

ЖАН-ЖАК РУССО

THE CONFESSIONS OF
JEAN JACQUES
ROUSSEAU — VOLUME
08

Жан-Жак Руссо

**The Confessions of Jean
Jacques Rousseau — Volume 08**

«Public Domain»

Pycco Ж.

The Confessions of Jean Jacques Rousseau — Volume 08 /
Ж. Pycco — «Public Domain»,

Содержание

BOOK VIII	5
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	13

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

The Confessions of Jean Jacques Rousseau — Volume 08

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 harpsichord 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 *prosopoeia* 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 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'Epinau, 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 Francueil, 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 Zuletta, 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.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.