

ЖАН-ЖАК РУССО

THE CONFESSIONS OF
JEAN JACQUES
ROUSSEAU — VOLUME
09

Jean-Jacques Rousseau
The Confessions of Jean
Jacques Rousseau — Volume 09

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of Jean Jacques

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BOOK IX

My impatience to inhabit the Hermitage not permitting me to wait until the return of fine weather, the moment my lodging was prepared I hastened to take possession of it, to the great amusement of the 'Coterie Holbachique', which publicly predicted I should not be able to support solitude for three months, and that I should unsuccessfully return to Paris, and live there as they did. For my part, having for fifteen years been out of my element, finding myself upon the eve of returning to it, I paid no attention to their pleasantries. Since contrary to my inclinations, I have again entered the world, I have incessantly regretted my dear Charmettes, and the agreeable life I led there. I felt a natural inclination to retirement and the country: it was impossible for me to live happily elsewhere. At Venice, in the train of public affairs, in the dignity of a kind of representation, in the pride of projects of advancement;

at Paris, in the vortex of the great world, in the luxury of suppers, in the brilliancy of spectacles, in the rays of splendor; my groves, rivulets, and solitary walks, constantly presented themselves to my recollection, interrupted my thought, rendered me melancholy, and made me sigh with desire. All the labor to which I had subjected myself, every project of ambition which by fits had animated my ardor, all had for object this happy country retirement, which I now thought near at hand. Without having acquired a genteel independence, which I had judged to be the only means of accomplishing my views, I imagined myself, in my particular situation, to be able to do without it, and that I could obtain the same end by a means quite opposite. I had no regular income; but I possessed some talents, and had acquired a name. My wants were few, and I had freed myself from all those which were most expensive, and which merely depended on prejudice and opinion. Besides this, although naturally indolent, I was laborious when I chose to be so. and my idleness was less that of an indolent man, than that of an independent one who applies to business when it pleases him. My profession of a copyist of music was neither splendid nor lucrative, but it was certain. The world gave me credit for the courage I had shown in making choice of it. I might depend upon having sufficient employment to enable me to live. Two thousand livres which remained of the produce of the 'Devin du Village', and my other writings, were a sum which kept me from being straitened, and several works I had upon the stocks promised me, without extorting

money from the booksellers, supplies sufficient to enable me to work at my ease without exhausting myself, even by turning to advantage the leisure of my walks. My little family, consisting of three persons, all of whom were usefully employed, was not expensive to support. Finally, from my resources, proportioned to my wants and desires, I might reasonably expect a happy and permanent existence, in that manner of life which my inclination had induced me to adopt.

I might have taken the interested side of the question, and, instead of subjecting my pen to copying, entirely devoted it to works which, from the elevation to which I had soared, and at which I found myself capable of continuing, might have enabled me to live in the midst of abundance, nay, even of opulence, had I been the least disposed to join the manoeuvres of an author to the care of publishing a good book. But I felt that writing for bread would soon have extinguished my genius, and destroyed my talents, which were less in my pen than in my heart, and solely proceeded from an elevated and noble manner of thinking, by which alone they could be cherished and preserved. Nothing vigorous or great can come from a pen totally venal. Necessity, nay, even avarice, perhaps, would have made me write rather rapidly than well. If the desire of success had not led me into cabals, it might have made me endeavor to publish fewer true and useful works than those which might be pleasing to the multitude; and instead of a distinguished author, which I might possibly become, I should have been nothing more than a scribbler. No:

I have always felt that the profession of letters was illustrious in proportion as it was less a trade. It is too difficult to think nobly when we think for a livelihood. To be able to dare even to speak great truths, an author must be independent of success. I gave my books to the public with a certainty of having written for the general good of mankind, without giving myself the least concern about what was to follow. If the work was thrown aside, so much the worse for such as did not choose to profit by it. Their approbation was not necessary to enable me to live, my profession was sufficient to maintain me had not my works had a sale, for which reason alone they all sold.

It was on the ninth of August, 1756, that I left cities, never to reside in them again: for I do not call a residence the few days I afterwards remained in Paris, London, or other cities, always on the wing, or contrary to my inclinations. Madam d'Epinay came and took us all three in her coach; her farmer carted away my little baggage, and I was put into possession the same day. I found my little retreat simply furnished, but neatly, and with some taste. The hand which had lent its aid in this furnishing rendered it inestimable in my eyes, and I thought it charming to be the guest of my female friend in a house I had made choice of, and which she had caused to be built purposely for me.

Although the weather was cold, and the ground lightly covered with snow, the earth began to vegetate: violets and primroses already made their appearance, the trees began to bud, and the evening of my arrival was distinguished by the song of the

nightingale, which was heard almost under my window, in a wood adjoining the house. After a light sleep, forgetting when I awoke my change of abode, I still thought myself in the Rue Grenelle, when suddenly this warbling made me give a start, and I exclaimed in my transport: "At length, all my wishes are accomplished!" The first thing I did was to abandon myself to the impression of the rural objects with which I was surrounded. Instead of beginning to set things in order in my new habitation, I began by doing it for my walks, and there was not a path, a copse, a grove, nor a corner in the environs of my place of residence that I did not visit the next day. The more I examined this charming retreat, the more I found it to my wishes. This solitary, rather than savage, spot transported me in idea to the end of the world. It had striking beauties which are but seldom found near cities, and never, if suddenly transported thither, could any person have imagined himself within four leagues of Paris.

After abandoning myself for a few days to this rural delirium, I began to arrange my papers, and regulate my occupations. I set apart, as I had always done, my mornings to copying, and my afternoons to walking, provided with my little paper book and a pencil, for never having been able to write and think at my ease except 'sub dio', I had no inclination to depart from this method, and I was persuaded the forest of Montmorency, which was almost at my door, would in future be my closet and study. I had several works begun; these I cast my eye over. My mind was indeed fertile in great projects, but in the noise of the city the

execution of them had gone on but slowly. I proposed to myself to use more diligence when I should be less interrupted. I am of opinion I have sufficiently fulfilled this intention; and for a man frequently ill, often at La Chevrette, at Epinay, at Raubonne, at the castle of Montmorency, at other times interrupted by the indolent and curious, and always employed half the day in copying, if what I produced during the six years I passed at the Hermitage and at Montmorency be considered, I am persuaded it will appear that if, in this interval, I lost my time, it was not in idleness.

Of the different works I had upon the stocks, that I had longest resolved in my mind which was most to my taste; to which I destined a certain portion of my life, and which, in my opinion, was to confirm the reputation I had acquired, was my 'Institutions Politiques. I had, fourteen years before, when at Venice, where I had an opportunity of remarking the defects of that government so much boasted of, conceived the first idea of them. Since that time my views had become much more extended by the historical study of morality. I had perceived everything to be radically connected with politics, and that, upon whatever principles these were founded, a people would never be more than that which the nature of the government made them; therefore the great question of the best government possible appeared to me to be reduced to this: What is the nature of a government the most proper to form the most virtuous and enlightened, the wisest and best people, taking the last epithet in its most extensive meaning?

I thought this question was much if not quite of the same nature with that which follows: What government is that which, by its nature, always maintains itself nearest to the laws, or least deviates from the laws. Hence, what is the law? and a series of questions of similar importance. I perceived these led to great truths, useful to the happiness of mankind, but more especially to that of my country, wherein, in the journey I had just made to it, I had not found notions of laws and liberty either sufficiently just or clear. I had thought this indirect manner of communicating these to my fellow-citizens would be least mortifying to their pride, and might obtain me forgiveness for having seen a little further than themselves.

Although I had already labored five or six years at the work, the progress I had made in it was not considerable. Writings of this kind require meditation, leisure and tranquillity. I had besides written the 'Institutions Politiques', as the expression is, 'en bonne fortune', and had not communicated my project to any person; not even to Diderot. I was afraid it would be thought too daring for the age and country in which I wrote, and that the fears of my friends would restrain me from carrying it into execution.

[It was more especially the wise severity of Duclos which inspired me with this fear; as for Diderot, I know not by what means all my conferences with him tended to make me more satirical than my natural disposition inclined me to be. This prevented me from consulting him upon an undertaking, in which I wished to introduce nothing but the

force of reasoning without the least appearance of ill humor or partiality. The manner of this work may be judged of by that of the 'Contrat Social', which is taken from it.]

I did not yet know that it would be finished in time, and in such a manner as to appear before my decease. I wished fearlessly to give to my subject everything it required; fully persuaded that not being of a satirical turn, and never wishing to be personal, I should in equity always be judged irreprehensible. I undoubtedly wished fully to enjoy the right of thinking which I had by birth; but still respecting the government under which I lived, without ever disobeying its laws, and very attentive not to violate the rights of persons, I would not from fear renounce its advantages.

I confess, even that, as a stranger, and living in France, I found my situation very favorable in daring to speak the truth; well knowing that continuing, as I was determined to do, not to print anything in the kingdom without permission, I was not obliged to give to any person in it an account of my maxims nor of their publication elsewhere. I should have been less independent even at Geneva, where, in whatever place my books might have been printed, the magistrate had a right to criticise their contents. This consideration had greatly contributed to make me yield to the solicitations of Madam d'Epinaÿ, and abandon the project of fixing my residence at Geneva. I felt, as I have remarked in my *Emilius*, that unless an author be a man of intrigue, when he wishes to render his works really useful to any country whatsoever, he must compose them in some other.

What made me find my situation still more happy, was my being persuaded that the government of France would, perhaps, without looking upon me with a very favorable eye, make it a point to protect me, or at least not to disturb my tranquillity. It appeared to me a stroke of simple, yet dexterous policy, to make a merit of tolerating that which there was no means of preventing; since, had I been driven from France, which was all government had the right to do, my work would still have been written, and perhaps with less reserve; whereas if I were left undisturbed, the author remained to answer for what he wrote, and a prejudice, general throughout all Europe, would be destroyed by acquiring the reputation of observing a proper respect for the rights of persons.

They who, by the event, shall judge I was deceived, may perhaps be deceived in their turn. In the storm which has since broken over my head, my books served as a pretence, but it was against my person that every shaft was directed. My persecutors gave themselves but little concern about the author, but they wished to ruin Jean Jacques; and the greatest evil they found in my writings was the honor they might possibly do me. Let us not encroach upon the future. I do not know that this mystery, which is still one to me, will hereafter be cleared up to my readers; but had my avowed principles been of a nature to bring upon me the treatment I received, I should sooner have become their victim, since the work in which these principles are manifested with most courage, not to call it audacity, seemed to have had its

effect previous to my retreat to the Hermitage, without I will not only say my having received the least censure, but without any steps having been taken to prevent the publication of it in France, where it was sold as publicly as in Holland. The *New Eloisa* afterwards appeared with the same facility, I dare add; with the same applause: and, what seems incredible, the profession of faith of this *Eloisa* at the point of death is exactly similar to that of the Savoyard vicar. Every strong idea in the *Social Contract* had been before published in the discourse on *Inequality*; and every bold opinion in *Emilius* previously found in *Eloisa*. This unrestrained freedom did not excite the least murmur against the first two works; therefore it was not that which gave cause to it against the latter.

Another undertaking much of the same kind, but of which the project was more recent, then engaged my attention: this was the extract of the works of the Abbe de Saint Pierre, of which, having been led away by the thread of my narrative, I have not hitherto been able to speak. The idea was suggested to me, after my return from Geneva, by the Abbe Malby, not immediately from himself, but by the interposition of Madam Dupin, who had some interest in engaging me to adopt it. She was one of the three or four-pretty women of Paris, of whom the Abbe de Saint Pierre had been the spoiled child, and although she had not decidedly had the preference, she had at least partaken of it with Madam d'Aiguillon. She preserved for the memory of the good man a respect and an affection which did honor to them both; and

her self-love would have been flattered by seeing the still-born works of her friend brought to life by her secretary. These works contained excellent things, but so badly told that the reading of them was almost insupportable; and it is astonishing the Abbe de Saint Pierre, who looked upon his readers as schoolboys, should nevertheless have spoken to them as men, by the little care he took to induce them to give him a hearing. It was for this purpose that the work was proposed to me as useful in itself, and very proper for a man laborious in manoeuvre, but idle as an author, who finding the trouble of thinking very fatiguing, preferred, in things which pleased him, throwing a light upon and extending the ideas of others, to producing any himself. Besides, not being confined to the functions of a translator, I was at liberty sometimes to think for myself; and I had it in my power to give such a form to my work, that many important truths would pass in it under the name of the Abbe de Saint Pierre, much more safely than under mine. The undertaking also was not trifling; the business was nothing less than to read and meditate twenty-three volumes, diffuse, confused, full of long narrations and periods, repetitions, and false or little views, from amongst which it was necessary to select some few that were good and useful, and sufficiently encouraging to enable me to support the painful labor. I frequently wished to have given it up, and should have done so, could I have got it off my hands with a great grace; but when I received the manuscripts of the abbe, which were given to me by his nephew, the Comte de Saint

Pierre, I had, by the solicitation of St. Lambert, in some measure engaged to make use of them, which I must either have done, or have given them back. It was with the former intention I had taken the manuscripts to the Hermitage, and this was the first work to which I proposed to dedicate my leisure hours.

I had likewise in my own mind projected a third, the idea of which I owed to the observations I had made upon myself and I felt the more disposed to undertake this work, as I had reason to hope I could make it a truly useful one, and perhaps, the most so of any that could be offered to the world, were the execution equal to the plan I had laid down. It has been remarked that most men are in the course of their lives frequently unlike themselves, and seem to be transformed into others very different from what they were. It was not to establish a thing so generally known that I wished to write a book; I had a newer and more important object. This was to search for the causes of these variations, and, by confining my observations to those which depend on ourselves, to demonstrate in what manner it might be possible to direct them, in order to render us better and more certain of our dispositions. For it is undoubtedly more painful to an honest man to resist desires already formed, and which it is his duty to subdue, than to prevent, change, or modify the same desires in their source, were he capable of tracing them to it. A man under temptation resists once because he has strength of mind, he yields another time because this is overcome; had it been the same as before he would again have triumphed.

By examining within myself, and searching in others what could be the cause of these different manners of being, I discovered that, in a great measure they depended on the anterior impressions of external objects; and that, continually modified by our senses and organs, we, without knowing it, bore in our ideas, sentiments, and even actions, the effect of these modifications. The striking and numerous observations I had collected were beyond all manner of dispute, and by their natural principle seemed proper to furnish an exterior regimen, which varied according to circumstances, might place and support the mind in the state most favorable to virtue. From how many mistakes would reason be preserved, how many vices would be stifled in their birth, were it possible to force animal economy to favor moral order, which it so frequently disturbs! Climate, seasons, sounds, colors, light, darkness, the elements, ailments, noise, silence, motion, rest, all act on the animal machine, and consequently on the mind: all offer a thousand means, almost certain of directing in their origin the sentiments by which we suffer ourselves to be governed. Such was the fundamental idea of which I had already made a sketch upon paper, and whence I hoped for an effect the more certain, in favor of persons well disposed, who, sincerely loving virtue, were afraid of their own weakness, as it appeared to me easy to make of it a book as agreeable to read as it was to compose. I have, however, applied myself but very little to this work, the title of which was to have been 'Morale Sensitive' ou le Materialisme du Sage. —[Sensitive

Morality, or the Materialism of the Sage.]—Interruptions, the cause of which will soon appear, prevented me from continuing it, and the fate of the sketch, which is more connected with my own than it may appear to be, will hereafter be seen.

Besides this, I had for some time meditated a system of education, of which Madam de Chenonceaux, alarmed for her son by that of her husband, had desired me to consider. The authority of friendship placed this object, although less in itself to my taste, nearer to my heart than any other. On which account this subject, of all those of which I have just spoken, is the only one I carried to its utmost extent. The end I proposed to myself in treating of it should, I think, have procured the author a better fate. But I will not here anticipate this melancholy subject. I shall have too much reason to speak of it in the course of my work.

These different objects offered me subjects of meditation for my walks; for, as I believed I had already observed, I am unable to reflect when I am not walking: the moment I stop, I think no more, and as soon as I am again in motion my head resumes its workings. I had, however, provided myself with a work for the closet upon rainy days. This was my dictionary of music, which my scattered, mutilated, and unshapen materials made it necessary to rewrite almost entirely. I had with me some books necessary to this purpose; I had spent two months in making extracts from others, I had borrowed from the king's library, whence I was permitted to take several to the Hermitage. I was thus provided with materials for composing in my apartment

when the weather did not permit me to go out, and my copying fatigued me. This arrangement was so convenient that it made it turn to advantage as well at the Hermitage as at Montmorency, and afterwards even at Motiers, where I completed the work whilst I was engaged in others, and constantly found a change of occupation to be a real relaxation.

During a considerable time I exactly followed the distribution I had prescribed myself, and found it very agreeable; but as soon as the fine weather brought Madam d'Epinay more frequently to Epinay, or to the Chervette, I found that attentions, in the first instance natural to me, but which I had not considered in my scheme, considerably deranged my projects. I have already observed that Madam d'Epinay had many amiable qualities; she sincerely loved her friends; served them with zeal; and, not sparing for them either time or pains, certainly deserved on their part every attention in return. I had hitherto discharged this duty without considering it as one, but at length I found that I had given myself a chain of which nothing but friendship prevented me from feeling the weight, and this was still aggravated by my dislike to numerous societies. Madam d' Epinay took advantage of these circumstances to make me a proposition seemingly agreeable to me, but which was more so to herself; this was to let me know when she was alone, or had but little company. I consented, without perceiving to what a degree I engaged myself. The consequence was that I no longer visited her at my own hour —but at hers, and that I never was certain of

being master of myself for a day together. This constraint considerably diminished the pleasure I had in going to see her. I found the liberty she had so frequently promised was given me upon no other condition than that of my never enjoying it; and once or twice when I wished to do this there were so many messages, notes, and alarms relative to my health, that I perceived that I could have no excuse but being confined to my bed, for not immediately running to her upon the first intimation. It was necessary I should submit to this yoke, and I did it, even more voluntarily than could be expected from so great an enemy to dependence: the sincere attachment I had to Madam D'Epinaÿ preventing me, in a great measure, from feeling the inconvenience with which it was accompanied. She, on her part, filled up, well or ill, the void which the absence of her usual circle left in her amusements. This for her was but a very slender supplement, although preferable to absolute solitude, which she could not support. She had the means of doing it much more at her ease after she began with literature, and at all events to write novels, letters, comedies, tales, and other trash of the same kind. But she was not so much amused in writing these as in reading them; and she never scribbled over two or three pages—at one sitting—without being previously assured of having, at least, two or three benevolent auditors at the end of so much labor. I seldom had the honor of being one of the chosen few except by means of another. When alone, I was, for the most part, considered as a cipher in everything; and this not only in the company of Madam

D'EpinaŸ, but in that of M. d'Holbach, and in every place where Grimm gave the 'ton'. This nullity was very convenient to me, except in a tete-a-tete, when I knew not what countenance to put on, not daring to speak of literature, of which it was not for me to say a word; nor of gallantry, being too timid, and fearing, more than death, the ridiculousness of an old gallant; besides that, I never had such an idea when in the company of Madam D'EpinaŸ, and that it perhaps would never have occurred to me, had I passed my whole life with her; not that her person was in the least disagreeable to me; on the contrary, I loved her perhaps too much as a friend to do it as a lover. I felt a pleasure in seeing and speaking to her. Her conversation, although agreeable enough in a mixed company, was uninteresting in private; mine, not more elegant or entertaining than her own, was no great amusement to her. Ashamed of being long silent, I endeavored to enliven our tete-a-tete and, although this frequently fatigued me, I was never disgusted with it. I was happy to show her little attentions, and gave her little fraternal kisses, which seemed not to be more sensual to herself; these were all. She was very thin, very pale, and had a bosom which resembled the back of her hand. This defect alone would have been sufficient to moderate my most ardent desires; my heart never could distinguish a woman in a person who had it; and besides other causes useless to mention, always made me forget the sex of this lady.

Having resolved to conform to an assiduity which was necessary, I immediately and voluntarily entered upon it, and for

the first year at least, found it less burthensome than I could have expected. Madam d'Epinay, who commonly passed the summer in the country, continued there but a part of this; whether she was more detained by her affairs in Paris, or that the absence of Grimm rendered the residence of the Chevrette less agreeable to her, I know not. I took the advantage of the intervals of her absence, or when the company with her was numerous, to enjoy my solitude with my good Theresa and her mother, in such a manner as to taste all its charms. Although I had for several years passed been frequently in the country, I seldom had enjoyed much of its pleasures; and these excursions, always made in company with people who considered themselves as persons of consequence, and rendered insipid by constraint, served to increase in me the natural desire I had for rustic pleasures. The want of these was the more sensible to me as I had the image of them immediately before my eyes. I was so tired of saloons, jets d'eau, groves, parterres, and of more fatiguing persons by whom they were shown; so exhausted with pamphlets, harpsichords, trios, unravellings of plots, stupid bon mots, insipid affections, pitiful storytellers, and great suppers; that when I gave a side glance at a poor simple hawthorn bush, a hedge, a barn, or a meadow; when, in passing through a hamlet, I scented a good chervil omelette, and heard at a distance the burden of a rustic song of the Bisquieres; I wished all rouge, furbelows and amber at the d—l, and envying the dinner of the good housewife, and the wine of her own vineyard, I heartily wished to give a slap on the

chaps to Monsieur le Chef and Monsieur le Maitre, who made me dine at the hour of supper, and sup when I should have been asleep, but especially to Messieurs the lackeys, who devoured with their eyes the morsel I put into my mouth, and upon pain of my dying with thirst, sold me the adulterated wine of their master, ten times dearer than that of a better quality would have cost me at a public house.

At length I was settled in an agreeable and solitary asylum, at liberty to pass there the remainder of my days, in that peaceful, equal, and independent life for which I felt myself born. Before I relate the effects this situation, so new to me, had upon my heart, it is proper I should recapitulate its secret affections, that the reader may better follow in their causes the progress of these new modifications.

I have always considered the day on which I was united to Theresa as that which fixed my moral existence. An attachment was necessary for me, since that which should have been sufficient to my heart had been so cruelly broken. The thirst after happiness is never extinguished in the heart of man. Mamma was advancing into years, and dishonored herself! I had proofs that she could never more be happy here below; it therefore remained to me to seek my own happiness, having lost all hopes of partaking of hers. I was sometimes irresolute, and fluctuated from one idea to another, and from project to project. My journey to Venice would have thrown me into public life, had the man with whom, almost against my inclination, I was connected

there had common sense. I was easily discouraged, especially in undertakings of length and difficulty. The ill success of this disgusted me with every other; and, according to my old maxims, considering distant objects as deceitful allurements, I resolved in future to provide for immediate wants, seeing nothing in life which could tempt me to make extraordinary efforts.

It was precisely at this time we became acquainted. The mild character of the good Theresa seemed so fitted to my own, that I united myself to her with an attachment which neither time nor injuries have been able to impair, and which has constantly been increased by everything by which it might have been expected to be diminished. The force of this sentiment will hereafter appear when I come to speak of the wounds she has given my heart in the height of my misery, without my ever having, until this moment, once uttered a word of complaint to any person whatever.

When it shall be known, that after having done everything, braved everything, not to separate from her; that after passing with her twenty years in despite of fate and men; I have in my old age made her my wife, without the least expectation or solicitation on her part, or promise or engagement on mine, the world will think that love bordering upon madness, having from the first moment turned my head, led me by degrees to the last act of extravagance; and this will no longer appear doubtful when the strong and particular reasons which should forever have prevented me from taking such a step are made known. What, therefore, will the reader think when I shall have told him, with

all the truth he has ever found in me, that, from the first moment in which I saw her, until that wherein I write, I have never felt the least love for her, that I never desired to possess her more than I did to possess Madam de Warrens, and that the physical wants which were satisfied with her person were, to me, solely those of the sex, and by no means proceeding from the individual? He will think that, being of a constitution different from that of other men, I was incapable of love, since this was not one of the sentiments which attached me to women the most dear to my heart. Patience, O my dear reader! the fatal moment approaches in which you will be but too much undeceived.

I fall into repetitions; I know it; and these are necessary. The first of my wants, the greatest, strongest and most insatiable, was wholly in my heart; the want of an intimate connection, and as intimate as it could possibly be: for this reason especially, a woman was more necessary to me than a man, a female rather than a male friend. This singular want was such that the closest corporal union was not sufficient: two souls would have been necessary to me in the same body, without which I always felt a void. I thought I was upon the point of filling it up forever. This young person, amiable by a thousand excellent qualities, and at that time by her form, without the shadow of art or coquetry, would have confined within herself my whole existence, could hers, as I had hoped it would, have been totally confined to me. I had nothing to fear from men; I am certain of being the only man she ever really loved and her moderate passions seldom wanted

another not even after I ceased in this respect to be one to her. I had no family; she had one; and this family was composed of individuals whose dispositions were so different from mine, that I could never make it my own. This was the first cause of my unhappiness. What would I not have given to be the child of her mother? I did everything in my power to become so, but could never succeed. I in vain attempted to unite all our interests: this was impossible. She always created herself one different from mine, contrary to it, and to that even of her daughter, which already was no longer separated from it. She, her other children, and grand-children, became so many leeches, and the least evil these did to Theresa was robbing her. The poor girl, accustomed to submit, even to her nieces, suffered herself to be pilfered and governed without saying a word; and I perceived with grief that by exhausting my purse, and giving her advice, I did nothing that could be of any real advantage to her. I endeavored to detach her from her mother; but she constantly resisted such a proposal. I could not but respect her resistance, and esteemed her the more for it; but her refusal was not on this account less to the prejudice of us both. Abandoned to her mother and the rest of her family, she was more their companion than mine, and rather at their command than mistress of herself. Their avarice was less ruinous than their advice was pernicious to her; in fact, if, on account of the love she had for me, added to her good natural disposition, she was not quite their slave, she was enough so to prevent in a great measure the effect of the good maxims I endeavored to

instil into her, and, notwithstanding all my efforts, to prevent our being united.

Thus was it, that notwithstanding a sincere and reciprocal attachment, in which I had lavished all the tenderness of my heart, the void in that heart was never completely filled. Children, by whom this effect should have been produced, were brought into the world, but these only made things worse. I trembled at the thought of intrusting them to a family ill brought up, to be still worse educated. The risk of the education of the foundling hospital was much less. This reason for the resolution I took, much stronger than all those I stated in my letter to Madam de Francueil, was, however, the only one with which I dared not make her acquainted; I chose rather to appear less excusable than to expose to reproach the family of a person I loved. But by the conduct of her wretched brother, notwithstanding all that can be said in his defence, it will be judged whether or not I ought to have exposed my children to an education similar to his.

Not having it in my power to taste in all its plentitude the charms of that intimate connection of which I felt the want, I sought for substitutes which did not fill up the void, yet they made it less sensible. Not having a friend entirely devoted to me, I wanted others, whose impulse should overcome my indolence; for this reason I cultivated and strengthened my connection with Diderot and the Abbe de Condillac, formed with Grimm a new one still more intimate, till at length by the unfortunate discourse, of which I have related some particulars, I unexpectedly found

myself thrown back into a literary circle which I thought I had quitted forever.

My first steps conducted me by a new path to another intellectual world, the simple and noble economy of which I cannot contemplate without enthusiasm. I reflected so much on the subject that I soon saw nothing but error and folly in the doctrine of our sages, and oppression and misery in our social order. In the illusion of my foolish pride, I thought myself capable of destroying all imposture; and thinking that, to make myself listened to, it was necessary my conduct should agree with my principles, I adopted the singular manner of life which I have not been permitted to continue, the example of which my pretended friends have never forgiven me, which at first made me ridiculous, and would at length have rendered me respectable, had it been possible for me to persevere.

Until then I had been good; from that moment I became virtuous, or at least infatuated with virtue. This infatuation had begun in my head, but afterwards passed into my heart. The most noble pride there took root amongst the ruins of extirpated vanity. I affected nothing; I became what I appeared to be, and during four years at least, whilst this effervescence continued at its greatest height, there is nothing great and good that can enter the heart of man, of which I was not capable between heaven and myself. Hence flowed my sudden eloquence; hence, in my first writings, that fire really celestial, which consumed me, and whence during forty years not a single spark had escaped,

because it was not yet lighted up.

I was really transformed; my friends and acquaintance scarcely knew me. I was no longer that timid, and rather bashful than modest man, who neither dared to present himself, nor utter a word; whom a single pleasantry disconcerted, and whose face was covered with a blush the moment his eyes met those of a woman. I became bold, haughty, intrepid, with a confidence the more firm, as it was simple, and resided in my soul rather than in my manner. The contempt with which my profound meditations had inspired me for the manners, maxims and prejudices of the age in which I lived, rendered me proof against the raillery of those by whom they were possessed, and I crushed their little pleasantries with a sentence, as I would have crushed an insect with my fingers.

What a change! All Paris repeated the severe and acute sarcasms of the same man who, two years before, and ten years afterwards, knew not how to find what he had to say, nor the word he ought to employ. Let the situation in the world the most contrary to my natural disposition be sought after, and this will be found. Let one of the short moments of my life in which I became another man, and ceased to be myself, be recollected, this also will be found in the time of which I speak; but, instead of continuing only six days, or six weeks, it lasted almost six years, and would perhaps still continue, but for the particular circumstances which caused it to cease, and restored me to nature, above which I had, wished to soar.

The beginning of this change took place as soon as I had quitted Paris, and the sight of the vices of that city no longer kept up the indignation with which it had inspired me. I no sooner had lost sight of men than I ceased to despise them, and once removed from those who designed me evil, my hatred against them no longer existed. My heart, little fitted for hatred, pitied their misery, and even their wickedness. This situation, more pleasing but less sublime, soon allayed the ardent enthusiasm by which I had so long been transported; and I insensibly, almost to myself even, again became fearful, complaisant and timid; in a word, the same Jean Jacques I before had been.

Had this resolution gone no further than restoring me to myself, all would have been well; but unfortunately it rapidly carried me away to the other extreme. From that moment my mind in agitation passed the line of repose, and its oscillations, continually renewed, have never permitted it to remain here. I must enter into some detail of this second revolution; terrible and fatal era, of a fate unparalleled amongst mortals.

We were but three persons in our retirement; it was therefore natural our intimacy should be increased by leisure and solitude. This was the case between Theresa and myself. We passed in conversations in the shade the most charming and delightful hours, more so than any I had hitherto enjoyed. She seemed to taste of this sweet intercourse more than I had until then observed her to do; she opened her heart, and communicated to me, relative to her mother and family, things she had had

resolution enough to conceal for a great length of time. Both had received from Madam Dupin numerous presents, made them on my account, and mostly for me, but which the cunning old woman, to prevent my being angry, had appropriated to her own use and that of her other children, without suffering Theresa to have the least share, strongly forbidding her to say a word to me of the matter: an order the poor girl had obeyed with an incredible exactness.

But another thing which surprised me more than this had done, was the discovery that besides the private conversations Diderot and Grimm had frequently had with both to endeavor to detach them from me, in which, by means of the resistance of Theresa, they had not been able to succeed, they had afterwards had frequent conferences with the mother, the subject of which was a secret to the daughter. However, she knew little presents had been made, and that there were mysterious goings backward and forward, the motive of which was entirely unknown to her. When we left Paris, Madam le Vasseur had long been in the habit of going to see Grimm twice or thrice a month, and continuing with him for hours together, in conversation so secret that the servant was always sent out of the room.

I judged this motive to be of the same nature with the project into which they had attempted to make the daughter enter, by promising to procure her and her mother, by means of Madam d'Epinay, a salt huckster's license, or snuff-shop; in a word, by tempting her with the allurements of gain. They had been told

that, as I was not in a situation to do anything for them, I could not, on their account, do anything for myself. As in all this I saw nothing but good intentions, I was not absolutely displeased with them for it. The mystery was the only thing which gave me pain, especially on the part of the old woman, who moreover daily became more parasitical and flattering towards me. This, however, did not prevent her from reproaching her daughter in private with telling me everything, and loving me too much, observing to her she was a fool and would at length be made a dupe.

This woman possessed, to a supreme degree, the art of multiplying the presents made her, by concealing from one what she received from another, and from me what she received from all. I could have pardoned her avarice, but it was impossible I should forgive her dissimulation. What could she have to conceal from me whose happiness she knew principally consisted in that of herself and her daughter? What I had done for the daughter I had done for myself, but the services I rendered the mother merited on her part some acknowledgment. She ought, at least, to have thought herself obliged for them to her daughter, and to have loved me for the sake of her by whom I was already beloved. I had raised her from the lowest state of wretchedness; she received from my hands the means of subsistence, and was indebted to me for her acquaintance with the persons from whom she found means to reap considerable benefit. Theresa had long supported her by her industry, and now maintained her with my

bread. She owed everything to this daughter, for whom she had done nothing, and her other children, to whom she had given marriage portions, and on whose account she had ruined herself, far from giving her the least aid, devoured her substance and mine. I thought that in such a situation she ought to consider me as her only friend and most sure protector, and that, far from making of my own affairs a secret to me, and conspiring against me in my house, it was her duty faithfully to acquaint me with everything in which I was interested, when this came to her knowledge before it did to mine. In what light, therefore, could I consider her false and mysterious conduct? What could I think of the sentiments with which she endeavored to inspire her daughter? What monstrous ingratitude was hers, to endeavor to instil it into her from whom I expected my greatest consolation?

These reflections at length alienated my affections from this woman, and to such a degree that I could no longer look upon her but with contempt. I nevertheless continued to treat with respect the mother of the friend of my bosom, and in everything to show her almost the reverence of a son; but I must confess I could not remain long with her without pain, and that I never knew how to bear restraint.

This is another short moment of my life, in which I approached near to happiness without being able to attain it, and this by no fault of my own. Had the mother been of a good disposition we all three should have been happy to the end of our days; the longest liver only would have been to be pitied. Instead

of which, the reader will see the course things took, and judge whether or not it was in my power to change it.

Madam le Vasseur, who perceived I had got more full possession of the heart of Theresa, and that she had lost ground with her, endeavored to regain it; and instead of striving to restore herself to my good opinion by the mediation of her daughter attempted to alienate her affections from me. One of the means she employed was to call her family to her aid. I had begged Theresa not to invite any of her relations to the Hermitage, and she had promised me she would not. These were sent for in my absence, without consulting her, and she was afterwards prevailed upon to promise not to say anything of the matter. After the first step was taken all the rest were easy. When once we make a secret of anything to the person we love, we soon make little scruple of doing it in everything; the moment I was at the Chevrette the Hermitage was full of people who sufficiently amused themselves. A mother has always great power over a daughter of a mild disposition; yet notwithstanding all the old woman could do, she was never able to prevail upon Theresa to enter into her views, nor to persuade her to join in the league against me. For her part, she resolved upon doing it forever, and seeing on one side her daughter and myself, who were in a situation to live, and that was all; on the other, Diderot, Grimm, D' Holbach and Madam d'Epinay, who promised great things, and gave some little ones, she could not conceive it was possible to be in the wrong with the wife of a farmer-general and baron.

Had I been more clear sighted, I should from this moment have perceived I nourished a serpent in my bosom. But my blind confidence, which nothing had yet diminished, was such that I could not imagine she wished to injure the person she ought to love. Though I saw numerous conspiracies formed on every side, all I complain of was the tyranny of persons who called themselves my friends, and who, as it seemed, would force me to be happy in the manner they should point out, and not in that I had chosen for myself.

Although Theresa refused to join in the confederacy with her mother, she afterwards kept her secret. For this her motive was commendable, although I will not determine whether she did it well or ill. Two women, who have secrets between them, love to prattle together; this attracted them towards each other, and Theresa, by dividing herself, sometimes let me feel I was alone; for I could no longer consider as a society that which we all three formed.

I now felt the neglect I had been guilty of during the first years of our connection, in not taking advantage of the docility with which her love inspired her, to improve her talents and give her knowledge, which, by more closely connecting us in our retirement would agreeably have filled up her time and my own, without once suffering us to perceive the length of a private conversation. Not that this was ever exhausted between us, or that she seemed disgusted with our walks; but we had not a sufficient number of ideas common to both to make ourselves a great store,

and we could not incessantly talk of our future projects which were confined to those of enjoying the pleasures of life. The objects around us inspired me with reflections beyond the reach of her comprehension. An attachment of twelve years' standing had no longer need of words: we were too well acquainted with each other to have any new knowledge to acquire in that respect. The resource of puns, jests, gossiping and scandal, was all that remained. In solitude especially is it, that the advantage of living with a person who knows how to think is particularly felt. I wanted not this resource to amuse myself with her; but she would have stood in need of it to have always found amusement with me. The worst of all was our being obliged to hold our conversations when we could; her mother, who become importunate, obliged me to watch for opportunities to do it. I was under constraint in my own house: this is saying everything; the air of love was prejudicial to good friendship. We had an intimate intercourse without living in intimacy.

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