The Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, Book 8

Jean Jacques Rousseau

Table of Contents

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BOOK VIII.

At the end of the preceding book a pause was necessary. With this begins the long chain of my misfortunes deduced from their origin.

Having lived in the two most splendid houses in Paris, I had, notwithstanding my candor and modesty, made some acquaintance. Among others at Dupin's, that of the young hereditary prince of Saxe−Gotha, and of the Baron de Thun, his governor; at the house of M. de la Popliniere, that of M. Seguy, friend to the Baron de Thun, and known in the literary world by his beautiful edition of Rousseau. The baron invited M. Seguy and myself to go and pass a day or two at Fontenai sous bois, where the prince had a house. As I passed Vincennes, at the sight of the dungeon, my feelings were acute; the effect of which the baron perceived on my countenance. At supper the prince mentioned the confinement of Diderot. The baron, to hear what I had to say, accused the prisoner of imprudence; and I showed not a little of the same in the impetuous manner in which I defended him. This excess of zeal, inspired by the misfortune which had befallen my friend, was pardoned, and the conversation immediately changed. There were present two Germans in the service of the prince. M. Klupssel, a man of great wit, his chaplain, and who afterwards, having supplanted the baron, became his governor. The other was a young man named M. Grimm, who served him as a reader until he could obtain some place, and whose indifferent appearance sufficiently proved the pressing necessity he was under of immediately finding one. From this very evening Klupssel and I began an acquaintance which soon led to friendship. That with the Sieur Grimm did not make quite so rapid a progress; he made but few advances, and was far from having that haughty presumption which prosperity afterwards gave him. The next day at dinner, the conversation turned upon music; he spoke well on the subject. I was transported with joy when I learned from him he could play an accompaniment on the harpsichord. After dinner was over music was introduced, and we amused ourselves the rest of the afternoon on the harpischord of the prince. Thus began that friendship which, at first, was so agreeable to me, afterwards so fatal, and of which I shall hereafter have so much to say.

At my return to Paris, I learned the agreeable news that Diderot was released from the dungeon, and that he had on his parole the castle and park of Vincennes for a prison, with permission to see his friends. How painful was it to me not to be able instantly to fly to him! But I was detained two or three days at Madam Dupin's by indispensable business. After ages of impatience, I flew to the arms of my friend. He was not alone: D' Alembert and the treasurer of the Sainte Chapelle were with him. As I entered I saw nobody but himself, I made but one step, one cry; I riveted my face to his: I pressed him in my arms, without speaking to him, except by tears and sighs: I stifled him with my affection and joy. The first thing he did, after quitting my arms, was to turn himself towards the ecclesiastic, and say: "You see, sir, how much I am beloved by my friends." My emotion was so great, that it was then impossible for me to reflect upon this manner of turning it to advantage; but I have since thought that, had I been in the place of Diderot, the idea he manifested would not have been the first that would have occurred to me.

I found him much affected by his imprisonment. The dungeon had made a terrible impression upon his mind, and, although he was very agreeably situated in the castle, and at liberty to, walk where he pleased in the park, which was not inclosed even by a wall, he wanted the society of his friends to prevent him from yielding to melancholy. As I was the person most concerned for his sufferings, I imagined I should also be the friend, the sight of whom would give him consolation; on which account, notwithstanding very pressing occupations, I went every two days at farthest, either alone, or accompanied by his wife, to pass the afternoon with him.

The heat of the summer was this year (1749) excessive. Vincennes is two leagues from Paris. The state of my finances not permitting me to pay for hackney coaches, at two o'clock in the afternoon, I went on foot, when alone, and walked as fast as possible, that I might arrive the sooner. The trees by the side of the road, always lopped, according to the custom of the country, afforded but little shade, and exhausted by fatigue, I frequently threw myself on the ground, being unable to proceed any further. I thought a book in my hand might make me moderate my pace. One day I took the Mercure de France, and as I walked and read, I came to the following question proposed by the academy of Dijon, for the premium of the ensuing year, 'Has the progress of sciences and arts contributed to corrupt or purify morals?'

The moment I had read this, I seemed to behold another world, and became a different man. Although I have a lively remembrance of the impression it made upon me, the detail has escaped my mind, since I communicated it to M. de Malesherbes in one of my four letters to him. This is one of the singularities of my memory which merits to be remarked. It serves me in proportion to my dependence upon it; the moment I have committed to paper that with which it was charged, it forsakes me, and I have no sooner written a thing than I had forgotten it entirely. This singularity is the same with respect to music. Before I learned the use of notes I knew a great number of songs; the moment I had made a sufficient progress to sing an air set to music, I could not recollect any one of them; and, at present, I much doubt whether I should be able entirely to go through one of those of which I was the most fond. All I distinctly recollect upon this occasion is, that on my arrival at Vincennes, I was in an agitation which approached a delirium. Diderot perceived it; I told him the cause, and read to him the prosopopoeia of Fabricius, written with a pencil under a tree. He encouraged me to pursue my ideas, and to become a competitor for the premium. I did so, and from that moment I was ruined.

All the rest of my misfortunes during my life were the inevitable effect of this moment of error.

My sentiments became elevated with the most inconceivable rapidity to the level of my ideas. All my little passions were stifled by the enthusiasm of truth, liberty, and virtue; and, what is most astonishing, this effervescence continued in my mind upwards of five years, to as great a degree perhaps as it has ever done in that of any other man. I composed the discourse in a very singular manner, and in that style which I have always followed in my other works. I dedicated to it the hours of the night in which sleep deserted me, I meditated in my bed with my eyes closed, and in my mind turned over and over again my periods with incredible labor and care; the moment they were finished to my satisfaction, I deposited them in my memory, until I had an opportunity of committing them to paper; but the time of rising and putting on my clothes made me lose everything, and when I took up my pen I recollected but little of what I had composed. I made Madam le Vasseur my secretary; I had lodged her with her daughter, and husband, nearer to myself; and she, to save me the expense of a servant, came every morning to make my fire, and to do such other little things as were necessary. As soon as she arrived I dictated to her while in bed what I had composed in the night, and this method, which for a long time I observed, preserved me many things I should otherwise have forgotten.

As soon as the discourse was finished, I showed it to Diderot. He was satisfied with the production, and pointed out some corrections he thought necessary to be made.

However, this composition, full of force and fire, absolutely wants logic and order; of all the works I ever wrote, this is the weakest in reasoning, and the most devoid of number and harmony. With whatever talent a man may be born, the art of writing is not easily learned.

I sent off this piece without mentioning it to anybody, except, I think, to Grimm, with whom, after his going to live with the Comte de Vriese, I began to be upon the most intimate footing. His harpsichord served as a rendezvous, and I passed with him at it all the moments I had to spare, in singing Italian airs, and barcaroles; sometimes without intermission, from morning till night, or rather from night until morning; and when I was not to be found at Madam Dupin's, everybody concluded I was with Grimm at his apartment, the public walk, or theatre. I left off going to the Comedie Italienne, of which I was free, to go with him, and pay, to the Comedie Francoise, of which he was passionately fond. In short, so powerful an attraction connected me with this young man, and I became so inseparable from him, that the poor aunt herself was rather neglected, that is, I saw her less frequently; for in no moment of my life has my attachment to her been diminished.

This impossibility of dividing, in favor of my inclinations, the little time I had to myself, renewed more strongly than ever the desire I had long entertained of having but one home for Theresa and myself; but the embarrassment of her numerous family, and especially the want of money to purchase furniture, had hitherto withheld me from accomplishing it. An opportunity to endeavor at it presented itself, and of this I took advantage. M. de Francueil and Madam Dupin, clearly perceiving that eight or nine hundred livres a year were unequal to my wants, increased of their own accord, my salary to fifty guineas; and Madam Dupin, having heard I wished to furnish myself lodgings, assisted me with some articles for that purpose. With this furniture and that Theresa already had, we made one common stock, and, having an apartment in the Hotel de Languedoc, Rue de Grevelle St, Honor, kept by very honest people, we arranged ourselves in the best manner we could, and lived there peaceably and agreeably during seven years, at the end of which I removed to go and live at the Hermitage.

Theresa's father was a good old man, very mild in his disposition, and much afraid of his wife; for this reason he had given her the surname of Lieutenant Criminal, which Grimm, jocosely, afterwards transferred to the daughter. Madam le Vasseur did not want sense, that is address; and pretended to the politeness and airs of the first circles; but she had a mysterious wheedling, which to me was insupportable, gave bad advice to her daughter, endeavored to make her dissemble with me, and separately, cajoled my friends at my expense, and that of each other; excepting these circumstances; she was a tolerably good mother, because she found her account in being so, and concealed the faults of her daughter to turn them to her own advantage. This woman, who had so much of my care and attention, to whom I made so many little presents, and by whom I had it extremely at heart to make myself beloved, was, from the impossibility of my succeeding in this wish, the only cause of the uneasiness I suffered in my little establishment. Except the effects of this cause I enjoyed, during these six or seven, years, the most perfect domestic happiness of which human weakness is capable. The heart of my Theresa was that of an angel; our attachment increased with our intimacy, and we were more and more daily convinced how much we were made for each other. Could our pleasures be described, their simplicity would cause laughter. Our walks, tete−a−tete, on the outside of the city, where I magnificently spent eight or ten sous in each guinguette.—[Ale−house]— Our little suppers at my window, seated opposite to each other upon two little chairs, placed upon a trunk, which filled up the spare of the embrasure. In this situation the window served us as a table, we respired the fresh air, enjoyed the prospect of the environs and the people who passed; and, although upon the fourth story, looked down into the street as we ate.

Who can describe, and how few can feel, the charms of these repasts, consisting of a quartern loaf, a few cherries, a morsel of cheese, and half−a−pint of wine which we drank between us? Friendship, confidence, intimacy, sweetness of disposition, how delicious are your reasonings! We sometimes remained in this situation until midnight, and never thought of the hour, unless informed of it by the old lady. But let us quit these details, which are either insipid or laughable; I have always said and felt that real enjoyment was not to be described.

Much about the same time I indulged in one not so delicate, and the last of the kind with which I have to reproach myself. I have observed that the minister Klupssel was an amiable man; my connections with him were almost as intimate as those I had with Grimm, and in the end became as familiar; Grimm and he sometimes eat at my apartment. These repasts, a little more than simple, were enlivened by the witty and extravagant wantonness of expression of Klupssel, and the diverting Germanicisms of Grimm, who was not yet become a purist.

Sensuality did not preside at our little orgies, but joy, which was preferable, reigned in them all, and we enjoyed ourselves so well together that we knew not how to separate. Klupssel had furnished a lodging for a little girl, who, notwithstanding this, was at the service of anybody, because he could not support her entirely himself. One evening as we were going into the coffee−house, we met him coming out to go and sup with her. We rallied him; he revenged himself gallantly, by inviting us to the same supper, and there rallying us in our turn. The poor young creature appeared to be of a good disposition, mild and little fitted to the way of life to which an old hag she had with her, prepared her in the best manner she could. Wine and conversation enlivened us to such a degree that we forgot ourselves. The amiable Klupssel was unwilling to do the honors of his table by halves, and we all three successively took a view of the next chamber, in company with his little friend, who knew not whether she should laugh or cry. Grimm has always maintained that he never touched her; it was therefore to amuse himself with our impatience, that he remained so long in the other chamber, and if he abstained, there is not much probability of his having done so from scruple, because previous to his going to live with the Comte de Friese, he lodged with girls of the town in the same quarter of St. Roch.

I left the Rue des Moineaux, where this girl lodged, as much ashamed as Saint Preux left the house in which he had become intoxicated, and when I wrote his story I well remembered my own. Theresa perceived by some sign, and especially by my confusion, I had something with which I reproached myself; I relieved my mind by my free and immediate confession. I did well, for the next day Grimm came in triumph to relate to her my crime with aggravation, and since that time he has never failed maliciously to recall it to her recollection; in this he was the more culpable, since I had freely and voluntarily given him my confidence, and had a right to expect he would not make me repent of it. I never had a more convincing proof than on this occasion, of the goodness of my Theresa's heart; she was more shocked at the behavior of Grimm than at my infidelity, and I received nothing from her but tender reproaches, in which there was not the least appearance of anger.

The simplicity of mind of this excellent girl was equal to her goodness of heart; and this is saying everything: but one instance of it, which is present to my recollection, is worthy of being related. I had told her Klupssel was a minister, and chaplain to the prince of Saxe−Gotha. A minister was to her so singular a man, that oddly confounding the most dissimilar ideas, she took it into her head to take Klupssel for the pope; I thought her mad the first time she told me when I came in, that the pope had called to see me. I made her explain herself and lost not a moment in going to relate the story to Grimm and Klupssel, who amongst ourselves never lost the name of pope. We gave to the girl in the Rue des Moineaux the name of Pope Joan. Our laughter was incessant; it almost stifled us. They, who in a letter which it hath pleased them to attribute to me, have made me say I never laughed but twice in my life, did not know me at this period, nor in my younger days; for if they had, the idea could never have entered into their heads.

The year following (1750), not thinking more of my discourse; I learned it had gained the premium at Dijon. This news awakened all the ideas which had dictated it to me, gave them new animation, and completed the fermentation of my heart of that first leaven of heroism and virtue which my father, my country, and Plutarch had inspired in my infancy. Nothing now appeared great in my eyes but to be free and virtuous, superior to fortune and opinion, and independent of all exterior circumstances; although a false shame, and the fear of disapprobation at first prevented me from conducting myself according to these principles, and from suddenly quarreling with the maxims of the age in which I lived, I from that moment took a decided resolution to do it.—[And of this I purposely delayed the execution, that irritated by contradiction f it might be rendered triumphant.]

While I was philosophizing upon the duties of man, an event happened which made me better reflect upon my own. Theresa became pregnant for the third time. Too sincere with myself, too haughty in my mind to contradict my principles by my actions, I began to examine the destination of my children, and my connections with the mother, according to the laws of nature, justice, and reason, and those of that religion, pure, holy, and eternal, like its author, which men have polluted while they pretended to purify it, and which by their formularies they have reduced to a religion of words, since the difficulty of prescribing impossibilities is but trifling to those by whom they are not practised.

If I deceived myself in my conclusions, nothing can be more astonishing than the security with which I depended upon them. Were I one of those men unfortunately born deaf to the voice of nature, in whom no sentiment of justice or humanity ever took the least root, this obduracy would be natural. But that warmth of heart, strong sensibility, and facility of forming attachments; the force with which they subdue me; my cruel sufferings when obliged to break them; the innate benevolence I cherished towards my fellow−creatures; the ardent love I bear to great virtues, to truth and justice, the horror in which I hold evil of every kind; the impossibility of hating, of injuring or wishing to injure anyone; the soft and lively emotion I feel at the sight of whatever is virtuous, generous and amiable; can these meet in the same mind with the depravity which without scruple treads under foot the most pleasing of all our duties? No, I feel, and openly declare this to be impossible. Never in his whole life could J. J. be a man without sentiment or an unnatural father. I may have been deceived, but it is impossible I should have lost the least of my feelings. Were I to give my reasons, I should say too much; since they have seduced me, they would seduce many others. I will not therefore expose those young persons by whom I may be read to the same danger. I will satisfy myself by observing that my error was such, that in abandoning my children to public education for want of the means of bringing them up myself; in destining them to become workmen and peasants, rather than adventurers and fortune−hunters, I thought I acted like an honest citizen, and a good father, and considered myself as a member of the republic of Plato. Since that time the regrets of my heart have more than once told me I was deceived; but my reason was so far from giving me the same intimation, that I have frequently returned thanks to Heaven for having by this means preserved them from the fate of their father, and that by which they were threatened the moment I should have been under the necessity of leaving them. Had I left them to Madam d'Upinay, or Madam de Luxembourg, who, from friendship, generosity, or some other motive, offered to take care of them in due time, would they have been more happy, better brought up, or honester men? To this I cannot answer; but I am certain they would have been taught to hate and perhaps betray their parents: it is much better that they have never known them.

My third child was therefore carried to the foundling hospital as well as the two former, and the next two were disposed of in the same manner; for I have had five children in all. This arrangement seemed to me to be so good, reasonable and lawful, that if I did not publicly boast of it, the motive by which I was withheld was merely my regard for their mother: but I mentioned it to all those to whom I had declared our connection, to Diderot, to Grimm, afterwards to M. d'Epinay, and after another interval to Madam de Luxembourg; and this freely and voluntarily, without being under the least necessity of doing it, having it in my power to conceal the step from all the world; for La Gouin was an honest woman, very discreet, and a person on whom I had the greatest reliance. The only one of my friends to whom it was in some measure my interest to open myself, was Thierry the physician, who had the care of my poor aunt in one of her lyings in, in which she was very ill. In a word, there was no mystery in my conduct, not only on account of my never having concealed anything from my friends, but because I never found any harm in it. Everything considered, I chose the best destination for my children, or that which I thought to be such. I could have wished, and still should be glad, had I been brought up as they have been.

Whilst I was thus communicating what I had done, Madam. le Vasseur did the same thing amongst her acquaintance, but with less disinterested views. I introduced her and her daughter to Madam Dupin, who, from friendship to me, showed them the greatest kindness. The mother confided to her the secret of the daughter. Madam Dupin, who is generous and kind, and to whom she never told how attentive I was to her, notwithstanding my moderate resources, in providing for everything, provided on her part for what was necessary, with a liberality which, by order of her mother, the daughter concealed from me during my residence in Paris, nor ever mentioned it until we were at the Hermitage, when she informed me of it, after having disclosed to me several other secrets of her heart. I did not know Madam Dupin, who never took the least notice to me of the matter, was so well informed: I know not yet whether Madam de Chenonceaux, her daughter−in−law, was as much in the secret: but Madam de Brancueil knew the whole and could not refrain from prattling. She spoke of it to me the following year, after I had left her house. This induced me to write her a letter upon the subject, which will be found in my collections, and wherein I gave such of my reasons as I could make public, without exposing Madam le Vasseur and her family; the most determinative of them came from that quarter, and these I kept profoundly secret.

I can rely upon the discretion of Madam Dupin, and the friendship of Madam de Chenonceaux; I had the same dependence upon that of Madam de Francuiel, who, however, was long dead before my secret made its way into the world. This it could never have done except by means of the persons to whom I intrusted it, nor did it until after my rupture with them. By this single fact they are judged; without exculpating myself from the blame I deserve, I prefer it to that resulting from their malignity. My fault is great, but it was an error. I have neglected my duty, but the desire of doing an injury never entered my heart; and the feelings of a father were never more eloquent in favor of children whom he never saw. But: betraying the confidence of friendship, violating the most sacred of all engagements, publishing secrets confided to us, and wantonly dishonoring the friend we have deceived, and who in detaching himself from our society still respects us, are not faults, but baseness of mind, and the last degree of heinousness.

I have promised my confession and not my justification; on which account I shall stop here. It is my duty faithfully to relate the truth, that of the reader to be just; more than this I never shall require of him.

The marriage of M. de Chenonceaux rendered his mother's house still more agreeable to me, by the wit and merit of the new bride, a very amiable young person, who seemed to distinguish me amongst the scribes of M. Dupin. She was the only daughter of the Viscountess de Rochechouart, a great friend of the Comte de Friese, and consequently of Grimm's who was very attentive to her. However, it was I who introduced him to her daughter; but their characters not suiting each other, this connection was not of long duration; and Grimm, who from that time aimed at what was solid, preferred the mother, a woman of the world, to the daughter who wished for steady friends, such as were agreeable to her, without troubling her head about the least intrigue, or making any interest amongst the great. Madam Dupin no longer finding in Madam de Chenonceaux all the docility she expected, made her house very disagreeable to her, and Madam de Chenonceaux, having a great opinion of her own merit, and, perhaps, of her birth, chose rather to give up the pleasures of society, and remain almost alone in her apartment, than to submit to a yoke she was not disposed to bear. This species of exile increased my attachment to her, by that natural inclination which excites me to approach the wretched, I found her mind metaphysical and reflective, although at times a little sophistical; her conversation, which was by no means that of a young woman coming from a convent, had for me the greatest attractions; yet she was not twenty years of age. Her complexion was seducingly fair; her figure would have been majestic had she held herself more upright. Her hair, which was fair, bordering upon ash color, and uncommonly beautiful, called to my recollection that of my poor mamma in the flower of her age, and strongly agitated my heart. But the severe principles I had just laid down for myself, by which at all events I was determined to be guided, secured me from the danger of her and her charms. During the whole summer I passed three or four hours a day in a tete−a−tete conversation with her, teaching her arithmetic, and fatiguing her with my innumerable ciphers, without uttering a single word of gallantry, or even once glancing my eyes upon her. Five or six years later I should not have had so much wisdom or folly; but it was decreed I was never to love but once in my life, and that another person was to have the first and last sighs of my heart.

Since I had lived in the house of Madam Dupin, I had always been satisfied with my situation, without showing the least sign of a desire to improve it. The addition which, in conjunction with M. de Francueil, she had made to my salary, was entirely of their own accord. This year M. de Francueil, whose friendship for me daily increased, had it in his thoughts to place me more at ease, and in a less precarious situation. He was receiver−general of finance. M. Dudoyer, his cash−keeper, was old and rich, and wished to retire. M. de Francueil offered me his place, and to prepare myself for it, I went during a few weeks, to Dudoyer, to take the necessary instructions. But whether my talents were ill−suited to the employment, or that M. Dudoyer, who I thought wished to procure his place for another, was not in earnest in the instructions he gave me, I acquired by slow degrees, and very imperfectly, the knowledge I was in want of, and could never understand the nature of accounts, rendered intricate, perhaps designedly. However, without having possessed myself of the whole scope of the business, I learned enough of the method to pursue it without the least difficulty; I even entered on my new office; I kept the cashbook and the cash; I paid and received money, took and gave receipts; and although this business was so ill suited to my inclinations as to my abilities, maturity of years beginning to render me sedate, I was determined to conquer my disgust, and entirely devote myself to my new employment.

Unfortunately for me, I had no sooner begun to proceed without difficulty, than M. de Francueil took a little journey, during which I remained intrusted with the cash, which, at that time, did not amount to more than twenty−five to thirty thousand livres. The anxiety of mind this sum of money occasioned me, made me perceive I was very unfit to be a cash−keeper, and I have no doubt but my uneasy situation, during his absence, contributed to the illness with which I was seized after his return.

I have observed in my first part that I was born in a dying state. A defect in the bladder caused me, during my early years, to suffer an almost continual retention of urine, and my Aunt Susan, to whose care I was intrusted, had inconceivable difficulty in preserving me. However, she succeeded, and my robust constitution at length got the better of all my weakness, and my health became so well established that except the illness from languor, of which I have given an account, and frequent heats in the bladder which the least heating of the blood rendered troublesome, I arrived at the age of thirty almost without feeling my original infirmity. The first time this happened was upon my arrival at Venice. The fatigue of the voyage, and the extreme heat I had suffered, renewed the burnings, and gave me a pain in the loins, which continued until the beginning of winter. After having seen padoana, I thought myself near the end of my career, but I suffered not the least inconvenience. After exhausting my imagination more than my body for my Zulietta, I enjoyed better health than ever. It was not until after the imprisonment of Diderot that the heat of blood, brought on by my journeys to Vincennes during the terrible heat of that summer, gave me a violent nephritic colic, since which I have never recovered my primitive good state of health.

At the time of which I speak, having perhaps fatigued myself too much in the filthy work of the cursed receiver−general's office, I fell into a worse state than ever, and remained five or six weeks in my bed in the most melancholy state imaginable. Madam Dupin sent me the celebrated Morand who, notwithstanding his address and the delicacy of his touch, made me suffer the greatest torments. He advised me to have recourse to Daran, who, in fact gave me some relief: but Morand, when he gave Madam Dupin an account of the state I was in, declared to her I should not be alive in six months. This afterwards came to my ear, and made me reflect seriously on my situation and the folly of sacrificing the repose of the few days I had to live to the slavery of an employment for which I felt nothing but disgust. Besides, how was it possible to reconcile the severe principles I had just adopted to a situation with which they had so little relation? Should not I, the cash−keeper of a receiver−general of finances, have preached poverty and disinterestedness with a very ill grace? These ideas fermented so powerfully in my mind with the fever, and were so strongly impressed, that from that time nothing could remove them; and, during my convalescence, I confirmed myself with the greatest coolness in the resolutions I had taken during my delirium. I forever abandoned all projects of fortune and advancement, resolved to pass in independence and poverty the little time I had to exist. I made every effort of which my mind was capable to break the fetters of prejudice, and courageously to do everything that was right without giving myself the least concern about the judgment of others. The obstacles I had to combat, and the efforts I made to triumph over them, are inconceivable. I succeeded as much as it was possible I should, and to a greater degree than I myself had hoped for. Had I at the same time shaken off the yoke of friendship as well as that of prejudice, my design would have been accomplished, perhaps the greatest, at least the most useful one to virtue, that mortal ever conceived; but whilst I despised the foolish judgments of the vulgar tribe called great and wise, I suffered myself to be influenced and led by persons who called themselves my friends. These, hurt at seeing me walk alone in a new path, while I seemed to take measures for my happiness, used all their endeavors to render me ridiculous, and that they might afterwards defame me, first strove to make me contemptible. It was less my literary fame than my personal reformation, of which I here state the period, that drew upon me their jealousy; they perhaps might have pardoned me for having distinguished myself in the art of writing; but they could never forgive my setting them, by my conduct, an example, which, in their eyes, seemed to reflect on themselves. I was born for friendship; my mind and easy disposition nourished it without difficulty. As long as I lived unknown to the public I was beloved by all my private acquaintance, and I had not a single enemy. But the moment I acquired literary fame, I had no longer a friend. This, was a great misfortune; but a still greater was that of being surrounded by people who called themselves my friends, and used the rights attached to that sacred name to lead me on to destruction. The succeeding part of these memoirs will explain this odious conspiracy. I here speak of its origin, and the manner of

the first intrigue will shortly appear.

In the independence in which I lived, it was, however, necessary to subsist. To this effect I thought of very simple means: which were copying music at so much a page. If any employment more solid would have fulfilled the same end I would have taken it up; but this occupation being to my taste, and the only one which, without personal attendance, could procure me daily bread, I adopted it. Thinking I had no longer need of foresight, and, stifling the vanity of cash−keeper to a financier, I made myself a copyist of music. I thought I had made an advantageous choice, and of this I so little repented, that I never quitted my new profession until I was forced to do it, after taking a fixed resolution to return to it as soon as possible.

The success of my first discourse rendered the execution of this resolution more easy. As soon as it had gained the premium, Diderot undertook to get it printed. Whilst I was in my bed, he wrote me a note informing me of the publication and effect: "It takes," said he, "beyond all imagination; never was there an instance of alike success."

This favor of the public, by no means solicited, and to an unknown author, gave me the first real assurance of my talents, of which, notwithstanding an internal sentiment, I had always had my doubts. I conceived the great advantage to be drawn from it in favor of the way of life I had determined to pursue; and was of opinion, that a copyist of some celebrity in the republic of letters was not likely to want employment.

The moment my resolution was confirmed, I wrote a note to M, de Francueil, communicating to him my intentions, thanking him and Madam Dupin for all goodness, and offering them my services in the way of my new profession. Francueil did not understand my note, and, thinking I was still in the delirium of fever, hastened to my apartment; but he found me so determined, that all he could say to me was without the least effect. He went to Madam Dupin, and told her and everybody he met, that I had become insane. I let him say what he pleased, and pursued the plan I had conceived. I began the change in my dress; I quitted laced clothes and white stockings; I put on a round wig, laid aside my sword, and sold my watch; saying to myself, with inexpressible pleasure: "Thank Heaven! I shall no longer want to know the hour!" M. de Francueil had the goodness to wait a considerable time before he disposed of my place. At length perceiving me inflexibly resolved, he gave it to M. d'Alibard, formerly tutor to the young Chenonceaux, and known as a botanist by his Flora Parisiensis.

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[I doubt not but these circumstances are now differently related by
M. Francueil and his consorts: but I appeal to what he said of them
at the time and long afterwards, to everybody he knew, until the
forming of the conspiracy, and of which men of common sense and
honor, must have preserved a remembrance.]
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However austere my sumptuary reform might be, I did not at first extend it to my linen, which was fine and in great quantity, the remainder of my stock when at Venice, and to which I was particularly attached. I had made it so much an object of cleanliness, that it became one of luxury, which was rather expensive. Some persons, however, did me the favor to deliver me from this servitude. On Christmas Eve, whilst the governesses were at vespers, and I was at the spiritual concert, the door of a garret, in which all our linen was hung up after being washed, was broken open. Everything was stolen; and amongst other things, forty−two of my shirts, of very fine linen, and which were the principal part of my stock. By the manner in which the neighbors described a man whom they had seen come out of the hotel with several parcels whilst we were all absent, Theresa and myself suspected her brother, whom we knew to be a worthless man. The mother strongly endeavored to remove this suspicion, but so many circumstances concurred to prove it to be well founded, that, notwithstanding all she could say, our opinions remained still the same: I dared not make a strict search for fear of finding more than I wished to do. The brother never returned to the place where I lived, and, at length, was no more heard of by any of us. I was much grieved Theresa and myself should be connected with such a family, and I exhorted her more than ever to shake off so dangerous a yoke. This adventure cured me of my inclination for fine linen, and since that time all I have had has been very common, and more suitable to the rest of my dress.

Having thus completed the change of that which related to my person, all my cares tendered to render it solid and lasting, by striving to root out from my heart everything susceptible of receiving an impression from the judgment of men, or which, from the fear of blame, might turn me aside from anything good and reasonable in itself. In consequence of the success of my work, my resolution made some noise in the world also, and procured me employment; so that I began my new profession with great appearance of success. However, several causes prevented me from succeeding in it to the same degree I should under any other circumstances have done. In the first place my ill state of health. The attack I had just had, brought on consequences which prevented my ever being so well as I was before; and I am of opinion, the physicians, to whose care I intrusted myself, did me as much harm as my illness. I was successively under the hands of Morand, Daran, Helvetius, Malouin, and Thyerri: men able in their profession, and all of them my friends, who treated me each according to his own manner, without giving me the least relief, and weakened me considerably. The more I submitted to their direction, the yellower, thinner, and weaker I became. My imagination, which they terrified, judging of my situation by the effect of their drugs, presented to me, on this side of the tomb, nothing but continued sufferings from the gravel, stone, and retention of urine. Everything which gave relief to others, ptisans, baths, and bleeding, increased my tortures. Perceiving the bougees of Daran, the only ones that had any favorable effect, and without which I thought I could no longer exist, to give me a momentary relief, I procured a prodigious number of them, that, in case of Daran's death, I might never be at a loss. During the eight or ten years in which I made such frequent use of these, they must, with what I had left, have cost me fifty louis.

It will easily be judged, that such expensive and painful means did not permit me to work without interruption; and that a dying man is not ardently industrious in the business by which he gains his daily bread.

Literary occupations caused another interruption not less prejudicial to my daily employment. My discourse had no sooner appeared than the defenders of letters fell upon me as if they had agreed with each to do it. My indignation was so raised at seeing so many blockheads, who did not understand the question, attempt to decide upon it imperiously, that in my answer I gave some of them the worst of it. One M. Gautier, of Nancy, the first who fell under the lash of my pen, was very roughly treated in a letter to M. Grimm. The second was King Stanislaus, himself, who did not disdain to enter the lists with me. The honor he did me, obliged me to change my manner in combating his opinions; I made use of a graver style, but not less nervous; and without failing in respect to the author, I completely refuted his work. I knew a Jesuit, Father de Menou, had been concerned in it. I depended on my judgment to distinguish what was written by the prince, from the production of the monk, and falling without mercy upon all the jesuitical phrases, I remarked, as I went along, an anachronism which I thought could come from nobody but the priest. This composition, which, for what reason I knew not, has been less spoken of than any of my other writings, is the only one of its kind. I seized the opportunity which offered of showing to the public in what manner an individual may defend the cause of truth even against a sovereign. It is difficult to adopt a more dignified and respectful manner than that in which I answered him. I had the happiness to have to do with an adversary to whom, without adulation, I could show every mark of the esteem of which my heart was full; and this I did with success and a proper dignity. My friends, concerned for my safety, imagined they already saw me in the Bastile. This apprehension never once entered my head, and I was right in not being afraid. The good prince, after reading my answer, said: "I have enough of at; I will not return to the charge." I have, since that time received from him different marks of esteem and benevolence, some of which I shall have occasion to speak of; and what I had written was read in France, and throughout Europe, without meeting the least censure.

In a little time I had another adversary whom I had not expected; this was the same M. Bordes, of Lyons, who ten years before had shown me much friendship, and from whom I had received several services. I had not forgotten him, but had neglected him from idleness, and had not sent him my writings for want of an opportunity, without seeking for it, to get them conveyed to his hands. I was therefore in the wrong, and he attacked me; this, however, he did politely, and I answered in the same manner. He replied more decidedly. This produced my last answer; after which I heard no more from him upon the subject; but he became my most violent enemy, took the advantage of the time of my misfortunes, to publish against me the most indecent libels, and made a journey to

London on purpose to do me an injury.

All this controversy employed me a good deal, and caused me a great loss of my time in my copying, without much contributing to the progress of truth, or the good of my purse. Pissot, at that time my bookseller, gave me but little for my pamphlets, frequently nothing at all, and I never received a farthing for my first discourse. Diderot gave it him. I was obliged to wait a long time for the little he gave me, and to take it from him in the most trifling sums. Notwithstanding this, my copying went on but slowly. I had two things together upon my hands, which was the most likely means of doing them both ill.

They were very opposite to each other in their effects by the different manners of living to which they rendered me subject. The success of my first writings had given me celebrity. My new situation excited curiosity. Everybody wished to know that whimsical man who sought not the acquaintance of any one, and whose only desire was to live free and happy in the manner he had chosen; this was sufficient to make the thing impossible to me. My apartment was continually full of people, who, under different pretences, came to take up my time. The women employed a thousand artifices to engage me to dinner. The more unpolite I was with people, the more obstinate they became. I could not refuse everybody. While I made myself a thousand enemies by my refusals, I was incessantly a slave to my complaisance, and, in whatever manner I made my engagements, I had not an hour in a day to myself.

I then perceived it was not so easy to be poor and independent, as I had imagined. I wished to live by my profession: the public would not suffer me to do it. A thousand means were thought of to indemnify me for the time I lost. The next thing would have been showing myself like Punch, at so much each person. I knew no dependence more cruel and degrading than this. I saw no other method of putting an end to it than refusing all kinds of presents, great and small, let them come from whom they would. This had no other effect than to increase the number of givers, who wished to have the honor of overcoming my resistance, and to force me, in spite of myself, to be under an obligation to them.

Many, who would not have given me half−a−crown had I asked it from them, incessantly importuned me with their offers, and, in revenge for my refusal, taxed me with arrogance and ostentation.

It will naturally be conceived that the resolutions I had taken, and the system I wished to follow, were not agreeable to Madam le Vasseur. All the disinterestedness of the daughter did not prevent her from following the directions of her mother; and the governesses, as Gauffecourt called them, were not always so steady in their refusals as I was. Although many things were concealed from me, I perceived so many as were necessary to enable me to judge that I did not see all, and this tormented me less by the accusation of connivance, which it was so easy for me to foresee, than by the cruel idea of never being master in my own apartments, nor even of my own person. I prayed, conjured, and became angry, all to no purpose; the mother made me pass for an eternal grumbler, and a man who was peevish and ungovernable. She held perpetual whisperings with my friends; everything in my little family was mysterious and a secret to me; and, that I might not incessantly expose myself to noisy quarrelling, I no longer dared to take notice of what passed in it. A firmness of which I was not capable, would have been necessary to withdraw me from this domestic strife. I knew how to complain, but not how to act: they suffered me to say what I pleased, and continued to act as they thought proper.

This constant teasing, and the daily importunities to which I was subject, rendered the house, and my residence at Paris, disagreeable to me. When my indisposition permitted me to go out, and I did not suffer myself to be led by my acquaintance first to one place and then to another, I took a walk, alone, and reflected on my grand system, something of which I committed to paper, bound up between two covers, which, with a pencil, I always had in my pocket. In this manner, the unforeseen disagreeableness of a situation I had chosen entirely led me back to literature, to which unsuspectedly I had recourse as a means of releaving my mind, and thus, in the first works I wrote, I introduced the peevishness and ill−humor which were the cause of my undertaking them. There was another circumstance which contributed not a little to this; thrown into the world despite of myself, without

having the manners of it, or being in a situation to adopt and conform myself to them, I took it into my head to adopt others of my own, to enable me to dispense with those of society. My foolish timidity, which I could not conquer, having for principle the fear of being wanting in the common forms, I took, by way of encouraging myself, a resolution to tread them under foot. I became sour and cynic from shame, and affected to despise the politeness which I knew not how to practice. This austerity, conformable to my new principles, I must confess, seemed to ennoble itself in my mind; it assumed in my eyes the form of the intrepidity of virtue, and I dare assert it to be upon this noble basis, that it supported itself longer and better than could have been expected from anything so contrary to my nature. Yet, not withstanding, I had the name of a misanthrope, which my exterior appearance and some happy expressions had given me in the world: it is certain I did not support the character well in private, that my friends and acquaintance led this untractable bear about like a lamb, and that, confining my sarcasms to severe but general truths, I was never capable of saying an uncivil thing to any person whatsoever.

The 'Devin du Village' brought me completely into vogue, and presently after there was not a man in Paris whose company was more sought after than mine. The history of this piece, which is a kind of era in my life, is joined with that of the connections I had at that time. I must enter a little into particulars to make what is to follow the better understood.

I had a numerous acquaintance, yet no more than two friends: Diderot and Grimm. By an effect of the desire I have ever felt to unite everything that is dear to me, I was too much a friend to both not to make them shortly become so to each other. I connected them: they agreed well together, and shortly become more intimate with each other than with me. Diderot had a numerous acquaintance, but Grimm, a stranger and a new− comer, had his to procure, and with the greatest pleasure I procured him all I could. I had already given him Diderot. I afterwards brought him acquainted with Gauffecourt. I introduced him to Madam Chenonceaux, Madam D'Epinay, and the Baron d'Holbach; with whom I had become connected almost in spite of myself. All my friends became his: this was natural: but not one of his ever became mine; which was inclining to the contrary. Whilst he yet lodged at the house of the Comte de Friese, he frequently gave us dinners in his apartment, but I never received the least mark of friendship from the Comte de Friese, Comte de Schomberg, his relation, very familiar with Grimm, nor from any other person, man or woman, with whom Grimm, by their means, had any connection. I except the Abbe Raynal, who, although his friend, gave proofs of his being mine; and in cases of need, offered me his purse with a generosity not very common. But I knew the Abbe Raynal long before Grimm had any acquaintance with him, and had entertained a great regard for him on account of his delicate and honorable behavior to me upon a slight occasion, which I shall never forget.

The Abbe Raynal is certainly a warm friend; of this I saw a proof, much about the time of which I speak, with respect to Grimm himself, with whom he was very intimate. Grimm, after having been sometime on a footing of friendship with Mademoiselle Fel, fell violently in love with her, and wished to supplant Cahusac. The young lady, piquing herself on her constancy, refused her new admirer. He took this so much to heart, that the appearance of his affliction became tragical. He suddenly fell into the strangest state imaginable. He passed days and nights in a continued lethargy. He lay with his eyes open; and although his pulse continued to beat regularly, without speaking eating, or stirring, yet sometimes seeming to hear what was said to him, but never answering, not even by a sign, and remaining almost as immovable as if he had been dead, yet without agitation, pain, or fever. The Abbe Raynal and myself watched over him; the abbe, more robust, and in better health than I was, by night, and I by day, without ever both being absent at one time. The Comte de Friese was alarmed, and brought to him Senac, who, after having examined the state in which he was, said there was nothing to apprehend, and took his leave without giving a prescription. My fears for my friend made me carefully observe the countenance of the physician, and I perceived him smile as he went away. However, the patient remained several days almost motionless, without taking anything except a few preserved cherries, which from time to time I put upon his tongue, and which he swallowed without difficulty. At length he, one morning, rose, dressed himself, and returned to his usual way of life, without either at that time or afterwards speaking to me or the Abbe Raynal, at least that I know of, or to any other person, of this singular lethargy, or the care we had taken of him during the time it lasted.

The affair made a noise, and it would really have been a wonderful circumstance had the cruelty of an opera girl made a man die of despair. This strong passion brought Grimm into vogue; he was soon considered as a prodigy in love, friendship, and attachments of every kind. Such an opinion made his company sought after, and procured him a good reception in the first circles; by which means he separated from me, with whom he was never inclined to associate when he could do it with anybody else. I perceived him to be on the point of breaking with me entirely; for the lively and ardent sentiments, of which he made a parade, were those which with less noise and pretensions, I had really conceived for him. I was glad he succeeded in the world; but I did not wish him to do this by forgetting his friend. I one day said to him: "Grimm, you neglect me, and I forgive you for it. When the first intoxication of your success is over, and you begin to perceive a void in your enjoyments, I hope you will return to your friend, whom you will always find in the same sentiments; at present do not constrain yourself, I leave you at liberty to act as you please, and wait your leisure." He said I was right, made his arrangements in consequence, and shook off all restraint, so that I saw no more of him except in company with our common friends.

Our chief rendezvous, before he was connected with Madam d'Epinay as he afterwards became, was at the house of Baron d'Holbach. This said baron was the son of a man who had raised himself from obscurity. His fortune was considerable, and he used it nobly, receiving at his house men of letters and merit: and, by the knowledge he himself had acquired, was very worthy of holding a place amongst them. Having been long attached to Diderot, he endeavored to become acquainted with me by his means, even before my name was known to the world. A natural repugnancy prevented me a long time from answering his advances. One day, when he asked me the reason of my unwillingness, I told him he was too rich. He was, however, resolved to carry his point, and at length succeeded. My greatest misfortune proceeded from my being unable to resist the force of marked attention. I have ever had reason to repent of having yielded to it.

Another acquaintance which, as soon as I had any pretensions to it, was converted into friendship, was that of M. Duclos. I had several years before seen him, for the first time, at the Chevrette, at the house of Madam d'Epinay, with whom he was upon very good terms. On that day we only dined together, and he returned to town in the afternoon. But we had a conversation of a few moments after dinner. Madam d'Epinay had mentioned me to him, and my opera of the 'Muses Gallantes'. Duclos, endowed with too great talents not to be a friend to those in whom the like were found, was prepossessed in my favor, and invited me to go and see him. Notwithstanding my former wish, increased by an acquaintance, I was withheld by my timidity and indolence, as long as I had no other passport to him than his complaisance. But encouraged by my first success, and by his eulogiums, which reached my ears, I went to see him; he returned my visit, and thus began the connection between us, which will ever render him dear to me. By him, as well as from the testimony of my own heart, I learned that uprightness and probity may sometimes be connected with the cultivation of letters.

Many other connections less solid, and which I shall not here particularize, were the effects of my first success, and lasted until curiosity was satisfied. I was a man so easily known, that on the next day nothing new was to be discovered in me. However, a woman, who at that time was desirous of my acquaintance, became much more solidly attached to me than any of those whose curiosity I had excited: this was the Marchioness of Crequi, niece to M. le Bailli de Froulay, ambassador from Malta, whose brother had preceded M. de Montaigu in the embassy to Venice, and whom I had gone to see on my return from that city. Madam de Crequi wrote to me: I visited her: she received me into her friendship. I sometimes dined with her. I met at her table several men of letters, amongst others M. Saurin, the author of Spartacus, Barnevelt, etc., since become my implacable enemy; for no other reason, at least that I can imagine, than my bearing the name of a man whom his father has cruelly persecuted.

It will appear that for a copyist, who ought to be employed in his business from morning till night, I had many interruptions, which rendered my days not very lucrative, and prevented me from being sufficiently attentive to what I did to do it well; for which reason, half the time I had to myself was lost in erasing errors or beginning my sheet anew. This daily importunity rendered Paris more unsupportable, and made me ardently wish to be in the country. I several times went to pass a few days at Mercoussis, the vicar of which was known to Madam le

Vasseur, and with whom we all arranged ourselves in such a manner as not to make things disagreeable to him. Grimm once went thither with us.

> [Since I have neglected to relate here a trifling, but memorable adventure I had with the said Grimm one day, on which we were to dine at the fountain of St. Vandrille, I will let it pass: but when I thought of it afterwards, I concluded that he was brooding in his heart the conspiracy he has, with so much success, since carried into execution.]

The vicar had a tolerable voice, sung well, and, although he did not read music, learned his part with great facility and precision. We passed our time in singing the trios I had composed at Chenonceaux. To these I added two or three new ones, to the words Grimm and the vicar wrote, well or ill. I cannot refrain from regretting these trios composed and sung in moments of pure joy, and which I left at Wootton, with all my music. Mademoiselle Davenport has perhaps curled her hair with them; but they are worthy of being preserved, and are, for the most part, of very good counterpoint. It was after one of these little excursions in which I had the pleasure of seeing the aunt at her ease and very cheerful, and in which my spirits were much enlivened, that I wrote to the vicar very rapidly and very ill, an epistle in verse which will be found amongst my papers.

I had nearer to Paris another station much to my liking with M. Mussard, my countryman, relation and friend, who at Passy had made himself a charming retreat, where I have passed some very peaceful moments. M. Mussard was a jeweller, a man of good sense, who, after having acquired a genteel fortune, had given his only daughter in marriage to M. de Valmalette, the son of an exchange broker, and maitre d'hotel to the king, took the wise resolution to quit business in his declining years, and to place an interval of repose and enjoyment between the hurry and the end of life. The good man Mussard, a real philosopher in practice, lived without care, in a very pleasant house which he himself had built in a very pretty garden, laid out with his own hands. In digging the terraces of this garden he found fossil shells, and in such great quantities that his lively imagination saw nothing but shells in nature. He really thought the universe was composed of shells and the remains of shells, and that the whole earth was only the sand of these in different stratae. His attention thus constantly engaged with his singular discoveries, his imagination became so heated with the ideas they gave him, that, in his head, they would soon have been converted into a system, that is into folly, if, happily for his reason, but unfortunately for his friends, to whom he was dear, and to whom his house was an agreeable asylum, a most cruel and extraordinary disease had not put an end to his existence. A constantly increasing tumor in his stomach prevented him from eating, long before the cause of it was discovered, and, after several years of suffering, absolutely occasioned him to die of hunger. I can never, without the greatest affliction of mind, call to my recollection the last moments of this worthy man, who still received with so much pleasure, Leneips and myself, the only friends whom the sight of his sufferings did not separate from him until his last hour, when he was reduced to devouring with his eyes the repasts he had placed before us, scarcely having the power of swallowing a few drops of weak tea, which came up again a moment afterwards. But before these days of sorrow, how many have I passed at his house, with the chosen friends he had made himself! At the head of the list I place the Abbe Prevot, a very amiable man, and very sincere, whose heart vivified his writings, worthy of immortality, and who, neither in his disposition nor in society, had the least of the melancholy coloring he gave to his works. Procope, the physician, a little Esop, a favorite with the ladies; Boulanger, the celebrated posthumous author of 'Despotisme Oriental', and who, I am of opinion extended the systems of Mussard on the duration of the world. The female part of his friends consisted of Madam Denis, niece to Voltaire, who, at that time, was nothing more than a good kind of woman, and pretended not to wit: Madam Vanloo, certainly not handsome, but charming, and who sang like an angel: Madam de Valmalette, herself, who sang also, and who, although very thin, would have been very amiable had she had fewer pretensions. Such, or very nearly such, was the society of M. Mussard, with which I should had been much pleased, had not his conchyliomania more engaged my attention; and I can say, with great truth, that, for upwards of six months, I worked with him in his cabinet with as much pleasure as he felt himself.

He had long insisted upon the virtue of the waters of Passy, that they were proper in my case, and recommended me to come to his house to drink them. To withdraw myself from the tumult of the city, I at length consented, and went to pass eight or ten days at Passy, which, on account of my being in the country, were of more service to me than the waters I drank during my stay there. Mussard played the violincello, and was passionately found of Italian music. This was the subject of a long conversation we had one evening after supper, particularly the 'opera− buffe' we had both seen in Italy, and with which we were highly delighted. My sleep having forsaken me in the night, I considered in what manner it would be possible to give in France an idea of this kind of drama. The 'Amours de Ragonde' did not in the least resemble it. In the morning, whilst I took my walk and drank the waters, I hastily threw together a few couplets to which I adapted such airs as occurred to me at the moments. I scribbled over what I had composed, in a kind of vaulted saloon at the end of the garden, and at tea. I could not refrain from showing the airs to Mussard and to Mademoiselle du Vernois, his 'gouvernante', who was a very good and amiable girl. Three pieces of composition I had sketched out were the first monologue: 'J'ai perdu mon serviteur;'—the air of the Devin; 'L'amour croit s'il s'inquiete;' and the last duo: 'A jamais, Colin, je t'engage, etc.' I was so far from thinking it worth while to continue what I had begun, that, had it not been for the applause and encouragement I received from both Mussard and Mademoiselle, I should have throw n my papers into the fire and thought no more of their contents, as I had frequently done by things of much the same merit; but I was so animated by the encomiums I received, that in six days, my drama, excepting a few couplets, was written. The music also was so far sketched out, that all I had further to do to it after my return from Paris, was to compose a little of the recitative, and to add the middle parts, the whole of which I finished with so much rapidity, that in three weeks my work was ready for representation. The only thing now wanting, was the divertissement, which was not composed until a long time afterwards.

My imagination was so warmed by the composition of this work that I had the strongest desire to hear it performed, and would have given anything to have seen and heard the whole in the manner I should have chosen, which would have been that of Lully, who is said to have had 'Armide' performed for himself only. As it was not possible I should hear the performance unaccompanied by the public, I could not see the effect of my piece without getting it received at the opera. Unfortunately it was quite a new species of composition, to which the ears of the public were not accustomed; and besides the ill success of the 'Muses Gallantes' gave too much reason to fear for the Devin, if I presented it in my own name. Duclos relieved me from this difficulty, and engaged to get the piece rehearsed without mentioning the author. That I might not discover myself, I did not go to the rehearsal, and the 'Petits violons',

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[Rebel and Frauneur, who, when they were very young, went together
from house to house playing on the violin, were so called.]
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by whom it was directed, knew not who the author was until after a general plaudit had borne the testimony of the work. Everybody present was so delighted with it, that, on the next day, nothing else was spoken of in the different companies. M. de Cury, Intendant des Menus, who was present at the rehearsal, demanded the piece to have it performed at court. Duclos, who knew my intentions, and thought I should be less master of my work at the court than at Paris, refused to give it. Cury claimed it authoratively. Duclos persisted in his refusal, and the dispute between them was carried to such a length, that one day they would have gone out from the opera−house together had they not been separated. M. de Cury applied to me, and I referred him to Duclos. This made it necessary to return to the latter. The Duke d'Aumont interfered; and at length Duclos thought proper to yield to authority, and the piece was given to be played at Fontainebleau.

The part to which I had been most attentive, and in which I had kept at the greatest distance from the common track, was the recitative. Mine was accented in a manner entirely new, and accompanied the utterance of the word. The directors dared not suffer this horrid innovation to pass, lest it should shock the ears of persons who never judge for themselves. Another recitative was proposed by Francueil and Jelyotte, to which I consented; but refused at the same time to have anything to do with it myself.

When everything was ready and the day of performance fixed, a proposition was made me to go to Fontainebleau, that I might at least be at the last rehearsal. I went with Mademoiselle Fel, Grimm, and I think the Abbe Raynal, in one of the stages to the court. The rehearsal was tolerable: I was more satisfied with it than I expected to have been. The orchestra was numerous, composed of the orchestras of the opera and the king's band. Jelyotte played Colin, Mademoiselle Fel, Colette, Cuvillier the Devin: the choruses were those of the opera. I said but little; Jelyotte had prepared everything; I was unwilling either to approve of or censure what he had done; and notwithstanding I had assumed the air of an old Roman, I was, in the midst of so many people, as bashful as a schoolboy.

The next morning, the day of performance, I went to breakfast at the coffee−house 'du grand commun', where I found a great number of people. The rehearsal of the preceding evening, and the difficulty of getting into the theatre, were the subjects of conversation. An officer present said he entered with the greatest ease, gave a long account of what had passed, described the author, and related what he had said and done; but what astonished me most in this long narrative, given with as much assurance as simplicity, was that it did not contain a syllable of truth. It was clear to me that he who spoke so positively of the rehearsal had not been at it, because, without knowing him, he had before his eyes that author whom he said he had seen and examined so minutely. However, what was more singular still in this scene, was its effect upon me. The officer was a man rather in years, he had nothing of the appearance of a coxcomb; his features appeared to announce a man of merit; and his cross of Saint Louis, an officer of long standing. He interested me: notwithstanding his impudence. Whilst he uttered his lies, I blushed, looked down, and was upon thorns; I, for some time, endeavored within myself to find the means of believing him to be in an involuntary error. At length, trembling lest some person should know me, and by this means confound him, I hastily drank my chocolate, without saying a word, and, holding down my head, I passed before him, got out of the coffee−house as soon as possible, whilst the company were making their remarks upon the relation that had been given. I was no sooner in the street than I was in a perspiration, and had anybody known and named me before I left the room, I am certain all the shame and embarrassment of a guilty person would have appeared in my countenance, proceeding from what I felt the poor man would have had to have suffered had his lie been discovered.

I come to one of the critical moments of my life, in which it is difficult to do anything more than to relate, because it is almost impossible that even narrative should not carry with it the marks of censure or apology. I will, however, endeavor to relate how and upon what motives I acted, with out adding either approbation or censure.

I was on that day in the same careless undress as usual, with a long beard and wig badly combed. Considering this want of decency as an act of courage, I entered the theatre wherein the king, queen, the royal family, and the whole court were to enter immediately after. I was conducted to a box by M. de Cury, and which belonged to him. It was very spacious, upon the stage and opposite to a lesser, but more elevated one, in which the king sat with Madam de Pompadour.

As I was surrounded by women, and the only man in front of the box, I had no doubt of my having been placed there purposely to be exposed to view. As soon as the theatre was lighted up, finding I was in the midst of people all extremely well dressed, I began to be less at my ease, and asked myself if I was in my place? whether or not I was properly dressed? After a few minutes of inquietude: "Yes," replied I, with an intrepidity which perhaps proceeded more from the impossibility of retracting than the force of all my reasoning, "I am in my place, because I am going to see my own piece performed, to which I have been invited, for which reason only I am come here; and after all, no person has a greater right than I have to reap the fruit of my labor and talents; I am dressed as usual, neither better nor worse; and if I once begin to subject myself to public opinion, I shall shortly become a slave to it in everything. To be always consistent with myself, I ought not to blush, in any place whatever, at being dressed in a manner suitable to the state I have chosen. My exterior appearance is simple, but neither dirty nor slovenly; nor is a beard either of these in itself, because it is given us by nature, and according to time, place and custom, is sometimes an ornament. People think I am ridiculous, nay, even absurd; but what signifies this to me? I ought to know how to bear censure and ridicule, provided I do not deserve them. "After this little soliloquy I

became so firm that, had it been necessary, I could have been intrepid. But whether it was the effect of the presence of his majesty, or the natural disposition of those about me, I perceived nothing but what was civil and obliging in the curiosity of which I was the object. This so much affected me that I began to be uneasy for myself, and the fate of my piece; fearing I should efface the favorable prejudices which seemed to lead to nothing but applause. I was armed against raillery; but, so far overcome, by the flattering and obliging treatment I had not expected, that I trembled like a child when the performance was begun.

I had soon sufficient reason to be encouraged. The piece was very ill played with respect to the actors, but the musical part was well sung and executed. During the first scene, which was really of a delightful simplicity, I heard in the boxes a murmur of surprise and applause, which, relative to pieces of the same kind, had never yet happened. The fermentation was soon increased to such a degree as to be perceptible through the whole audience, and of which, to speak—after the manner of Montesquieu—the effect was augmented by itself. In the scene between the two good little folks, this effect was complete. There is no clapping of hands before the king; therefore everything was heard, which was advantageous to the author and the piece. I heard about me a whispering of women, who appeared as beautiful as angels. They said to each other in a low voice: "This is charming: That is ravishing: There is not a sound which does not go to the heart." The pleasure of giving this emotion to so many amiable persons moved me to tears; and these I could not contain in the first duo, when I remarked that I was not the only person who wept. I collected myself for a moment, on recollecting the concert of M. de Treitorens. This reminiscence had the effect of the slave who held the crown over the head of the general who triumphed, but my reflection was short, and I soon abandoned myself without interruption to the pleasure of enjoying my success. However, I am certain the voluptuousness of the sex was more predominant than the vanity of the author, and had none but men been present, I certainly should not have had the incessant desire I felt of catching on my lips the delicious tears I had caused to flow. I have known pieces excite more lively admiration, but I never saw so complete, delightful, and affecting an intoxication of the senses reign, during a whole representation, especially at court, and at a first performance. They who saw this must recollect it, for it has never yet been equalled.

The same evening the Duke d' Aumont sent to desire me to be at the palace the next day at eleven o'clock, when he would present me to the king. M. de Cury, who delivered me the message, added that he thought a pension was intended, and that his majesty wished to announce it to me himself. Will it be believed that the night of so brilliant a day was for me a night of anguish and perplexity? My first idea, after that of being presented, was that of my frequently wanting to retire; this had made me suffer very considerably at the theatre, and might torment me the next day when I should be in the gallery, or in the king's apartment, amongst all the great, waiting for the passing of his majesty. My infirmity was the principal cause which prevented me from mixing in polite companies, and enjoying the conversation of the fair. The idea alone of the situation in which this want might place me, was sufficient to produce it to such a degree as to make me faint away, or to recur to means to which, in my opinion, death was much preferable. None but persons who are acquainted with this situation can judge of the horror which being exposed to the risk of it inspires.

I then supposed myself before the king, presented to his majesty, who deigned to stop and speak to me. In this situation, justness of expression and presence of mind were peculiarly necessary in answering. Would my timidity which disconcerts me in presence of any stranger whatever, have been shaken off in presence of the King of France; or would it have suffered me instantly to make choice of proper expressions? I wished, without laying aside the austere manner I had adopted, to show myself sensible of the honor done me by so great a monarch, and in a handsome and merited eulogium to convey some great and useful truth. I could not prepare a suitable answer without exactly knowing what his majesty was to say to me; and had this been the case, I was certain that, in his presence, I should not recollect a word of what I had previously meditated. "What," said I, "will become of me in this moment, and before the whole court, if, in my confusion, any of my stupid expressions should escape me?" This danger alarmed and terrified me. I trembled to such a degree that at all events I was determined not to expose myself to it.

I lost, it is true, the pension which in some measure was offered me; but I at the same time exempted myself from the yoke it would have imposed. Adieu, truth, liberty, and courage! How should I afterwards have dared to speak of disinterestedness and independence? Had I received the pension I must either have become a flatterer or remained silent; and, moreover, who would have insured to me the payment of it! What steps should I have been under the necessity of taking! How many people must I have solicited! I should have had more trouble and anxious cares in preserving than in doing without it. Therefore, I thought I acted according to my principles by refusing, and sacrificing appearances to reality. I communicated my resolution to Grimm, who said nothing against it. To others I alleged my ill state of health, and left the court in the morning.

My departure made some noise, and was generally condemned. My reasons could not be known to everybody, it was therefore easy to accuse me of foolish pride, and thus not irritate the jealousy of such as felt they would not have acted as I had done. The next day Jelyotte wrote me a note, in which he stated the success of my piece, and the pleasure it had afforded the king. "All day long," said he, "his majesty sings, with the worst voice in his kingdom: 'J'ai perdu mon serviteur: J'ai perdu tout mon bonheur.'" He likewise added, that in a fortnight the Devin was to be performed a second time; which confirmed in the eyes of the public the complete success of the first.

Two days afterwards, about nine o'clock in the evening, as I was going to sup with Madam D'Epinay, I perceived a hackney−coach pass by the door. Somebody within made a sign to me to approach. I did so, and got into it, and found the person to be Diderot. He spoke of the pension with more warmth than, upon such a subject, I should have expected from a philosopher. He did not blame me for having been unwilling to be presented to the king, but severely reproached me with my indifference about the pension. He observed that although on my own account I might be disinterested, I ought not to be so on that of Madam Vasseur and her daughter; that it was my duty to seize every means of providing for their subsistence; and that as, after all, it could not be said I had refused the pension, he maintained I ought, since the king seemed disposed to grant it to me, to solicit and obtain it by one means or another. Although I was obliged to him for his good wishes, I could not relish his maxims, which produced a warm dispute, the first I ever had with him. All our disputes were of this kind, he prescribing to me what he pretended I ought to do, and I defending myself because I was of a different opinion.

It was late when we parted. I would have taken him to supper at Madam d' Epinay's, but he refused to go; and, notwithstanding all the efforts which at different times the desire of uniting those I love induced me to make, to prevail upon him to see her, even that of conducting her to his door which he kept shut against us, he constantly refused to do it, and never spoke of her but with the utmost contempt. It was not until after I had quarrelled with both that they became acquainted and that he began to speak honorably of her.

From this time Diderot and Grimm seemed to have undertaken to alienate from me the governesses, by giving them to understand that if they were not in easy circumstances the fault was my own, and that they never would be so with me. They endeavored to prevail on them to leave me, promising them the privilege for retailing salt, a snuff shop, and I know not what other advantages by means of the influence of Madam d' Epinay. They likewise wished to gain over Duclos and d'Holback, but the former constantly refused their proposals. I had at the time some intimation of what was going forward, but I was not fully acquainted with the whole until long afterwards; and I frequently had reason to lament the effects of the blind and indiscreet zeal of my friends, who, in my ill state of health, striving to reduce me to the most melancholy solitude, endeavored, as they imagined, to render me happy by the means which, of all others, were the most proper to make me miserable.

In the carnival following the conclusion of the year 1753, the Devin was performed at Paris, and in this interval I had sufficient time to compose the overture and divertissement. This divertissement, such as it stands engraved, was to be in action from the beginning to the end, and in a continued subject, which in my opinion, afforded very agreeable representations. But when I proposed this idea at the opera−house, nobody would so much as hearken to me, and I was obliged to tack together music and dances in the usual manner: on this account the divertissement, although full of charming ideas which do not diminish the beauty of scenes, succeeded but very middlingly. I suppressed the recitative of Jelyotte, and substituted my own, such as I had first composed it, and as it is now

engraved; and this recitative a little after the French manner, I confess, drawled out, instead of pronounced by the actors, far from shocking the ears of any person, equally succeeded with the airs, and seemed in the judgment of the public to possess as much musical merit. I dedicated my piece to Duclos, who had given it his protection, and declared it should be my only dedication. I have, however, with his consent, written a second; but he must have thought himself more honored by the exception, than if I had not written a dedication to any person.

I could relate many anecdotes concerning this piece, but things of greater importance prevent me from entering into a detail of them at present. I shall perhaps resume the subject in a supplement. There is however one which I cannot omit, as it relates to the greater part of what is to follow. I one day examined the music of D'Holbach, in his closet. After having looked over many different kinds, he said, showing me a collection of pieces for the harpsichord: "These were composed for me; they are full of taste and harmony, and unknown to everybody but myself. You ought to make a selection from them for your divertissement." Having in my head more subjects of airs and symphonies than I could make use of, I was not the least anxious to have any of his. However, he pressed me so much, that, from a motive of complaisance, I chose a Pastoral, which I abridged and converted into a trio, for the entry of the companions of Colette. Some months afterwards, and whilst the Devin still continued to be performed, going into Grimms I found several people about his harpsichord, whence he hastily rose on my arrival. As I accidently looked toward his music stand, I there saw the same collection of the Baron d'Holback, opened precisely at the piece he had prevailed upon me to take, assuring me at the same time that it should never go out of his hands. Some time afterwards, I again saw the collection open on the harpischord of M. d'Papinay, one day when he gave a little concert. Neither Grimm, nor anybody else, ever spoke to me of the air, and my reason for mentioning it here is that some time afterwards, a rumor was spread that I was not the author of Devin. As I never made a great progress in the practical part, I am persuaded that had it not been for my dictionary of music, it would in the end have been said I did not understand composition.

Sometime before the 'Devin du Village' was performed, a company of Italian Bouffons had arrived at Paris, and were ordered to perform at the opera−house, without the effect they would produce there being foreseen. Although they were detestable, and the orchestra, at that time very ignorant, mutilated at will the pieces they gave, they did the French opera an injury that will never be repaired. The comparison of these two kinds of music, heard the same evening in the same theatre, opened the ears of the French; nobody could endure their languid music after the marked and lively accents of Italian composition; and the moment the Bouffons had done, everybody went away. The managers were obliged to change the order of representation, and let the performance of the Bouffons be the last. 'Egle Pigmalion' and 'le Sylphe' were successively given: nothing could bear the comparison. The 'Devin du Village' was the only piece that did it, and this was still relished after 'la Serva Padroma'. When I composed my interlude, my head was filled with these pieces, and they gave me the first idea of it: I was, however, far from imagining they would one day be passed in review by the side of my composition. Had I been a plagiarist, how many pilferings would have been manifest, and what care would have been taken to point them out to the public! But I had done nothing of the kind. All attempts to discover any such thing were fruitless: nothing was found in my music which led to the recollection of that of any other person; and my whole composition compared with the pretended original, was found to be as new as the musical characters I had invented. Had Mondonville or Rameau undergone the same ordeal, they would have lost much of their substance.

The Bouffons acquired for Italian music very warm partisans. All Paris was divided into two parties, the violence of which was greater than if an affair of state or religion had been in question. One of them, the most powerful and numerous, composed of the great, of men of fortune, and the ladies, supported French music; the other, more lively and haughty, and fuller of enthusiasm, was composed of real connoisseurs, and men of talents, and genius. This little group assembled at the opera−house, under the box belonging to the queen. The other party filled up the rest of the pit and the theatre; but the heads were mostly assembled under the box of his majesty. Hence the party names of Coin du Roi, Coin de la Reine,—[King's corner,—Queen's corner.]— then in great celebrity. The dispute, as it became more animated, produced several pamphlets. The king's corner aimed at pleasantry; it was laughed at by the 'Petit Prophete'. It attempted to reason; the 'Lettre sur la Musique Francoise' refuted its reasoning. These two little productions, the former of which was by Grimm, the latter by myself, are the only ones

which have outlived the quarrel; all the rest are long since forgotten.

But the Petit Prophete, which, notwithstanding all I could say, was for a long time attributed to me, was considered as a pleasantry, and did not produce the least inconvenience to the author: whereas the letter on music was taken seriously, and incensed against me the whole nation, which thought itself offended by this attack on its music. The description of the incredible effect of this pamphlet would be worthy of the pen of Tacitus. The great quarrel between the parliament and the clergy was then at its height. The parliament had just been exiled; the fermentation was general; everything announced an approaching insurrection. The pamphlet appeared: from that moment every other quarrel was forgotten; the perilous state of French music was the only thing by which the attention of the public was engaged, and the only insurrection was against myself. This was so general that it has never since been totally calmed. At court, the bastile or banishment was absolutely determined on, and a 'lettre de cachet' would have been issued had not M. de Voyer set forth in the most forcible manner that such a step would be ridiculous. Were I to say this pamphlet probably prevented a revolution, the reader would imagine I was in a dream. It is, however, a fact, the truth of which all Paris can attest, it being no more than fifteen years since the date of this singular fact. Although no attempts were made on my liberty, I suffered numerous insults; and even my life was in danger. The musicians of the opera orchestra humanely resolved to murder me as I went out of the theatre. Of this I received information; but the only effect it produced on me was to make me more assiduously attend the opera; and I did not learn, until a considerable time afterwards, that M. Ancelot, officer in the mousquetaires, and who had a friendship for me, had prevented the effect of this conspiracy by giving me an escort, which, unknown to myself, accompanied me until I was out of danger. The direction of the opera−house had just been given to the hotel de ville. The first exploit performed by the Prevot des Marchands, was to take from me my freedom of the theatre, and this in the most uncivil manner possible. Admission was publicly refused me on my presenting myself, so that I was obliged to take a ticket that I might not that evening have the mortification to return as I had come. This injustice was the more shameful, as the only price I had set on my piece when I gave it to the managers was a perpetual freedom of the house; for although this was a right, common to every author, and which I enjoyed under a double title, I expressly stipulated for it in presence of M. Duclos. It is true, the treasurer brought me fifty louis, for which I had not asked; but, besides the smallness of the sum, compared with that which, according to the rule, established in such cases, was due to me, this payment had nothing in common with the right of entry formerly granted, and which was entirely independent of it. There was in this behavior such a complication of iniquity and brutality, that the public, notwithstanding its animosity against me, which was then at its highest, was universally shocked at it, and many persons who insulted me the preceding evening, the next day exclaimed in the open theatre, that it was shameful thus to deprive an author of his right of entry; and particularly one who had so well deserved it, and was entitled to claim it for himself and another person. So true is the Italian proverb: Ogn' un ama la giustizia in cosa d altrui.—[Every one loves justice in the affairs of another.]

In this situation the only thing I had to do was to demand my work, since the price I had agreed to receive for it was refused me. For this purpose I wrote to M. d'Argenson, who had the department of the opera. I likewise enclosed to him a memoir which was unanswerable; but this, as well as my letter, was ineffectual, and I received no answer to either. The silence of that unjust man hurt me extremely, and did not contribute to increase the very moderate good opinion I always had of his character and abilities. It was in this manner the managers kept my piece while they deprived me of that for which I had given it them. From the weak to the strong, such an act would be a theft: from the strong to the weak, it is nothing more than an appropriation of property, without a right.

With respect to the pecuniary advantages of the work, although it did not produce me a fourth part of the sum it would have done to any other. person, they were considerable enough to enable me to subsist several years, and to make amends for the ill success of copying, which went on but very slowly. I received a hundred louis from the king; fifty from Madam de Pompadour, for the performance at Bellevue, where she herself played the part of Colin; fifty from the opera; and five hundred livres from Pissot, for the engraving; so that this interlude, which cost me no more than five or six weeks' application, produced, notwithstanding the ill treatment I received from the managers and my stupidity at court, almost as much money as my 'Emilius', which had cost me twenty years'

meditation, and three years' labor. But I paid dearly for the pecuniary ease I received from the piece, by the infinite vexations it brought upon me. It was the germ of the secret jealousies which did not appear until a long time afterwards. After its success I did not remark, either in Grimm, Diderot, or any of the men of letters, with whom I was acquainted, the same cordiality and frankness, nor that pleasure in seeing me, I had previously experienced. The moment I appeared at the baron's, the conversation was no longer general; the company divided into small parties; whispered into each other's ears; and I remained alone, without knowing to whom to address myself. I endured for a long time this mortifying neglect; and, perceiving that Madam d'Holbach, who was mild and amiable, still received me well, I bore with the vulgarity of her husband as long as it was possible. But he one day attacked me without reason or pretence, and with such brutality, in presence of Diderot, who said not a word, and Margency, who since that time has often told me how much he admired the moderation and mildness of my answers, that, at length driven from his house, by this unworthy treatment, I took leave with a resolution never to enter it again. This did not, however, prevent me from speaking honorably of him and his house, whilst he continually expressed himself relative to me in the most insulting terms, calling me that 'petit cuistre': the little college pedant, or servitor in a college, without, however, being able to charge me with having done either to himself or any person to whom he was attached the most trifling injury. In this manner he verified my fears and predictions, I am of opinion my pretended friends would have pardoned me for having written books, and even excellent ones, because this merit was not foreign to themselves; but that they could not forgive my writing an opera, nor the brilliant success it had; because there was not one amongst them capable of the same, nor in a situation to aspire to like honors. Duclos, the only person superior to jealousy, seemed to become more attached to me: he introduced me to Mademoiselle Quinault, in whose house I received polite attention, and civility to as great an extreme, as I had found a want of it in that of M. d'Holbach.

Whilst the performance of the 'Devin du Village' was continued at the opera−house, the author of it had an advantageous negotiation with the managers of the French comedy. Not having, during seven or eight years, been able to get my 'Narcissis' performed at the Italian theatre, I had, by the bad performance in French of the actors, become disgusted with it, and should rather have had my piece received at the French theatre than by them. I mentioned this to La None, the comedian, with whom I had become acquainted, and who, as everybody knows, was a man of merit and an author. He was pleased with the piece, and promised to get it performed without suffering the name of the author to be known; and in the meantime procured me the freedom of the theatre, which was extremely agreeable to me, for I always preferred it to the two others. The piece was favorably received, and without the author's name being mentioned; but I have reason to believe it was known to the actors and actresses, and many other persons. Mademoiselles Gauffin and Grandval played the amorous parts; and although the whole performance was, in my opinion, injudicious, the piece could not be said to be absolutely ill played. The indulgence of the public, for which I felt gratitude, surprised me; the audience had the patience to listen to it from the beginning to the end, and to permit a second representation without showing the least sign of disapprobation. For my part, I was so wearied with the first, that I could not hold out to the end; and the moment I left the theatre, I went into the Caf, de Procope, where I found Boissi, and others of my acquaintance, who had probably been as much fatigued as myself. I there humbly or haughtily avowed myself the author of the piece, judging it as everybody else had done. This public avowal of an author of a piece which had not succeeded, was much admired, and was by no means painful to myself. My self−love was flattered by the courage with which I made it: and I am of opinion, that, on this occasion, there was more pride in speaking, than there would have been foolish shame in being silent. However, as it was certain the piece, although insipid in the performance would bear to be read, I had it printed: and in the preface, which is one of the best things I ever wrote, I began to make my principles more public than I had before done.

I soon had an opportunity to explain them entirely in a work of the greatest importance: for it was, I think, this year, 1753, that the programma of the Academy of Dijon upon the 'Origin of the Inequality of Mankind' made its appearance. Struck with this great question, I was surprised the academy had dared to propose it: but since it had shown sufficient courage to do it, I thought I might venture to treat it, and immediately undertook the discussion.

That I might consider this grand subject more at my ease, I went to St. Germain for seven or eight days with Theresa, our hostess, who was a good kind of woman, and one of her friends. I consider this walk as one of the most agreeable ones I ever took. The weather was very fine. These good women took upon themselves all the care and expense. Theresa amused herself with them; and I, free from all domestic concerns, diverted myself, without restraint, at the hours of dinner and supper. All the rest of the day wandering in the forest, I sought for and found there the image of the primitive ages of which I boldly traced the history. I confounded the pitiful lies of men; I dared to unveil their nature; to follow the progress of time, and the things by which it has been disfigured; and comparing the man of art with the natural man, to show them, in their pretended improvement, the real source of all their misery. My mind, elevated by these contemplations, ascended to the Divinity, and thence, seeing my fellow creatures follow in the blind track of their prejudices that of their errors and misfortunes, I cried out to them, in a feeble voice, which they could not hear: "Madmen! know that all your evils proceed from yourselves!"

From these meditations resulted the discourse on Inequality, a work more to the taste of Diderot than any of my other writings, and in which his advice was of the greatest service to me.

> [At the time I wrote this, I had not the least suspicion of the grand conspiracy of Diderot and Grimm. otherwise I should easily. have discovered how much the former abused my confidence, by giving to my writings that severity and melancholy which were not to be found in them from the moments he ceased to direct me. The passage of the philosopher, who argues with himself, and stops his ears against the complaints of a man in distress, is after his manner: and he gave me others still more extraordinary; which I could never resolve to make use of. But, attributing, this melancholy to that he had acquired in the dungeon of Vincennes, and of which there is a very sufficient dose in his Clairoal, I never once suspected the least unfriendly dealing.]

It was, however, understood but by few readers, and not one of these would ever speak of it. I had written it to become a competitor for the premium, and sent it away fully persuaded it would not obtain it; well convinced it was not for productions of this nature that academies were founded.

This excursion and this occupation enlivened my spirits and was of service to my health. Several years before, tormented by my disorder, I had entirely given myself up to the care of physicians, who, without alleviating my sufferings, exhausted my strength and destroyed my constitution. At my return from St. Germain, I found myself stronger and perceived my health to be improved. I followed this indication, and determined to cure myself or die without the aid of physicians and medicine. I bade them forever adieu, and lived from day to day, keeping close when I found myself indisposed, and going abroad the moment I had sufficient strength to do it. The manner of living in Paris amidst people of pretensions was so little to my liking; the cabals of men of letters, their little candor in their writings, and the air of importance they gave themselves in the world, were so odious to me; I found so little mildness, openness of heart and frankness in the intercourse even of my friends; that, disgusted with this life of tumult, I began ardently to wish to reside in the country, and not perceiving that my occupation permitted me to do it, I went to pass there all the time I had to spare. For several months I went after dinner to walk alone in the Bois de Boulogne, meditating on subjects for future works, and not returning until evening.

Gauffecourt, with whom I was at that time extremely intimate, being on account of his employment obliged to go to Geneva, proposed to me the journey, to which I consented. The state of my health was such as to require the care of the governess; it was therefore decided she should accompany us, and that her mother should remain in the house. After thus having made our arrangements, we set off on the first of June, 1754.

This was the period when at the age of forty−two, I for the first time in my life felt a diminution of my natural confidence to which I had abandoned myself without reserve or inconvenience. We had a private carriage, in which with the same horses we travelled very slowly. I frequently got out and walked. We had scarcely performed

half our journey when Theresa showed the greatest uneasiness at being left in the carriage with Gauffecourt, and when, notwithstanding her remonstrances, I would get out as usual, she insisted upon doing the same, and walking with me. I chid her for this caprice, and so strongly opposed it, that at length she found herself obliged to declare to me the cause whence it proceeded. I thought I was in a dream; my astonishment was beyond expression, when I learned that my friend M. de Gauffecourt, upwards of sixty years of age, crippled by the gout, impotent and exhausted by pleasures, had, since our departure, incessantly endeavored to corrupt a person who belonged to his friend, and was no longer young nor handsome, by the most base and shameful means, such as presenting to her a purse, attempting to inflame her imagination by the reading of an abominable book, and by the sight of infamous figures, with which it was filled. Theresa, full of indignation, once threw his scandalous book out of the carriage; and I learned that on the first evening of our journey, a violent headache having obliged me to retire to bed before supper, he had employed the whole time of this tete−a−tete in actions more worthy of a satyr than a man of worth and honor, to whom I thought I had intrusted my companion and myself. What astonishment and grief of heart for me! I, who until then had believed friendship to be inseparable from every amiable and noble sentiment which constitutes all its charm, for the first time in my life found myself under the necessity of connecting it with disdain, and of withdrawing my confidence from a man for whom I had an affection, and by whom I imagined myself beloved! The wretch concealed from me his turpitude; and that I might not expose Theresa, I was obliged to conceal from him my contempt, and secretly to harbor in my heart such sentiments as were foreign to its nature. Sweet and sacred illusion of friendship! Gauffecourt first took the veil from before my eyes. What cruel hands have since that time prevented it from again being drawn over them!

At Lyons I quitted Gauffecourt to take the road to Savoy, being unable to be so near to mamma without seeing her. I saw her—Good God, in what a situation! How contemptible! What remained to her of primitive virtue? Was it the same Madam de Warrens, formerly so gay and lively, to whom the vicar of Pontverre had given me recommendations? How my heart was wounded! The only resource I saw for her was to quit the country. I earnestly but vainly repeated the invitation I had several times given her in my letters to come and live peacefully with me, assuring her I would dedicate the rest of my life, and that of Theresa, to render her happy. Attached to her pension, from which, although it was regularly paid, she had not for a long time received the least advantage, my offers were lost upon her. I again gave her a trifling part of the contents of my purse, much less than I ought to have done, and considerably less than I should have offered her had not I been certain of its not being of the least service to herself. During my residence at Geneva, she made a journey into Chablais, and came to see me at Grange−canal. She was in want of money to continue her journey: what I had in my pocket was insufficient to this purpose, but an hour afterwards I sent it her by Theresa. Poor mamma! I must relate this proof of the goodness of her heart. A little diamond ring was the last jewel she had left. She took it from her finger, to put it upon that of Theresa, who instantly replaced it upon that whence it had been taken, kissing the generous hand which she bathed with her tears. Ah! this was the proper moment to discharge my debt! I should have abandoned everything to follow her, and share her fate: let it be what it would. I did nothing of the kind. My attention was engaged by another attachment, and I perceived the attachment I had to her was abated by the slender hopes there were of rendering it useful to either of us. I sighed after her, my heart was grieved at her situation, but I did not follow her. Of all the remorse I felt this was the strongest and most lasting. I merited the terrible chastisement with which I have since that time incessantly been overwhelmed: may this have expiated my ingratitude! Of this I appear guilty in my conduct, but my heart has been too much distressed by what I did ever to have been that of an ungrateful man.

Before my departure from Paris I had sketched out the dedication of my discourse on the 'Inequality of Mankind'. I finished it at Chambery, and dated it from that place, thinking that, to avoid all chicane, it was better not to date it either from France or Geneva. The moment I arrived in that city I abandoned myself to the republican enthusiasm which had brought me to it. This was augmented by the reception I there met with. Kindly treated by persons of every description, I entirely gave myself up to a patriotic zeal, and mortified at being excluded from the rights of a citizen by the possession of a religion different from that of my forefathers, I resolved openly to return to the latter. I thought the gospel being the same for every Christian, and the only difference in religious opinions the result of the explanations given by men to that which they did not understand, it was the exclusive

right of the sovereign power in every country to fix the mode of worship, and these unintelligible opinions; and that consequently it was the duty of a citizen to admit the one, and conform to the other in the manner prescribed by the law. The conversation of the encyclopaedists, far from staggering my faith, gave it new strength by my natural aversion to disputes and party. The study of man and the universe had everywhere shown me the final causes and the wisdom by which they were directed. The reading of the Bible, and especially that of the New Testament, to which I had for several years past applied myself, had given me a sovereign contempt for the base and stupid interpretations given to the words of Jesus Christ by persons the least worthy of understanding his divine doctrine. In a word, philosophy, while it attached me to the essential part of religion, had detached me from the trash of the little formularies with which men had rendered it obscure. Judging that for a reasonable man there were not two ways of being a Christian, I was also of opinion that in each country everything relative to form and discipline was within the jurisdiction of the laws. From this principle, so social and pacific, and which has brought upon me such cruel persecutions, it followed that, if I wished to be a citizen of Geneva, I must become a Protestant, and conform to the mode of worship established in my country. This I resolved upon; I moreover put myself under the instructions of the pastor of the parish in which I lived, and which was without the city. All I desired was not to appear at the consistory. However, the ecclesiastical edict was expressly to that effect; but it was agreed upon to dispense with it in my favor, and a commission of five or six members was named to receive my profession of faith. Unfortunately, the minister Perdriau, a mild and an amiable man, took it into his head to tell me the members were rejoiced at the thoughts of hearing me speak in the little assembly. This expectation alarmed me to such a degree that having night and day during three weeks studied a little discourse I had prepared, I was so confused when I ought to have pronounced it that I could not utter a single word, and during the conference I had the appearance of the most stupid schoolboy. The persons deputed spoke for me, and I answered yes and no, like a blockhead; I was afterwards admitted to the communion, and reinstated in my rights as a citizen. I was enrolled as such in the lists of guards, paid by none but citizens and burgesses, and I attended at a council− general extraordinary to receive the oath from the syndic Mussard. I was so impressed with the kindness shown me on this occasion by the council and the consistory, and by the great civility and obliging behavior of the magistrates, ministers and citizens, that, pressed by the worthy De Luc, who was incessant in his persuasions, and still more so by my own inclination, I did not think of going back to Paris for any other purpose than to break up housekeeping, find a situation for M. and Madam le Vassear, or provide for their subsistence, and then return with Theresa to Geneva, there to settle for the rest of my days.

After taking this resolution I suspended all serious affairs the better to enjoy the company of my friends until the time of my departure. Of all the amusements of which I partook, that with which I was most pleased, was sailing round the lake in a boat, with De Luc, the father, his daughter−in−law, his two sons, and my Theresa. We gave seven days to this excursion in the finest weather possible. I preserved a lively remembrance of the situation which struck me at the other extremity of the lake, and of which I, some years afterwards, gave a description in my New Eloisa.

The principal connections I made at Geneva, besides the De Lucs, of which I have spoken, were the young Vernes, with whom I had already been acquainted at Paris, and of whom I then formed a better opinion than I afterwards had of him. M. Perdriau, then a country pastor, now professor of Belles Lettres, whose mild and agreeable society will ever make me regret the loss of it, although he has since thought proper to detach himself from me; M. Jalabert, at that time professor of natural philosophy, since become counsellor and syndic, to whom I read my discourse upon Inequality (but not the dedication), with which he seemed to be delighted; the Professor Lullin, with whom I maintained a correspondence until his death, and who gave me a commission to purchase books for the library; the Professor Vernet, who, like most other people, turned his back upon me after I had given him proofs of attachment and confidence of which he ought to, have been sensible, if a theologian can be affected by anything; Chappins, clerk and successor to Gauffecourt, whom he wished to supplant, and who, soon afterwards, was him self supplanted; Marcet de Mezieres, an old friend of my father's, and who had also shown himself to be mine: after having well deserved of his country, he became a dramatic author, and, pretending to be of the council of two hundred, changed his principles, and, before he died, became ridiculous. But he from whom I expected most was M. Moultout, a very promising young man by his talents and his brilliant imagination, whom

I have always loved, although his conduct with respect to me was frequently equivocal, and, not withstanding his being connected with my most cruel enemies, whom I cannot but look upon as destined to become the defender of my memory and the avenger of his friend.

In the midst of these dissipations, I neither lost the taste for my solitary excursions, nor the habit of them; I frequently made long ones upon the banks of the lake, during which my mind, accustomed to reflection, did not remain idle; I digested the plan already formed of my political institutions, of which I shall shortly have to speak; I meditated a history of the Valais; the plan of a tragedy in prose, the subject of which, nothing less than Lucretia, did not deprive me of the hope of succeeding, although I had dared again to exhibit that unfortunate heroine, when she could no longer be suffered upon any French stage. I at that time tried my abilities with Tacitus, and translated the first books of his history, which will be found amongst my papers.

After a residence of four months at Geneva, I returned in the month of October to Paris; and avoided passing through Lyons that I might not again have to travel with Gauffecourt. As the arrangement I had made did not require my being at Geneva until the spring following, I returned, during the winter, to my habits and occupations; the principal of the latter was examining the proof sheets of my discourse on the Inequality of Mankind, which I had procured to be printed in Holland, by the bookseller Rey, with whom I had just become acquainted at Geneva. This work was dedicated to the republic; but as the publication might be unpleasing to the council, I wished to wait until it had taken its effect at Geneva before I returned thither. This effect was not favorable to me; and the dedication, which the most pure patriotism had dictated, created me enemies in the council, and inspired even many of the burgesses with jealousy. M. Chouet, at that time first syndic, wrote me a polite but very cold letter, which will be found amongst my papers. I received from private persons, amongst others from Du Luc and De Jalabert, a few compliments, and these were all. I did not perceive that a single Genevese was pleased with the hearty zeal found in the work. This indifference shocked all those by whom it was remarked. I remember that dining one day at Clichy, at Madam Dupin's, with Crommelin, resident from the republic, and M. de Mairan, the latter openly declared the council owed me a present and public honors for the work, and that it would dishonor itself if it failed in either. Crommelin, who was a black and mischievous little man, dared not reply in my presence, but he made a frightful grimace, which however forced a smile from Madam Dupin. The only advantage this work procured me, besides that resulting from the satisfaction of my own heart, was the title of citizen given me by my friends, afterwards by the public after their example, and which I afterwards lost by having too well merited.

This ill success would not, however, have prevented my retiring to Geneva, had not more powerful motives tended to the same effect. M. D'Epinay, wishing to add a wing which was wanting to the chateau of the Chevrette, was at an immense expense in completing it. Going one day with Madam D'Epinay to see the building, we continued our walk a quarter of a league further to the reservoir of the waters of the park which joined the forest of Montmorency, and where there was a handsome kitchen garden, with a little lodge, much out of repair, called the Hermitage. This solitary and very agreeable place had struck me when I saw it for the first time before my journey to Geneva. I had exclaimed in my transport: "Ah, madam, what a delightful habitation! This asylum was purposely prepared for me." Madam D'Epinay did not pay much attention to what I said; but at this second journey I was quite surprised to find, instead of the old decayed building, a little house almost entirely new, well laid out, and very habitable for a little family of three persons. Madam D'Epinay had caused this to be done in silence, and at a very small expense, by detaching a few materials and some of the work men from the castle. She now said to me, on remarking my surprise: "My dear, here behold your asylum; it is you who have chosen it; friendship offers it to you. I hope this will remove from you the cruel idea of separating from me." I do not think I was ever in my life more strongly or more deliciously affected. I bathed with tears the beneficent hand of my friend; and if I were not conquered from that very instant even, I was extremely staggered. Madam D'Epinay, who would not be denied, became so pressing, employed so many means, so many people to circumvent me, proceeding even so far as to gain over Madam le Vasseur and her daughter, that at length she triumphed over all my resolutions. Renouncing the idea of residing in my own country, I resolved, I promised, to inhabit the Hermitage; and, whilst the building was drying, Madam D'Epinay took care to prepare furniture, so that

everything was ready the following spring.

One thing which greatly aided me in determining, was the residence Voltaire had chosen near Geneva; I easily comprehended this man would cause a revolution there, and that I should find in my country the manners, which drove me from Paris; that I should be under the necessity of incessantly struggling hard, and have no other alternative than that of being an unsupportable pedant, a poltroon, or a bad citizen. The letter Voltaire wrote me on my last work, induced me to insinuate my fears in my answer; and the effect this produced confirmed them. From that moment I considered Geneva as lost, and I was not deceived. I perhaps ought to have met the storm, had I thought myself capable of resisting it. But what could I have done alone, timid, and speaking badly, against a man, arrogant, opulent, supported by the credit of the great, eloquent, and already the idol of the women and young men? I was afraid of uselessly exposing myself to danger to no purpose. I listened to nothing but my peaceful disposition, to my love of repose, which, if it then deceived me, still continues to deceive me on the same subject. By retiring to Geneva, I should have avoided great misfortunes; but I have my doubts whether, with all my ardent and patriotic zeal, I should have been able to effect anything great and useful for my country.

Tronchin, who about the same time went to reside at Geneva, came afterwards to Paris and brought with him treasures. At his arrival he came to see me, with the Chevalier Jaucourt. Madam D'Epinay had a strong desire to consult him in private, but this it was not easy to do. She addressed herself to me, and I engaged Tronchin to go and see her. Thus under my auspices they began a connection, which was afterwards increased at my expense. Such has ever been my destiny: the moment I had united two friends who were separately mine, they never failed to combine against me. Although, in the conspiracy then formed by the Tronchins, they must all have borne me a mortal hatred. He still continued friendly to me: he even wrote me a letter after his return to Geneva, to propose to me the place of honorary librarian. But I had taken my resolution, and the offer did not tempt me to depart from it.

About this time I again visited M. d'Holbach. My visit was occasioned by the death of his wife, which, as well as that of Madam Francueil, happened whilst I was at Geneva. Diderot, when he communicated to me these melancholy events, spoke of the deep affliction of the husband. His grief affected my heart. I myself was grieved for the loss of that excellent woman, and wrote to M. d'Holbach a letter of condolence. I forgot all the wrongs he had done me, and at my return from Geneva, and after he had made the tour of France with Grimm and other friends to alleviate his affliction, I went to see him, and continued my visits until my departure for the Hermitage. As soon as it was known in his circle that Madam D'Epinay was preparing me a habitation there, innumerable sarcasms, founded upon the want I must feel of the flattery and amusement of the city, and the supposition of my not being able to support the solitude for a fortnight, were uttered against me. Feeling within myself how I stood affected, I left him and his friends to say what they pleased, and pursued my intention. M. d'Holbach rendered me some services—

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[This is an instance of the treachery of my memory.  A long time
after I had written what I have stated above, I learned, in
conversing with my wife, that it was not M. d'Holbach, but M. de
Chenonceaux, then one of the administrators of the Hotel Dieu, who
procured this place for her father.  I had so totally forgotten the
circumstance, and the idea of M. d'Holbach's having done it was so
strong in my mind that I would have sworn it had been him.]
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in finding a place for the old Le Vasseur, who was eighty years of age and a burden to his wife, from which she begged me to relieve her. He was put into a house of charity, where, almost as soon as he arrived there, age and the grief of finding himself removed from his family sent him to the grave. His wife and all his children, except Theresa, did not much regret his loss. But she, who loved him tenderly, has ever since been inconsolable, and never forgiven herself for having suffered him, at so advanced an age, to end his days in any other house than her own.

Much about the same time I received a visit I little expected, although it was from a very old acquaintance. My friend Venture, accompanied by another man, came upon me one morning by surprise. What a change did I discover in his person! Instead of his former gracefulness, he appeared sottish and vulgar, which made me extremely reserved with him. My eyes deceived me, or either debauchery had stupefied his mind, or all his first splendor was the effect of his youth, which was past. I saw him almost with indifference, and we parted rather coolly. But when he was gone, the remembrance of our former connection so strongly called to my recollection that of my younger days, so charmingly, so prudently dedicated to that angelic woman (Madam de Warrens) who was not much less changed than himself; the little anecdotes of that happy time, the romantic day of Toune passed with so much innocence and enjoyment between those two charming girls, from whom a kiss of the hand was the only favor, and which, notwithstanding its being so trifling, had left me such lively, affecting and lasting regrets; and the ravishing delirium of a young heart, which I had just felt in all its force, and of which I thought the season forever past for me. The tender remembrance of these delightful circumstances made me shed tears over my faded youth and its transports for ever lost to me. Ah! how many tears should I have shed over their tardy and fatal return had I foreseen the evils I had yet to suffer from them.

Before I left Paris, I enjoyed during the winter which preceded my retreat, a pleasure after my own heart, and of which I tasted in all its purity. Palissot, academician of Nancy, known by a few dramatic compositions, had just had one of them performed at Luneville before the King of Poland. He perhaps thought to make his court by representing in his piece a man who had dared to enter into a literary dispute with the king. Stanislaus, who was generous, and did not like satire, was filled with indignation at the author's daring to be personal in his presence. The Comte de Tressan, by order of the prince, wrote to M. d'Alembert, as well as to myself, to inform me that it was the intention of his majesty to have Palissot expelled his academy. My answer was a strong solicitation in favor of Palissot, begging M. de Tressan to intercede with the king in his behalf. His pardon was granted, and M. de Tressan, when he communicated to me the information in the name of the monarch, added that the whole of what had passed should be inserted in the register of the academy. I replied that this was less granting a pardon than perpetuating a punishment. At length, after repeated solicitations, I obtained a promise, that nothing relative to the affair should be inserted in the register, and that no public trace should remain of it. The promise was accompanied, as well on the part of the king as on that of M. de Tressan, with assurance of esteem and respect, with which I was extremely flattered; and I felt on this occasion that the esteem of men who are themselves worthy of it, produced in the mind a sentiment infinitely more noble and pleasing than that of vanity. I have transcribed into my collection the letters of M. de Tressan, with my answers to them: and the original of the former will be found amongst my other papers.

I am perfectly aware that if ever these memoirs become public, I here perpetuate the remembrance of a fact which I would wish to efface every trace; but I transmit many others as much against my inclination. The grand object of my undertaking, constantly before my eyes, and the indispensable duty of fulfilling it to its utmost extent, will not permit me to be turned aside by trifling considerations, which would lead me from my purpose. In my strange and unparalleled situation, I owe too much to truth to be further than this indebted to any person whatever. They who wish to know me well must be acquainted with me in every point of view, in every relative situation, both good and bad. My confessions are necessarily connected with those of many other people: I write both with the same frankness in everything that relates to that which has befallen me; and am not obliged to spare any person more than myself, although it is my wish to do it. I am determined always to be just and true, to say of others all the good I can, never speaking of evil except when it relates to my own conduct, and there is a necessity for my so doing. Who, in the situation in which the world has placed me, has a right to require more at my hands? My confessions are not intended to appear during my lifetime, nor that of those they may disagreeably affect. Were I master of my own destiny, and that of the book I am now writing, it should never be made public until after my death and theirs. But the efforts which the dread of truth obliges my powerful enemies to make to destroy every trace of it, render it necessary for me to do everything, which the strictest right, and the most severe justice, will permit, to preserve what I have written. Were the remembrance of me to be lost at my dissolution, rather than expose any person alive, I would without a murmur suffer an unjust and momentary reproach. But since my name is to live, it is my duty to endeavor to transmit with it to posterity the remembrance of the unfortunate man by

whom it was borne, such as he really was, and not such as his unjust enemies incessantly endeavored to describe him.