhausted myself in reasoning, as if persuaded he could comprehend me; and as he frequently formed very subtle arguments, concluded he must be reasonable, because he bid fair to be so good a logician.

The little Condillac was still more embarrassing; for he neither understood, answered, nor was concerned at anything; he was of an obstinacy beyond belief, and was never happier than when he had succeeded in putting me in a rage; then, indeed, he was the philosopher, and I the child. I was conscious of all my faults, studied the tempers of my pupils, and became acquainted with them; but where was the use of seeing the evil, without being able to apply a remedy? My penetration was unavailing, since it never prevented any mischief; and everything I undertook failed, because all I did to effect my designs was precisely what I ought not to have done.

I was not more fortunate in what had only reference to myself, than in what concerned my pupils. Madam Deybens, in recommending me to her friend Madam de Malby, had requested her to form my manners, and endeavor to give me an air of the world. She took some pains on this account, wishing to teach me how to do the honors of the house; but I was so awkward, bashful, and stupid, that she found it necessary to stop there. This, however, did not prevent me from falling in love with her, according to my usual custom; I even behaved in such a manner, that she could not avoid observing it; but I never durst declare my passion; and as the lady never seemed in a humor to make advances, I soon became weary of my sighs and ogling, being convinced they answered no manner of purpose.

I had quite lost my inclination for little thieveries while with Madam de Warrens; indeed, as everything belonged to me, there was nothing to steal; besides, the elevated notions I had imbibed ought to have rendered me in future above such meanness, and generally speaking they certainly did so; but this rather proceeded from my having learned to conquer temptations, than having succeeded in rooting out the propensity, and I should even now greatly dread stealing, as in my infancy, were I yet subject to the same inclinations. I had a proof of this at M. Malby's, when, though surrounded by a number of little things that I could easily have pilfered, and which appeared no temptation, I took it into my head to covert some white Arbois wine, some glasses of which I had drunk at table, and thought delicious. It happened to be rather thick, and as I fancied myself an excellent finer of wine, I mentioned my skill, and this was accordingly trusted to my care, but in attempting to mend, I spoiled it, though to the sight only, for it remained equally agreeable to the taste. Profiting by this opportunity, I furnished myself from time to time with a few bottles to drink in my own apartment; but unluckily, I could never drink without eating; the difficulty lay therefore, in procuring bread. It was impossible to make a reserve of this article, and to have it brought by the footman was discovering myself, and insulting the master of the house; I could not bear to purchase it myself; how could a fine gentleman, with a sword at his side, enter a baker's shop to buy a small loaf of bread? it was utterly impossible. At length I recollected the thoughtless saying of a great princess, who, on being informed that the country people had no bread, replied, "Then let them eat pastry!" Yet even this resource was attended with a difficulty. I sometimes went out alone for this very purpose, running over the whole city, and passing thirty pastry cook's shops, without daring to enter any one of them. In the first place, it was necessary there should be only one person in the shop, and that person's physiognomy must be so encouraging as to give me confidence to pass the threshold; but when once the dear little cake was procured, and I shut up in my chamber with that and a bottle of wine, taken cautiously from the bottom of a cupboard, how much did I enjoy

The Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, Book 6

drinking my wine, and reading a few pages of a novel; for when I have no company I always wish to read while eating; it seems a substitute for society, and I dispatch alternately a page and a morsel; 'tis indeed, as if my book dined with me.

I was neither dissolute nor sottish, never in my whole life having been intoxicated with liquor; my little thefts were not very indiscreet, yet they were discovered; the bottles betrayed me, and though no notice was taken of it, I had no longer the management of the cellar. In all this Monsieur Malby conducted himself with prudence and politeness, being really a very deserving man, who, under a manner as harsh as his employment, concealed a real gentleness of disposition and uncommon goodness of heart: he was judicious, equitable, and (what would not be expected from an officer of the Marechausse) very humane.

Sensible of his indulgence, I became greatly attached to him, which made my stay at Lyons longer than it would otherwise have been; but at length, disgusted with an employment which I was not calculated for, and a situation of great confinement, consequently disagreeable to me, after a year's trial, during which time I spared no pains to fulfill my engagement, I determined to quit my pupils; being convinced I should never succeed in educating them properly. Monsieur Malby saw this as clearly as myself, though I am inclined to think he would never have dismissed me had I not spared him the trouble, which was an excess of condescension in this particular, that I certainly cannot justify.

What rendered my situation yet more insupportable was the comparison I was continually drawing between the life I now led and that which I had quitted; the remembrance of my dear Charmettes, my garden, trees, fountain and orchard, but, above all, the company of her who was born to give life and soul to every other enjoyment. On calling to mind our pleasures and innocent life, I was seized with such oppressions and heaviness of heart, as deprived me of the power of performing anything as it should be. A hundred times was I tempted instantly to set off on foot to my dear Madam de Warrens, being persuaded that could I once more see her, I should be content to die that moment: in fine, I could no longer resist the tender emotions which recalled me back to her, whatever it might cost me. I accused myself of not having been sufficiently patient, complaisant and kind; concluding I might yet live happily with her on the terms of tender friendship, and by showing more for her than I had hitherto done. I formed the finest projects in the world, burned to execute them, left all, renounced everything, departed, fled, and arriving in all the transports of my early youth, found myself once more at her feet. Alas! I should have died there with joy, had I found in her reception, in her embrace, or in her heart, one-quarter of what I had formerly found there, and which I yet found the undiminished warmth of.

Fearful illusions of transitory things, how often dost thou torment us in vain! She received me with that excellence of heart which could only die with her; but I sought the influence there which could never be recalled, and had hardly been half an hour with her before I was once more convinced that my former happiness had vanished forever, and that I was in the same melancholy situation which I had been obliged to fly from; yet without being able to accuse any person with my unhappiness, for Courtilles really was not to blame, appearing to see my return with more pleasure than dissatisfaction. But how could I bear to be a secondary person with her to whom I had been everything, and who could never cease being such to me? How could I live an alien in that house where I had been the child? The sight of every object that had been witness to my former happiness, rendered the comparison yet more distressing; I should have suffered less in any other habitation, for this incessantly recalled such pleasing remembrances, that it was irritating the recollection of my loss.

Consumed with vain regrets, given up to the most gloomy melancholy, I resumed the custom of remaining alone, except at meals; shut up with my books, I sought to give some useful diversion to my ideas, and feeling the imminent danger of want, which I had so long dreaded, I sought means to prepare for and receive it, when Madam de Warrens should have no other resource. I had placed her household on a footing not to become worse; but since my departure everything had been altered. He who now managed her affairs was a spendthrift, and wished to make a great appearance; such as keeping a good horse with elegant trappings; loved to appear gay in the eyes of the neighbors, and was perpetually undertaking something he did not understand. Her pension was taken up in

The Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, Book 6

advance, her rent was in arrears, debts of every kind continued to accumulate; I could plainly foresee that her pension would be seized, and perhaps suppressed; in short, I expected nothing but ruin and misfortune, and the moment appeared to approach so rapidly that I already felt all its horrors.

My closet was my only amusement, and after a tedious search for remedies for the sufferings of my mind, I determined to seek some against the evil of distressing circumstances, which I daily expected would fall upon us, and returning to my old chimeras, behold me once more building castles in the air to relieve this dear friend from the cruel extremities into which I saw her ready to fall. I did not believe myself wise enough to shine in the republic of letters, or to stand any chance of making a fortune by that means; a new idea, therefore, inspired me with that confidence, which the mediocrity of my talents could not impart.

In ceasing to teach music I had not abandoned the thoughts of it; on the contrary, I had studied the theory sufficiently to consider myself well informed on the subject. When reflecting on the trouble it had cost me to read music, and the great difficulty I yet experienced in singing at sight, I began to think the fault might as well arise from the manner of noting as from my own dulness, being sensible it was an art which most people find difficult to understand. By examining the formation of the signs, I was convinced they were frequently very ill devised. I had before thought of marking the gamut by figures, to prevent the trouble of having lines to draw, on noting the plainest air; but had been stopped by the difficulty of the octaves, and by the distinction of measure and quantity: this idea returned again to my mind, and on a careful revision of it, I found the difficulties by no means insurmountable. I pursued it successfully, and was at length able to note any music whatever by figures, with the greatest exactitude and simplicity. From this moment I supposed my fortune made, and in the ardor of sharing it with her to whom I owed everything, thought only of going to Paris, not doubting that on presenting my project to the Academy, it would be adopted with rapture. I had brought some money from Lyons; I augmented this stock by the sale of my books, and in the course of a fortnight my resolution was both formed and executed: in short, full of the magnificent ideas it had inspired, and which were common to me on every occasion, I departed from Savoy with my new system of music, as I had formerly done from Turin with my heron-fountain.

Such have been the errors and faults of my youth; I have related the history of them with a fidelity which my heart approves; if my riper years were dignified with some virtues, I should have related them with the same frankness; it was my intention to have done this, but I must forego this pleasing task and stop here. Time, which renders justice to the characters of most men, may withdraw the veil; and should my memory reach posterity, they may one day discover what I had to say—they will then understand why I am now silent.