ENG 232: WORLD LITERATURE II



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World Literature II

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Licensing

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Editor's General Introduction

Dear Reader,

Welcome, and thank you for choosing this LibreText, an online textbook of world literature that covers the time period from c1651 to current times. In the “Professor’s Introductions” that precede each reading, you will find information to guide and enhance your understanding of the reading selections themselves. These introductions are based on close analysis of each of the readings presented here, and intensive scrutiny of the social and historical contexts from which they spring. I would like to acknowledge my late graduate advisor at the University of California, San Diego, Michel de Certeau, for introducing me to and guiding my early readings of these texts. Readings themselves are all from openly licensed and/or Public Domain sources.

Sincerely,

Sherry “Taz” Rosenthal

Professor of English (North Las Vegas Campus), College of Southern Nevada

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

1: Acts I, II, and III of TARTUFFE by Molière (first half)

1.1: Editor's Introduction

1.2: Act I

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1.1: Editor's Introduction

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Molière, born Jean-Baptiste Poquelin in Paris on January 15, 1622, is widely regarded as one of the greatest playwrights in Western literature, and is arguably the most influential comic playwright of the French classical era. Also, his work strongly impacted the history of theater due to his sharp wit, social commentary, and astute understanding of human nature. Molière's plays remain timeless in terms of their universal themes, such as greed, power, and human folly.

The most famous works of Moliere include *The Misanthrope*, *The Imaginary Invalid*, *The School for Wives*, *The Miser*, and *Tartuffe*. Each of these plays reflects the playwright's concern with the foibles of humanity, including hypocrisy, greed, vanity, and self-delusion.

In *Tartuffe*, arguably Moliere's most controversial work, he especially critiques religious hypocrisy. The play's action centers on the title character Tartuffe, a con man who feigns deeply piety, while manipulating and exploiting a wealthy man, Orgon. Moliere's sharp satire drew much criticism from the Catholic Church and religious authorities of the time, leading to the play being banned for five years. Still, *Tartuffe* remains one of Molière's lasting works, due to its timeless portrayal of the dangers of blind faith and deception.

First performed in 1664, *Tartuffe* explores conflicts between appearances and reality. Through its key plot points and underlying themes, this play offers not only a satirical critique of religious pretense, but also mirrors 17th-century France's social and political tensions.

The title character Tartuffe embodies the archetype of a fake devotee who manipulates others for personal gain. In this way, Molière critiques not so much religion itself, but the exploitation of supposed religious piety for selfish reasons. This theme continues to resonate today, timelessly underscoring the difference between real goodness and pretend virtue.

Moliere critiques a particular kind of "religious" individual, the hypocritical impostor who cloaks himself in religiosity in order to manipulate and exploit others. Such a person represents the antithesis of genuine religious devotion. Through the character of Tartuffe the imposter, Molière conveys the dangers of this kind of hypocrisy and the ease with which an unscrupulous person can trick and manipulate others.

Also, Moliere emphasizes Tartuffe's blatant character contradictions. For example, Tartuffe outwardly expresses humility and piety, yet his actions show his actual selfish, lascivious nature. He ingratiates himself with family patriarch Orgon by pretending moral superiority, but then in private, tries to seduce Orgon's wife. His duplicity features strongly in Molière's critique, since Tartuffe's outward show of virtue is merely a tool for personal gain, not a reflection of any true faith.

Both Orgon and Tartuffe embody hypocrisy, but in different ways that display their contrasting motivations and roles. For instance, Tartuffe the con man represents calculated, self-serving hypocrisy, while Orgon's hypocrisy is rooted in self-deception and a misguided idea of piety. Their respective hypocrisies not only drive the plot, but underscore the danger of blind faith, and equally, the importance of rational discernment.

Clearly, Tartuffe's hypocrisy is deliberate and manipulative. He presents himself as devout, earning Orgon's trust and admiration through elaborate displays of religious devotion. His false modesty and exaggerated religiosity are deployed to exploit Orgon's gullibility and secure power and influence over him and his family. The imposter's true goal is personal advancement, made clear during his attempts to marry Mariane for her dowry and seduce Elmire. Thus, the religious hypocrite's hypocrisy is a calculated performance, aimed toward achieving selfish ends, despite an appearance of virtue.

In contrast, Orgon's hypocrisy is less about intentional deceit and more about self-deception. Orgon genuinely believes Tartuffe is pious, so much so that he disregards the well-being of his own family. The hypocrisy of Orgon lies in his willingness to impose Tartuffe's false virtue on the family he is supposed to protect, while ignoring their actual needs. Blind faith leads Orgon to irrational choices, such as disinheriting his son Damis and arranging Mariane's unwanted marriage to Tartuffe. Therefore, Orgon's actions demonstrate a hypocritical abandonment of family responsibilities.

Moreover, Tartuffe manipulates not only Orgon but everyone around him, or tries to, with calculated charm and false morality, successfully deceiving Orgon but failing to convince the more perceptive members of Orgon's household. Characters like Elmire,

Cléante, and Dorine see through the facade, highlighting the disparity between real virtue and Tartuffe's counterfeit persona. On the other hand, Orgon's hypocrisy is revealed through his readiness to sacrifice his family's happiness and well-being.

Despite their differences, Orgon and Tartuffe's hypocrisies are interdependent. Tartuffe's successful deceit hinges on Orgon's gullibility, while Orgon's sense of moral superiority is bolstered by his association with Tartuffe's phony virtue. This shows how easily truth can be denied or ignored when critical thinking is forsaken.

Tartuffe's resolution brings the hypocrisies of both characters to a head. The title character's true nature is exposed once Elmire orchestrates a scheme to reveal to Orgon his idol's lascivious intentions. This forces Orgon to finally confront his own folly, and the dire consequences of his misplaced trust. Tartuffe's arrest and the king's intervention restore order and illustrate the importance of not only justice, but rationality.

Historically, the play struck a nerve at a time and place where the Catholic Church wielded considerable influence. Religious authorities at first perceived it as an attack on religion rather than on the abuse of religious power. The initial ban by King Louis XIV and its eventual approval after revisions, reflect the tension between state and church power. Molière's nuanced critique, however, is directed not at genuine faith or religious practice but at those who exploit supposed religiosity for their own selfish ends.

Modern society has its share of individuals who resemble Tartuffe. The con man's deceit and manipulation mirror contemporary purveyors of fraud and corruption, making a character like Tartuffe realistic, even today. Moliere's critique of hypocrisy remains relevant too, as people nowadays continue to encounter individuals who hide their actual intentions. In today's world, individuals like Orgon can be seen in those who, for example, fall prey to charismatic leaders, conspiracy theories, and/or unverified information. Orgon's gullibility and stubbornness in defending Tartuffe, despite evidence of his deceit, reflect challenges people face in distinguishing integrity from pretense.

The enduring nature of this play and its themes rests in Molière's keen observation of human behavior and societal dynamics. The themes of hypocrisy, gullibility, reason, and integrity are timeless, making the characters in *Tartuffe* relatable to twenty-first-century audiences.

In the first three acts, key conflicts arise between Orgon and his family, as well as between the fraud Tartuffe and the other characters. In this sense, the play critiques both religious hypocrisy and the foolishness of those who allow themselves to be manipulated by it.

The opening act sets the stage by introducing the central conflict between Orgon's household and Tartuffe. Orgon has invited Tartuffe into his home, and grown infatuated with him, believing him to be a model of religious virtue. However, it quickly becomes clear to everyone except Orgon that Tartuffe is a fake who employs religion as a mask to manipulate others and gain power over them.

Tartuffe's hypocrisy contrasts with honest, sensible characters such as Orgon's wife, Elmire, and brother-in-law, Cléante. Both see through Tartuffe's façade. Blind devotion emerges as a secondary theme, due to Orgon's stubborn faith in Tartuffe, which blinds him to the truth and alienates him from his family. Orgon's irrational reverence for Tartuffe leads to growing tension between him and the rest of the household, who grow increasingly frustrated by his refusal to see through Tartuffe's religious facade. In Act I, the primary conflict arises between Orgon and the family members who recognize Tartuffe's deceit. Orgon's blind irrationality includes his dismissive behavior toward his wife, and his own son, Damis, whose concerns about Tartuffe are met with hostility.

A subplot concerns Orgon's daughter, Mariane, and her fiance Valère. Although Mariane is in love with Valère, Orgon announces his intention to break their engagement and marry her to Tartuffe. This decision shocks his household and increases greatly the tension between Orgon and his family. The theme of patriarchal authority becomes more pronounced in this act. Orgon, convinced of Tartuffe's virtue, exercises his authority to make decisions contrary to the wishes of his family, particularly Mariane. His abuse of power reflects his descent into irrationality, based on his blind loyalty to Tartuffe. At the same time, the theme of reason vs. folly emerges, as other characters, especially the outspoken servant Dorine, challenge Orgon's decision. Dorine's practical wisdom and biting humor underscore Orgon's foolishness, and show the contrast between rationality and Orgon's blind devotion. The latter conflict also reflects the broader theme of control. Orgon, as patriarch, seeks to impose his will upon his daughter, with no thought to her happiness, which sets the stage for further confrontations.

Act III begins to reveal Tartuffe's true nature as his hypocrisy becomes more evident. Here, Tartuffe makes advances toward Elmire, exposing his lust and complete disregard for the religious piety he claims to possess. Elmire, understanding that Tartuffe is not the man her husband believes him to be, tries to use this knowledge to trap him.

Also, the theme of deception appears in this act. Tartuffe's predatory behavior toward Elmire reveals his deceit, but the challenge remains to convince Orgon of it. Tartuffe's manipulation of Orgon is based on his ability to disguise his true intentions, and Act III underscores how easily people can be fooled when they refuse to question appearances.

The conflict between truth and falsehood is also central to Act III. While the rest of the household recognizes Tartuffe's true character, Orgon remains stubbornly devoted. This creates great dramatic tension as the audience anticipates the revelation of Tartuffe's treachery but must still watch as Orgon continues to disregard reason and evidence.

A further key theme is gender dynamics, especially in the interactions between Tartuffe and Elmire. Elmire's calm, rational approach to dealing with Tartuffe contrasts against Orgon's irrationality, calling into question traditional gender roles. Elmire is an intelligent, capable woman, and one who takes action to protect her family, in contrast to Orgon's blindness.

The family's growing frustration with Orgon's irrational devotion to Tartuffe sets up the central conflict of the play: the battle to expose Tartuffe's deceit and free the household from his influence. At the heart of all this is Orgon's refusal to listen to reason, which not only threatens his family's happiness but his own patriarchal authority. This then sets the stage for a series of comedic yet poignant events that expose Tartuffe's real nature and intentions, and test the resilience of Orgon's family.

The collective effort to reveal Tartuffe's hypocrisy therefore becomes a central thread, leading to a climactic moment where Tartuffe is caught attempting to seduce Orgon's wife, Elmire. This pivotal scene finally exposes Tartuffe's duplicity to Orgon, who at last sees the truth. *Tartuffe* is overall a rich tapestry of comedy, social critique, and moral exploration. Its key points, from Orgon's misguided trust to the exposure of Tartuffe's deceit, examine themes of hypocrisy, reason, and justice, and make *Tartuffe* a timeless work that continues to resonate.

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1.2: Act I

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Author: Molière

Translator: Curtis Hidden Page

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK TARTUFFE; OR, THE HYPOCRITE ***

Produced by Dagny and John Vickers.

The Scene is at Paris

ACT I

SCENE I

MADAME PERNELLE and FLIPOTTE, her servant; ELMIRE, MARIANE, CLEANTE,
DAMIS, DORINE

MADAME PERNELLE
Come, come, Flipotte, and let me get away.

ELMIRE
You hurry so, I hardly can attend you.

MADAME PERNELLE
Then don't, my daughter-in law. Stay where you are.
I can dispense with your polite attentions.

ELMIRE
We're only paying what is due you, mother.
Why must you go away in such a hurry?

MADAME PERNELLE
Because I can't endure your carryings-on,
And no one takes the slightest pains to please me.
I leave your house, I tell you, quite disgusted;
You do the opposite of my instructions;
You've no respect for anything; each one
Must have his say; it's perfect pandemonium.

DORINE
If …

MADAME PERNELLE
You're a servant wench, my girl, and much

Too full of gab, and too impertinent
And free with your advice on all occasions.

DAMIS
But …

MADAME PERNELLE
You're a fool, my boy—f, o, o, l
Just spells your name. Let grandma tell you that
I've said a hundred times to my poor son,
Your father, that you'd never come to good
Or give him anything but plague and torment.

MARIANE
I think …

MADAME PERNELLE
O dearie me, his little sister!
You're all demureness, butter wouldn't melt
In your mouth, one would think to look at you.
Still waters, though, they say … you know the proverb;
And I don't like your doings on the sly.

ELMIRE
But, mother …

MADAME PERNELLE
Daughter, by your leave, your conduct
In everything is altogether wrong;
You ought to set a good example for 'em;
Their dear departed mother did much better.
You are extravagant; and it offends me,
To see you always decked out like a princess.
A woman who would please her husband's eyes
Alone, wants no such wealth of fineries.

CLEANTE
But, madam, after all …

MADAME PERNELLE
Sir, as for you,
The lady's brother, I esteem you highly,
Love and respect you. But, sir, all the same,
If I were in my son's, her husband's, place,
I'd urgently entreat you not to come
Within our doors. You preach a way of living
That decent people cannot tolerate.
I'm rather frank with you; but that's my way—
I don't mince matters, when I mean a thing.

DAMIS
Mr. Tartuffe, your friend, is mighty lucky …

MADAME PERNELLE
He is a holy man, and must be heeded;

I can't endure, with any show of patience,
To hear a scatterbrains like you attack him.

DAMIS
What! Shall I let a bigot criticaster
Come and usurp a tyrant's power here?
And shall we never dare amuse ourselves
Till this fine gentleman deigns to consent?

DORINE
If we must hark to him, and heed his maxims,
There's not a thing we do but what's a crime;
He censures everything, this zealous carper.

MADAME PERNELLE
And all he censures is well censured, too.
He wants to guide you on the way to heaven;
My son should train you all to love him well.

DAMIS
No, madam, look you, nothing—not my father
Nor anything—can make me tolerate him.
I should belie my feelings not to say so.
His actions rouse my wrath at every turn;
And I foresee that there must come of it
An open rupture with this sneaking scoundrel.

DORINE
Besides, 'tis downright scandalous to see
This unknown upstart master of the house—
This vagabond, who hadn't, when he came,
Shoes to his feet, or clothing worth six farthings,
And who so far forgets his place, as now
To censure everything, and rule the roost!

MADAME PERNELLE
Eh! Mercy sakes alive! Things would go better
If all were governed by his pious orders.

DORINE
He passes for a saint in your opinion.
In fact, he's nothing but a hypocrite.

MADAME PERNELLE
Just listen to her tongue!

DORINE
I wouldn't trust him,
Nor yet his Lawrence, without bonds and surety.

MADAME PERNELLE
I don't know what the servant's character
May be; but I can guarantee the master
A holy man. You hate him and reject him
Because he tells home truths to all of you.

'Tis sin alone that moves his heart to anger,
And heaven's interest is his only motive.

DORINE

Of course. But why, especially of late,
Can he let nobody come near the house?
Is heaven offended at a civil call
That he should make so great a fuss about it?
I'll tell you, if you like, just what I think;
(Pointing to Elmire)
Upon my word, he's jealous of our mistress.

MADAME PERNELLE

You hold your tongue, and think what you are saying.
He's not alone in censuring these visits;
The turmoil that attends your sort of people,
Their carriages forever at the door,
And all their noisy footmen, flocked together,
Annoy the neighbourhood, and raise a scandal.
I'd gladly think there's nothing really wrong;
But it makes talk; and that's not as it should be.

CLEANTE

Eh! madam, can you hope to keep folk's tongues
From wagging? It would be a grievous thing
If, for the fear of idle talk about us,
We had to sacrifice our friends. No, no;
Even if we could bring ourselves to do it,
Think you that everyone would then be silenced?
Against backbiting there is no defence
So let us try to live in innocence,
To silly tattle pay no heed at all,
And leave the gossips free to vent their gall.

DORINE

Our neighbour Daphne, and her little husband,
Must be the ones who slander us, I'm thinking.
Those whose own conduct's most ridiculous,
Are always quickest to speak ill of others;
They never fail to seize at once upon
The slightest hint of any love affair,
And spread the news of it with glee, and give it
The character they'd have the world believe in.
By others' actions, painted in their colours,
They hope to justify their own; they think,
In the false hope of some resemblance, either
To make their own intrigues seem innocent,
Or else to make their neighbours share the blame
Which they are loaded with by everybody.

MADAME PERNELLE

These arguments are nothing to the purpose.
Orante, we all know, lives a perfect life;

Her thoughts are all of heaven; and I have heard
That she condemns the company you keep.

DORINE
O admirable pattern! Virtuous dame!
She lives the model of austerity;
But age has brought this piety upon her,
And she's a prude, now she can't help herself.
As long as she could capture men's attentions
She made the most of her advantages;
But, now she sees her beauty vanishing,
She wants to leave the world, that's leaving her,
And in the specious veil of haughty virtue
She'd hide the weakness of her worn-out charms.
That is the way with all your old coquettes;
They find it hard to see their lovers leave 'em;
And thus abandoned, their forlorn estate
Can find no occupation but a prude's.
These pious dames, in their austerity,
Must carp at everything, and pardon nothing.
They loudly blame their neighbours' way of living,
Not for religion's sake, but out of envy,
Because they can't endure to see another
Enjoy the pleasures age has weaned them from.

MADAME PERNELLE (to Elmire)
There! That's the kind of rigmarole to please you,
Daughter-in-law. One never has a chance
To get a word in edgewise, at your house,
Because this lady holds the floor all day;
But none the less, I mean to have my say, too.
I tell you that my son did nothing wiser
In all his life, than take this godly man
Into his household; heaven sent him here,
In your great need, to make you all repent;
For your salvation, you must hearken to him;
He censures nothing but deserves his censure.
These visits, these assemblies, and these balls,
Are all inventions of the evil spirit.
You never hear a word of godliness
At them—but idle cackle, nonsense, flimflam.
Our neighbour often comes in for a share,
The talk flies fast, and scandal fills the air;
It makes a sober person's head go round,
At these assemblies, just to hear the sound
Of so much gab, with not a word to say;
And as a learned man remarked one day
Most aptly, 'tis the Tower of Babylon,
Where all, beyond all limit, babble on.
And just to tell you how this point came in …

(To Cleante)
So! Now the gentlemen must snicker, must he?
Go find fools like yourself to make you laugh
And don't …

(To Elmire)
Daughter, good-bye; not one word more.
As for this house, I leave the half unsaid;
But I shan't soon set foot in it again,

(Cuffing Flipotte)
Come, you! What makes you dream and stand agape,
Hussy! I'll warm your ears in proper shape!
March, trollop, march!

SCENE II

CLEANTE, DORINE

CLEANTE
I won't escort her down,
For fear she might fall foul of me again;
The good old lady …

DORINE
Bless us! What a pity
She shouldn't hear the way you speak of her!
She'd surely tell you you're too "good" by half,
And that she's not so "old" as all that, neither!

CLEANTE
How she got angry with us all for nothing!
And how she seems possessed with her Tartuffe!

DORINE
Her case is nothing, though, beside her son's!
To see him, you would say he's ten times worse!
His conduct in our late unpleasantness [1]
Had won him much esteem, and proved his courage
In service of his king; but now he's like
A man besotted, since he's been so taken
With this Tartuffe. He calls him brother, loves him
A hundred times as much as mother, son,
Daughter, and wife. He tells him all his secrets
And lets him guide his acts, and rule his conscience.
He fondles and embraces him; a sweetheart
Could not, I think, be loved more tenderly;
At table he must have the seat of honour,
While with delight our master sees him eat
As much as six men could; we must give up
The choicest tidbits to him; if he belches,
('tis a servant speaking) [2]
Master exclaims: "God bless you!"—Oh, he dotes
Upon him! he's his universe, his hero;
He's lost in constant admiration, quotes him

On all occasions, takes his trifling acts
For wonders, and his words for oracles.
The fellow knows his dupe, and makes the most on't,
He fools him with a hundred masks of virtue,
Gets money from him all the time by canting,
And takes upon himself to carp at us.
Even his silly coxcomb of a lackey
Makes it his business to instruct us too;
He comes with rolling eyes to preach at us,
And throws away our ribbons, rouge, and patches.
The wretch, the other day, tore up a kerchief
That he had found, pressed in the *Golden Legend*,
Calling it a horrid crime for us to mingle
The devil's finery with holy things.

[Footnote 1: Referring to the rebellion called La Fronde, during the minority of Louis XIV.]

[Footnote 2: Moliere's note, inserted in the text of all the old editions. It is a curious illustration of the desire for uniformity and dignity of style in dramatic verse of the seventeenth century, that Moliere feels called on to apologize for a touch of realism like this. Indeed, these lines were even omitted when the play was given.]

SCENE III

ELMIRE, MARIANE, DAMIS, CLEANTE, DORINE

ELMIRE (to Cleante)
You're very lucky to have missed the speech
She gave us at the door. I see my husband
Is home again. He hasn't seen me yet,
So I'll go up and wait till he comes in.

CLEANTE
And I, to save time, will await him here;
I'll merely say good-morning, and be gone.

SCENE IV

CLEANTE, DAMIS, DORINE

DAMIS
I wish you'd say a word to him about
My sister's marriage; I suspect Tartuffe
Opposes it, and puts my father up
To all these wretched shifts. You know, besides,
How nearly I'm concerned in it myself;
If love unites my sister and Valere,
I love his sister too; and if this marriage
Were to …

DORINE
He's coming.

SCENE V

ORGON, CLEANTE, DORINE

ORGON
Ah! Good morning, brother.

CLEANTE
I was just going, but am glad to greet you.
Things are not far advanced yet, in the country?

ORGON
Dorine …

(To Cleante)
Just wait a bit, please, brother-in-law.
Let me allay my first anxiety
By asking news about the family.

(To Dorine)
Has everything gone well these last two days?
What's happening? And how is everybody?

DORINE
Madam had fever, and a splitting headache
Day before yesterday, all day and evening.

ORGON
And how about Tartuffe?

DORINE
Tartuffe? He's well;
He's mighty well; stout, fat, fair, rosy-lipped.

ORGON
Poor man!

DORINE
At evening she had nausea
And couldn't touch a single thing for supper,
Her headache still was so severe.

ORGON
And how
About Tartuffe?

DORINE
He supped alone, before her,
And unctuously ate up two partridges,
As well as half a leg o' mutton, deviled.

ORGON
Poor man!

DORINE
All night she couldn't get a wink
Of sleep, the fever racked her so; and we
Had to sit up with her till daylight.

ORGON
How

About Tartuffe?

DORINE
Gently inclined to slumber,
He left the table, went into his room,
Got himself straight into a good warm bed,
And slept quite undisturbed until next morning.

ORGON
Poor man!

DORINE
At last she let us all persuade her,
And got up courage to be bled; and then
She was relieved at once.

ORGON
And how about
Tartuffe?

DORINE
He plucked up courage properly,
Bravely entrenched his soul against all evils,
And to replace the blood that she had lost,
He drank at breakfast four huge draughts of wine.

ORGON
Poor man!

DORINE
So now they both are doing well;
And I'll go straightway and inform my mistress
How pleased you are at her recovery.

SCENE VI

ORGON, CLEANTE

CLEANTE
Brother, she ridicules you to your face;
And I, though I don't want to make you angry,
Must tell you candidly that she's quite right.
Was such infatuation ever heard of?
And can a man to-day have charms to make you
Forget all else, relieve his poverty,
Give him a home, and then … ?

ORGON
Stop there, good brother,
You do not know the man you're speaking of.

CLEANTE
Since you will have it so, I do not know him;
But after all, to tell what sort of man
He is …

ORGON
Dear brother, you'd be charmed to know him;

Your raptures over him would have no end.
He is a man … who … ah! … in fact …a man
Whoever does his will, knows perfect peace,
And counts the whole world else, as so much dung.
His converse has transformed me quite; he weans
My heart from every friendship, teaches me
To have no love for anything on earth;
And I could see my brother, children, mother,
And wife, all die, and never care—a snap.

CLEANTE
Your feelings are humane, I must say, brother!

ORGON
Ah! If you'd seen him, as I saw him first,
You would have loved him just as much as I.
He came to church each day, with contrite mien,
Kneeled, on both knees, right opposite my place,
And drew the eyes of all the congregation,
To watch the fervour of his prayers to heaven;
With deep-drawn sighs and great ejaculations,
He humbly kissed the earth at every moment;
And when I left the church, he ran before me
To give me holy water at the door.
I learned his poverty, and who he was,
By questioning his servant, who is like him,
And gave him gifts; but in his modesty
He always wanted to return a part.
"It is too much," he'd say, "too much by half;
I am not worthy of your pity." Then,
When I refused to take it back, he'd go,
Before my eyes, and give it to the poor.
At length heaven bade me take him to my home,
And since that day, all seems to prosper here.
He censures everything, and for my sake
He even takes great interest in my wife;
He lets me know who ogles her, and seems
Six times as jealous as I am myself.
You'd not believe how far his zeal can go:
He calls himself a sinner just for trifles;
The merest nothing is enough to shock him;
So much so, that the other day I heard him
Accuse himself for having, while at prayer,
In too much anger caught and killed a flea.

CLEANTE
Zounds, brother, you are mad, I think! Or else
You're making sport of me, with such a speech.
What are you driving at with all this nonsense … ?

ORGON
Brother, your language smacks of atheism;

And I suspect your soul's a little tainted
Therewith. I've preached to you a score of times
That you'll draw down some judgment on your head.

CLEANTE

That is the usual strain of all your kind;
They must have every one as blind as they.
They call you atheist if you have good eyes;
And if you don't adore their vain grimaces,
You've neither faith nor care for sacred things.
No, no; such talk can't frighten me; I know
What I am saying; heaven sees my heart.
We're not the dupes of all your canting mummers;
There are false heroes—and false devotees;
And as true heroes never are the ones
Who make much noise about their deeds of honour,
Just so true devotees, whom we should follow,
Are not the ones who make so much vain show.
What! Will you find no difference between
Hypocrisy and genuine devoutness?
And will you treat them both alike, and pay
The self-same honour both to masks and faces
Set artifice beside sincerity,
Confuse the semblance with reality,
Esteem a phantom like a living person,
And counterfeit as good as honest coin?
Men, for the most part, are strange creatures, truly!
You never find them keep the golden mean;
The limits of good sense, too narrow for them,
Must always be passed by, in each direction;
They often spoil the noblest things, because
They go too far, and push them to extremes.
I merely say this by the way, good brother.

ORGON

You are the sole expounder of the doctrine;
Wisdom shall die with you, no doubt, good brother,
You are the only wise, the sole enlightened,
The oracle, the Cato, of our age.
All men, compared to you, are downright fools.

CLEANTE

I'm not the sole expounder of the doctrine,
And wisdom shall not die with me, good brother.
But this I know, though it be all my knowledge,
That there's a difference 'twixt false and true.
And as I find no kind of hero more
To be admired than men of true religion,
Nothing more noble or more beautiful
Than is the holy zeal of true devoutness;
Just so I think there's naught more odious
Than whited sepulchres of outward unction,

Those barefaced charlatans, those hireling zealots,
Whose sacrilegious, treacherous pretence
Deceives at will, and with impunity
Makes mockery of all that men hold sacred;
Men who, enslaved to selfish interests,
Make trade and merchandise of godliness,
And try to purchase influence and office
With false eye-rollings and affected raptures;
Those men, I say, who with uncommon zeal
Seek their own fortunes on the road to heaven;
Who, skilled in prayer, have always much to ask,
And live at court to preach retirement;
Who reconcile religion with their vices,
Are quick to anger, vengeful, faithless, tricky,
And, to destroy a man, will have the boldness
To call their private grudge the cause of heaven;
All the more dangerous, since in their anger
They use against us weapons men revere,
And since they make the world applaud their passion,
And seek to stab us with a sacred sword.
There are too many of this canting kind.
Still, the sincere are easy to distinguish;
And many splendid patterns may be found,
In our own time, before our very eyes
Look at Ariston, Periandre, Oronte,
Alcidamas, Clitandre, and Polydore;
No one denies their claim to true religion;
Yet they're no braggadocios of virtue,
They do not make insufferable display,
And their religion's human, tractable;
They are not always judging all our actions,
They'd think such judgment savoured of presumption;
And, leaving pride of words to other men,
'Tis by their deeds alone they censure ours.
Evil appearances find little credit
With them; they even incline to think the best
Of others. No caballers, no intriguers,
They mind the business of their own right living.
They don't attack a sinner tooth and nail,
For sin's the only object of their hatred;
Nor are they over-zealous to attempt
Far more in heaven's behalf than heaven would have 'em.
That is my kind of man, that is true living,
That is the pattern we should set ourselves.
Your fellow was not fashioned on this model;
You're quite sincere in boasting of his zeal;
But you're deceived, I think, by false pretences.

ORGON

My dear good brother-in-law, have you quite done?

CLEANTE
Yes.

ORGON
I'm your humble servant.

(Starts to go.)

CLEANTE
Just a word.
We'll drop that other subject. But you know
Valere has had the promise of your daughter.

ORGON
Yes.

CLEANTE
You had named the happy day.

ORGON
'Tis true.

CLEANTE
Then why put off the celebration of it?

ORGON
I can't say.

CLEANTE
Can you have some other plan
In mind?

ORGON
Perhaps.

CLEANTE
You mean to break your word?

ORGON
I don't say that.

CLEANTE
I hope no obstacle
Can keep you from performing what you've promised.

ORGON
Well, that depends.

CLEANTE
Why must you beat about?
Valere has sent me here to settle matters.

ORGON
Heaven be praised!

CLEANTE
What answer shall I take him?

ORGON
Why, anything you please.

CLEANTE
But we must know
Your plans. What are they?

ORGON
I shall do the will
Of Heaven.

CLEANTE
Come, be serious. You've given
Your promise to Valere. Now will you keep it?

ORGON
Good-bye.

CLEANTE (alone)
His love, methinks, has much to fear;
I must go let him know what's happening here.

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1.3: Act II

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ACT II

SCENE I

ORGON, MARIANE

ORGON
Now, Mariane.

MARIANE
Yes, father?

ORGON
Come; I'll tell you
A secret.

MARIANE
Yes … What are you looking for?

ORGON (looking into a small closet-room)
To see there's no one there to spy upon us;
That little closet's mighty fit to hide in.
There! We're all right now. Mariane, in you
I've always found a daughter dutiful
And gentle. So I've always love you dearly.

MARIANE
I'm grateful for your fatherly affection.

ORGON
Well spoken, daughter. Now, prove you deserve it
By doing as I wish in all respects.

MARIANE
To do so is the height of my ambition.

ORGON
Excellent well. What say you of—Tartuffe?

MARIANE
Who? I?

ORGON
Yes, you. Look to it how you answer.

MARIANE
Why! I'll say of him—anything you please.

SCENE II

ORGON, MARIANE, DORINE (coming in quietly and standing behind
Orgon, so that he does not see her)

ORGON
Well spoken. A good girl. Say then, my daughter,
That all his person shines with noble merit,
That he has won your heart, and you would like
To have him, by my choice, become your husband.
Eh?

MARIANE
Eh?

ORGON
What say you?

MARIANE
Please, what did you say?

ORGON
What?

MARIANE
Surely I mistook you, sir?

ORGON
How now?

MARIANE
Who is it, father, you would have me say
Has won my heart, and I would like to have
Become my husband, by your choice?

ORGON
Tartuffe.

MARIANE
But, father, I protest it isn't true!
Why should you make me tell this dreadful lie?

ORGON
Because I mean to have it be the truth.
Let this suffice for you: I've settled it.

MARIANE
What, father, you would … ?

ORGON
Yes, child, I'm resolved
To graft Tartuffe into my family.
So he must be your husband. That I've settled.
And since your duty ..

(Seeing Dorine)
What are you doing there?
Your curiosity is keen, my girl,
To make you come eavesdropping on us so.

DORINE
Upon my word, I don't know how the rumour
Got started—if 'twas guess-work or mere chance
But I had heard already of this match,
And treated it as utter stuff and nonsense.

ORGON
What! Is the thing incredible?

DORINE
So much so
I don't believe it even from yourself, sir.

ORGON
I know a way to make you credit it.

DORINE
No, no, you're telling us a fairly tale!

ORGON
I'm telling you just what will happen shortly.

DORINE
Stuff!

ORGON
Daughter, what I say is in good earnest.

DORINE
There, there, don't take your father seriously;
He's fooling.

ORGON
But I tell you …

DORINE
No. No use.
They won't believe you.

ORGON
If I let my anger …

DORINE
Well, then, we do believe you; and the worse
For you it is. What! Can a grown-up man
With that expanse of beard across his face
Be mad enough to want …?

ORGON
You hark me:
You've taken on yourself here in this house
A sort of free familiarity
That I don't like, I tell you frankly, girl.

DORINE
There, there, let's not get angry, sir, I beg you.
But are you making game of everybody?
Your daughter's not cut out for bigot's meat;
And he has more important things to think of.
Besides, what can you gain by such a match?
How can a man of wealth, like you, go choose
A wretched vagabond for son-in-law?

ORGON
You hold your tongue. And know, the less he has,
The better cause have we to honour him.
His poverty is honest poverty;
It should exalt him more than worldly grandeur,
For he has let himself be robbed of all,
Through careless disregard of temporal things
And fixed attachment to the things eternal.
My help may set him on his feet again,
Win back his property—a fair estate
He has at home, so I'm informed—and prove him
For what he is, a true-born gentleman.

DORINE
Yes, so he says himself. Such vanity
But ill accords with pious living, sir.
The man who cares for holiness alone
Should not so loudly boast his name and birth;
The humble ways of genuine devoutness
Brook not so much display of earthly pride.
Why should he be so vain? … But I offend you:
Let's leave his rank, then,—take the man himself:
Can you without compunction give a man
Like him possession of a girl like her?
Think what a scandal's sure to come of it!
Virtue is at the mercy of the fates,
When a girl's married to a man she hates;
The best intent to live an honest woman
Depends upon the husband's being human,
And men whose brows are pointed at afar
May thank themselves their wives are what they are.

For to be true is more than woman can,
With husbands built upon a certain plan;
And he who weds his child against her will
Owes heaven account for it, if she do ill.
Think then what perils wait on your design.

ORGON (to Mariane)
So! I must learn what's what from her, you see!

DORINE
You might do worse than follow my advice.

ORGON
Daughter, we can't waste time upon this nonsense;
I know what's good for you, and I'm your father.
True, I had promised you to young Valere;
But, first, they tell me he's inclined to gamble,
And then, I fear his faith is not quite sound.
I haven't noticed that he's regular
At church.

DORINE
You'd have him run there just when you do.
Like those who go on purpose to be seen?

ORGON
I don't ask your opinion on the matter.
In short, the other is in Heaven's best graces,
And that is riches quite beyond compare.
This match will bring you every joy you long for;
'Twill be all steeped in sweetness and delight.
You'll live together, in your faithful loves,
Like two sweet children, like two turtle-doves;
You'll never fail to quarrel, scold, or tease,
And you may do with him whate'er you please.

DORINE
With him? Do naught but give him horns, I'll warrant.

ORGON
Out on thee, wench!

DORINE
I tell you he's cut out for't;
However great your daughter's virtue, sir,
His destiny is sure to prove the stronger.

ORGON
Have done with interrupting. Hold your tongue.
Don't poke your nose in other people's business.

DORINE (She keeps interrupting him, just as he turns and starts
to speak to his daughter).
If I make bold, sir, 'tis for your own good.

ORGON
You're too officious; pray you, hold your tongue.

DORINE
'Tis love of you …

ORGON
I want none of your love.

DORINE
Then I will love you in your own despite.

ORGON
You will, eh?

DORINE
Yes, your honour's dear to me;
I can't endure to see you made the butt
Of all men's ridicule.

ORGON
Won't you be still?

DORINE
'Twould be a sin to let you make this match.

ORGON
Won't you be still, I say, you impudent viper!

DORINE
What! you are pious, and you lose your temper?

ORGON
I'm all wrought up, with your confounded nonsense;
Now, once for all, I tell you hold your tongue.

DORINE
Then mum's the word; I'll take it out in thinking.

ORGON
Think all you please; but not a syllable
To me about it, or … you understand!

(Turning to his daughter.)
As a wise father, I've considered all
With due deliberation.

DORINE
I'll go mad
If I can't speak.
(She stops the instant he turns his head.)

ORGON
Though he's no lady's man,
Tartuffe is well enough …

DORINE
A pretty phiz!

ORGON
So that, although you may not care at all
For his best qualities …

DORINE
A handsome dowry!

(Orgon turns and stands in front of her, with arms folded, eyeing her.)
Were I in her place, any man should rue it
Who married me by force, that's mighty certain;
I'd let him know, and that within a week,
A woman's vengeance isn't far to seek.

ORGON (to Dorine)
So—nothing that I say has any weight?

DORINE
Eh? What's wrong now? I didn't speak to you.

ORGON
What were you doing?

DORINE
Talking to myself.

ORGON
Oh! Very well. (Aside.) Her monstrous impudence
Must be chastised with one good slap in the face.

(He stands ready to strike her, and, each time he speaks to his daughter, he glances toward her; but she stands still and says not a word.) [3]

[Footnote 3: As given at the Comedie francaise, the action is as follows: While Orgon says, "You must approve of my design," Dorine is making signs to Mariane to resist his orders; Orgon turns around suddenly; but Dorine quickly changes her gesture and with the hand which she had lifted calmly arranges her hair and her cap. Orgon goes on, "Think of the husband …" and stops before the middle of his sentence to turn and catch the beginning of Dorine's gesture; but he is too quick this time, and Dorine stands looking at his furious countenance with a sweet and gentle expression. He turns and goes on, and the obstinate Dorine again lifts her hand behind his shoulder to urge Mariane to resistance: this time he catches her; but just as he swings his shoulder to give her the promised blow, she stops him by changing the intent of her gesture, and carefully picking from the top of his sleeve a bit of fluff which she holds carefully between her fingers, then blows into the air, and watches intently as it floats away. Orgon is paralysed by her innocence of expression, and compelled to hide his rage.—Regnier, *Le Tartuffe des Comediens*.]

ORGON
Daughter, you must approve of my design….
Think of this husband … I have chosen for you…

(To Dorine)
Why don't you talk to yourself?

DORINE
Nothing to say.

ORGON
One little word more.

DORINE
Oh, no, thanks. Not now.

ORGON
Sure, I'd have caught you.

DORINE
Faith, I'm no such fool.

ORGON
So, daughter, now obedience is the word;
You must accept my choice with reverence.

DORINE (running away)
You'd never catch me marrying such a creature.

ORGON (swinging his hand at her and missing her)
Daughter, you've such a pestilent hussy there
I can't live with her longer, without sin.
I can't discuss things in the state I'm in.
My mind's so flustered by her insolent talk,
To calm myself, I must go take a walk.

SCENE III

MARIANE, DORINE

DORINE
Say, have you lost the tongue from out your head?
And must I speak your role from A to Zed?
You let them broach a project that's absurd,
And don't oppose it with a single word!

MARIANE
What can I do? My father is the master.

DORINE
Do? Everything, to ward off such disaster.

MARIANE
But what?

DORINE
Tell him one doesn't love by proxy;
Tell him you'll marry for yourself, not him;
Since you're the one for whom the thing is done,
You are the one, not he, the man must please;
If his Tartuffe has charmed him so, why let him
Just marry him himself—no one will hinder.

MARIANE
A father's rights are such, it seems to me,
That I could never dare to say a word.

DORINE
Came, talk it out. Valere has asked your hand:
Now do you love him, pray, or do you not?

MARIANE
Dorine! How can you wrong my love so much,
And ask me such a question? Have I not
A hundred times laid bare my heart to you?
Do you know how ardently I love him?

DORINE
How do I know if heart and words agree,
And if in honest truth you really love him?

MARIANE
Dorine, you wrong me greatly if you doubt it;
I've shown my inmost feelings, all too plainly.

DORINE
So then, you love him?

MARIANE
Yes, devotedly.

DORINE
And he returns your love, apparently?

MARIANE
I think so.

DORINE
And you both alike are eager
To be well married to each other?

MARIANE
Surely.

DORINE
Then what's your plan about this other match?

MARIANE
To kill myself, if it is forced upon me.

DORINE
Good! That's a remedy I hadn't thought of.
Just die, and everything will be all right.
This medicine is marvellous, indeed!
It drives me mad to hear folk talk such nonsense.

MARIANE
Oh dear, Dorine you get in such a temper!
You have no sympathy for people's troubles.

DORINE
I have no sympathy when folk talk nonsense,
And flatten out as you do, at a pinch.

MARIANE
But what can you expect?—if one is timid?—

DORINE
But what is love worth, if it has no courage?

MARIANE
Am I not constant in my love for him?
Is't not his place to win me from my father?

DORINE
But if your father is a crazy fool,

And quite bewitched with his Tartuffe? And breaks
His bounden word? Is that your lover's fault?

MARIANE
But shall I publicly refuse and scorn
This match, and make it plain that I'm in love?
Shall I cast off for him, whate'er he be,
Womanly modesty and filial duty?
You ask me to display my love in public … ?

DORINE
No, no, I ask you nothing. You shall be
Mister Tartuffe's; why, now I think of it,
I should be wrong to turn you from this marriage.
What cause can I have to oppose your wishes?
So fine a match! An excellent good match!
Mister Tartuffe! Oh ho! No mean proposal!
Mister Tartuffe, sure, take it all in all,
Is not a man to sneeze at—oh, by no means!
'Tis no small luck to be his happy spouse.
The whole world joins to sing his praise already;
He's noble—in his parish; handsome too;
Red ears and high complexion—oh, my lud!
You'll be too happy, sure, with him for husband.

MARIANE
Oh dear! …

DORINE
What joy and pride will fill your heart
To be the bride of such a handsome fellow!

MARIANE
Oh, stop, I beg you; try to find some way
To help break off the match. I quite give in,
I'm ready to do anything you say.

DORINE
No, no, a daughter must obey her father,
Though he should want to make her wed a monkey.
Besides, your fate is fine. What could be better!
You'll take the stage-coach to his little village,
And find it full of uncles and of cousins,
Whose conversation will delight you. Then
You'll be presented in their best society.
You'll even go to call, by way of welcome,
On Mrs. Bailiff, Mrs. Tax-Collector,
Who'll patronise you with a folding-stool.
There, once a year, at carnival, you'll have
Perhaps—a ball; with orchestra—two bag-pipes;
And sometimes a trained ape, and Punch and Judy;
Though if your husband …

MARIANE
Oh, you'll kill me. Please
Contrive to help me out with your advice.

DORINE
I thank you kindly.

MARIANE
Oh! Dorine, I beg you …

DORINE
To serve you right, this marriage must go through.

MARIANE
Dear girl!

DORINE
No.

MARIANE
If I say I love Valere …

DORINE
No, no. Tartuffe's your man, and you shall taste him.

MARIANE
You know I've always trusted you; now help me …

DORINE
No, you shall be, my faith! Tartuffified.

MARIANE
Well, then, since you've no pity for my fate
Let me take counsel only of despair;
It will advise and help and give me courage;
There's one sure cure, I know, for all my troubles.

(She starts to go.)

DORINE
There, there! Come back. I can't be angry long.
I must take pity on you, after all.

MARIANE
Oh, don't you see, Dorine, if I must bear
This martyrdom, I certainly shall die.

DORINE
Now don't you fret. We'll surely find some way.
To hinder this … But here's Valere, your lover.

SCENE IV

VALERE, MARIANE, DORINE

VALERE
Madam, a piece of news—quite new to me—
Has just come out, and very fine it is.

MARIANE
What piece of news?

VALERE
Your marriage with Tartuffe.

MARIANE
'Tis true my father has this plan in mind.

VALERE
Your father, madam …

MARIANE
Yes, he's changed his plans,
And did but now propose it to me.

VALERE
What!
Seriously?

MARIANE
Yes, he was serious,
And openly insisted on the match.

VALERE
And what's your resolution in the matter,
Madam?

MARIANE
I don't know.

VALERE
That's a pretty answer.
You don't know?

MARIANE
No.

VALERE
No?

MARIANE
What do you advise?

VALERE
I? My advice is, marry him, by all means.

MARIANE
That's your advice?

VALERE
Yes.

MARIANE
Do you mean it?

VALERE
Surely.
A splendid choice, and worthy of your acceptance.

MARIANE
Oh, very well, sir! I shall take your counsel.

VALERE
You'll find no trouble taking it, I warrant.

MARIANE
No more than you did giving it, be sure.

VALERE
I gave it, truly, to oblige you, madam.

MARIANE
And I shall take it to oblige you, sir.

Dorine (withdrawing to the back of the stage)
Let's see what this affair will come to.

VALERE
So,
That is your love? And it was all deceit
When you …

MARIANE
I beg you, say no more of that.
You told me, squarely, sir, I should accept
The husband that is offered me; and I
Will tell you squarely that I mean to do so,
Since you have given me this good advice.

VALERE
Don't shield yourself with talk of my advice.
You had your mind made up, that's evident;
And now you're snatching at a trifling pretext
To justify the breaking of your word.

MARIANE
Exactly so.

VALERE
Of course it is; your heart
Has never known true love for me.

MARIANE
Alas!
You're free to think so, if you please.

VALERE
Yes, yes,
I'm free to think so; and my outraged love
May yet forestall you in your perfidy,
And offer elsewhere both my heart and hand.

MARIANE
No doubt of it; the love your high deserts
May win …

VALERE
Good Lord, have done with my deserts!
I know I have but few, and you have proved it.
But I may find more kindness in another;

I know of someone, who'll not be ashamed
To take your leavings, and make up my loss.

MARIANE
The loss is not so great; you'll easily
Console yourself completely for this change.

VALERE
I'll try my best, that you may well believe.
When we're forgotten by a woman's heart,
Our pride is challenged; we, too, must forget;
Or if we cannot, must at least pretend to.
No other way can man such baseness prove,
As be a lover scorned, and still in love.

MARIANE
In faith, a high and noble sentiment.

VALERE
Yes; and it's one that all men must approve.
What! Would you have me keep my love alive,
And see you fly into another's arms
Before my very eyes; and never offer
To someone else the heart that you had scorned?

MARIANE
Oh, no, indeed! For my part, I could wish
That it were done already.

VALERE
What! You wish it?

MARIANE
Yes.

VALERE
This is insult heaped on injury;
I'll go at once and do as you desire.

(He takes a step or two as if to go away.)

MARIANE
Oh, very well then.

VALERE (turning back)
But remember this.
'Twas you that drove me to this desperate pass.

MARIANE
Of course.

VALERE (turning back again)
And in the plan that I have formed
I only follow your example.

MARIANE
Yes.

VALERE (at the door)
Enough; you shall be punctually obeyed.

MARIANE
So much the better.

VALERE (coming back again)
This is once for all.

MARIANE
So be it, then.

VALERE (He goes toward the door, but just as he reaches it, turns around)
Eh?

MARIANE
What?

VALERE
You didn't call me?

MARIANE
I? You are dreaming.

VALERE
Very well, I'm gone. Madam, farewell.

(He walks slowly away.)

MARIANE
Farewell, sir.

DORINE
I must say
You've lost your senses and both gone clean daft!
I've let you fight it out to the end o' the chapter
To see how far the thing could go. Oho, there,
Mister Valere!

(She goes and seizes him by the arm, to stop him. He makes a great show of resistance.)

VALERE
What do you want, Dorine?

DORINE
Come here.

VALERE
No, no, I'm quite beside myself.
Don't hinder me from doing as she wishes.

DORINE
Stop!

VALERE
No. You see, I'm fixed, resolved, determined.

DORINE
So!

MARIANE (aside)
Since my presence pains him, makes him go,
I'd better go myself, and leave him free.

DORINE (leaving Valere, and running after Mariane)
Now t'other! Where are you going?

MARIANE
Let me be.

DORINE.
Come back.

MARIANE
No, no, it isn't any use.

VALERE (aside)
'Tis clear the sight of me is torture to her;
No doubt, t'were better I should free her from it.

DORINE (leaving Mariane and running after Valere)
Same thing again! Deuce take you both, I say.
Now stop your fooling; come here, you; and you.

(She pulls first one, then the other, toward the middle of the stage.)

VALERE (to Dorine)
What's your idea?

MARIANE (to Dorine)
What can you mean to do?

DORINE
Set you to rights, and pull you out o' the scrape.

(To Valere)
Are you quite mad, to quarrel with her now?

VALERE
Didn't you hear the things she said to me?

DORINE (to Mariane)
Are you quite mad, to get in such a passion?

MARIANE
Didn't you see the way he treated me?

DORINE
Fools, both of you.

(To Valere)
She thinks of nothing else
But to keep faith with you, I vouch for it.

(To Mariane)
And he loves none but you, and longs for nothing
But just to marry you, I stake my life on't.

MARIANE (to Valere)
Why did you give me such advice then, pray?

VALERE (to Mariane)
Why ask for my advice on such a matter?

DORINE
You both are daft, I tell you. Here, your hands.

(To Valere)
Come, yours.

VALERE (giving Dorine his hand)
What for?

DORINE (to Mariane)
Now, yours.

MARIANE (giving Dorine her hand)
But what's the use?

DORINE
Oh, quick now, come along. There, both of you—
You love each other better than you think.

(Valere and Mariane hold each other's hands some time without looking at each other.)

VALERE (at last turning toward Mariane)
Come, don't be so ungracious now about it;
Look at a man as if you didn't hate him.

(Mariane looks sideways toward Valere, with just a bit of a smile.)

DORINE
My faith and troth, what fools these lovers be!

VALERE (to Mariane)
But come now, have I not a just complaint?
And truly, are you not a wicked creature
To take delight in saying what would pain me?

MARIANE
And are you not yourself the most ungrateful … ?

DORINE
Leave this discussion till another time;
Now, think how you'll stave off this plaguy marriage.

MARIANE
Then tell us how to go about it.

DORINE
Well,
We'll try all sorts of ways.

(To Mariane)
Your father's daft;

(To Valere)
This plan is nonsense.

(To Mariane)
You had better humour

His notions by a semblance of consent,
So that in case of danger, you can still
Find means to block the marriage by delay.
If you gain time, the rest is easy, trust me.
One day you'll fool them with a sudden illness,
Causing delay; another day, ill omens:
You've met a funeral, or broke a mirror,
Or dreamed of muddy water. Best of all,
They cannot marry you to anyone
Without your saying yes. But now, methinks,
They mustn't find you chattering together.

(To Valere)
You, go at once and set your friends at work
To make him keep his word to you; while we
Will bring the brother's influence to bear,
And get the step-mother on our side, too.
Good-bye.

VALERE (to Mariane)
Whatever efforts we may make,
My greatest hope, be sure, must rest on you.

MARIANE (to Valere)
I cannot answer for my father's whims;
But no one save Valere shall ever have me.

VALERE
You thrill me through with joy! Whatever comes …

DORINE
Oho! These lovers! Never done with prattling!
Now go.

VALERE (starting to go, and coming back again)
One last word …

DORINE
What a gabble and pother!
Be off! By this door, you. And you, by t'other.

(She pushes them off, by the shoulders, in opposite directions.)

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1.4: Act III

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK TARTUFFE; OR, THE HYPOCRITE ***

Produced by Dagny and John Vickers.

ACT III

SCENE I

DAMIS, DORINE

DAMIS
May lightning strike me dead this very instant,
May I be everywhere proclaimed a scoundrel,
If any reverence or power shall stop me,
And if I don't do straightway something desperate!

DORINE
I beg you, moderate this towering passion;
Your father did but merely mention it.
Not all things that are talked of turn to facts;
The road is long, sometimes, from plans to acts.

DAMIS
No, I must end this paltry fellow's plots,
And he shall hear from me a truth or two.

DORINE
So ho! Go slow now. Just you leave the fellow—
Your father too—in your step-mother's hands.
She has some influence with this Tartuffe,
He makes a point of heeding all she says,
And I suspect that he is fond of her.
Would God 'twere true!—'Twould be the height of humour
Now, she has sent for him, in your behalf,
To sound him on this marriage, to find out
What his ideas are, and to show him plainly
What troubles he may cause, if he persists

In giving countenance to this design.
His man says, he's at prayers, I mustn't see him,
But likewise says, he'll presently be down.
So off with you, and let me wait for him.

DAMIS
I may be present at this interview.

DORINE
No, no! They must be left alone.

DAMIS
I won't
So much as speak to him.

DORINE
Go on! We know you
And your high tantrums. Just the way to spoil things!
Be off.

DAMIS
No, I must see—I'll keep my temper.

DORINE
Out on you, what a plague! He's coming. Hide!

(Damis goes and hides in the closet at the back of the stage.)

SCENE II

TARTUFFE, DORINE

TARTUFFE (speaking to his valet, off the stage, as soon as he sees
Dorine is there)
Lawrence, put up my hair-cloth shirt and scourge,
And pray that Heaven may shed its light upon you.
If any come to see me, say I'm gone
To share my alms among the prisoners.

DORINE (aside)
What affectation and what showing off!

TARTUFFE
What do you want with me?

DORINE
To tell you …

TARTUFFE (taking a handkerchief from his pocket)
Ah!
Before you speak, pray take this handkerchief.

DORINE
What?

TARTUFFE
Cover up that bosom, which I can't
Endure to look on. Things like that offend
Our souls, and fill our minds with sinful thoughts.

DORINE
Are you so tender to temptation, then,
And has the flesh such power upon your senses?
I don't know how you get in such a heat;
For my part, I am not so prone to lust,
And I could see you stripped from head to foot,
And all your hide not tempt me in the least.

TARTUFFE
Show in your speech some little modesty,
Or I must instantly take leave of you.

DORINE
No, no, I'll leave you to yourself; I've only
One thing to say: Madam will soon be down,
And begs the favour of a word with you.

TARTUFFE
Ah! Willingly.

DORINE (aside)
How gentle all at once!
My faith, I still believe I've hit upon it.

TARTUFFE
Will she come soon?

DORINE
I think I hear her now.
Yes, here she is herself; I'll leave you with her.

SCENE III

ELMIRE, TARTUFFE

TARTUFFE
May Heaven's overflowing kindness ever
Give you good health of body and of soul,
And bless your days according to the wishes
And prayers of its most humble votary!

ELMIRE
I'm very grateful for your pious wishes.
But let's sit down, so we may talk at ease.

TARTUFFE (after sitting down)
And how are you recovered from your illness?

ELMIRE (sitting down also)
Quite well; the fever soon let go its hold.

TARTUFFE
My prayers, I fear, have not sufficient merit
To have drawn down this favour from on high;
But each entreaty that I made to Heaven
Had for its object your recovery.

ELMIRE
You're too solicitous on my behalf.

TARTUFFE
We could not cherish your dear health too much;
I would have given mine, to help restore it.

ELMIRE
That's pushing Christian charity too far;
I owe you many thanks for so much kindness.

TARTUFFE
I do far less for you than you deserve.

ELMIRE
There is a matter that I wished to speak of
In private; I am glad there's no one here
To listen.

TARTUFFE
Madam, I am overjoyed.
'Tis sweet to find myself alone with you.
This is an opportunity I've asked
Of Heaven, many a time; till now, in vain.

ELMIRE
All that I wish, is just a word from you,
Quite frank and open, hiding nothing from me.

(DAMIS, without their seeing him, opens the closet door halfway.)

TARTUFFE
I too could wish, as Heaven's especial favour,
To lay my soul quite open to your eyes,
And swear to you, the trouble that I made
About those visits which your charms attract,
Does not result from any hatred toward you,
But rather from a passionate devotion,
And purest motives …

ELMIRE
That is how I take it,
I think 'tis my salvation that concerns you.

TARTUFFE (pressing her finger tips)
Madam, 'tis so; and such is my devotion …

ELMIRE
Ouch! but you squeeze too hard.

TARTUFFE
Excess of zeal.
In no way could I ever mean to hurt you,
And I'd as soon …

(He puts his hand on her knee.)

ELMIRE
What's your hand doing there?

TARTUFFE
Feeling your gown; the stuff is very soft.

ELMIRE
Let be, I beg you; I am very ticklish.

(She moves her chair away, and Tartuffe brings his nearer.)

TARTUFFE (handling the lace yoke of Elmire's dress)
Dear me how wonderful in workmanship
This lace is! They do marvels, nowadays;
Things of all kinds were never better made.

ELMIRE
Yes, very true. But let us come to business.
They say my husband means to break his word.
And marry Mariane to you. Is't so?

TARTUFFE
He did hint some such thing; but truly, madam,
That's not the happiness I'm yearning after;
I see elsewhere the sweet compelling charms
Of such a joy as fills my every wish.

ELMIRE
You mean you cannot love terrestrial things.

TARTUFFE
The heart within my bosom is not stone.

ELMIRE
I well believe your sighs all tend to Heaven,
And nothing here below can stay your thoughts.

TARTUFFE
Love for the beauty of eternal things
Cannot destroy our love for earthly beauty;
Our mortal senses well may be entranced
By perfect works that Heaven has fashioned here.
Its charms reflected shine in such as you,
And in yourself, its rarest miracles;
It has displayed such marvels in your face,
That eyes are dazed, and hearts are rapt away;
I could not look on you, the perfect creature,
Without admiring Nature's great Creator,
And feeling all my heart inflamed with love
For you, His fairest image of Himself.
At first I trembled lest this secret love
Might be the Evil Spirit's artful snare;
I even schooled my heart to flee your beauty,
Thinking it was a bar to my salvation.
But soon, enlightened, O all lovely one,
I saw how this my passion may be blameless,
How I may make it fit with modesty,
And thus completely yield my heart to it.

'Tis I must own, a great presumption in me
To dare make you the offer of my heart;
My love hopes all things from your perfect goodness,
And nothing from my own poor weak endeavour.
You are my hope, my stay, my peace of heart;
On you depends my torment or my bliss;
And by your doom of judgment, I shall be
Blest, if you will; or damned, by your decree.

ELMIRE
Your declaration's turned most gallantly;
But truly, it is just a bit surprising.
You should have better armed your heart, methinks,
And taken thought somewhat on such a matter.
A pious man like you, known everywhere …

TARTUFFE
Though pious, I am none the less a man;
And when a man beholds your heavenly charms,
The heart surrenders, and can think no more.
I know such words seem strange, coming from me;
But, madam, I'm no angel, after all;
If you condemn my frankly made avowal
You only have your charming self to blame.
Soon as I saw your more than human beauty,
You were thenceforth the sovereign of my soul;
Sweetness ineffable was in your eyes,
That took by storm my still resisting heart,
And conquered everything, fasts, prayers, and tears,
And turned my worship wholly to yourself.
My looks, my sighs, have spoke a thousand times;
Now, to express it all, my voice must speak.
If but you will look down with gracious favour
Upon the sorrows of your worthless slave,
If in your goodness you will give me comfort
And condescend unto my nothingness,
I'll ever pay you, O sweet miracle,
An unexampled worship and devotion.
Then too, with me your honour runs no risk;
With me you need not fear a public scandal.
These court gallants, that women are so fond of,
Are boastful of their acts, and vain in speech;
They always brag in public of their progress;
Soon as a favour's granted, they'll divulge it;
Their tattling tongues, if you but trust to them,
Will foul the altar where their hearts have worshipped.
But men like me are so discreet in love,
That you may trust their lasting secrecy.
The care we take to guard our own good name
May fully guarantee the one we love;

So you may find, with hearts like ours sincere,
Love without scandal, pleasure without fear.

ELMIRE
I've heard you through—your speech is clear, at least.
But don't you fear that I may take a fancy
To tell my husband of your gallant passion,
And that a prompt report of this affair
May somewhat change the friendship which he bears you?

TARTUFFE
I know that you're too good and generous,
That you will pardon my temerity,
Excuse, upon the score of human frailty,
The violence of passion that offends you,
And not forget, when you consult your mirror,
That I'm not blind, and man is made of flesh.

ELMIRE
Some women might do otherwise, perhaps,
But I am willing to employ discretion,
And not repeat the matter to my husband;
But in return, I'll ask one thing of you:
That you urge forward, frankly and sincerely,
The marriage of Valere to Mariane;
That you give up the unjust influence
By which you hope to win another's rights;
And …

SCENE IV

ELMIRE, DAMIS, TARTUFFE

DAMIS (coming out of the closet-room where he had been hiding)
No, I say! This thing must be made public.
I was just there, and overheard it all;
And Heaven's goodness must have brought me there
On purpose to confound this scoundrel's pride
And grant me means to take a signal vengeance
On his hypocrisy and arrogance,
And undeceive my father, showing up
The rascal caught at making love to you.

ELMIRE
No, no; it is enough if he reforms,
Endeavouring to deserve the favour shown him.
And since I've promised, do not you belie me.
'Tis not my way to make a public scandal;
An honest wife will scorn to heed such follies,
And never fret her husband's ears with them.

DAMIS
You've reasons of your own for acting thus;
And I have mine for doing otherwise.
To spare him now would be a mockery;

His bigot's pride has triumphed all too long
Over my righteous anger, and has caused
Far too much trouble in our family.
The rascal all too long has ruled my father,
And crossed my sister's love, and mine as well.
The traitor now must be unmasked before him:
And Providence has given me means to do it.
To Heaven I owe the opportunity,
And if I did not use it now I have it,
I should deserve to lose it once for all.

ELMIRE
Damis …

DAMIS
No, by your leave; I'll not be counselled.
I'm overjoyed. You needn't try to tell me
I must give up the pleasure of revenge.
I'll make an end of this affair at once;
And, to content me, here's my father now.

SCENE V

ORGON, ELMIRE, DAMIS, TARTUFFE

DAMIS
Father, we've news to welcome your arrival,
That's altogether novel, and surprising.
You are well paid for your caressing care,
And this fine gentleman rewards your love
Most handsomely, with zeal that seeks no less
Than your dishonour, as has now been proven.
I've just surprised him making to your wife
The shameful offer of a guilty love.
She, somewhat over gentle and discreet,
Insisted that the thing should be concealed;
But I will not condone such shamelessness,
Nor so far wrong you as to keep it secret.

ELMIRE
Yes, I believe a wife should never trouble
Her husband's peace of mind with such vain gossip;
A woman's honour does not hang on telling;
It is enough if she defend herself;
Or so I think; Damis, you'd not have spoken,
If you would but have heeded my advice.

SCENE VI

ORGON, DAMIS, TARTUFFE

ORGON
Just Heaven! Can what I hear be credited?

TARTUFFE
Yes, brother, I am wicked, I am guilty,

A miserable sinner, steeped in evil,
The greatest criminal that ever lived.
Each moment of my life is stained with soilures;
And all is but a mass of crime and filth;
Heaven, for my punishment, I see it plainly,
Would mortify me now. Whatever wrong
They find to charge me with, I'll not deny it
But guard against the pride of self-defence.
Believe their stories, arm your wrath against me,
And drive me like a villain from your house;
I cannot have so great a share of shame
But what I have deserved a greater still.

ORGON (to his son)
You miscreant, can you dare, with such a falsehood,
To try to stain the whiteness of his virtue?

DAMIS
What! The feigned meekness of this hypocrite
Makes you discredit …

ORGON
Silence, cursed plague!

TARTUFFE
Ah! Let him speak; you chide him wrongfully;
You'd do far better to believe his tales.
Why favour me so much in such a matter?
How can you know of what I'm capable?
And should you trust my outward semblance, brother,
Or judge therefrom that I'm the better man?
No, no; you let appearances deceive you;
I'm anything but what I'm thought to be,
Alas! and though all men believe me godly,
The simple truth is, I'm a worthless creature.

(To Damis)
Yes, my dear son, say on, and call me traitor,
Abandoned scoundrel, thief, and murderer;
Heap on me names yet more detestable,
And I shall not gainsay you; I've deserved them;
I'll bear this ignominy on my knees,
To expiate in shame the crimes I've done.

ORGON (to Tartuffe)
Ah, brother, 'tis too much!

(To his son)
You'll not relent,
You blackguard?

DAMIS
What! His talk can so deceive you …

ORGON
Silence, you scoundrel!

(To Tartuffe)
Brother, rise, I beg you.

(To his son)
Infamous villain!

DAMIS
Can he …

ORGON
Silence!

DAMIS
What …

ORGON
Another word, I'll break your every bone.

TARTUFFE
Brother, in God's name, don't be angry with him!
I'd rather bear myself the bitterest torture
Than have him get a scratch on my account.

ORGON (to his son)
Ungrateful monster!

TARTUFFE
Stop. Upon my knees
I beg you pardon him …

ORGON (throwing himself on his knees too, and embracing Tartuffe)
Alas! How can you?

(To his son)
Villain! Behold his goodness!

DAMIS
So …

ORGON
Be still.

DAMIS
What! I …

ORGON
Be still, I say. I know your motives
For this attack. You hate him, all of you;
Wife, children, servants, all let loose upon him,
You have recourse to every shameful trick
To drive this godly man out of my house;
The more you strive to rid yourselves of him,
The more I'll strive to make him stay with me;
I'll have him straightway married to my daughter,
Just to confound the pride of all of you.

DAMIS
What! Will you force her to accept his hand?

ORGON
Yes, and this very evening, to enrage you,
Young rascal! Ah! I'll brave you all, and show you
That I'm the master, and must be obeyed.
Now, down upon your knees this instant, rogue,
And take back what you said, and ask his pardon.

DAMIS
Who? I? Ask pardon of that cheating scoundrel … ?

ORGON
Do you resist, you beggar, and insult him?
A cudgel, here! a cudgel!

(To Tartuffe)
Don't restrain me.

(To his son)
Off with you! Leave my house this instant, sirrah,
And never dare set foot in it again.

DAMIS
Yes, I will leave your house, but …

ORGON
Leave it quickly.
You reprobate, I disinherit you,
And give you, too, my curse into the bargain.

SCENE VII

ORGON, TARTUFFE

ORGON
What! So insult a saintly man of God!

TARTUFFE
Heaven, forgive him all the pain he gives me! [4]

[Footnote 4: Some modern editions have adopted the reading, preserved by tradition as that of the earliest stage version: Heaven, forgive him even as I forgive him! Voltaire gives still another reading: Heaven, forgive me even as I forgive him! Whichever was the original version, it appears in none of the early editions, and Moliere probably felt forced to change it on account of its too close resemblance to the Biblical phrase.]

(To Orgon)
Could you but know with what distress I see
Them try to vilify me to my brother!

ORGON
Ah!

TARTUFFE
The mere thought of such ingratitude
Makes my soul suffer torture, bitterly …
My horror at it … Ah! my heart's so full
I cannot speak … I think I'll die of it.

ORGON (in tears, running to the door through which he drove away his son)
Scoundrel! I wish I'd never let you go,
But slain you on the spot with my own hand.

(To Tartuffe)
Brother, compose yourself, and don't be angry.

TARTUFFE
Nay, brother, let us end these painful quarrels.
I see what troublous times I bring upon you,
And think 'tis needful that I leave this house.

ORGON
What! You can't mean it?

TARTUFFE
Yes, they hate me here,
And try, I find, to make you doubt my faith.

ORGON
What of it? Do you find I listen to them?

TARTUFFE
No doubt they won't stop there. These same reports
You now reject, may some day win a hearing.

ORGON
No, brother, never.

TARTUFFE
Ah! my friend, a woman
May easily mislead her husband's mind.

ORGON
No, no.

TARTUFFE
So let me quickly go away
And thus remove all cause for such attacks.

ORGON
No, you shall stay; my life depends upon it.

TARTUFFE
Then I must mortify myself. And yet,
If you should wish …

ORGON
No, never!

TARTUFFE
Very well, then;
No more of that. But I shall rule my conduct
To fit the case. Honour is delicate,
And friendship binds me to forestall suspicion,
Prevent all scandal, and avoid your wife.

ORGON
No, you shall haunt her, just to spite them all.
'Tis my delight to set them in a rage;
You shall be seen together at all hours
And what is more, the better to defy them,
I'll have no other heir but you; and straightway
I'll go and make a deed of gift to you,
Drawn in due form, of all my property.
A good true friend, my son-in-law to be,
Is more to me than son, and wife, and kindred.
You will accept my offer, will you not?

TARTUFFE
Heaven's will be done in everything!

ORGON
Poor man!
We'll go make haste to draw the deed aright,
And then let envy burst itself with spite!

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: Acts IV and V of Moliere's TARTUFFE (second half)

2.1: Editor's Introduction

2.2: Act IV

2.3: Act V

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2.1: Editor's Introduction

In Acts IV and V of Molière's *Tartuffe*, key themes introduced earlier in the play, hypocrisy, gullibility, family conflict, and the tension and interplay between reason and blind faith, reach a climax and a resolution. Dramatic tension also increases as Tartuffe's real nature is revealed, but Molière introduces as well new thematic elements that further the satire. In these final acts, themes of justice and the restoration of order, the exposure of deception, and triumph of reason over folly emerge more strongly, providing both a moral and narrative resolution to the play's conflicts. Acts IV and V feature a full exposure of Tartuffe's hypocrisy. While the audience is aware Tartuffe is a fraud, Orgon remains blind to this until he witnesses his hero's seduction attempt of his own wife, Elmire, in Act IV. This scene is crucial, as it finally forces Orgon to confront reality. Tartuffe's pious façade crumbles, and his selfishness is laid bare. This dramatic unmasking of Tartuffe serves not only as a turning point but also the thematic culmination of Molière's critique of religious hypocrisy. By demonstrating how easily Tartuffe manipulates appearances to exploit Orgon, Molière reinforces the dangers of confusing pretend piety with real virtue. This theme is especially important in the context of17th-century France, where religious hypocrisy was a sensitive matter, and Molière's satire would be seen as a bold critique of real individuals who abused religion for personal gain.

Another key theme in the final acts is Orgon's transformation from gullibility to enlightenment. Through most of the play, Orgon symbolizes blind faith, since he refuses to listen to the warnings of his family and places all his trust in Tartuffe. His eventual realization of Tartuffe's deceit, brought about by Elmire's clever plan in Act IV, marks his shift from ignorance to understanding. Orgon's enlightenment also represents a broader commentary on the importance of critical thinking, since Molière seems to suggest that even those who have been thoroughly duped can be redeemed once they open their minds to the truth. These scenes also continue to contrast Orgon and characters like Cléante, who has represented reason and moderation throughout the play. Orgon's journey from folly to wisdom echoes Molière's broader point about balancing faith with reason in making moral judgments.

Also, the resolution of the family conflict in Acts IV and V supports the theme of restoring both social and family order. Tartuffe's malevolent influence had severely impacted Orgon's household, creating much tension between Orgon and his children. However, once Tartuffe is exposed, the family unites in their common goal to rid themselves of his troublesome presence. In Act V, the whole family works to resolve the crisis, with Dorine, Elmire, and Cléante playing key roles in support of Orgon. Restoration of order is symbolized by Orgon's change of heart about his daughter Mariane's marriage. After previously insisting she marry Tartuffe, he now gives his blessing to her union with Valère and re-establishes family harmony. This emphasizes the value of solidarity and reason in a family structure.

The theme of justice is most explicitly addressed in Act V, when the King intervenes to resolve the crisis. After Tartuffe attempts to seize Orgon's property and have him arrested, it appears for a moment the family will face ruin. However, a royal officer then arrives and arrests Tartuffe, revealing that the King had seen through his deception all along. This turn of events reflects the theme of justice, with the King acting as a moral authority to uphold truth and reason over hypocrisy and deceit. Molière does this to emphasize that justice guided by wisdom and insight, will ultimately prevail. The King's intervention can be seen as a commentary on the role of authority in maintaining social order. In essence, when leaders are just and discerning, they protect society from corruption and hypocrisy.

Thus, Acts IV and V underscore the function of comedy for social critique. While *Tartuffe* is comic, its satire represents a serious portrayal of religious hypocrisy and gullibility. Molière's use of humor entertains the audience but also encourages reflection on timeless social and moral issues. The comedic resolution, with Tartuffe's arrest and the family's restored happiness, gives closure, but also a new awareness of serious matters that underpin the play's humor. For all of these reasons, even today *Tartuffe* resonates for its powerful exploration of human nature, morality, and complexities within social and religious life.

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2.2: Act IV

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Translator: Curtis Hidden Page

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Credits: Produced by Dagny and John Vickers

ACT IV

SCENE I

CLEANTE, TARTUFFE

CLEANTE
Yes, it's become the talk of all the town,
And make a stir that's scarcely to your credit;
And I have met you, sir, most opportunely,
To tell you in a word my frank opinion.
Not to sift out this scandal to the bottom,
Suppose the worst for us—suppose Damis
Acted the traitor, and accused you falsely;
Should not a Christian pardon this offence,
And stifle in his heart all wish for vengeance?
Should you permit that, for your petty quarrel,
A son be driven from his father's house?
I tell you yet again, and tell you frankly,
Everyone, high or low, is scandalised;
If you'll take my advice, you'll make it up,
And not push matters to extremities.
Make sacrifice to God of your resentment;
Restore the son to favour with his father.

TARTUFFE
Alas! So far as I'm concerned, how gladly
Would I do so! I bear him no ill will;
I pardon all, lay nothing to his charge,
And wish with all my heart that I might serve him;
But Heaven's interests cannot allow it;
If he returns, then I must leave the house.
After his conduct, quite unparalleled,

All intercourse between us would bring scandal;
God knows what everyone's first thought would be!
They would attribute it to merest scheming
On my part—say that conscious of my guilt
I feigned a Christian love for my accuser,
But feared him in my heart, and hoped to win him
And underhandedly secure his silence.

CLEANTE
You try to put us off with specious phrases;
But all your arguments are too far-fetched.
Why take upon yourself the cause of Heaven?
Does Heaven need our help to punish sinners?
Leave to itself the care of its own vengeance,
And keep in mind the pardon it commands us;
Besides, think somewhat less of men's opinions,
When you are following the will of Heaven.
Shall petty fear of what the world may think
Prevent the doing of a noble deed?
No!—let us always do as Heaven commands,
And not perplex our brains with further questions.

TARTUFFE
Already I have told you I forgive him;
And that is doing, sir, as Heaven commands.
But after this day's scandal and affront
Heaven does not order me to live with him.

CLEANTE
And does it order you to lend your ear
To what mere whim suggested to his father,
And to accept gift of his estates,
On which, in justice, you can make no claim?

TARTUFFE
No one who knows me, sir, can have the thought
That I am acting from a selfish motive.
The goods of this world have no charms for me;
I am not dazzled by their treacherous glamour;
And if I bring myself to take the gift
Which he insists on giving me, I do so,
To tell the truth, only because I fear
This whole estate may fall into bad hands,
And those to whom it comes may use it ill
And not employ it, as is my design,
For Heaven's glory and my neighbours' good.

CLEANTE
Eh, sir, give up these conscientious scruples
That well may cause a rightful heir's complaints.
Don't take so much upon yourself, but let him
Possess what's his, at his own risk and peril;
Consider, it were better he misused it,

Than you should be accused of robbing him.
I am astounded that unblushingly
You could allow such offers to be made!
Tell me—has true religion any maxim
That teaches us to rob the lawful heir?
If Heaven has made it quite impossible
Damis and you should live together here,
Were it not better you should quietly
And honourably withdraw, than let the son
Be driven out for your sake, dead against
All reason? 'Twould be giving, sir, believe me,
Such an example of your probity …

TARTUFFE
Sir, it is half-past three; certain devotions
Recall me to my closet; you'll forgive me
For leaving you so soon.

CLEANTE (alone)
Ah!

SCENE II

ELMIRE, MARIANE, CLEANTE, DORINE

DORINE (to Cleante)
Sir, we beg you
To help us all you can in her behalf;
She's suffering almost more than heart can bear;
This match her father means to make to-night
Drives her each moment to despair. He's coming.
Let us unite our efforts now, we beg you,
And try by strength or skill to change his purpose.

SCENE III

ORGON, ELMIRE, MARIANE, CLEANTE, DORINE

ORGON
So ho! I'm glad to find you all together.

(To Mariane)
Here is the contract that shall make you happy,
My dear. You know already what it means.

MARIANE (on her knees before Orgon)
Father, I beg you, in the name of Heaven
That knows my grief, and by whate'er can move you,
Relax a little your paternal rights,
And free my love from this obedience!
Oh, do not make me, by your harsh command,
Complain to Heaven you ever were my father;
Do not make wretched this poor life you gave me.
If, crossing that fond hope which I had formed,
You'll not permit me to belong to one
Whom I have dared to love, at least, I beg you

Upon my knees, oh, save me from the torment
Of being possessed by one whom I abhor!
And do not drive me to some desperate act
By exercising all your rights upon me.

ORGON (a little touched)
Come, come, my heart, be firm! no human weakness!

MARIANE
I am not jealous of your love for him;
Display it freely; give him your estate,
And if that's not enough, add all of mine;
I willingly agree, and give it up,
If only you'll not give him me, your daughter;
Oh, rather let a convent's rigid rule
Wear out the wretched days that Heaven allots me.

ORGON
These girls are ninnies!—always turning nuns
When fathers thwart their silly love-affairs.
Get on your feet! The more you hate to have him,
The more 'twill help you earn your soul's salvation.
So, mortify your senses by this marriage,
And don't vex me about it any more.

DORINE
But what … ?

ORGON
You hold your tongue, before your betters.
Don't dare to say a single word, I tell you.

CLEANTE
If you will let me answer, and advise …

ORGON
Brother, I value your advice most highly;
'Tis well thought out; no better can be had;
But you'll allow me—not to follow it.

ELMIRE (to her husband)
I can't find words to cope with such a case;
Your blindness makes me quite astounded at you.
You are bewitched with him, to disbelieve
The things we tell you happened here to-day.

ORGON
I am your humble servant, and can see
Things, when they're plain as noses on folks' faces,
I know you're partial to my rascal son,
And didn't dare to disavow the trick
He tried to play on this poor man; besides,
You were too calm, to be believed; if that
Had happened, you'd have been far more disturbed.

ELMIRE
And must our honour always rush to arms
At the mere mention of illicit love?
Or can we answer no attack upon it
Except with blazing eyes and lips of scorn?
For my part, I just laugh away such nonsense;
I've no desire to make a loud to-do.
Our virtue should, I think, be gentle-natured;
Nor can I quite approve those savage prudes
Whose honour arms itself with teeth and claws
To tear men's eyes out at the slightest word.
Heaven preserve me from that kind of honour!
I like my virtue not to be a vixen,
And I believe a quiet cold rebuff
No less effective to repulse a lover.

ORGON
I know … and you can't throw me off the scent.

ELMIRE
Once more, I am astounded at your weakness;
I wonder what your unbelief would answer,
If I should let you see we've told the truth?

ORGON
See it?

ELMIRE
Yes.

ORGON
Nonsense.

ELMIRE
Come! If I should find
A way to make you see it clear as day?

ORGON
All rubbish.

ELMIRE
What a man! But answer me.
I'm not proposing now that you believe us;
But let's suppose that here, from proper hiding,
You should be made to see and hear all plainly;
What would you say then, to your man of virtue?

ORGON
Why, then, I'd say … say nothing. It can't be.

ELMIRE
Your error has endured too long already,
And quite too long you've branded me a liar.
I must at once, for my own satisfaction,
Make you a witness of the things we've told you.

ORGON
Amen! I take you at your word. We'll see
What tricks you have, and how you'll keep your promise.

ELMIRE (to Dorine)
Send him to me.

DORINE (to Elmire)
The man's a crafty codger,
Perhaps you'll find it difficult to catch him.

ELMIRE (to Dorine)
Oh no! A lover's never hard to cheat,
And self-conceit leads straight to self-deceit.
Bid him come down to me.

(To Cleante and Mariane)
And you, withdraw.

SCENE IV

ELMIRE, ORGON

ELMIRE
Bring up this table, and get under it.

ORGON
What?

ELMIRE
One essential is to hide you well.

ORGON
Why under there?

ELMIRE
Oh, dear! Do as I say;
I know what I'm about, as you shall see.
Get under, now, I tell you; and once there
Be careful no one either sees or hears you.

ORGON
I'm going a long way to humour you,
I must say; but I'll see you through your scheme.

ELMIRE
And then you'll have, I think, no more to say.

(To her husband, who is now under the table.)
But mind, I'm going to meddle with strange matters;
Prepare yourself to be in no wise shocked.
Whatever I may say must pass, because
'Tis only to convince you, as I promised.
By wheedling speeches, since I'm forced to do it,
I'll make this hypocrite put off his mask,
Flatter the longings of his shameless passion,
And give free play to all his impudence.
But, since 'tis for your sake, to prove to you
His guilt, that I shall feign to share his love,

I can leave off as soon as you're convinced,
And things shall go no farther than you choose.
So, when you think they've gone quite far enough,
It is for you to stop his mad pursuit,
To spare your wife, and not expose me farther
Than you shall need, yourself, to undeceive you.
It is your own affair, and you must end it
When … Here he comes. Keep still, don't show yourself.

SCENE V

TARTUFFE, ELMIRE; ORGON (under the table)

TARTUFFE
They told me that you wished to see me here.

ELMIRE
Yes. I have secrets for your ear alone.
But shut the door first, and look everywhere
For fear of spies.

(Tartuffe goes and closes the door, and comes back.)
We surely can't afford
Another scene like that we had just now;
Was ever anyone so caught before!
Damis did frighten me most terribly
On your account; you saw I did my best
To baffle his design, and calm his anger.
But I was so confused, I never thought
To contradict his story; still, thank Heaven,
Things turned out all the better, as it happened,
And now we're on an even safer footing.
The high esteem you're held in, laid the storm;
My husband can have no suspicion of you,
And even insists, to spite the scandal-mongers,
That we shall be together constantly;
So that is how, without the risk of blame,
I can be here locked up with you alone,
And can reveal to you my heart, perhaps
Only too ready to allow your passion.

TARTUFFE
Your words are somewhat hard to understand,
Madam; just now you used a different style.

ELMIRE
If that refusal has offended you,
How little do you know a woman's heart!
How ill you guess what it would have you know,
When it presents so feeble a defence!
Always, at first, our modesty resists
The tender feelings you inspire us with.
Whatever cause we find to justify
The love that masters us, we still must feel

Some little shame in owning it; and strive
To make as though we would not, when we would.
But from the very way we go about it
We let a lover know our heart surrenders,
The while our lips, for honour's sake, oppose
Our heart's desire, and in refusing promise.
I'm telling you my secret all too freely
And with too little heed to modesty.
But—now that I've made bold to speak—pray tell me.
Should I have tried to keep Damis from speaking,
Should I have heard the offer of your heart
So quietly, and suffered all your pleading,
And taken it just as I did—remember—
If such a declaration had not pleased me,
And, when I tried my utmost to persuade you
Not to accept the marriage that was talked of,
What should my earnestness have hinted to you
If not the interest that you've inspired,
And my chagrin, should such a match compel me
To share a heart I want all to myself?

TARTUFFE
'Tis, past a doubt, the height of happiness,
To hear such words from lips we dote upon;
Their honeyed sweetness pours through all my senses
Long draughts of suavity ineffable.
My heart employs its utmost zeal to please you,
And counts your love its one beatitude;
And yet that heart must beg that you allow it
To doubt a little its felicity.
I well might think these words an honest trick
To make me break off this approaching marriage;
And if I may express myself quite plainly,
I cannot trust these too enchanting words
Until the granting of some little favour
I sigh for, shall assure me of their truth
And build within my soul, on firm foundations,
A lasting faith in your sweet charity.

ELMIRE (coughing to draw her husband's attention)
What! Must you go so fast?—and all at once
Exhaust the whole love of a woman's heart?
She does herself the violence to make
This dear confession of her love, and you
Are not yet satisfied, and will not be
Without the granting of her utmost favours?

TARTUFFE
The less a blessing is deserved, the less
We dare to hope for it; and words alone
Can ill assuage our love's desires. A fate
Too full of happiness, seems doubtful still;

We must enjoy it ere we can believe it.
And I, who know how little I deserve
Your goodness, doubt the fortunes of my daring;
So I shall trust to nothing, madam, till
You have convinced my love by something real.

ELMIRE
Ah! How your love enacts the tyrant's role,
And throws my mind into a strange confusion!
With what fierce sway it rules a conquered heart,
And violently will have its wishes granted!
What! Is there no escape from your pursuit?
No respite even?—not a breathing space?
Nay, is it decent to be so exacting,
And so abuse by urgency the weakness
You may discover in a woman's heart?

TARTUFFE
But if my worship wins your gracious favour,
Then why refuse me some sure proof thereof?

ELMIRE
But how can I consent to what you wish,
Without offending Heaven you talk so much of?

TARTUFFE
If Heaven is all that stands now in my way,
I'll easily remove that little hindrance;
Your heart need not hold back for such a trifle.

ELMIRE
But they affright us so with Heaven's commands!

TARTUFFE
I can dispel these foolish fears, dear madam;
I know the art of pacifying scruples
Heaven forbids, 'tis true, some satisfactions;
But we find means to make things right with Heaven.

('Tis a scoundrel speaking.) [5]

[Footnote 5: Moliere's note, in the original edition.]

There is a science, madam, that instructs us
How to enlarge the limits of our conscience
According to our various occasions,
And rectify the evil of the deed
According to our purity of motive.
I'll duly teach you all these secrets, madam;
You only need to let yourself be guided.
Content my wishes, have no fear at all;
I answer for't, and take the sin upon me.

(Elmire coughs still louder.)
Your cough is very bad.

ELMIRE
Yes, I'm in torture.

TARTUFFE
Would you accept this bit of licorice?

ELMIRE
The case is obstinate, I find; and all
The licorice in the world will do no good.

TARTUFFE
'Tis very trying.

ELMIRE
More than words can say.

TARTUFFE
In any case, your scruple's easily
Removed. With me you're sure of secrecy,
And there's no harm unless a thing is known.
The public scandal is what brings offence,
And secret sinning is not sin at all.

ELMIRE (after coughing again)
So then, I see I must resolve to yield;
I must consent to grant you everything,
And cannot hope to give full satisfaction
Or win full confidence, at lesser cost.
No doubt 'tis very hard to come to this;
'Tis quite against my will I go so far;
But since I must be forced to it, since nothing
That can be said suffices for belief,
Since more convincing proof is still demanded,
I must make up my mind to humour people.
If my consent give reason for offence,
So much the worse for him who forced me to it;
The fault can surely not be counted mine.

TARTUFFE
It need not, madam; and the thing itself …

ELMIRE
Open the door, I pray you, and just see
Whether my husband's not there, in the hall.

TARTUFFE
Why take such care for him? Between ourselves,
He is a man to lead round by the nose.
He's capable of glorying in our meetings;
I've fooled him so, he'd see all, and deny it.

ELMIRE
No matter; go, I beg you, look about,
And carefully examine every corner.

SCENE VI

ORGON, ELMIRE

ORGON (crawling out from under the table)
That is, I own, a man … abominable!
I can't get over it; the whole thing floors me.

ELMIRE
What? You come out so soon? You cannot mean it!
Get back under the table; 'tis not time yet;
Wait till the end, to see, and make quite certain,
And don't believe a thing on mere conjecture.

ORGON
Nothing more wicked e'er came out of Hell.

ELMIRE
Dear me! Don't go and credit things too lightly.
No, let yourself be thoroughly convinced;
Don't yield too soon, for fear you'll be mistaken.

(As Tartuffe enters, she makes her husband stand behind her.)

SCENE VII

TARTUFFE, ELMIRE, ORGON

TARTUFFE (not seeing Orgon)
All things conspire toward my satisfaction,
Madam, I've searched the whole apartment through.
There's no one here; and now my ravished soul …

ORGON (stopping him)
Softly! You are too eager in your amours;
You needn't be so passionate. Ah ha!
My holy man! You want to put it on me!
How is your soul abandoned to temptation!
Marry my daughter, eh?—and want my wife, too?
I doubted long enough if this was earnest,
Expecting all the time the tone would change;
But now the proof's been carried far enough;
I'm satisfied, and ask no more, for my part.

ELMIRE (to Tartuffe)
'Twas quite against my character to play
This part; but I was forced to treat you so.

TARTUFFE
What? You believe … ?

ORGON
Come, now, no protestations.
Get out from here, and make no fuss about it.

TARTUFFE
But my intent …

ORGON
That talk is out of season.
You leave my house this instant.

TARTUFFE
You're the one
To leave it, you who play the master here!
This house belongs to me, I'll have you know,
And show you plainly it's no use to turn
To these low tricks, to pick a quarrel with me,
And that you can't insult me at your pleasure,
For I have wherewith to confound your lies,
Avenge offended Heaven, and compel
Those to repent who talk to me of leaving.

SCENE VIII

ELMIRE, ORGON

ELMIRE
What sort of speech is this? What can it mean?

ORGON
My faith, I'm dazed. This is no laughing matter.

ELMIRE
What?

ORGON
From his words I see my great mistake;
The deed of gift is one thing troubles me.

ELMIRE
The deed of gift …

ORGON
Yes, that is past recall.
But I've another thing to make me anxious.

ELMIRE
What's that?

ORGON
You shall know all. Let's see at once
Whether a certain box is still upstairs

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2.3: Act V

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ACT V

SCENE I

ORGON, CLEANTE

CLEANTE
Whither away so fast?

ORGON
How should I know?

CLEANTE
Methinks we should begin by taking counsel
To see what can be done to meet the case.

ORGON
I'm all worked up about that wretched box.
More than all else it drives me to despair.

CLEANTE
That box must hide some mighty mystery?

ORGON
Argas, my friend who is in trouble, brought it
Himself, most secretly, and left it with me.
He chose me, in his exile, for this trust;
And on these documents, from what he said,
I judge his life and property depend.

CLEANTE
How could you trust them to another's hands?

ORGON
By reason of a conscientious scruple.
I went straight to my traitor, to confide
In him; his sophistry made me believe

That I must give the box to him to keep,
So that, in case of search, I might deny
My having it at all, and still, by favour
Of this evasion, keep my conscience clear
Even in taking oath against the truth.

CLEANTE

Your case is bad, so far as I can see;
This deed of gift, this trusting of the secret
To him, were both—to state my frank opinion—
Steps that you took too lightly; he can lead you
To any length, with these for hostages;
And since he holds you at such disadvantage,
You'd be still more imprudent, to provoke him;
So you must go some gentler way about.

ORGON

What! Can a soul so base, a heart so false,
Hide neath the semblance of such touching fervour?
I took him in, a vagabond, a beggar! …
'Tis too much! No more pious folk for me!
I shall abhor them utterly forever,
And henceforth treat them worse than any devil.

CLEANTE

So! There you go again, quite off the handle!
In nothing do you keep an even temper.
You never know what reason is, but always
Jump first to one extreme, and then the other.
You see your error, and you recognise
That you've been cozened by a feigned zeal;
But to make up for't, in the name of reason,
Why should you plunge into a worse mistake,
And find no difference in character
Between a worthless scamp, and all good people?
What! Just because a rascal boldly duped you
With pompous show of false austerity,
Must you needs have it everybody's like him,
And no one's truly pious nowadays?
Leave such conclusions to mere infidels;
Distinguish virtue from its counterfeit,
Don't give esteem too quickly, at a venture,
But try to keep, in this, the golden mean.
If you can help it, don't uphold imposture;
But do not rail at true devoutness, either;
And if you must fall into one extreme,
Then rather err again the other way.

SCENE II

DAMIS, ORGON, CLEANTE

DAMIS

What! father, can the scoundrel threaten you,

Forget the many benefits received,
And in his base abominable pride
Make of your very favours arms against you?

ORGON
Too true, my son. It tortures me to think on't.

DAMIS
Let me alone, I'll chop his ears off for him.
We must deal roundly with his insolence;
'Tis I must free you from him at a blow;
'Tis I, to set things right, must strike him down.

CLEANTE
Spoke like a true young man. Now just calm down,
And moderate your towering tantrums, will you?
We live in such an age, with such a king,
That violence can not advance our cause.

SCENE III

MADAME PERNELLE, ORGON, ELMIRE, CLEANTE, MARIANE, DAMIS, DORINE

MADAME PERNELLE
What's this? I hear of fearful mysteries!

ORGON
Strange things indeed, for my own eyes to witness;
You see how I'm requited for my kindness,
I zealously receive a wretched beggar,
I lodge him, entertain him like my brother,
Load him with benefactions every day,
Give him my daughter, give him all my fortune:
And he meanwhile, the villain, rascal, wretch,
Tries with black treason to suborn my wife,
And not content with such a foul design,
He dares to menace me with my own favours,
And would make use of those advantages
Which my too foolish kindness armed him with,
To ruin me, to take my fortune from me,
And leave me in the state I saved him from.

DORINE
Poor man!

MADAME PERNELLE
My son, I cannot possibly
Believe he could intend so black a deed.

ORGON
What?

MADAME PERNELLE
Worthy men are still the sport of envy.

ORGON
Mother, what do you mean by such a speech?

MADAME PERNELLE
There are strange goings-on about your house,
And everybody knows your people hate him.

ORGON
What's that to do with what I tell you now?

MADAME PERNELLE
I always said, my son, when you were little:
That virtue here below is hated ever;
The envious may die, but envy never.

ORGON
What's that fine speech to do with present facts?

MADAME PERNELLE
Be sure, they've forged a hundred silly lies …

ORGON
I've told you once, I saw it all myself.

MADAME PERNELLE
For slanderers abound in calumnies …

ORGON
Mother, you'd make me damn my soul. I tell you
I saw with my own eyes his shamelessness.

MADAME PERNELLE
Their tongues for spitting venom never lack,
There's nothing here below they'll not attack.

ORGON
Your speech has not a single grain of sense.
I saw it, harkee, saw it, with these eyes
I saw—d'ye know what saw means?—must I say it
A hundred times, and din it in your ears?

MADAME PERNELLE
My dear, appearances are oft deceiving,
And seeing shouldn't always be believing.

ORGON
I'll go mad.

MADAME PERNELLE
False suspicions may delude,
And good to evil oft is misconstrued.

ORGON
Must I construe as Christian charity
The wish to kiss my wife!

MADAME PERNELLE
You must, at least,
Have just foundation for accusing people,
And wait until you see a thing for sure.

ORGON
The devil! How could I see any surer?
Should I have waited till, before my eyes,
He … No, you'll make me say things quite improper.

MADAME PERNELLE
In short, 'tis known too pure a zeal inflames him;
And so, I cannot possibly conceive
That he should try to do what's charged against him.

ORGON
If you were not my mother, I should say
Such things! … I know not what, I'm so enraged!

DORINE (to Orgon)
Fortune has paid you fair, to be so doubted;
You flouted our report, now yours is flouted.

CLEANTE
We're wasting time here in the merest trifling,
Which we should rather use in taking measures
To guard ourselves against the scoundrel's threats.

DAMIS
You think his impudence could go far?

ELMIRE
For one, I can't believe it possible;
Why, his ingratitude would be too patent.

CLEANTE
Don't trust to that; he'll find abundant warrant
To give good colour to his acts against you;
And for less cause than this, a strong cabal
Can make one's life a labyrinth of troubles.
I tell you once again: armed as he is
You never should have pushed him quite so far.

ORGON
True; yet what could I do? The rascal's pride
Made me lose all control of my resentment.

CLEANTE
I wish with all my heart that some pretence
Of peace could be patched up between you two

ELMIRE
If I had known what weapons he was armed with,
I never should have raised such an alarm,
And my …

ORGON (to Dorine, seeing Mr. Loyal come in)
Who's coming now? Go quick, find out.
I'm in a fine state to receive a visit!

SCENE IV

ORGON, MADAME PERNELLE, ELMIRE, MARIANE, CLEANTE, DAMIS, DORINE, MR. LOYAL

1. LOYAL (to Dorine, at the back of the stage)
   Good day, good sister. Pray you, let me see
   The master of the house.

DORINE
He's occupied;
I think he can see nobody at present.

1. LOYAL
   I'm not by way of being unwelcome here.
   My coming can, I think, nowise displease him;
   My errand will be found to his advantage.

DORINE
Your name, then?

1. LOYAL
   Tell him simply that his friend
   Mr. Tartuffe has sent me, for his goods …

DORINE (to Orgon)
It is a man who comes, with civil manners,
Sent by Tartuffe, he says, upon an errand
That you'll be pleased with.

CLEANTE (to Orgon)
Surely you must see him,
And find out who he is, and what he wants.

ORGON (to Cleante)
Perhaps he's come to make it up between us:
How shall I treat him?

CLEANTE
You must not get angry;
And if he talks of reconciliation
Accept it.

1. LOYAL (to Orgon)
   Sir, good-day. And Heaven send
   Harm to your enemies, favour to you.

ORGON (aside to Cleante)
This mild beginning suits with my conjectures
And promises some compromise already.

1. LOYAL
   All of your house has long been dear to me;
   I had the honour, sir, to serve your father.

ORGON
Sir, I am much ashamed, and ask your pardon
For not recalling now your face or name.

1. LOYAL
   My name is Loyal. I'm from Normandy.
   My office is court-bailiff, in despite
   Of envy; and for forty years, thank Heaven,

It's been my fortune to perform that office
With honour. So I've come, sir, by your leave
To render service of a certain writ …

ORGON
What, you are here to …

1. LOYAL
   Pray, sir, don't be angry.
   'Tis nothing, sir, but just a little summons:—
   Order to vacate, you and yours, this house,
   Move out your furniture, make room for others,
   And that without delay or putting off,
   As needs must be …

ORGON
I? Leave this house?

1. LOYAL
   Yes, please, sir
   The house is now, as you well know, of course,
   Mr. Tartuffe's. And he, beyond dispute,
   Of all your goods is henceforth lord and master
   By virtue of a contract here attached,
   Drawn in due form, and unassailable.

DAMIS (to Mr. Loyal)
Your insolence is monstrous, and astounding!

1. LOYAL (to Damis)
   I have no business, sir, that touches you;

(Pointing to Orgon)
This is the gentleman. He's fair and courteous,
And knows too well a gentleman's behaviour
To wish in any wise to question justice.

ORGON
But …

1. LOYAL
   Sir, I know you would not for a million
   Wish to rebel; like a good citizen
   You'll let me put in force the court's decree.

DAMIS
Your long black gown may well, before you know it,
Mister Court-bailiff, get a thorough beating.

1. LOYAL (to Orgon)
   Sir, make your son be silent or withdraw.
   I should be loath to have to set things down,
   And see your names inscribed in my report.

DORINE (aside)
This Mr. Loyal's looks are most disloyal.

1. LOYAL
   I have much feeling for respectable
   And honest folk like you, sir, and consented
   To serve these papers, only to oblige you,
   And thus prevent the choice of any other
   Who, less possessed of zeal for you than I am
   Might order matters in less gentle fashion.

ORGON
And how could one do worse than order people
Out of their house?

1. LOYAL
   Why, we allow you time;
   And even will suspend until to-morrow
   The execution of the order, sir.
   I'll merely, without scandal, quietly,
   Come here and spend the night, with half a score
   Of officers; and just for form's sake, please,
   You'll bring your keys to me, before retiring.
   I will take care not to disturb your rest,
   And see there's no unseemly conduct here.
   But by to-morrow, and at early morning,
   You must make haste to move your least belongings;
   My men will help you—I have chosen strong ones
   To serve you, sir, in clearing out the house.
   No one could act more generously, I fancy,
   And, since I'm treating you with great indulgence,
   I beg you'll do as well by me, and see
   I'm not disturbed in my discharge of duty.

ORGON
I'd give this very minute, and not grudge it,
The hundred best gold louis I have left,
If I could just indulge myself, and land
My fist, for one good square one, on his snout.

CLEANTE (aside to Orgon)
Careful!—don't make things worse.

DAMIS
Such insolence!
I hardly can restrain myself. My hands
Are itching to be at him.

DORINE
By my faith,
With such a fine broad back, good Mr. Loyal,
A little beating would become you well.

1. LOYAL
   My girl, such infamous words are actionable.
   And warrants can be issued against women.

CLEANTE (to Mr. Loyal)
Enough of this discussion, sir; have done.
Give us the paper, and then leave us, pray.

1. LOYAL
   Then *au revoir*. Heaven keep you from disaster!

ORGON
May Heaven confound you both, you and your master!

SCENE V

ORGON, MADAME PERNELLE, ELMIRE, CLEANTE, MARIANE, DAMIS, DORINE

ORGON
Well, mother, am I right or am I not?
This writ may help you now to judge the matter.
Or don't you see his treason even yet?

MADAME PERNELLE
I'm all amazed, befuddled, and beflustered!

DORINE (to Orgon)
You are quite wrong, you have no right to blame him;
This action only proves his good intentions.
Love for his neighbour makes his virtue perfect;
And knowing money is a root of evil,
In Christian charity, he'd take away
Whatever things may hinder your salvation.

ORGON
Be still. You always need to have that told you.

CLEANTE (to Orgon)
Come, let us see what course you are to follow.

ELMIRE
Go and expose his bold ingratitude.
Such action must invalidate the contract;
His perfidy must now appear too black
To bring him the success that he expects.

SCENE VI

VALERE, ORGON, MADAME PERNELLE, ELMIRE, CLEANTE, MARIANE, DAMIS, DORINE

VALERE
'Tis with regret, sir, that I bring bad news;
But urgent danger forces me to do so.
A close and intimate friend of mine, who knows
The interest I take in what concerns you,
Has gone so far, for my sake, as to break
The secrecy that's due to state affairs,
And sent me word but now, that leaves you only
The one expedient of sudden flight.
The villain who so long imposed upon you,
Found means, an hour ago, to see the prince,
And to accuse you (among other things)

By putting in his hands the private strong-box
Of a state-criminal, whose guilty secret,
You, failing in your duty as a subject,
(He says) have kept. I know no more of it
Save that a warrant's drawn against you, sir,
And for the greater surety, that same rascal
Comes with the officer who must arrest you.

CLEANTE
His rights are armed; and this is how the scoundrel
Seeks to secure the property he claims.

ORGON
Man is a wicked animal, I'll own it!

VALERE
The least delay may still be fatal, sir.
I have my carriage, and a thousand louis,
Provided for your journey, at the door.
Let's lose no time; the bolt is swift to strike,
And such as only flight can save you from.
I'll be your guide to seek a place of safety,
And stay with you until you reach it, sir.

ORGON
How much I owe to your obliging care!
Another time must serve to thank you fitly;
And I pray Heaven to grant me so much favour
That I may some day recompense your service.
Good-bye; see to it, all of you …

CLEANTE
Come hurry;
We'll see to everything that's needful, brother.

SCENE VII

TARTUFFE, AN OFFICER, MADAME PERNELLE, ORGON, ELMIRE, CLEANTE, MARIANE, VALERE, DAMIS, DORINE

TARTUFFE (stopping Orgon)
Softly, sir, softly; do not run so fast;
You haven't far to go to find your lodging;
By order of the prince, we here arrest you.

ORGON
Traitor! You saved this worst stroke for the last;
This crowns your perfidies, and ruins me.

TARTUFFE
I shall not be embittered by your insults,
For Heaven has taught me to endure all things.

CLEANTE
Your moderation, I must own, is great.

DAMIS
How shamelessly the wretch makes bold with Heaven!

TARTUFFE
Your ravings cannot move me; all my thought
Is but to do my duty.

MARIANE
You must claim
Great glory from this honourable act.

TARTUFFE
The act cannot be aught but honourable,
Coming from that high power which sends me here.

ORGON
Ungrateful wretch, do you forget 'twas I
That rescued you from utter misery?

TARTUFFE
I've not forgot some help you may have given;
But my first duty now is toward my prince.
The higher power of that most sacred claim
Must stifle in my heart all gratitude;
And to such puissant ties I'd sacrifice
My friend, my wife, my kindred, and myself.

ELMIRE
The hypocrite!

DORINE
How well he knows the trick
Of cloaking him with what we most revere!

CLEANTE
But if the motive that you make parade of
Is perfect as you say, why should it wait
To show itself, until the day he caught you
Soliciting his wife? How happens it
You have not thought to go inform against him
Until his honour forces him to drive you
Out of his house? And though I need not mention
That he'd just given you his whole estate,
Still, if you meant to treat him now as guilty,
How could you then consent to take his gift?

TARTUFFE (to the Officer)
Pray, sir, deliver me from all this clamour;
Be good enough to carry out your order.

THE OFFICER
Yes, I've too long delayed its execution;
'Tis very fitting you should urge me to it;
So therefore, you must follow me at once
To prison, where you'll find your lodging ready.

TARTUFFE
Who? I, sir?

THE OFFICER
You.

TARTUFFE
By why to prison?

THE OFFICER
You
Are not the one to whom I owe account.
You, sir (to Orgon), recover from your hot alarm.
Our prince is not a friend to double dealing,
His eyes can read men's inmost hearts, and all
The art of hypocrites cannot deceive him.
His sharp discernment sees things clear and true;
His mind cannot too easily be swayed,
For reason always holds the balance even.
He honours and exalts true piety,
But knows the false, and views it with disgust.
This fellow was by no means apt to fool him,
Far subtler snares have failed against his wisdom,
And his quick insight pierced immediately
The hidden baseness of this tortuous heart.
Accusing you, the knave betrayed himself,
And by true recompense of Heaven's justice
He stood revealed before our monarch's eyes
A scoundrel known before by other names,
Whose horrid crimes, detailed at length, might fill
A long-drawn history of many volumes.
Our monarch—to resolve you in a word—
Detesting his ingratitude and baseness,
Added this horror to his other crimes,
And sent me hither under his direction
To see his insolence out-top itself,
And force him then to give you satisfaction.
Your papers, which the traitor says are his,
I am to take from him, and give you back;
The deed of gift transferring your estate
Our monarch's sovereign will makes null and void;
And for the secret personal offence
Your friend involved you in, he pardons you:
Thus he rewards your recent zeal, displayed
In helping to maintain his rights, and shows
How well his heart, when it is least expected,
Knows how to recompense a noble deed,
And will not let true merit miss its due,
Remembering always rather good than evil.

DORINE
Now Heaven be praised!

MADAME PERNELLE
At last I breathe again.

ELMIRE
A happy outcome!

MARIANE
Who'd have dared to hope it?

ORGON (to Tartuffe, who is being led by the officer)
There traitor! Now you're …

SCENE VIII

MADAME PERNELLE, ORGON, ELMIRE, MARIANE, CLEANTE, VALERE, DAMIS, DORINE

CLEANTE
Brother, hold!—and don't
Descend to such indignities, I beg you.
Leave the poor wretch to his unhappy fate,
And let remorse oppress him, but not you.
Hope rather that his heart may now return
To virtue, hate his vice, reform his ways,
And win the pardon of our glorious prince;
While you must straightway go, and on your knees
Repay with thanks his noble generous kindness.

ORGON
Well said! We'll go, and at his feet kneel down,
With joy to thank him for his goodness shown;
And this first duty done, with honours due,
We'll then attend upon another, too.
With wedded happiness reward Valere,
And crown a lover noble and sincere.

End of Project Gutenberg's Tartuffe, by Jean-Baptiste Poquelin Moliere

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK TARTUFFE; OR, THE HYPOCRITE ***

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: Voltaire's CANDIDE (first half)

3.1: Editor's Introduction

3.2: Candide, First Half

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3.1: Editor's Introduction

François-Marie Arouet, better known by the pen name Voltaire, was a towering figure in the 18th century Enlightenment, a time of intellectual and philosophical developments that emphasized reason, individualism, and skepticism of revered traditions and institutions. Born in Paris in 1694, Voltaire was one of the most prolific writers, of plays, poems, novels, essays, and of both historical and scientific works. His wit, intellect, and criticism of established practices and conventions made him a celebrated but controversial figure.

Early on, Voltaire possessed a love of literature and a talent at writing. However, his penchant for satire, and for criticism of both the French government and the Catholic Church led in his adulthood to his being imprisoned and exiled several times. Still, Voltaire lived to be 83 and wrote prolifically throughout his life.

His most famous work is the novella *Candide, or Optimism*, published in 1759. *Candide* is a satirical story that follows the adventures of its title character, a naive young man who lives, at least initially, in the sheltered environment of a wealthy estate. His mentor, Pangloss, teaches him that they live in "the best of all possible worlds," an idea derived from the optimistic philosophy of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. This philosophy suggests everything happens for the best and that all occurrences, even tragic ones, are part of a greater good.

Voltaire wrote *Candide* in response to the pervasive optimism of his time, which he found deeply flawed and unrealistic. Several factors influenced his writing. He was particularly critical of Leibnizian optimism, which he saw as a too-simplistic, complacent way to view the world. The devastating Lisbon earthquake of 1755, which killed tens of thousands, also profoundly affected Voltaire and contributed even further to his skepticism of the idea that such disasters were part of a divine, benevolent plan.

In *Candide*, Voltaire satirizes as well various institutions and aspects of society, including the Catholic Church, the state, and the military. He uses humor and irony to expose the corruption, hypocrisy, and absurdity he sees in these institutions. For example, the novella depicts the Inquisition, a powerful arm of the Church, as cruel and arbitrary.

Candide also served as a platform for Voltaire to critique various philosophical ideas. The characters Candide encounters on his journey represent different philosophies and worldviews, which allows Voltaire to dissect and challenge them. Ultimately, Candide's journey leads him to reject blind optimism and adopt a more pragmatic approach to life, expressed in *Candide's* famous concluding line, "We must cultivate our garden."

Voltaire's own life experiences, including his imprisonments, exiles, and conflicts with authorities, informed his writing, and his personal struggles against censorship and injustice lend authenticity and urgency to the critiques within this story. *Candide* exemplifies Voltaire's unwavering commitment to challenging the status quo. Through its satire, Voltaire critiques the unfounded optimism of his time, exposes the flaws of societal institutions, and advocates for a more rational and pragmatic approach to viewing the world.

Within *Candide*, Candide's teacher Pangloss embodies and ardently defends the philosophical doctrine of optimism. Pangloss's unwavering belief in Leibniz's doctrine is a key theme, and Voltaire uses it to explore the limitations and absurdities of a blindly optimistic outlook. Pangloss's optimism stems from Leibniz's view, which attempts to reconcile the existence of evil and suffering in the world with the idea of a benevolent, omnipotent God. According to this philosophy, since God is all-knowing and all-good, God must have created the best possible world out of all conceivable alternatives. Any apparent imperfections or evils must therefore have a place in the grand scheme of things. Pangloss voices this with his oft-repeated maxim, "All is for the best, in the best of all possible worlds."

Throughout *Candide*, Pangloss encounters numerous catastrophes and personal misfortunes, yet persistently interprets them as necessary and ultimately beneficial components of the world's optimal design. For instance, when Pangloss and Candide witness the devastation caused by the Lisbon earthquake, Pangloss insists that the disaster must have some greater purpose, even as they endure its horrific consequences.

Pangloss's belief in optimism is deeply ingrained, a product of philosophical indoctrination rather than empirical observation or critical thinking. He adheres to Leibnizian principles with dogmatic fervor, dismissing any evidence that contradicts this view, thereby reflecting Voltaire's critique of philosophers who prize abstract theory over practical reality.

His attachment to optimism is also a matter of intellectual pride. As a self-proclaimed philosopher, he is reluctant to admit the fallibility of his doctrine, even in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. His pride prevents him from acknowledging that the world might be inherently flawed or that human suffering is not always justifiable. The absurdity of Pangloss's rationalizations serves to ridicule the idea that everything happens for a good reason.

Through Pangloss, Voltaire also critiques the broader tendency of religious and philosophical authorities to offer comforting but hollow explanations for pain and suffering. Pangloss's role as a teacher and mentor mirrors the influence of religious leaders who preach doctrines that may not hold up to scrutiny. Voltaire's satire challenges readers to question such authorities, and to seek more pragmatic and compassionate responses to the world's realities and challenges.

On the other hand, the concluding words of *Candide*, "That is all very well put, but we must cultivate our garden," serve as a poignant summary of the novella's core themes and philosophical journey. These words, spoken by Candide, reflect a significant departure from the blind optimism espoused by his mentor Pangloss and signify a turn toward more practical and pragmatic action. Through this statement, Voltaire encapsulates his critique of philosophical speculation detached from reality, and emphasizes instead the importance of personal responsibility and productive labor.

"We must cultivate our garden" also points to the necessity of practical, hands-on work. The metaphorical garden represents the domain over which individuals have direct control and responsibility. By advocating for the cultivation of one's garden, Candide, and by extension, Voltaire, asserts that meaningful change and fulfillment arise from engaging and improving one's immediate environment.

Additionally, the act of cultivating a garden requires effort and responsibility. Individuals must take charge of their own destinies. This emphasis on personal agency is also central to Enlightenment thought, reflecting Voltaire's belief in the power of human reason and action.

Through first-hand experiences, Candide learns that life can be full of suffering and injustice. While we may not be able to eliminate all suffering, we can strive to create order, productivity, and contentment in our lives.

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3.2: Candide, First Half

CANDIDE [First half, Chapters I-XV](opens in new window) [www.gutenberg.org]

I

HOW CANDIDE WAS BROUGHT UP IN A MAGNIFICENT CASTLE, AND HOW HE WAS EXPELLED THENCE.

In a castle of Westphalia, belonging to the Baron of Thunder-ten-Tronckh, lived a youth, whom nature had endowed with the most gentle manners. His countenance was a true picture of his soul. He combined a true judgment with simplicity of spirit, which was the reason, I apprehend, of his being called Candide. The old servants of the family suspected him to have been the son of the Baron's sister, by a good, honest gentleman of the neighborhood, whom that young lady would never marry because he had been able to prove only seventy-one quarterings, the rest of his genealogical tree having been lost through the injuries of time.

The Baron was one of the most powerful lords in Westphalia, for his castle had not only a gate, but windows. His great hall, even, was hung with tapestry. All the dogs of his farm-yards formed a pack of hounds at need; his grooms were his huntsmen; and the curate of the village was his grand almoner. They called him "My Lord," and laughed at all his stories.

The Baron's lady weighed about three hundred and fifty pounds, and was therefore a person of great consideration, and she did the honours of the house with a dignity that commanded still greater respect. Her daughter Cunegonde was seventeen years of age, fresh-coloured, comely, plump, and desirable. The Baron's son seemed to be in every respect worthy of his father. The Preceptor Pangloss [1]Links to an external site.(opens in new window) was the oracle of the family, and little Candide heard his lessons with all the good faith of his age and character.

Pangloss was professor of metaphysico-theologico-cosmolo-nigology. He proved admirably that there is no effect without a cause, and that, in this best of all possible worlds, the Baron's castle was the most magnificent of castles, and his lady the best of all possible Baronesses.

"It is demonstrable," said he, "that things cannot be otherwise than as they are; for all being created for an end, all is necessarily for the best end. Observe, that the nose has been formed to bear spectacles—thus we have spectacles. Legs are visibly designed for stockings—and we have stockings. Stones were made to be hewn, and to construct castles—therefore my lord has a magnificent castle; for the greatest baron in the province ought to be the best lodged. Pigs were made to be eaten—therefore we eat pork all the year round. Consequently they who assert that all is well have said a foolish thing, they should have said all is for the best."

Candide listened attentively and believed innocently; for he thought Miss Cunegonde extremely beautiful, though he never had the courage to tell her so. He concluded that after the happiness of being born of Baron of Thunder-ten-Tronckh, the second degree of happiness was to be Miss Cunegonde, the third that of seeing her every day, and the fourth that of hearing Master Pangloss, the greatest philosopher of the whole province, and consequently of the whole world.

One day Cunegonde, while walking near the castle, in a little wood which they called a park, saw between the bushes, Dr. Pangloss giving a lesson in experimental natural philosophy to her mother's chamber-maid, a little brown wench, very pretty and very docile. As Miss Cunegonde had a great disposition for the sciences, she breathlessly observed the repeated experiments of which she was a witness; she clearly perceived the force of the Doctor's reasons, the effects, and the causes; she turned back greatly flurried, quite pensive, and filled with the desire to be learned; dreaming that she might well be a *sufficient reason* for young Candide, and he for her.

She met Candide on reaching the castle and blushed; Candide blushed also; she wished him good morrow in a faltering tone, and Candide spoke to her without knowing what he said. The next day after dinner, as they went from table, Cunegonde and Candide found themselves behind a screen; Cunegonde let fall her handkerchief, Candide picked it up, she took him innocently by the hand, the youth as innocently kissed the young lady's hand with particular vivacity, sensibility, and grace; their lips met, their eyes sparkled, their knees trembled, their hands strayed. Baron Thunder-ten-Tronckh passed near the screen and beholding this cause and effect chased Candide from the castle with great kicks on the backside; Cunegonde fainted away; she was boxed on the ears by the Baroness, as soon as she came to herself; and all was consternation in this most magnificent and most agreeable of all possible castles.

II

WHAT BECAME OF CANDIDE AMONG THE BULGARIANS.

Candide, driven from terrestrial paradise, walked a long while without knowing where, weeping, raising his eyes to heaven, turning them often towards the most magnificent of castles which imprisoned the purest of noble young ladies. He lay down to sleep without supper, in the middle of a field between two furrows. The snow fell in large flakes. Next day Candide, all benumbed, dragged himself towards the neighbouring town which was called Waldberghofftrarbk-dikdorff, having no money, dying of hunger and fatigue, he stopped sorrowfully at the door of an inn. Two men dressed in blue observed him.

"Comrade," said one, "here is a well-built young fellow, and of proper height."

They went up to Candide and very civilly invited him to dinner.

"Gentlemen," replied Candide, with a most engaging modesty, "you do me great honour, but I have not wherewithal to pay my share."

"Oh, sir," said one of the blues to him, "people of your appearance and of your merit never pay anything: are you not five feet five inches high?"

"Yes, sir, that is my height," answered he, making a low bow.

"Come, sir, seat yourself; not only will we pay your reckoning, but we will never suffer such a man as you to want money; men are only born to assist one another."

"You are right," said Candide; "this is what I was always taught by Mr. Pangloss, and I see plainly that all is for the best."

They begged of him to accept a few crowns. He took them, and wished to give them his note; they refused; they seated themselves at table.

"Love you not deeply?"

"Oh yes," answered he; "I deeply love Miss Cunegonde."

"No," said one of the gentlemen, "we ask you if you do not deeply love the King of the Bulgarians?"

"Not at all," said he; "for I have never seen him."

"What! he is the best of kings, and we must drink his health."

"Oh! very willingly, gentlemen," and he drank.

"That is enough," they tell him. "Now you are the help, the support, the defender, the hero of the Bulgarians. Your fortune is made, and your glory is assured."

Instantly they fettered him, and carried him away to the regiment. There he was made to wheel about to the right, and to the left, to draw his rammer, to return his rammer, to present, to fire, to march, and they gave him thirty blows with a cudgel. The next day he did his exercise a little less badly, and he received but twenty blows. The day following they gave him only ten, and he was regarded by his comrades as a prodigy.

Candide, all stupefied, could not yet very well realise how he was a hero. He resolved one fine day in spring to go for a walk, marching straight before him, believing that it was a privilege of the human as well as of the animal species to make use of their legs as they pleased. He had advanced two leagues when he was overtaken by four others, heroes of six feet, who bound him and carried him to a dungeon. He was asked which he would like the best, to be whipped six-and-thirty times through all the regiment, or to receive at once twelve balls of lead in his brain. He vainly said that human will is free, and that he chose neither the one nor the other. He was forced to make a choice; he determined, in virtue of that gift of God_called liberty, to run the gauntlet six-and-thirty times. He bore this twice. The regiment was composed of two thousand men; that composed for him four thousand strokes, which laid bare all his muscles and nerves, from the nape of his neck quite down to his rump. As they were going to proceed to a third whipping, Candide, able to bear no more, begged as a favour that they would be so good as to shoot him. He obtained this favour; they bandaged his eyes, and bade him kneel down. The King of the Bulgarians passed at this moment and ascertained the nature of the crime. As he had great talent, he understood from all that he learnt of Candide that he was a young metaphysician,

extremely ignorant of the things of this world, and he accorded him his pardon with a clemency which will bring him praise in all the journals, and throughout all ages.

An able surgeon cured Candide in three weeks by means of emollients taught by Dioscorides. He had already a little skin, and was able to march when the King of the Bulgarians gave battle to the King of the Abares.[2Links to an external site.(opens in new window)

III

HOW CANDIDE MADE HIS ESCAPE FROM THE BULGARIANS, AND WHAT AFTERWARDS BECAME OF HIM.

There was never anything so gallant, so spruce, so brilliant, and so well disposed as the two armies. Trumpets, fifes, hautboys, drums, and cannon made music such as Hell itself had never heard. The cannons first of all laid flat about six thousand men on each side; the muskets swept away from this best of worlds nine or ten thousand ruffians who infested its surface. The bayonet was also a *sufficient reason* for the death of several thousands. The whole might amount to thirty thousand souls. Candide, who trembled like a philosopher, hid himself as well as he could during this heroic butchery.

At length, while the two kings were causing Te Deum to be sung each in his own camp, Candide resolved to go and reason elsewhere on effects and causes. He passed over heaps of dead and dying, and first reached a neighbouring village; it was in cinders, it was an Abare village which the Bulgarians had burnt according to the laws of war. Here, old men covered with wounds, beheld their wives, hugging their children to their bloody breasts, massacred before their faces; there, their daughters, disembowelled and breathing their last after having satisfied the natural wants of Bulgarian heroes; while others, half burnt in the flames, begged to be despatched. The earth was strewed with brains, arms, and legs.

Candide fled quickly to another village; it belonged to the Bulgarians; and the Abarian heroes had treated it in the same way. Candide, walking always over palpitating limbs or across ruins, arrived at last beyond the seat of war, with a few provisions in his knapsack, and Miss Cunegonde always in his heart. His provisions failed him when he arrived in Holland; but having heard that everybody was rich in that country, and that they were Christians, he did not doubt but he should meet with the same treatment from them as he had met with in the Baron's castle, before Miss Cunegonde's bright eyes were the cause of his expulsion thence.

He asked alms of several grave-looking people, who all answered him, that if he continued to follow this trade they would confine him to the house of correction, where he should be taught to get a living.

The next he addressed was a man who had been haranguing a large assembly for a whole hour on the subject of charity. But the orator, looking askew, said:

"What are you doing here? Are you for the good cause?"

"There can be no effect without a cause," modestly answered Candide; "the whole is necessarily concatenated and arranged for the best. It was necessary for me to have been banished from the presence of Miss Cunegonde, to have afterwards run the gauntlet, and now it is necessary I should beg my bread until I learn to earn it; all this cannot be otherwise."

"My friend," said the orator to him, "do you believe the Pope to be Anti-Christ?"

"I have not heard it," answered Candide; "but whether he be, or whether he be not, I want bread."

"Thou dost not deserve to eat," said the other. "Begone, rogue; begone, wretch; do not come near me again."

The orator's wife, putting her head out of the window, and spying a man that doubted whether the Pope was Anti-Christ, poured over him a full.... Oh, heavens! to what excess does religious zeal carry the ladies.

A man who had never been christened, a good Anabaptist, named James, beheld the cruel and ignominious treatment shown to one of his brethren, an unfeathered biped with a rational soul, he took him home, cleaned him, gave him bread and beer, presented him with two florins, and even wished to teach him the manufacture of Persian stuffs which they make in Holland. Candide, almost prostrating himself before him, cried:

"Master Pangloss has well said that all is for the best in this world, for I am infinitely more touched by your extreme generosity than with the inhumanity of that gentleman in the black coat and his lady."

The next day, as he took a walk, he met a beggar all covered with scabs, his eyes diseased, the end of his nose eaten away, his mouth distorted, his teeth black, choking in his throat, tormented with a violent cough, and spitting out a tooth at each effort.

IV

HOW CANDIDE FOUND HIS OLD MASTER PANGLOSS, AND WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM.

Candide, yet more moved with compassion than with horror, gave to this shocking beggar the two florins which he had received from the honest Anabaptist James. The spectre looked at him very earnestly, dropped a few tears, and fell upon his neck. Candide recoiled in disgust.

"Alas!" said one wretch to the other, "do you no longer know your dear Pangloss?"

"What do I hear? You, my dear master! you in this terrible plight! What misfortune has happened to you? Why are you no longer in the most magnificent of castles? What has become of Miss Cunegonde, the pearl of girls, and nature's masterpiece?"

"I am so weak that I cannot stand," said Pangloss.

Upon which Candide carried him to the Anabaptist's stable, and gave him a crust of bread. As soon as Pangloss had refreshed himself a little:

"Well," said Candide, "Cunegonde?"

"She is dead," replied the other.

Candide fainted at this word; his friend recalled his senses with a little bad vinegar which he found by chance in the stable. Candide reopened his eyes.

"Cunegonde is dead! Ah, best of worlds, where art thou? But of what illness did she die? Was it not for grief, upon seeing her father kick me out of his magnificent castle?"

"No," said Pangloss, "she was ripped open by the Bulgarian soldiers, after having been violated by many; they broke the Baron's head for attempting to defend her; my lady, her mother, was cut in pieces; my poor pupil was served just in the same manner as his sister; and as for the castle, they have not left one stone upon another, not a barn, nor a sheep, nor a duck, nor a tree; but we have had our revenge, for the Abares have done the very same thing to a neighbouring barony, which belonged to a Bulgarian lord."

At this discourse Candide fainted again; but coming to himself, and having said all that it became him to say, inquired into the cause and effect, as well as into the *sufficient reason* that had reduced Pangloss to so miserable a plight.

"Alas!" said the other, "it was love; love, the comfort of the human species, the preserver of the universe, the soul of all sensible beings, love, tender love."

"Alas!" said Candide, "I know this love, that sovereign of hearts, that soul of our souls; yet it never cost me more than a kiss and twenty kicks on the backside. How could this beautiful cause produce in you an effect so abominable?"

Pangloss made answer in these terms: "Oh, my dear Candide, you remember Paquette, that pretty wench who waited on our noble Baroness; in her arms I tasted the delights of paradise, which produced in me those hell torments with which you see me devoured; she was infected with them, she is perhaps dead of them. This present Paquette received of a learned Grey Friar, who had traced it to its source; he had had it of an old countess, who had received it from a cavalry captain, who owed it to a marchioness, who took it from a page, who had received it from a Jesuit, who when a novice had it in a direct line from one of the companions of Christopher Columbus.[3]Links to an external site.(opens in new window) For my part I shall give it to nobody, I am dying."

"Oh, Pangloss!" cried Candide, "what a strange genealogy! Is not the Devil the original stock of it?"

"Not at all," replied this great man, "it was a thing unavoidable, a necessary ingredient in the best of worlds; for if Columbus had not in an island of America caught this disease, which contaminates the source of life, frequently even hinders generation, and which is evidently opposed to the great end of nature, we should have neither chocolate nor cochineal. We are also to observe that upon our continent, this distemper is like religious controversy, confined to a particular spot. The Turks, the Indians, the Persians, the Chinese, the Siamese, the Japanese, know nothing of it; but there is a sufficient reason for believing that they will know it in their turn in a few centuries. In the meantime, it has made marvellous progress among us, especially in those great armies

composed of honest well-disciplined hirelings, who decide the destiny of states; for we may safely affirm that when an army of thirty thousand men fights another of an equal number, there are about twenty thousand of them p-x-d on each side."

"Well, this is wonderful!" said Candide, "but you must get cured."

"Alas! how can I?" said Pangloss, "I have not a farthing, my friend, and all over the globe there is no letting of blood or taking a glister, without paying, or somebody paying for you."

These last words determined Candide; he went and flung himself at the feet of the charitable Anabaptist James, and gave him so touching a picture of the state to which his friend was reduced, that the good man did not scruple to take Dr. Pangloss into his house, and had him cured at his expense. In the cure Pangloss lost only an eye and an ear. He wrote well, and knew arithmetic perfectly. The Anabaptist James made him his bookkeeper. At the end of two months, being obliged to go to Lisbon about some mercantile affairs, he took the two philosophers with him in his ship. Pangloss explained to him how everything was so constituted that it could not be better. James was not of this opinion.

"It is more likely," said he, "mankind have a little corrupted nature, for they were not born wolves, and they have become wolves; God has given them neither cannon of four-and-twenty pounders, nor bayonets; and yet they have made cannon and bayonets to destroy one another. Into this account I might throw not only bankrupts, but Justice which seizes on the effects of bankrupts to cheat the creditors."

"All this was indispensable," replied the one-eyed doctor, "for private misfortunes make the general good, so that the more private misfortunes there are the greater is the general good."

While he reasoned, the sky darkened, the winds blew from the four quarters, and the ship was assailed by a most terrible tempest within sight of the port of Lisbon.

V

TEMPEST, SHIPWRECK, EARTHQUAKE, AND WHAT BECAME OF DOCTOR PANGLOSS, CANDIDE, AND JAMES THE ANABAPTIST.

Half dead of that inconceivable anguish which the rolling of a ship produces, one-half of the passengers were not even sensible of the danger. The other half shrieked and prayed. The sheets were rent, the masts broken, the vessel gaped. Work who would, no one heard, no one commanded. The Anabaptist being upon deck bore a hand; when a brutish sailor struck him roughly and laid him sprawling; but with the violence of the blow he himself tumbled head foremost overboard, and stuck upon a piece of the broken mast. Honest James ran to his assistance, hauled him up, and from the effort he made was precipitated into the sea in sight of the sailor, who left him to perish, without deigning to look at him. Candide drew near and saw his benefactor, who rose above the water one moment and was then swallowed up for ever. He was just going to jump after him, but was prevented by the philosopher Pangloss, who demonstrated to him that the Bay of Lisbon had been made on purpose for the Anabaptist to be drowned. While he was proving this *à priori*, the ship foundered; all perished except Pangloss, Candide, and that brutal sailor who had drowned the good Anabaptist. The villain swam safely to the shore, while Pangloss and Candide were borne thither upon a plank.

As soon as they recovered themselves a little they walked toward Lisbon. They had some money left, with which they hoped to save themselves from starving, after they had escaped drowning. Scarcely had they reached the city, lamenting the death of their benefactor, when they felt the earth tremble under their feet. The sea swelled and foamed in the harbour, and beat to pieces the vessels riding at anchor. Whirlwinds of fire and ashes covered the streets and public places; houses fell, roofs were flung upon the pavements, and the pavements were scattered. Thirty thousand inhabitants of all ages and sexes were crushed under the ruins. [4]Links to an external site.(opens in new window) The sailor, whistling and swearing, said there was booty to be gained here.

"What can be the *sufficient reason* of this phenomenon?" said Pangloss.

"This is the Last Day!" cried Candide.

The sailor ran among the ruins, facing death to find money; finding it, he took it, got drunk,[Pg 20] and having slept himself sober, purchased the favours of the first good-natured wench whom he met on the ruins of the destroyed houses, and in the midst of the dying and the dead. Pangloss pulled him by the sleeve.

"My friend," said he, "this is not right. You sin against the *universal reason*; you choose your time badly."

"S'blood and fury!" answered the other; "I am a sailor and born at Batavia. Four times have I trampled upon the crucifix in four voyages to Japan [5]Links to an external site.(opens in new window); a fig for thy universal reason."

Some falling stones had wounded Candide. He lay stretched in the street covered with rubbish.

"Alas!" said he to Pangloss, "get me a little wine and oil; I am dying."

"This concussion of the earth is no new thing," answered Pangloss. "The city of Lima, in America, experienced the same convulsions last year; the same cause, the same effects; there is certainly a train of sulphur under ground from Lima to Lisbon."

"Nothing more probable," said Candide; "but for the love of God a little oil and wine."

"How, probable?" replied the philosopher. "I maintain that the point is capable of being demonstrated."

Candide fainted away, and Pangloss fetched him some water from a neighbouring fountain. The following day they rummaged among the ruins and found provisions, with which they repaired their exhausted strength. After this they joined with others in relieving those inhabitants who had escaped death. Some, whom they had succoured, gave them as good a dinner as they could in such disastrous circumstances; true, the repast was mournful, and the company moistened their bread with tears; but Pangloss consoled them, assuring them that things could not be otherwise.

"For," said he, "all that is is for the best. If there is a volcano at Lisbon it cannot be elsewhere. It is impossible that things should be other than they are; for everything is right."

A little man dressed in black, Familiar of the Inquisition, who sat by him, politely took up his word and said:

"Apparently, then, sir, you do not believe in original sin; for if all is for the best there has then been neither Fall nor punishment."

"I humbly ask your Excellency's pardon," answered Pangloss, still more politely; "for the Fall and curse of man necessarily entered into the system of the best of worlds."

"Sir," said the Familiar, "you do not then believe in liberty?"

"Your Excellency will excuse me," said Pangloss; "liberty is consistent with absolute necessity, for it was necessary we should be free; for, in short, the determinate will——"

Pangloss was in the middle of his sentence, when the Familiar beckoned to his footman, who gave him a glass of wine from Porto or Opporto.

VI

HOW THE PORTUGUESE MADE A BEAUTIFUL AUTO-DA-FÉ, TO PREVENT ANY FURTHER EARTHQUAKES; AND HOW CANDIDE WAS PUBLICLY WHIPPED.

After the earthquake had destroyed three-fourths of Lisbon, the sages of that country could think of no means more effectual to prevent utter ruin than to give the people a beautiful *auto-da-fé* [6]Links to an external site.(opens in new window); for it had been decided by the University of Coimbra, that the burning of a few people alive by a slow fire, and with great ceremony, is an infallible secret to hinder the earth from quaking.

In consequence hereof, they had seized on a Biscayner, convicted of having married his godmother, and on two Portuguese, for rejecting the bacon which larded a chicken they were eating [7]Links to an external site.(opens in new window); after dinner, they came and secured Dr. Pangloss, and his disciple Candide, the one for speaking his mind, the other for having listened with an air of approbation. They were conducted to separate apartments, extremely cold, as they were never incommoded by the sun. Eight days after they were dressed in *san-benitos*[8]Links to an external site.(opens in new window) and their heads ornamented with paper mitres. The mitre and *san-benito* belonging to Candide were painted with reversed flames and with devils that had neither tails nor claws; but Pangloss's devils had claws and tails and the flames were upright. They marched in procession thus habited and heard a very pathetic sermon, followed by fine church music. Candide was whipped in cadence while they were singing; the Biscayner, and the two men who had refused to eat bacon, were burnt; and Pangloss was hanged, though that was not the custom. The same day the earth sustained a most violent concussion.

Candide, terrified, amazed, desperate, all bloody, all palpitating, said to himself:

"If this is the best of possible worlds, what then are the others? Well, if I had been only whipped I could put up with it, for I experienced that among the Bulgarians; but oh, my dear Pangloss! thou greatest of philosophers, that I should have seen you hanged, without knowing for what! Oh, my dear Anabaptist, thou best of men, that thou should'st have been drowned in the very harbour! Oh, Miss Cunegonde, thou pearl of girls! that thou should'st have had thy belly ripped open!"

Thus he was musing, scarce able to stand, preached at, whipped, absolved, and blessed, when an old woman accosted him saying:

"My son, take courage and follow me."

VII

HOW THE OLD WOMAN TOOK CARE OF CANDIDE, AND HOW HE FOUND THE OBJECT HE LOVED.

Candide did not take courage, but followed the old woman to a decayed house, where she gave him a pot of pomatum to anoint his sores, showed him a very neat little bed, with a suit of clothes hanging up, and left him something to eat and drink.

"Eat, drink, sleep," said she, "and may our lady of Atocha, [9]Links to an external site.(opens in new window) the great St. Anthony of Padua, and the great St. James of Compostella, receive you under their protection. I shall be back to-morrow."

Candide, amazed at all he had suffered and still more with the charity of the old woman, wished to kiss her hand.

"It is not my hand you must kiss," said the old woman; "I shall be back to-morrow. Anoint yourself with the pomatum, eat and sleep."

Candide, notwithstanding so many disasters, ate and slept. The next morning the old woman brought him his breakfast, looked at his back, and rubbed it herself with another ointment: in like manner she brought him his dinner; and at night she returned with his supper. The day following she went through the very same ceremonies.

"Who are you?" said Candide; "who has inspired you with so much goodness? What return can I make you?"

The good woman made no answer; she returned in the evening, but brought no supper.

"Come with me," she said, "and say nothing."

She took him by the arm, and walked with him about a quarter of a mile into the country; they arrived at a lonely house, surrounded with gardens and canals. The old woman knocked at a little door, it opened, she led Candide up a private staircase into a small apartment richly furnished. She left him on a brocaded sofa, shut the door and went away. Candide thought himself in a dream; indeed, that he had been dreaming unluckily all his life, and that the present moment was the only agreeable part of it all.

The old woman returned very soon, supporting with difficulty a trembling woman of a majestic figure, brilliant with jewels, and covered with a veil.

"Take off that veil," said the old woman to Candide.

The young man approaches, he raises the veil with a timid hand. Oh! what a moment! what surprise! he believes he beholds Miss Cunegonde? he really sees her! it is herself! His strength fails him, he cannot utter a word, but drops at her feet. Cunegonde falls upon the sofa. The old woman supplies a smelling bottle; they come to themselves and recover their speech. As they began with broken accents, with questions and answers interchangeably interrupted with sighs, with tears, and cries. The old woman desired they would make less noise and then she left them to themselves.

"What, is it you?" said Candide, "you live? I find you again in Portugal? then you have not been ravished? then they did not rip open your belly as Doctor Pangloss informed me?"

"Yes, they did," said the beautiful Cunegonde; "but those two accidents are not always mortal."

"But were your father and mother killed?"

"It is but too true," answered Cunegonde, in tears.

"And your brother?"

"My brother also was killed."

"And why are you in Portugal? and how did you know of my being here? and by what strange adventure did you contrive to bring me to this house?"

"I will tell you all that," replied the lady, "but first of all let me know your history, since the innocent kiss you gave me and the kicks which you received."

Candide respectfully obeyed her, and though he was still in a surprise, though his voice was feeble and trembling, though his back still pained him, yet he gave her a most ingenuous account of everything that had befallen him since the moment of their separation. Cunegonde lifted up her eyes to heaven; shed tears upon hearing of the death of the good Anabaptist and of Pangloss; after which she spoke as follows to Candide, who did not lose a word and devoured her with his eyes.

VIII

THE HISTORY OF CUNEGONDE.

"I was in bed and fast asleep when it pleased God to send the Bulgarians to our delightful castle of Thunder-ten-Tronckh; they slew my father and brother, and cut my mother in pieces. A tall Bulgarian, six feet high, perceiving that I had fainted away at this sight, began to ravish me; this made me recover; I regained my senses, I cried, I struggled, I bit, I scratched, I wanted to tear out the tall Bulgarian's eyes—not knowing that what happened at my father's house was the usual practice of war. The brute gave me a cut in the left side with his hanger, and the mark is still upon me."

"Ah! I hope I shall see it," said honest Candide.

"You shall," said Cunegonde, "but let us continue."

"Do so," replied Candide.

Thus she resumed the thread of her story:

"A Bulgarian captain came in, saw me all bleeding, and the soldier not in the least disconcerted. The captain flew into a passion at the disrespectful behaviour of the brute, and slew him on my body. He ordered my wounds to be dressed, and took me to his quarters as a prisoner of war. I washed the few shirts that he had, I did his cooking; he thought me very pretty—he avowed it; on the other hand, I must own he had a good shape, and a soft and white skin; but he had little or no mind or philosophy, and you might see plainly that he had never been instructed by Doctor Pangloss. In three months time, having lost all his money, and being grown tired of my company, he sold me to a Jew, named Don Issachar, who traded to Holland and Portugal, and had a strong passion for women. This Jew was much attached to my person, but could not triumph over it; I resisted him better than the Bulgarian soldier. A modest woman may be ravished once, but her virtue is strengthened by it. In order to render me more tractable, he brought me to this country house. Hitherto I had imagined that nothing could equal the beauty of Thunder-ten-Tronckh Castle; but I found I was mistaken.

"The Grand Inquisitor, seeing me one day at Mass, stared long at me, and sent to tell me that he wished to speak on private matters. I was conducted to his palace, where I acquainted him with the history of my family, and he represented to me how much it was beneath my rank to belong to an Israelite. A proposal was then made to Don Issachar that he should resign me to my lord. Don Issachar, being the court banker, and a man of credit, would hear nothing of it. The Inquisitor threatened him with an *auto-da-fé*. At last my Jew, intimidated, concluded a bargain, by which the house and myself should belong to both in common; the Jew should have for himself Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday, and the Inquisitor should have the rest of the week. It is now six months since this agreement was made. Quarrels have not been wanting, for they could not decide whether the night from Saturday to Sunday belonged to the old law or to the new. For my part, I have so far held out against both, and I verily believe that this is the reason why I am still beloved.

"At length, to avert the scourge of earthquakes, and to intimidate Don Issachar, my Lord Inquisitor was pleased to celebrate an *auto-da-fé*. He did me the honour to invite me to the ceremony. I had a very good seat, and the ladies were served with refreshments between Mass and the execution. I was in truth seized with horror at the burning of those two Jews, and of the honest Biscayner who had married his godmother; but what was my surprise, my fright, my trouble, when I saw in a *san-benito* and mitre a figure which resembled that of Pangloss! I rubbed my eyes, I looked at him attentively, I saw him hung; I fainted. Scarcely had I recovered my senses than I saw you stripped, stark naked, and this was the height of my horror, consternation, grief, and despair. I tell you, truthfully, that your skin is yet whiter and of a more perfect colour than that of my Bulgarian captain. This spectacle

redoubled all the feelings which overwhelmed and devoured me. I screamed out, and would have said, 'Stop, barbarians!' but my voice failed me, and my cries would have been useless after you had been severely whipped. How is it possible, said I, that the beloved Candide and the wise Pangloss should both be at Lisbon, the one to receive a hundred lashes, and the other to be hanged by the Grand Inquisitor, of whom I am the well-beloved? Pangloss most cruelly deceived me when he said that everything in the world is for the best.

"Agitated, lost, sometimes beside myself, and sometimes ready to die of weakness, my mind was filled with the massacre of my father, mother, and brother, with the insolence of the ugly Bulgarian soldier, with the stab that he gave me, with my servitude under the Bulgarian captain, with my hideous Don Issachar, with my abominable Inquisitor, with the execution of Doctor Pangloss, with the grand Miserere to which they whipped you, and especially with the kiss I gave you behind the screen the day that I had last seen you. I praised God for bringing you back to me after so many trials, and I charged my old woman to take care of you, and to conduct you hither as soon as possible. She has executed her commission perfectly well; I have tasted the inexpressible pleasure of seeing you again, of hearing you, of speaking with you. But you must be hungry, for myself, I am famished; let us have supper."

They both sat down to table, and, when supper was over, they placed themselves once more on the sofa; where they were when Signor Don Issachar arrived. It was the Jewish Sabbath, and Issachar had come to enjoy his rights, and to explain his tender love.

IX

WHAT BECAME OF CUNEGONDE, CANDIDE, THE GRAND INQUISITOR, AND THE JEW.

This Issachar was the most choleric Hebrew that had ever been seen in Israel since the Captivity in Babylon.

"What!" said he, "thou bitch of a Galilean, was not the Inquisitor enough for thee? Must this rascal also share with me?"

In saying this he drew a long poniard which he always carried about him; and not imagining that his adversary had any arms he threw himself upon Candide: but our honest Westphalian had received a handsome sword from the old woman along with the suit of clothes. He drew his rapier, despite his gentleness, and laid the Israelite stone dead upon the cushions at Cunegonde's feet.

"Holy Virgin!" cried she, "what will become of us? A man killed in my apartment! If the officers of justice come, we are lost!"

"Had not Pangloss been hanged," said Candide, "he would give us good counsel in this emergency, for he was a profound philosopher. Failing him let us consult the old woman."

She was very prudent and commenced to give her opinion when suddenly another little door opened. It was an hour after midnight, it was the beginning of Sunday. This day belonged to my lord the Inquisitor. He entered, and saw the whipped Candide, sword in hand, a dead man upon the floor, Cunegonde aghast, and the old woman giving counsel.

At this moment, the following is what passed in the soul of Candide, and how he reasoned:

If this holy man call in assistance, he will surely have me burnt; and Cunegonde will perhaps be served in the same manner; he was the cause of my being cruelly whipped; he is my rival; and, as I have now begun to kill, I will kill away, for there is no time to hesitate. This reasoning was clear and instantaneous; so that without giving time to the Inquisitor to recover from his surprise, he pierced him through and through, and cast him beside the Jew.

"Yet again!" said Cunegonde, "now there is no mercy for us, we are excommunicated, our last hour has come. How could you do it? you, naturally so gentle, to slay a Jew and a prelate in two minutes!"

"My beautiful young lady," responded Candide, "when one is a lover, jealous and whipped by the Inquisition, one stops at nothing."

The old woman then put in her word, saying:

"There are three Andalusian horses in the stable with bridles and saddles, let the brave Candide get them ready; madame has money, jewels; let us therefore mount quickly on horseback, though I can sit only on one buttock; let us set out for Cadiz, it is the finest weather in the world, and there is great pleasure in travelling in the cool of the night."

Immediately Candide saddled the three horses, and Cunegonde, the old woman and he, travelled thirty miles at a stretch. While they were journeying, the Holy Brotherhood entered the house; my lord the Inquisitor was interred in a handsome church, and Issachar's body was thrown upon a dunghill.

Candide, Cunegonde, and the old woman, had now reached the little town of Avacena in the midst of the mountains of the Sierra Morena, and were speaking as follows in a public inn.

X

IN WHAT DISTRESS CANDIDE, CUNEGONDE, AND THE OLD WOMAN ARRIVED AT CADIZ; AND OF THEIR EMBARKATION.

"Who was it that robbed me of my money and jewels?" said Cunegonde, all bathed in tears. "How shall we live? What shall we do? Where find Inquisitors or Jews who will give me more?"

"Alas!" said the old woman, "I have a shrewd suspicion of a reverend Grey Friar, who stayed last night in the same inn with us at Badajos. God preserve me from judging rashly, but he came into our room twice, and he set out upon his journey long before us."

"Alas!" said Candide, "dear Pangloss has often demonstrated to me that the goods of this world are common to all men, and that each has an equal right to them. But according to these principles the Grey Friar ought to have left us enough to carry us through our journey. Have you nothing at all left, my dear Cunegonde?"

"Not a farthing," said she.

"What then must we do?" said Candide.

"Sell one of the horses," replied the old woman. "I will ride behind Miss Cunegonde, though I can hold myself only on one buttock, and we shall reach Cadiz."

In the same inn there was a Benedictine prior who bought the horse for a cheap price. Candide, Cunegonde, and the old woman, having passed through Lucena, Chillas, and Lebrixa, arrived at length at Cadiz. A fleet was there getting ready, and troops assembling to bring to reason the reverend Jesuit Fathers of Paraguay, accused of having made one of the native tribes in the neighborhood of San Sacrament revolt against the Kings of Spain and Portugal. Candide having been in the Bulgarian service, performed the military exercise before the general of this little army with so graceful an address, with so intrepid an air, and with such agility and expedition, that he was given the command of a company of foot. Now, he was a captain! He set sail with Miss Cunegonde, the old woman, two valets, and the two Andalusian horses, which had belonged to the grand Inquisitor of Portugal.

During their voyage they reasoned a good deal on the philosophy of poor Pangloss.

"We are going into another world," said Candide; "and surely it must be there that all is for the best. For I must confess there is reason to complain a little of what passeth in our world in regard to both natural and moral philosophy."

"I love you with all my heart," said Cunegonde; "but my soul is still full of fright at that which I have seen and experienced."

"All will be well," replied Candide; "the sea of this new world is already better than our European sea; it is calmer, the winds more regular. It is certainly the New World which is the best of all possible worlds."

"God grant it," said Cunegonde; "but I have been so horribly unhappy there that my heart is almost closed to hope."

"You complain," said the old woman; "alas! you have not known such misfortunes as mine."

Cunegonde almost broke out laughing, finding the good woman very amusing, for pretending to have been as unfortunate as she.

"Alas!" said Cunegonde, "my good mother, unless you have been ravished by two Bulgarians, have received two deep wounds in your belly, have had two castles demolished, have had two mothers cut to pieces before your eyes, and two of your lovers whipped at an *auto-da-fé*, I do not conceive how you could be more unfortunate than I. Add that I was born a baroness of seventy-two quarterings—and have been a cook!"

"Miss," replied the old woman, "you do not_know my birth; and were I to show you my backside, you would not talk in that manner, but would suspend your judgment."

This speech having raised extreme curiosity in the minds of Cunegonde and Candide, the old woman spoke to them as follows.

XI

HISTORY OF THE OLD WOMAN.

"I had not always bleared eyes and red eyelids; neither did my nose always touch my chin; nor was I always a servant. I am the daughter of Pope Urban X. [10]Links to an external site.(opens in new window) and of the Princess of Palestrina. Until the age of fourteen I was brought up in a palace, to which all the castles of your German barons would scarcely have served for stables; and one of my robes was worth more than all the magnificence of Westphalia. As I grew up I improved in beauty, wit, and every graceful accomplishment, in the midst of pleasures, hopes, and respectful homage. Already I inspired love. My throat was formed, and such a throat! white, firm, and shaped like that of the Venus of Medici; and what eyes! what eyelids! what black eyebrows! such flames darted from my dark pupils that they eclipsed the scintillation of the stars—as I was told by the poets in our part of the world. My waiting women, when dressing and undressing me, used to fall into an ecstasy, whether they viewed me before[Pg 43] or behind; how glad would the gentlemen have been to perform that office for them!

"I was affianced to the most excellent Prince of Massa Carara. Such a prince! as handsome as myself, sweet-tempered, agreeable, brilliantly witty, and sparkling with love. I loved him as one loves for the first time—with idolatry, with transport. The nuptials were prepared. There was surprising pomp and magnificence; there were *fêtes*, carousals, continual *opera bouffe*; and all Italy composed sonnets in my praise, though not one of them was passable. I was just upon the point of reaching the summit of bliss, when an old marchioness who had been mistress to the Prince, my husband, invited him to drink chocolate with her. He died in less than two hours of most terrible convulsions. But this is only a bagatelle. My mother, in despair, and scarcely less afflicted than myself, determined to absent herself for some time from so fatal a place. She had a very fine estate in the neighbourhood of Gaeta. We embarked on board a galley of the country which was gilded like the great altar of St. Peter's at Rome. A Sallee corsair swooped down and boarded us. Our men defended themselves like the Pope's soldiers; they flung themselves upon their knees, and threw down their arms, begging of the corsair an absolution *in articulo mortis*.

"Instantly they were stripped as bare as monkeys; my mother, our maids of honour, and myself were all served in the same manner. It is amazing with what expedition those gentry undress people. But what surprised me most was, that they thrust their fingers into the part of our bodies which the generality of women suffer no other instrument but—pipes to enter. It appeared to me a very strange kind of ceremony; but thus one judges of things when one has not seen the world. I afterwards learnt that it was to try whether we had concealed any diamonds. This is the practice established from time immemorial, among civilised nations that scour the seas. I was informed that the very religious Knights of Malta never fail to make this search when they take any Turkish prisoners of either sex. It is a law of nations from which they never deviate.

"I need not tell *you* how great a hardship it was for a young princess and her mother to be made slaves and carried to Morocco. You may easily imagine all we had to suffer on board the pirate vessel. My mother was still very handsome; our maids of honour, and even our waiting women, had more charms than are to be found in all Africa. As for myself, I was ravishing, was exquisite, grace itself, and I was a virgin! I did not remain so long; this flower, which had been reserved for the handsome Prince of Massa Carara, was plucked by the corsair captain. He was an abominable negro, and yet believed that he did me a great deal of honour. Certainly the Princess of Palestrina and myself must have been very strong to go through all that we experienced until our arrival at Morocco. But let us pass on; these are such common things as not to be worth mentioning.

"Morocco swam in blood when we arrived. Fifty sons of the Emperor Muley-Ismael[11]Links to an external site.(opens in new window) had each their adherents; this produced fifty civil wars, of blacks against blacks, and blacks against tawnies, and tawnies against tawnies, and mulattoes against mulattoes. In short it was a continual carnage throughout the empire.

"No sooner were we landed, than the blacks of a contrary faction to that of my captain attempted to rob him of his booty. Next to jewels and gold we were the most valuable things he had. I was witness to such a battle as you have never seen in your European climates. The northern nations have not that heat in their blood, nor that raging lust for women, so common in Africa. It seems that you Europeans have only milk in your veins; but it is vitriol, it is fire which runs in those of the inhabitants of Mount Atlas and the neighbouring countries. They fought with the fury of the lions, tigers, and serpents of the country, to see who should have us. A Moor seized my mother by the right arm, while my captain's lieutenant held her by the left; a Moorish soldier had hold of her by one leg, and one of our corsairs held her by the other. Thus almost all our women were drawn in quarters by four men. My captain concealed me behind him; and with his drawn scimitar cut and slashed every one that opposed his fury. At length I saw all our Italian women, and my mother herself, torn, mangled, massacred, by the monsters who disputed over them. The slaves, my

companions, those who had taken them, soldiers, sailors, blacks, whites, mulattoes, and at last my captain, all were killed, and I remained dying on a heap of dead. Such scenes as this were transacted through an extent of three hundred leagues—and yet they never missed the five prayers a day ordained by Mahomet.

"With difficulty I disengaged myself from such a heap of slaughtered bodies, and crawled to a large orange tree on the bank of a neighbouring rivulet, where I fell, oppressed with fright, fatigue, horror, despair, and hunger. Immediately after, my senses, overpowered, gave themselves up to sleep, which was yet more swooning than repose. I was in this state of weakness and insensibility, between life and death, when I felt myself pressed by something that moved upon my body. I opened my eyes, and saw a white man, of good countenance, who sighed, and who said between his teeth: '*O che sciagura d'essere senza coglioni!*'" [12Links to an external site.(opens in new window)

XII

THE ADVENTURES OF THE OLD WOMAN CONTINUED.

"Astonished and delighted to hear my native language, and no less surprised at what this man said, I made answer that there were much greater misfortunes than that of which he complained. I told him in a few words of the horrors which I had endured, and fainted a second time. He carried me to a neighbouring house, put me to bed, gave me food, waited upon me, consoled me, flattered me; he told me that he had never seen any one so beautiful as I, and that he never so much regretted the loss of what it was impossible to recover.

"'I was born at Naples,' said he, 'there they geld two or three thousand children every year; some die of the operation, others acquire a voice more beautiful than that of women, and others are raised to offices of state.[13]Links to an external site.(opens in new window) This operation was performed on me with great success and I was chapel musician to madam, the Princess of Palestrina.'

"'To my mother!' cried I.

"'Your mother!' cried he, weeping. 'What! can you be that young princess whom I brought up until the age of six years, and who promised so early to be as beautiful as you?'

"'It is I, indeed; but my mother lies four hundred yards hence, torn in quarters, under a heap of dead bodies.'

"I told him all my adventures, and he made me acquainted with his; telling me that he had been sent to the Emperor of Morocco by a Christian power, to conclude a treaty with that prince, in consequence of which he was to be furnished with military stores and ships to help to demolish the commerce of other Christian Governments.

"'My mission is done,' said this honest eunuch; 'I go to embark for Ceuta, and will take you to Italy. *Ma che sciagura d'essere senza coglioni!*'

"I thanked him with tears of commiseration; and instead of taking me to Italy he conducted me to Algiers, where he sold me to the Dey. Scarcely was I sold, than the plague which had made the tour of Africa, Asia, and Europe, broke out with great malignancy in Algiers. You have seen earthquakes; but pray, miss, have you ever had the plague?"

"Never," answered Cunegonde.

"If you had," said the old woman, "you would acknowledge that it is far more terrible than an earthquake. It is common in Africa, and I caught it. Imagine to yourself the distressed situation of the daughter of a Pope, only fifteen years old, who, in less than three months, had felt the miseries of poverty and slavery, had been ravished almost every day, had beheld her mother drawn in quarters, had experienced famine and war, and was dying of the plague in Algiers. I did not die, however, but my eunuch, and the Dey, and almost the whole seraglio of Algiers perished.

"As soon as the first fury of this terrible pestilence was over, a sale was made of the Dey's slaves; I was purchased by a merchant, and carried to Tunis; this man sold me to another merchant, who sold me again to another at Tripoli; from Tripoli I was sold to Alexandria, from Alexandria to Smyrna, and from Smyrna to Constantinople. At length I became the property of an Aga of the Janissaries, who was soon ordered away to the defence of Azof, then besieged by the Russians.

"The Aga, who was a very gallant man, took his whole seraglio with him, and lodged us in a small fort on the Palus Méotides, guarded by two black eunuchs and twenty soldiers. The Turks killed prodigious numbers of the Russians, but the latter had their

revenge. Azof was destroyed by fire, the inhabitants put to the sword, neither sex nor age was spared; until there remained only our little fort, and the enemy wanted to starve us out. The twenty Janissaries had sworn they would never surrender. The extremities of famine to which they were reduced, obliged them to eat our two eunuchs, for fear of violating their oath. And at the end of a few days they resolved also to devour the women.

"We had a very pious and humane Iman, who preached an excellent sermon, exhorting them not to kill us all at once.

"'Only cut off a buttock of each of those ladies,' said he, 'and you'll fare extremely well; if you must go to it again, there will be the same entertainment a few days hence; heaven will accept of so charitable an action, and send you relief.'

"He had great eloquence; he persuaded them; we underwent this terrible operation. The Iman applied the same balsam to us, as he does to children after circumcision; and we all nearly died.

"Scarcely had the Janissaries finished the repast with which we had furnished them, than the Russians came in flat-bottomed boats; not a Janissary escaped. The Russians paid no attention to the condition we were in. There are French surgeons in all parts of the world; one of them who was very clever took us under his care—he cured us; and as long as I live I shall remember that as soon as my wounds were healed he made proposals to me. He bid us all be of good cheer, telling us that the like had happened in many sieges, and that it was according to the laws of war.

"As soon as my companions could walk, they were obliged to set out for Moscow. I fell to the share of a Boyard who made me his gardener, and gave me twenty lashes a day. But this nobleman having in two years' time been broke upon the wheel along with thirty more Boyards for some broils at court, I profited by that event; I fled. I traversed all Russia; I was a long time an inn-holder's servant at Riga, the same at Rostock, at Vismar, at Leipzig, at Cassel, at Utrecht, at Leyden, at the Hague, at Rotterdam. I waxed old in misery and disgrace, having only one-half of my posteriors, and always remembering I was a Pope's daughter. A hundred times I was upon the point of killing myself; but still I loved life. This ridiculous foible is perhaps one of our most fatal characteristics; for is there anything more absurd than to wish to carry continually a burden which one can always throw down? to detest existence and yet to cling to one's existence? in brief, to caress[Pg 53] the serpent which devours us, till he has eaten our very heart?

"In the different countries which it has been my lot to traverse, and the numerous inns where I have been servant, I have taken notice of a vast number of people who held their own existence in abhorrence, and yet I never knew of more than eight who voluntarily put an end to their misery; three negroes, four Englishmen, and a German professor named Robek. [14]Links to an external site.(opens in new window) I ended by being servant to the Jew, Don Issachar, who placed me near your presence, my fair lady. I am determined to share your fate, and have been much more affected with your misfortunes than with my own. I would never even have spoken to you of my misfortunes, had you not piqued me a little, and if it were not customary to tell stories on board a ship in order to pass away the time. In short, Miss Cunegonde, I have had experience, I know the world; therefore I advise you to divert yourself, and prevail upon each passenger to tell his story; and if there be one of them all, that has not cursed his life many a time, that has not frequently looked upon himself as the unhappiest of mortals, I give you leave to throw me headforemost into the sea."

XIII

HOW CANDIDE WAS FORCED AWAY FROM HIS FAIR CUNEGONDE AND THE OLD WOMAN.

The beautiful Cunegonde having heard the old woman's history, paid her all the civilities due to a person of her rank and merit. She likewise accepted her proposal, and engaged all the passengers, one after the other, to relate their adventures; and then both she and Candide allowed that the old woman was in the right.

"It is a great pity," said Candide, "that the sage Pangloss was hanged contrary to custom at an *auto-da-fé*; he would tell us most amazing things in regard to the physical and moral evils that overspread earth and sea, and I should be able, with due respect, to make a few objections."

While each passenger was recounting his story, the ship made her way. They landed at Buenos Ayres. Cunegonde, Captain Candide, and the old woman, waited on the Governor, Don Fernando d'Ibaraa, y Figueora, y Mascarenes, y Lampourdos, y Souza. This nobleman had a stateliness becoming a person who bore so many names. He spoke to men with so noble a disdain, carried his nose so loftily, raised his voice so unmercifully, assumed so imperious an air, and stalked with such intolerable pride, that those who

saluted him were strongly inclined to give him a good drubbing. Cunegonde appeared to him the most beautiful he had ever met. The first thing he did was to ask whether she was not the captain's wife. The manner in which he asked the question alarmed Candide; he durst not say she was his wife, because indeed she was not; neither durst he say she was his sister, because it was not so; and although this obliging lie had been formerly much in favour among the ancients, and although it could be useful to the moderns, his soul was too pure to betray the truth.

"Miss Cunegonde," said he, "is to do me the honour to marry me, and we beseech your excellency to deign to sanction our marriage."

Don Fernando d'Ibaraa, y Figueora, y Mascarenes, y Lampourdos, y Souza, turning up his moustachios, smiled mockingly, and ordered Captain Candide to go and review his company. Candide obeyed, and the Governor remained alone with Miss Cunegonde. He declared his passion, protesting he would marry her the next day in the face of the church, or otherwise, just as should be agreeable to herself. Cunegonde asked a quarter of an hour to consider of it, to consult the old woman, and to take her resolution.

The old woman spoke thus to Cunegonde:

"Miss, you have seventy-two quarterings, and not a farthing; it is now in your power to be wife to the greatest lord in South America, who has very beautiful moustachios. Is it for you to pique yourself upon inviolable fidelity? You have been ravished by Bulgarians; a Jew and an Inquisitor have enjoyed your favours. Misfortune gives sufficient excuse. I own, that if I were in your place, I should have no scruple in marrying the Governor and in making the fortune of Captain Candide."

While the old woman spoke with all the prudence which age and experience gave, a small ship entered the port on board of which were an Alcalde and his alguazils, and this was what had happened.

As the old woman had shrewdly guessed, it was a Grey Friar who stole Cunegonde's money and jewels in the town of Badajos, when she and Candide were escaping. The Friar wanted to sell some of the diamonds to a jeweller; the jeweller knew them to be the Grand Inquisitor's. The Friar before he was hanged confessed he had stolen them. He described the persons, and the route they had taken. The flight of Cunegonde and Candide was already known. They were traced to Cadiz. A vessel was immediately sent in pursuit of them. The vessel was already in the port of Buenos Ayres. The report spread that the Alcalde was going to land, and that he was in pursuit of the murderers of my lord the Grand Inquisitor. The prudent old woman saw at once what was to be done.

"You cannot run away," said she to Cunegonde, "and you have nothing to fear, for it was not you that killed my lord; besides the Governor who loves you will not suffer you to be ill-treated; therefore stay."

She then ran immediately to Candide.

"Fly," said she, "or in an hour you will be burnt."

There was not a moment to lose; but how could he part from Cunegonde, and where could he flee for shelter?

XIV

HOW CANDIDE AND CACAMBO WERE RECEIVED BY THE JESUITS OF PARAGUAY.

Candide had brought such a valet with him from Cadiz, as one often meets with on the coasts of Spain and in the American colonies. He was a quarter Spaniard, born of a mongrel in Tucuman; he had been singing-boy, sacristan, sailor, monk, pedlar, soldier, and lackey. His name was Cacambo, and he loved his master, because his master was a very good man. He quickly saddled the two Andalusian horses.

"Come, master, let us follow the old woman's advice; let us start, and run without looking behind us."

Candide shed tears.

"Oh! my dear Cunegonde! must I leave you just at a time when the Governor was going to sanction our nuptials? Cunegonde, brought to such a distance what will become of you?"

"She will do as well as she can," said Cacambo; "the women are never at a loss, God provides for them, let us run."

"Whither art thou carrying me? Where shall we go? What shall we do without Cunegonde?" said Candide.

"By St. James of Compostella," said Cacambo, "you were going to fight against the Jesuits; let us go to fight for them; I know the road well, I'll conduct you to their kingdom, where they will be charmed to have a captain that understands the Bulgarian exercise. You'll make a prodigious fortune; if we cannot find our account in one world we shall in another. It is a great pleasure to see and do new things."

"You have before been in Paraguay, then?" said Candide.

"Ay, sure," answered Cacambo, "I was servant in the College of the Assumption, and am acquainted with the government of the good Fathers as well as I am with the streets of Cadiz. It is an admirable government. The kingdom is upwards of three hundred leagues in diameter, and divided into thirty provinces; there the Fathers possess all, and the people nothing; it is a masterpiece of reason and justice. For my part I see nothing so divine as the Fathers who here make war upon the kings of Spain and Portugal, and in Europe confess those kings; who here kill Spaniards, and in Madrid send them to heaven; this delights me, let us push forward. You are going to be the happiest of mortals. What pleasure will it be to those Fathers to hear that a captain who knows the Bulgarian exercise has come to them!"

As soon as they reached the first barrier, Cacambo told the advanced guard that a captain wanted to speak with my lord the Commandant. Notice was given to the main guard, and immediately a Paraguayan officer ran and laid himself at the feet of the Commandant, to impart this news to him. Candide and Cacambo were disarmed, and their two Andalusian horses seized. The strangers were introduced between two files of musketeers; the Commandant was at the further end, with the three-cornered cap on his head, his gown tucked up, a sword by his side, and a spontoon 15]Links to an external site.(opens in new window) in his hand. He beckoned, and straightway the new-comers were encompassed by four-and-twenty soldiers. A sergeant told them they must wait, that the Commandant could not speak to them, and that the reverend Father Provincial does not suffer any Spaniard to open his mouth but in his presence, or to stay above three hours in the province.

"And where is the reverend Father Provincial?" said Cacambo.

"He is upon the parade just after celebrating mass," answered the sergeant, "and you cannot kiss his spurs till three hours hence."

"However," said Cacambo, "the captain is not a Spaniard, but a German, he is ready to perish with hunger as well as myself; cannot we have something for breakfast, while we wait for his reverence?"

The sergeant went immediately to acquaint the Commandant with what he had heard.

"God be praised!" said the reverend Commandant, "since he is a German, I may speak to him; take him to my arbour."

Candide was at once conducted to a beautiful summer-house, ornamented with a very pretty colonnade of green and gold marble, and with trellises, enclosing parraquets, humming-birds, fly-birds, guinea-hens, and all other rare birds. An excellent breakfast was provided in vessels of gold; and while the Paraguayans were eating maize out of wooden dishes, in the open fields and exposed to the heat of the sun, the reverend Father Commandant retired to his arbour.

He was a very handsome young man, with a full face, white skin but high in colour; he had an arched eyebrow, a lively eye, red ears, vermilion lips, a bold air, but such a boldness as neither belonged to a Spaniard nor a Jesuit. They returned their arms to Candide and Cacambo, and also the two Andalusian horses; to whom Cacambo gave some ats to eat just by the arbour, having an eye upon them all the while for fear of a surprise.

Candide first kissed the hem of the Commandant's robe, then they sat down to table.

"You are, then, a German?" said the Jesuit to him in that language.

"Yes, reverend Father," answered Candide.

As they pronounced these words they looked at each other with great amazement, and with such an emotion as they could not conceal.

"And from what part of Germany do you come?" said the Jesuit.

"I am from the dirty province of Westphalia," answered Candide; "I was born in the Castle of Thunder-ten-Tronckh."

"Oh! Heavens! is it possible?" cried the Commandant.

"What a miracle!" cried Candide.

"Is it really you?" said the Commandant.

"It is not possible!" said Candide.

They drew back; they embraced; they shed rivulets of tears.

"What, is it you, reverend Father? You, the brother of the fair Cunegonde! You, that was slain by the Bulgarians! You, the Baron's son! You, a Jesuit in Paraguay! I must confess this is a strange world that we live in. Oh, Pangloss! Pangloss! how glad you would be if you had not been hanged!"

The Commandant sent away the negro slaves and the Paraguayans, who served them with liquors in goblets of rock-crystal. He thanked God and St. Ignatius a thousand times; he clasped Candide in his arms; and their faces were all bathed with tears.

"You will be more surprised, more affected, and transported," said Candide, "when I tell you that Cunegonde, your sister, whom you believe to have been ripped open, is in perfect health."

"Where?"

"In your neighbourhood, with the Governor of Buenos Ayres; and I was going to fight against you."

Every word which they uttered in this long conversation but added wonder to wonder. Their souls fluttered on their tongues, listened in their ears, and sparkled in their eyes. As they were Germans, they sat a good while at table, waiting for the reverend Father Provincial, and the Commandant spoke to his dear Candide as follows.

XV

HOW CANDIDE KILLED THE BROTHER OF HIS DEAR CUNEGONDE.

"I shall have ever present to my memory the dreadful day, on which I saw my father and mother killed, and my sister ravished. When the Bulgarians retired, my dear sister could not be found; but my mother, my father, and myself, with two maid-servants and three little boys all of whom had been slain, were put in a hearse, to be conveyed for interment to a chapel belonging to the Jesuits, within two leagues of our family seat. A Jesuit sprinkled us with some holy water; it was horribly salt; a few drops of it fell into my eyes; the father perceived that my eyelids stirred a little; he put his hand upon my heart and felt it beat. I received assistance, and at the end of three weeks I recovered. You know, my dear Candide, I was very pretty; but I grew much prettier, and the reverend Father Didrie, [16]Links to an external site.(opens in new window) Superior of that House, conceived the tenderest friendship for me; he gave me the habit of the order, some years after I was sent to Rome. The Father-General needed new levies of young German-Jesuits. The sovereigns of Paraguay admit as few Spanish Jesuits as possible; they prefer those of other nations as being more subordinate to their commands. I was judged fit by the reverend Father-General to go and work in this vineyard. We set out—a Pole, a Tyrolese, and myself. Upon my arrival I was honoured with a sub-deaconship and a lieutenancy. I am to-day colonel and priest. We shall give a warm reception to the King of Spain's troops; I will answer for it that they shall be excommunicated and well beaten. Providence sends you here to assist us. But is it, indeed, true that my dear sister Cunegonde is in the neighbourhood, with the Governor of Buenos Ayres?"

Candide assured him on oath that nothing was more true, and their tears began afresh.

The Baron could not refrain from embracing Candide; he called him his brother, his saviour.

"Ah! perhaps," said he, "we shall together, my dear Candide, enter the town as conquerors, and recover my sister Cunegonde."

"That is all I want," said Candide, "for I intended to marry her, and I still hope to do so."

"You insolent!" replied the Baron, "would you have the impudence to marry my sister who has seventy-two quarterings! I find thou hast the most consummate effrontery to dare to mention so presumptuous a design!"

Candide, petrified at this speech, made answer:

"Reverend Father, all the quarterings in the world signify nothing; I rescued your sister from the arms of a Jew and of an Inquisitor; she has great obligations to me, she wishes to marry me; Master Pangloss always told me that all men are equal, and certainly I will marry her."

"We shall see that, thou scoundrel!" said the Jesuit Baron de Thunder-ten-Tronckh, and that instant struck him across the face with the flat of his sword. Candide in an instant drew his rapier, and plunged it up to the hilt in the Jesuit's belly; but in pulling it out reeking hot, he burst into tears.

"Good God!" said he, "I have killed my old master, my friend, my brother-in-law! I am the best-natured creature in the world, and yet I have already killed three men, and of these three two were priests."

Cacambo, who stood sentry by the door of the arbour, ran to him.

"We have nothing more for it than to sell our lives as dearly as we can," said his master to him, "without doubt some one will soon enter the arbour, and we must die sword in hand."

Cacambo, who had been in a great many scrapes in his lifetime, did not lose his head; he took the Baron's Jesuit habit, put it on Candide, gave him the square cap, and made him mount on horseback. All this was done in the twinkling of an eye.

"Let us gallop fast, master, everybody will take you for a Jesuit, going to give directions to your men, and we shall have passed the frontiers before they will be able to overtake us."

He flew as he spoke these words, crying out aloud in Spanish:

"Make way, make way, for the reverend Father Colonel."

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Voltaire's CANDIDE (second half)

4.1: Editor's Introduction

4.2: Candide, Second Half

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4.1: Editor's Introduction

In the second half of *Candide* (Chapters XVI through XXX) the central themes of optimism, human suffering, and the critique of organized religion, authority, and societal structures are eventually resolved through Candide's journey. These chapters mark a significant portion of his adventures as he continues to encounter both absurdity and tragedy. By Chapters XVI through XXXII, Candide's optimism is increasingly tested as he experiences various hardships. In Chapter XVI, for example, after Candide and his companion, Cacambo, flee the Oreillons, they narrowly escape being eaten by cannibals. Such absurd violence and near-death experiences contrast sharply with Pangloss's teachings, illustrating the futility of trying to explain away suffering as part of a larger divine plan.

In Chapter XVII, Candide stumbles upon El Dorado, a utopian society where there is no greed, religious strife, or social inequality. This society could represent the "best of all possible worlds" Pangloss envisions, but Candide chooses to leave it. His decision to abandon the utopia suggests Voltaire's, and by association, Candide's growing skepticism of idealistic philosophies separate from the real world. Candide still seeks happiness (primarily through his love for Cunégonde) yet increasingly sees the impracticality of Pangloss's optimism as he faces more brutality and suffering.

The themes of corruption and hypocrisy, especially in religious and political institutions, are also expressly critiqued in these chapters. Candide encounters a number of figures who represent corruption. In Chapter XIX, Candide meets a Catholic Inquisitor and a Jesuit colonel (who turns out to be Cunégonde's brother), both of whom exhibit religious hypocrisy, using their positions for personal gain and oppression rather than moral or spiritual purposes. These characters show how religious figures are more concerned with maintaining power and status than with any form of genuine faith or morality.

This critique is further developed in Chapter XXVI, where Candide encounters several dethroned kings in Venice. These fallen monarchs, once powerful, now lead pitiable lives. Voltaire uses these examples to highlight the fragility and ultimate ineffectiveness of political power, underscoring the idea that authority, religious or political, often fails to achieve any true good.

In Chapter XIX, Candide's optimism is shattered when he witnesses the brutal treatment of African slaves in Suriname. Voltaire exposes the horrors of European colonialism and the brutal exploitation of the enslaved, forcing Candide to reckon with these stark and vivid realities of human cruelty. The infamous scene where Candide meets the mutilated slave, who lost a leg and hand, shocks Candide, who then begins to doubt that such suffering can be part of a divine plan.

Additionally, in Chapter XXVII, Candide meets Martin, a pessimistic scholar who argues that the world is filled only with cruelty and wickedness. Martin's view contrasts sharply with Pangloss's, but his pessimism is grounded in the harsh experiences he and Candide witness together. This conflict between optimism and pessimism continues as Candide struggles to reconcile his hope for a better life with the constant misfortunes he sees and experiences. By the final chapters, Candide's journey comes to a resolution with a rejection of both Panglossian optimism and extreme pessimism. Candide, now disillusioned by the relentless suffering and absurdities he has witnessed, ultimately adopts a more pragmatic philosophy.

In the closing chapters (especially Chapter XXX), Candide finally rejects Pangloss's unwavering belief that all happens for the best. After reuniting with Cunégonde, who has been reduced to a life of servitude and lost her beauty, Candide marries her out of duty rather than love, understanding that his idealized vision of her no longer exists. This disappointment further shatters the optimistic illusions that once propelled him.

However, instead of descending into despair, Candide resolves to take action. He famously declares, "We must cultivate our garden," signaling a shift away from passive acceptance of fate toward a philosophy of practical action. Rather than relying on abstract theory to explain or justify the world's suffering, he embraces the idea of working for a modest, attainable happiness through tangible effort. This implies that while the world may be filled with injustice and pain, individuals can still find meaning and satisfaction by focusing on immediate and practical tasks.

-Taz Rosenthal

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4.2: Candide, Second Half

CANDIDE [Second Half, Chapters XVI-XXX](opens in new window) [www.gutenberg.org]

XVI

ADVENTURES OF THE TWO TRAVELLERS, WITH TWO GIRLS, TWO MONKEYS, AND THE SAVAGES CALLED OREILLONS.

Candide and his valet had got beyond the barrier, before it was known in the camp that the German Jesuit was dead. The wary Cacambo had taken care to fill his wallet with bread, chocolate, bacon, fruit, and a few bottles of wine. With their Andalusian horses they penetrated into an unknown country, where they perceived no beaten track. At length they came to a beautiful meadow intersected with purling rills. Here our two adventurers fed their horses. Cacambo proposed to his master to take some food, and he set him an example.

"How can you ask me to eat ham," said Candide, "after killing the Baron's son, and being doomed never more to see the beautiful Cunegonde? What will it avail me to spin out my wretched days and drag them far from her in remorse and despair? And what will the *Journal of Trevoux* [17]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window) say?"

While he was thus lamenting his fate, he went on eating. The sun went down. The two wanderers heard some little cries which seemed to be uttered by women. They did not know whether they were cries of pain or joy; but they started up precipitately with that inquietude and alarm which every little thing inspires in an unknown country. The noise was made by two naked girls, who tripped along the mead, while two monkeys were pursuing them and biting their buttocks. Candide was moved with pity; he had learned to fire a gun in the Bulgarian service, and he was so clever at it, that he could hit a filbert in a hedge without touching a leaf of the tree. He took up his double-barrelled Spanish fusil, let it off, and killed the two monkeys.

"God be praised! My dear Cacambo, I have rescued those two poor creatures from a most perilous situation. If I have committed a sin in killing an Inquisitor and a Jesuit, I have made ample amends by saving the lives of these girls. Perhaps they are young ladies of family; and this adventure may procure us great advantages in this country."

He was continuing, but stopped short when he saw the two girls tenderly embracing the monkeys, bathing their bodies in tears, and rending the air with the most dismal lamentations.

"Little did I expect to see such good-nature," said he at length to Cacambo; who made answer:

"Master, you have done a fine thing now; you have slain the sweethearts of those two young ladies."

"The sweethearts! Is it possible? You are jesting, Cacambo, I can never believe it!"

"Dear master," replied Cacambo; "you are surprised at everything. Why should you think it so strange that in some countries there are monkeys which insinuate themselves into the good graces of the ladies; they are a fourth part human, as I am a fourth part Spaniard."

"Alas!" replied Candide, "I remember to have heard Master Pangloss say, that formerly such accidents used to happen; that these mixtures were productive of Centaurs, Fauns, and Satyrs; and that many of the ancients had seen such monsters, but I looked upon the whole as fabulous."

"You ought now to be convinced," said Cacambo, "that it is the truth, and you see what use is made of those creatures, by persons that have not had a proper education; all I fear is that those ladies will play us some ugly trick."

These sound reflections induced Candide to leave the meadow and to plunge into a wood. He supped there with Cacambo; and after cursing the Portuguese inquisitor, the Governor of Buenos Ayres, and the Baron, they fell asleep on moss. On awaking they felt that they could not move; for during the night the Oreillons, who inhabited that country, and to whom the ladies had denounced them, had bound them with cords made of the bark of trees. They were encompassed by fifty naked Oreillons, armed with bows and arrows, with clubs and flint hatchets. Some were making a large cauldron boil, others were preparing spits, and all cried:

"A Jesuit! a Jesuit! we shall be revenged, we shall have excellent cheer, let us eat the Jesuit, let us eat him up!"

"I told you, my dear master," cried Cacambo sadly, "that those two girls would play us some ugly trick."

Candide seeing the cauldron and the spits, cried:

"We are certainly going to be either roasted or boiled. Ah! what would Master Pangloss say, were he to see how pure nature is formed? Everything is right, may be, but I declare it is very hard to have lost Miss Cunegonde and to be put upon a spit by Oreillons."

Cacambo never lost his head.

"Do not despair," said he to the disconsolate Candide, "I understand a little of the jargon of these people, I will speak to them."

"Be sure," said Candide, "to represent to them how frightfully inhuman it is to cook men, and how very un-Christian."

"Gentlemen," said Cacambo, "you reckon you are to-day going to feast upon a Jesuit. It is all very well, nothing is more unjust than thus to treat your enemies. Indeed, the law of nature teaches us to kill our neighbour, and such is the practice all over the world. If we do not accustom ourselves to eating them, it is because we have better fare. But you have not the same resources as we; certainly it is much better to devour your enemies than to resign to the crows and rooks the fruits of your victory. But, gentlemen, surely you would not choose to eat your friends. You believe that you are going to spit a Jesuit, and he is your defender. It is the enemy of your enemies that you are going to roast. As for myself, I was born in your country; this gentleman is my master, and, far from being a Jesuit, he has just killed one, whose spoils he wears; and thence comes your mistake. To convince you of the truth of what I say, take his habit and carry it to the first barrier of the Jesuit kingdom, and inform yourselves whether my master did not kill a Jesuit officer. It will not take you long, and you can always eat us if you find that I have lied to you. But I have told you the truth. You are too well acquainted with the principles of public law, humanity, and justice not to pardon us."

The Oreillons found this speech very reasonable. They deputed two of their principal people with all expedition to inquire into the truth of the matter; these executed their commission like men of sense, and soon returned with good news. The Oreillons untied their prisoners, showed them all sorts of civilities, offered them girls, gave them refreshment, and reconducted them to the confines of their territories, proclaiming with great joy:

"He is no Jesuit! He is no Jesuit!"

Candide could not help being surprised at the cause of his deliverance.

"What people!" said he; "what men! what manners! If I had not been so lucky as to run Miss Cunegonde's brother through the body, I should have been devoured without redemption. But, after all, pure nature is good, since these people, instead of feasting upon my flesh, have shown me a thousand civilities, when then I was not a Jesuit."

XVII

ARRIVAL OF CANDIDE AND HIS VALET AT EL DORADO, AND WHAT THEY SAW THERE.

"You see," said Cacambo to Candide, as soon as they had reached the frontiers of the Oreillons, "that this hemisphere is not better than the others, take my word for it; let us go back to Europe by the shortest way."

"How go back?" said Candide, "and where shall we go? to my own country? The Bulgarians and the Abares are slaying all; to Portugal? there I shall be burnt; and if we abide here we are every moment in danger of being spitted. But how can I resolve to quit a part of the world where my dear Cunegonde resides?"

"Let us turn towards Cayenne," said Cacambo, "there we shall find Frenchmen, who wander all over the world; they may assist us; God will perhaps have pity on us."

It was not easy to get to Cayenne; they knew vaguely in which direction to go, but rivers, precipices, robbers, savages, obstructed them all the way. Their horses died of fatigue. Their provisions were consumed; they fed a whole_month upon wild fruits, and found themselves at last near a little river bordered with cocoa trees, which sustained their lives and their hopes.

Cacambo, who was as good a counsellor as the old woman, said to Candide:

"We are able to hold out no longer; we have walked enough. I see an empty canoe near the river-side; let us fill it with cocoanuts, throw ourselves into it, and go with the current; a river always leads to some inhabited spot. If we do not find pleasant things we shall at least find new things."

"With all my heart," said Candide, "let us recommend ourselves to Providence."

They rowed a few leagues, between banks, in some places flowery, in others barren; in some parts smooth, in others rugged. The stream ever widened, and at length lost itself under an arch of frightful rocks which reached to the sky. The two travellers had the courage to commit themselves to the current. The river, suddenly contracting at this place, whirled them along with a dreadful noise and rapidity. At the end of four-and-twenty hours they saw daylight again, but their canoe was dashed to pieces against the rocks. For a league they had to creep from rock to rock, until at length they discovered an extensive plain, bounded by inaccessible mountains. The country was cultivated as much for pleasure as for necessity. On all sides the useful was also the beautiful. The roads were covered, or rather adorned, with carriages of a glittering form and substance, in which were men and women of surprising beauty, drawn by large red sheep which surpassed in fleetness the finest coursers of Andalusia, Tetuan, and Mequinez. [18]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)

"Here, however, is a country," said Candide, "which is better than Westphalia."

He stepped out with Cacambo towards the first village which he saw. Some children dressed in tattered brocades played at quoits on the outskirts. Our travellers from the other world amused themselves by looking on. The quoits were large round pieces, yellow, red, and green, which cast a singular lustre! The travellers picked a few of them off the ground; this was of gold, that of emeralds, the other of rubies—the least of them would have been the greatest ornament on the Mogul's throne.

"Without doubt," said Cacambo, "these children must be the king's sons that are playing at quoits!"

The village schoolmaster appeared at this moment and called them to school.

"There," said Candide, "is the preceptor of the royal family."

The little truants immediately quitted their game, leaving the quoits on the ground with all their other playthings. Candide gathered them up, ran to the master, and presented them to him in a most humble manner, giving him to understand by signs that their royal highnesses had forgotten their gold and jewels. The schoolmaster, smiling, flung them upon the ground; then, looking at Candide with a good deal of surprise, went about his business.

The travellers, however, took care to gather up the gold, the rubies, and the emeralds.

"Where are we?" cried Candide. "The king's children in this country must be well brought up, since they are taught to despise gold and precious stones."

Cacambo was as much surprised as Candide. At length they drew near the first house in the village. It was built like an European palace. A crowd of people pressed about the door, and there were still more in the house. They heard most agreeable music, and were aware of a delicious odour of cooking. Cacambo went up to the door and heard they were talking Peruvian; it was his mother tongue, for it is well known that Cacambo was born in Tucuman, in a village where no other language was spoken.

"I will be your interpreter here," said he to Candide; "let us go in, it is a public-house."

Immediately two waiters and two girls, dressed in cloth of gold, and their hair tied up with ribbons, invited them to sit down to table with the landlord. They served four dishes of soup, each garnished with two young parrots; a boiled condor[19]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window) which weighed two hundred pounds; two roasted monkeys, of excellent flavour; three hundred humming-birds in one dish, and six hundred fly-birds in another; exquisite ragouts; delicious pastries; the whole served up in dishes of a kind of rock-crystal. The waiters and girls poured out several liqueurs drawn from the sugar-cane.

Most of the company were chapmen and waggoners, all extremely polite; they asked Cacambo a few questions with the greatest circumspection, and answered his in the most obliging manner.

As soon as dinner was over, Cacambo believed as well as Candide that they might well pay their reckoning by laying down two of those large gold pieces which they had picked up. The landlord and landlady shouted with laughter and held their sides. When the fit was over:

"Gentlemen," said the landlord, "it is plain you are strangers, and such guests we are not accustomed to see; pardon us therefore for laughing when you offered us the pebbles from our highroads in payment of your reckoning. You doubtless have not the money of the country; but it is not necessary to have any money at all to dine in this house. All hostelries established for the convenience of commerce are paid by the government. You have fared but very indifferently because this is a poor village; but everywhere else, you will be received as you deserve."

Cacambo explained this whole discourse with great astonishment to Candide, who was as greatly astonished to hear it.

"What sort of a country then is this," said they to one another; "a country unknown to all the rest of the world, and where nature is of a kind so different from ours? It is probably the country where all is well; for there absolutely must be one such place. And, whatever Master Pangloss might say, I often found that things went very ill in Westphalia."

XVIII

WHAT THEY SAW IN THE COUNTRY OF EL DORADO.

Cacambo expressed his curiosity to the landlord, who made answer:

"I am very ignorant, but not the worse on that account. However, we have in this neighbourhood an old man retired from Court who is the most learned and most communicative person in the kingdom."

At once he took Cacambo to the old man. Candide acted now only a second character, and accompanied his valet. They entered a very plain house, for the door was only of silver, and the ceilings were only of gold, but wrought in so elegant a taste as to vie with the richest. The antechamber, indeed, was only encrusted with rubies and emeralds, but the order in which everything was arranged made amends for this great simplicity.

The old man received the strangers on his sofa, which was stuffed with humming-birds' feathers, and ordered his servants to present them with liqueurs in diamond goblets; after which he satisfied their curiosity in the following terms:

"I am now one hundred and seventy-two years old, and I learnt of my late father, Master of the Horse to the King, the amazing revolutions of Peru, of which he had been an eyewitness. The kingdom we now inhabit is the ancient country of the Incas, who quitted it very imprudently to conquer another part of the world, and were at length destroyed by the Spaniards.

"More wise by far were the princes of their family, who remained in their native country; and they ordained, with the consent of the whole nation, that none of the inhabitants should ever be permitted to quit this little kingdom; and this has preserved our innocence and happiness. The Spaniards have had a confused notion of this country, and have called it *El Dorado*; and an Englishman, whose name was Sir Walter Raleigh, came very near it about a hundred years ago; but being surrounded by inaccessible rocks and precipices, we have hitherto been sheltered from the rapaciousness of European nations, who have an inconceivable passion for the pebbles and dirt of our land, for the sake of which they would murder us to the last man."

The conversation was long: it turned chiefly on their form of government, their manners, their women, their public entertainments, and the arts. At length Candide, having always had a taste for metaphysics, made Cacambo ask whether there was any religion in that country.

The old man reddened a little.

"How then," said he, "can you doubt it? Do you take us for ungrateful wretches?"

Cacambo humbly asked, "What was the religion in El Dorado?"

The old man reddened again.

"Can there be two religions?" said he. "We have, I believe, the religion of all the world: we worship God night and morning."

"Do you worship but one God?" said Cacambo, who still acted as interpreter in representing Candide's doubts.

"Surely," said the old man, "there are not two, nor three, nor four. I must confess the people from your side of the world ask very extraordinary questions."

Candide was not yet tired of interrogating the good old man; he wanted to know in what manner they prayed to God in El Dorado.

"We do not pray to Him," said the worthy sage; "we have nothing to ask of Him; He has given us all we need, and we return Him thanks without ceasing."

Candide having a curiosity to see the priests asked where they were. The good old man smiled.

"My friend," said he, "we are all priests. The King and all the heads of families sing solemn canticles of thanksgiving every morning, accompanied by five or six thousand musicians."

"What! have you no monks who teach, who dispute, who govern, who cabal, and who burn people that are not of their opinion?"

"We must be mad, indeed, if that were the case," said the old man; "here we are all of one opinion, and we know not what you mean by monks."

During this whole discourse Candide was in raptures, and he said to himself:

"This is vastly different from Westphalia and the Baron's castle. Had our friend Pangloss seen El Dorado he would no longer have said that the castle of Thunder-ten-Tronckh was the finest upon earth. It is evident that one must travel."

After this long conversation the old man ordered a coach and six sheep to be got ready, and twelve of his domestics to conduct the travellers to Court.

"Excuse me," said he, "if my age deprives me of the honour of accompanying you. The King will receive you in a manner that cannot displease you; and no doubt you will make an allowance for the customs of the country, if some things should not be to your liking."

Candide and Cacambo got into the coach, the six sheep flew, and in less than four hours they reached the King's palace situated at the extremity of the capital. The portal was two hundred and twenty feet high, and one hundred wide; but words are wanting to express the materials of which it was built. It is plain such materials must have prodigious superiority over those pebbles and sand which we call gold and precious stones.

Twenty beautiful damsels of the King's guard received Candide and Cacambo as they alighted from the coach, conducted them to the bath, and dressed them in robes woven of the down of humming-birds; after which the great crown officers, of both sexes, led them to the King's apartment, between two files of musicians, a thousand on each side. When they drew near to the audience chamber Cacambo asked one of the great officers in what way he should pay his obeisance to his Majesty; whether they should throw themselves upon their knees or on their stomachs; whether they should put their hands upon their heads or behind their backs; whether they should lick the dust off the floor; in a word, what was the ceremony?

"The custom," said the great officer, "is to embrace the King, and to kiss him on each cheek."

Candide and Cacambo threw themselves round his Majesty's neck. He received them with all the goodness imaginable, and politely invited them to supper.

While waiting they were shown the city, and saw the public edifices raised as high as the clouds, the market places ornamented with a thousand columns, the fountains of spring water, those of rose water, those of liqueurs drawn from sugar-cane, incessantly flowing into the great squares, which were paved with a kind of precious stone, which gave off a delicious fragrancy like that of cloves and cinnamon. Candide asked to see the court of justice, the parliament. They told him they had none, and that they were strangers to lawsuits. He asked if they had any prisons, and they answered no. But what surprised him most and gave him the greatest pleasure was the palace of sciences, where he saw a gallery two thousand feet long, and filled with instruments employed in mathematics and physics.

After rambling about the city the whole afternoon, and seeing but a thousandth part of it, they were reconducted to the royal palace, where Candide sat down to table with his Majesty, his valet Cacambo, and several ladies. Never was there a better entertainment, and never was more wit shown at a table than that which fell from his Majesty. Cacambo explained the King's *bon-mots* to Candide, and notwithstanding they were translated they still appeared to be *bon-mots*. Of all the things that surprised Candide this was not the least.

They spent a month in this hospitable place. Candide frequently said to Cacambo:

"I own, my friend, once more that the castle where I was born is nothing in comparison with this; but, after all, Miss Cunegonde is not here, and you have, without doubt, some mistress in Europe. If we abide here we shall only be upon a footing with the rest, whereas, if we return to our old world, only with twelve sheep laden with the pebbles of El Dorado, we shall be richer than all the kings in Europe. We shall have no more Inquisitors to fear, and we may easily recover Miss Cunegonde."

This speech was agreeable to Cacambo; mankind are so fond of roving, of making a figure in their own country, and of boasting of what they have seen in their travels, that the two happy ones resolved to be no longer so, but to ask his Majesty's leave to quit the country.

"You are foolish," said the King. "I am sensible that my kingdom is but a small place, but when a person is comfortably settled in any part he should abide there. I have not the right to detain strangers. It is a tyranny which neither our manners nor our laws

permit. All men are free. Go when you wish, but the going will be very difficult. It is impossible to ascend that rapid river on which you came as by a miracle, and which runs under vaulted rocks. The mountains which surround my kingdom are ten thousand feet high, and as steep as walls; they are each over ten leagues in breadth, and there is no other way to descend them than by precipices. However, since you absolutely wish to depart, I shall give orders to my engineers to construct a machine that will convey you very safely. When we have conducted you over the mountains no one can accompany you further, for my subjects have made a vow never to quit the kingdom, and they are too wise to break it. Ask me besides anything that you please."

"We desire nothing of your Majesty," says Candide, "but a few sheep laden with provisions, pebbles, and the earth of this country."

The King laughed.

"I cannot conceive," said he, "what pleasure you Europeans find in our yellow clay, but take as much as you like, and great good may it do you."

At once he gave directions that his engineers should construct a machine to hoist up these two extraordinary men out of the kingdom. Three thousand good mathematicians went to work; it was ready in fifteen days, and did not cost more than twenty million sterling in the specie of that country. They placed Candide and Cacambo on the machine. There were two great red sheep saddled and bridled to ride upon as soon as they were beyond the mountains, twenty pack-sheep laden with provisions, thirty with presents of the curiosities of the country, and fifty with gold, diamonds, and precious stones. The King embraced the two wanderers very tenderly.

Their departure, with the ingenious manner in which they and their sheep were hoisted over the mountains, was a splendid spectacle. The mathematicians took their leave after conveying them to a place of safety, and Candide had no other desire, no other aim, than to present his sheep to Miss Cunegonde.

"Now," said he, "we are able to pay the Governor of Buenos Ayres if Miss Cunegonde can be ransomed. Let us journey towards Cayenne. Let us embark, and we will afterwards see what kingdom we shall be able to purchase."

XIX

WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM AT SURINAM AND HOW CANDIDE GOT ACQUAINTED WITH MARTIN.

Our travellers spent the first day very agreeably. They were delighted with possessing more treasure than all Asia, Europe, and Africa could scrape together. Candide, in his raptures, cut Cunegonde's name on the trees. The second day two of their sheep plunged into a morass, where they and their burdens were lost; two more died of fatigue a few days after; seven or eight perished with hunger in a desert; and others subsequently fell down precipices. At length, after travelling a hundred days, only two sheep remained. Said Candide to Cacambo:

"My friend, you see how perishable are the riches of this world; there is nothing solid but virtue, and the happiness of seeing Cunegonde once more."

"I grant all you say," said Cacambo, "but we have still two sheep remaining, with more treasure than the King of Spain will ever have; and I see a town which I take to be Surinam, belonging to the Dutch. We are at the end of all our troubles, and at the beginning of happiness."

As they drew near the town, they saw a negro stretched upon the ground, with only one moiety of his clothes, that is, of his blue linen drawers; the poor man had lost his left leg and his right hand.

"Good God!" said Candide in Dutch, "what art thou doing there, friend, in that shocking condition?"

"I am waiting for my master, Mynheer Vanderdendur, the famous merchant," answered the negro.

"Was it Mynheer Vanderdendur," said Candide, "that treated thee thus?"

"Yes, sir," said the negro, "it is the custom. They give us a pair of linen drawers for our whole garment twice a year. When we work at the sugar-canes, and the mill snatches hold of a finger, they cut off the hand; and when we attempt to run away, they cut off the leg; both cases have happened to me. This is the price at which you eat sugar in Europe. Yet when my mother sold me for ten patagons [20]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window) on the coast of Guinea, she said to me: 'My dear child, bless our fetiches, adore them for ever; they will make thee live happily; thou hast the honour of being the slave of our lords, the whites, which is making the fortune of thy father and mother.' Alas! I know not whether I have made their fortunes; this I

know, that they have not made mine. Dogs, monkeys, and parrots are a thousand times less wretched than I. The Dutch fetiches, who have converted me, declare every Sunday that we are all of us children of Adam—blacks as well as whites. I am not a genealogist, but if these preachers tell truth, we are all second cousins. Now, you must agree, that it is impossible to treat one's relations in a more barbarous manner."

"Oh, Pangloss!" cried Candide, "thou hadst not guessed at this abomination; it is the end. I must at last renounce thy optimism."

"What is this optimism?" said Cacambo.

"Alas!" said Candide, "it is the madness of maintaining that everything is right when it is wrong."

Looking at the negro, he shed tears, and weeping, he entered Surinam.

The first thing they inquired after was whether there was a vessel in the harbour which could be sent to Buenos Ayres. The person to whom they applied was a Spanish sea-captain, who offered to agree with them upon reasonable terms. He appointed to meet them at a public-house, whither Candide and the faithful Cacambo went with their two sheep, and awaited his coming.

Candide, who had his heart upon his lips, told the Spaniard all his adventures, and avowed that he intended to elope with Miss Cunegonde.

"Then I will take good care not to carry you to Buenos Ayres," said the seaman. "I should be hanged, and so would you. The fair Cunegonde is my lord's favourite mistress."

This was a thunderclap for Candide: he wept for a long while. At last he drew Cacambo aside.

"Here, my dear friend," said he to him, "this thou must do. We have, each of us in his pocket, five or six millions in diamonds; you are more clever than I; you must go and bring Miss Cunegonde from Buenos Ayres. If the Governor makes any difficulty, give him a million; if he will not relinquish her, give him two; as you have not killed an Inquisitor, they will have no suspicion of you; I'll get another ship, and go and wait for you at Venice; that's a free country, where there is no danger either from Bulgarians, Abares, Jews, or Inquisitors."

Cacambo applauded this wise resolution. He despaired at parting from so good a master, who had become his intimate friend; but the pleasure of serving him prevailed over the pain of leaving him. They embraced with tears; Candide charged him not to forget the good old woman. Cacambo set out that very same day. This Cacambo was a very honest fellow.

Candide stayed some time longer in Surinam, waiting for another captain to carry him and the two remaining sheep to Italy. After he had hired domestics, and purchased everything necessary for a long voyage, Mynheer Vanderdendur, captain of a large vessel, came and offered his services.

"How much will you charge," said he to this man, "to carry me straight to Venice—me, my servants, my baggage, and these two sheep?"

The skipper asked ten thousand piastres. Candide did not hesitate.

"Oh! oh!" said the prudent Vanderdendur to himself, "this stranger gives ten thousand piastres unhesitatingly! He must be very rich."

Returning a little while after, he let him know that upon second consideration, he could not undertake the voyage for less than twenty thousand piastres.

"Well, you shall have them," said Candide.

"Ay!" said the skipper to himself, "this man agrees to pay twenty thousand piastres with as much ease as ten."

He went back to him again, and declared that he could not carry him to Venice for less than thirty thousand piastres.

"Then you shall have thirty thousand," replied Candide.

"Oh! oh!" said the Dutch skipper once more to himself, "thirty thousand piastres are a trifle to this man; surely these sheep must be laden with an immense treasure; let us say no more about it. First of all, let him pay down the thirty thousand piastres; then we shall see."

Candide sold two small diamonds, the least of which was worth more than what the skipper asked for his freight. He paid him in advance. The two sheep were put on board. Candide followed in a little boat to join the vessel in the roads. The skipper seized his opportunity, set sail, and put out to sea, the wind favouring him. Candide, dismayed and stupefied, soon lost sight of the vessel.

"Alas!" said he, "this is a trick worthy of the old world!"

He put back, overwhelmed with sorrow, for indeed he had lost sufficient to make the fortune of twenty monarchs. He waited upon the Dutch magistrate, and in his distress he knocked over loudly at the door. He entered and told his adventure, raising his voice with unnecessary vehemence. The magistrate began by fining him ten thousand piastres for making a noise; then he listened patiently, promised to examine into his affair at the skipper's return, and ordered him to pay ten thousand piastres for the expense of the hearing.

This drove Candide to despair; he had, indeed, endured misfortunes a thousand times worse; the coolness of the magistrate and of the skipper who had robbed him, roused his choler and flung him into a deep melancholy. The villainy of mankind presented itself before his imagination in all its deformity, and his mind was filled with gloomy ideas. At length hearing that a French vessel was ready to set sail for Bordeaux, as he had no sheep laden with diamonds to take along with him he hired a cabin at the usual price. He made it known in the town that he would pay the passage and board and give two thousand piastres to any honest man who would make the voyage with him, upon condition that this man was the most dissatisfied with his state, and the most unfortunate in the whole province.

Such a crowd of candidates presented themselves that a fleet of ships could hardly have held them. Candide being desirous of selecting from among the best, marked out about one-twentieth of them who seemed to be sociable men, and who all pretended to merit his preference. He assembled them at his inn, and gave them a supper on condition that each took an oath to relate his history faithfully, promising to choose him who appeared to be most justly discontented with his state, and to bestow some presents upon the rest.

They sat until four o'clock in the morning. Candide, in listening to all their adventures, was reminded of what the old woman had said to him in their voyage to Buenos Ayres, and of her wager that there was not a person on board the ship but had met with very great misfortunes. He dreamed of Pangloss at every adventure told to him.

"This Pangloss," said he, "would be puzzled to demonstrate his system. I wish that he were here. Certainly, if all things are good, it is in El Dorado and not in the rest of the world."

At length he made choice of a poor man of letters, who had worked ten years for the booksellers of Amsterdam. He judged that there was not in the whole world a trade which could disgust one more.

This philosopher was an honest man; but he had been robbed by his wife, beaten by his son, and abandoned by his daughter who got a Portuguese to run away with her. He had just been deprived of a small employment, on which he subsisted; and he was persecuted by the preachers of Surinam, who took him for a Socinian. We must allow that the others were at least as wretched as he; but Candide hoped that the philosopher would entertain him during the voyage. All the other candidates complained that Candide had done them great injustice; but he appeased them by giving one hundred piastres to each.

XX

WHAT HAPPENED AT SEA TO CANDIDE AND MARTIN.

The old philosopher, whose name was Martin, embarked then with Candide for Bordeaux. They had both seen and suffered a great deal; and if the vessel had sailed from Surinam to Japan, by the Cape of Good Hope, the subject of moral and natural evil would have enabled them to entertain one another during the whole voyage.

Candide, however, had one great advantage over Martin, in that he always hoped to see Miss Cunegonde; whereas Martin had nothing at all to hope. Besides, Candide was possessed of money and jewels, and though he had lost one hundred large red sheep, laden with the greatest treasure upon earth; though the knavery of the Dutch skipper still sat heavy upon his mind; yet when he reflected upon what he had still left, and when he mentioned the name of Cunegonde, especially towards the latter end of a repast, he inclined to Pangloss's doctrine.

"But you, Mr. Martin," said he to the philosopher, "what do you think of all this? what are your ideas on moral and natural evil?"

"Sir," answered Martin, "our priests accused me of being a Socinian, but the real fact is I am a Manichean."[21]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)

"You jest," said Candide; "there are no longer Manicheans in the world."

"I am one," said Martin. "I cannot help it; I know not how to think otherwise."

"Surely you must be possessed by the devil," said Candide.

"He is so deeply concerned in the affairs of this world," answered Martin, "that he may very well be in me, as well as in everybody else; but I own to you that when I cast an eye on this globe, or rather on this little ball, I cannot help thinking that God has abandoned it to some malignant being. I except, always, El Dorado. I scarcely ever knew a city that did not desire the destruction of a neighbouring city, nor a family that did not wish to exterminate some other family. Everywhere the weak execrate the powerful, before whom they cringe; and the powerful beat them like sheep whose wool and flesh they sell. A million regimented assassins, from one extremity of Europe to the other, get their bread by disciplined depredation and murder, for want of more honest employment. Even in those cities which seem to enjoy peace, and where the arts flourish, the inhabitants are devoured by more envy, care, and uneasiness than are experienced by a besieged town. Secret griefs are more cruel than public calamities. In a word I have seen so much, and experienced so much that I am a Manichean."

"There are, however, some things good," said Candide.

"That may be," said Martin; "but I know them not."

In the middle of this dispute they heard the report of cannon; it redoubled every instant. Each took out his glass. They saw two ships in close fight about three miles off. The wind brought both so near to the French vessel that our travellers had the pleasure of seeing the fight at their ease. At length one let off a broadside, so low and so truly aimed, that the other sank to the bottom. Candide and Martin could plainly perceive a hundred men on the deck of the sinking vessel; they raised their hands to heaven and uttered terrible outcries, and the next moment were swallowed up by the sea.

"Well," said Martin, "this is how men treat one another."

"It is true," said Candide; "there is something diabolical in this affair."

While speaking, he saw he knew not what, of a shining red, swimming close to the vessel. They put out the long-boat to see what it could be: it was one of his sheep! Candide was more rejoiced at the recovery of this one sheep than he had been grieved at the loss of the hundred laden with the large diamonds of El Dorado.

The French captain soon saw that the captain of the victorious vessel was a Spaniard, and that the other was a Dutch pirate, and the very same one who had robbed Candide. The immense plunder which this villain had amassed, was buried with him in the sea, and out of the whole only one sheep was saved.

"You see," said Candide to Martin, "that crime is sometimes punished. This rogue of a Dutch skipper has met with the fate he deserved."

"Yes," said Martin; "but why should the passengers be doomed also to destruction? God has punished the knave, and the devil has drowned the rest."

The French and Spanish ships continued their course, and Candide continued his conversation with Martin. They disputed fifteen successive days, and on the last of those fifteen days, they were as far advanced as on the first. But, however, they chatted, they communicated ideas, they consoled each other. Candide caressed his sheep.

"Since I have found thee again," said he, "I may likewise chance to find my Cunegonde."

XXI

CANDIDE AND MARTIN, REASONING, DRAW NEAR THE COAST OF FRANCE.

At length they descried the coast of France.

"Were you ever in France, Mr. Martin?" said Candide.

"Yes," said Martin, "I have been in several provinces. In some one-half of the people are fools, in others they are too cunning; in some they are weak and simple, in others they affect to be witty; in all, the principal occupation is love, the next is slander, and the third is talking nonsense."

"But, Mr. Martin, have you seen Paris?"

"Yes, I have. All these kinds are found there. It is a chaos—a confused multitude, where everybody seeks pleasure and scarcely any one finds it, at least as it appeared to me. I made a short stay there. On my arrival I was robbed of all I had by pickpockets at the fair of St. Germain. I myself was taken for a robber and was imprisoned for eight days, after which I served as corrector of the press to gain the money necessary for my return to Holland on foot. I knew the whole scribbling rabble, the party rabble, the fanatic rabble. It is said that there are very polite people in that city, and I wish to believe it."

"For my part, I have no curiosity to see France," said Candide. "You may easily imagine that after spending a month at El Dorado I can desire to behold nothing upon earth but Miss Cunegonde. I go to await her at Venice. We shall pass through France on our way to Italy. Will you bear me company?"

"With all my heart," said Martin. "It is said that Venice is fit only for its own nobility, but that strangers meet with a very good reception if they have a good deal of money. I have none of it; you have, therefore I will follow you all over the world."

"But do you believe," said Candide, "that the earth was originally a sea, as we find it asserted in that large book belonging to the captain?"

"I do not believe a word of it," said Martin, "any more than I do of the many ravings which have been published lately."

"But for what end, then, has this world been formed?" said Candide.

"To plague us to death," answered Martin.

"Are you not greatly surprised," continued Candide, "at the love which these two girls of the Oreillons had for those monkeys, of which I have already told you?"

"Not at all," said Martin. "I do not see that that passion was strange. I have seen so many extraordinary things that I have ceased to be surprised."

"Do you believe," said Candide, "that men have always massacred each other as they do to-day, that they have always been liars, cheats, traitors, ingrates, brigands, idiots, thieves, scoundrels, gluttons, drunkards, misers, envious, ambitious, bloody-minded, calumniators, debauchees, fanatics, hypocrites, and fools?"

"Do you believe," said Martin, "that hawks have always eaten pigeons when they have found them?"

"Yes, without doubt," said Candide.

"Well, then," said Martin, "if hawks have always had the same character why should you imagine that men may have changed theirs?"

"Oh!" said Candide, "there is a vast deal of difference, for free will——"

And reasoning thus they arrived at Bordeaux.

XXII

WHAT HAPPENED IN FRANCE TO CANDIDE AND MARTIN.

Candide stayed in Bordeaux no longer than was necessary for the selling of a few of the pebbles of El Dorado, and for hiring a good chaise to hold two passengers; for he could not travel without his Philosopher Martin. He was only vexed at parting with his sheep, which he left to the Bordeaux Academy of Sciences, who set as a subject for that year's prize, "to find why this sheep's wool was red;" and the prize was awarded to a learned man of the North, who demonstrated by A plus B minus C divided by Z, that the sheep must be red, and die of the rot.

Meanwhile, all the travellers whom Candide met in the inns along his route, said to him, "We go to Paris." This general eagerness at length gave him, too, a desire to see this capital; and it was not so very great a *détour* from the road to Venice.

He entered Paris by the suburb of St. Marceau and fancied that he was in the dirtiest village of Westphalia.

Scarcely was Candide arrived at his inn, than he found himself attacked by a slight illness, caused by fatigue. As he had a very large diamond on his finger, and the people of the inn had taken notice of a prodigiously heavy box among his baggage, there were two physicians to attend him, though he had never sent for them, and two devotees who warmed his broths.

"I remember," Martin said, "also to have been sick at Paris in my first voyage; I was very poor, thus I had neither friends, devotees, nor doctors, and I recovered."

However, what with physic and bleeding, Candide's illness became serious. A parson of the neighborhood came with great meekness to ask for a bill for the other world payable to the bearer. Candide would do nothing for him; but the devotees assured him it was the new fashion. He answered that he was not a man of fashion. Martin wished to throw the priest out of the window. The priest swore that they would not bury Candide. Martin swore that he would bury the priest if he continued to be troublesome. The quarrel grew heated. Martin took him by the shoulders and roughly turned him out of doors; which occasioned great scandal and a law-suit.

Candide got well again, and during his convalescence he had very good company to sup with him. They played high. Candide wondered why it was that the ace never came to him; but Martin was not at all astonished.

Among those who did him the honours of the town was a little Abbé of Perigord, one of those busybodies who are ever alert, officious, forward, fawning, and complaisant; who watch for strangers in their passage through the capital, tell them the scandalous history of the town, and offer them pleasure at all prices. He first took Candide and Martin to La Comédie, where they played a new tragedy. Candide happened to be seated near some of the fashionable wits. This did not prevent his shedding tears at the well-acted scenes. One of these critics at his side said to him between the acts:

"Your tears are misplaced; that is a shocking actress; the actor who plays with her is yet worse; and the play is still worse than the actors. The author does not know a word of Arabic, yet the scene is in Arabia; moreover he is a man that does not believe in innate ideas; and I will bring you, to-morrow, twenty pamphlets written against him."[22]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)

"How many dramas have you in France, sir?" said Candide to the Abbé.

"Five or six thousand."

"What a number!" said Candide. "How many good?"

"Fifteen or sixteen," replied the other.

"What a number!" said Martin.

Candide was very pleased with an actress who played Queen Elizabeth in a somewhat insipid tragedy[23]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window) sometimes acted.

"That actress," said he to Martin, "pleases me much; she has a likeness to Miss Cunegonde; I should be very glad to wait upon her."

The Perigordian Abbé offered to introduce him. Candide, brought up in Germany, asked what was the etiquette, and how they treated queens of England in France.

"It is necessary to make distinctions," said the Abbé. "In the provinces one takes them to the inn; in Paris, one respects them when they are beautiful, and throws them on the highway when they are dead."[24]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)

"Queens on the highway!" said Candide.

"Yes, truly," said Martin, "the Abbé is right. I was in Paris when Miss Monime passed, as the saying is, from this life to the other. She was refused what people call the *honours of sepulture*—that is to say, of rotting with all the beggars of the neighbourhood in an ugly cemetery; she was interred all alone by her company at the corner of the Rue de Bourgogne, which ought to trouble her much, for she thought nobly."

"That was very uncivil," said Candide.

"What would you have?" said Martin; "these people are made thus. Imagine all contradictions, all possible incompatibilities—you will find them in the government, in the law-courts, in the churches, in the public shows of this droll nation."

"Is it true that they always laugh in Paris?" said Candide.

"Yes," said the Abbé, "but it means nothing, for they complain of everything with great fits of laughter; they even do the most detestable things while laughing."

"Who," said Candide, "is that great pig who spoke so ill of the piece at which I wept, and of the actors who gave me so much pleasure?"

"He is a bad character," answered the Abbé, "who gains his livelihood by saying evil of all plays and of all books. He hates whatever succeeds, as the eunuchs hate those who enjoy; he is one of the serpents of literature who nourish themselves on dirt and spite; he is a *folliculaire*."

"What is a *folliculaire*?" said Candide.

"It is," said the Abbé, "a pamphleteer—a Fréron.[25]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)

Thus Candide, Martin, and the Perigordian conversed on the staircase, while watching every one go out after the performance.

"Although I am eager to see Cunegonde again," said Candide, "I should like to sup with Miss Clairon, for she appears to me admirable."

The Abbé was not the man to approach Miss Clairon, who saw only good company.

"She is engaged for this evening," he said, "but I shall have the honour to take you to the house of a lady of quality, and there you will know Paris as if you had lived in it for years."

Candide, who was naturally curious, let himself be taken to this lady's house, at the end of the Faubourg St. Honoré. The company was occupied in playing faro; a dozen melancholy punters held each in his hand a little pack of cards; a bad record of his misfortunes. Profound silence reigned; pallor was on the faces of the punters, anxiety on that of the banker, and the hostess, sitting near the unpitying banker, noticed with lynx-eyes all the doubled and other increased stakes, as each player dog's-eared his cards; she made them turn down the edges again with severe, but polite attention; she showed no vexation for fear of losing her customers. The lady insisted upon being called the Marchioness of Parolignac. Her daughter, aged fifteen, was among the punters, and notified with a covert glance the cheatings of the poor people who tried to repair the cruelties of fate. The Perigordian Abbé, Candide and Martin entered; no one rose, no one saluted them, no one looked at them; all were profoundly occupied with their cards.

"The Baroness of Thunder-ten-Tronckh was more polite," said Candide.

However, the Abbé whispered to the Marchioness, who half rose, honoured Candide with a gracious smile, and Martin with a condescending nod; she gave a seat and a pack of cards to Candide, who lost fifty thousand francs in two deals, after which they supped very gaily, and every one was astonished that Candide was not moved by his loss; the servants said among themselves, in the language of servants:—

"Some English lord is here this evening."

The supper passed at first like most Parisian suppers, in silence, followed by a noise of words which could not be distinguished, then with pleasantries of which most were insipid, with false news, with bad reasoning, a little politics, and much evil speaking; they also discussed new books.

"Have you seen," said the Perigordian Abbé, "the romance of Sieur Gauchat, doctor of divinity?"[26]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)

"Yes," answered one of the guests, "but I have not been able to finish it. We have a crowd of silly writings, but all together do not approach the impertinence of 'Gauchat, Doctor of Divinity.' I am so satiated with the great number of detestable books with which we are inundated that I am reduced to punting at faro."

"And the *Mélanges* of Archdeacon Trublet,[27]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window) what do you say of that?" said the Abbé.

"Ah!" said the Marchioness of Parolignac, "the wearisome mortal! How curiously he repeats to you all that the world knows! How heavily he discusses that which is not worth the trouble of lightly remarking upon! How, without wit, he appropriates the wit of

others! How he spoils what he steals! How he disgusts me! But he will disgust me no longer—it is enough to have read a few of the Archdeacon's pages."

There was at table a wise man of taste, who supported the Marchioness. They spoke afterwards of tragedies; the lady asked why there were tragedies which were sometimes played and which could not be read. The man of taste explained very well how a piece could have some interest, and have almost no merit; he proved in few words that it was not enough to introduce one or two of those situations which one finds in all romances, and which always seduce the spectator, but that it was necessary to be new without being odd, often sublime and always natural, to know the human heart and to make it speak; to be a great poet without allowing any person in the piece to appear to be a poet; to know language perfectly—to speak it with purity, with continuous harmony and without rhythm ever taking anything from sense.

"Whoever," added he, "does not observe all these rules can produce one or two tragedies, applauded at a theatre, but he will never be counted in the ranks of good writers. There are very few good tragedies; some are idylls in dialogue, well written and well rhymed, others political reasonings which lull to sleep, or amplifications which repel; others demoniac dreams in barbarous style, interrupted in sequence, with long apostrophes to the gods, because they do not know how to speak to men, with false maxims, with bombastic commonplaces!"

Candide listened with attention to this discourse, and conceived a great idea of the speaker, and as the Marchioness had taken care to place him beside her, he leaned towards her and took the liberty of asking who was the man who had spoken so well.

"He is a scholar," said the lady, "who does not play, whom the Abbé sometimes brings to supper; he is perfectly at home among tragedies and books, and he has written a tragedy which was hissed, and a book of which nothing has ever been seen outside his bookseller's shop excepting the copy which he dedicated to me."

"The great man!" said Candide. "He is another Pangloss!"

Then, turning towards him, he said:

"Sir, you think doubtless that all is for the best in the moral and physical world, and that nothing could be otherwise than it is?"

"I, sir!" answered the scholar, "I know nothing of all that; I find that all goes awry with me; that no one knows either what is his rank, nor what is his condition, what he does nor what he ought to do; and that except supper, which is always gay, and where there appears to be enough concord, all the rest of the time is passed in impertinent quarrels; Jansenist against Molinist, Parliament against the Church, men of letters against men of letters, courtesans against courtesans, financiers against the people, wives against husbands, relatives against relatives—it is eternal war."

"I have seen the worst," Candide replied. "But a wise man, who since has had the misfortune to be hanged, taught me that all is marvellously well; these are but the shadows on a beautiful picture."

"Your hanged man mocked the world," said Martin. "The shadows are horrible blots."

"They are men who make the blots," said Candide, "and they cannot be dispensed with."

"It is not their fault then," said Martin.

Most of the punters, who understood nothing of this language, drank, and Martin reasoned with the scholar, and Candide related some of his adventures to his hostess.

After supper the Marchioness took Candide into her boudoir, and made him sit upon a sofa.

"Ah, well!" said she to him, "you love desperately Miss Cunegonde of Thunder-ten-Tronckh?"

"Yes, madame," answered Candide.

The Marchioness replied to him with a tender smile:

"You answer me like a young man from Westphalia. A Frenchman would have said, 'It is true that I have loved Miss Cunegonde, but seeing you, madame, I think I no longer love her.'"

"Alas! madame," said Candide, "I will answer you as you wish."

"Your passion for her," said the Marchioness, "commenced by picking up her handkerchief. I wish that you would pick up my garter."

"With all my heart," said Candide. And he picked it up.

"But I wish that you would put it on," said the lady.

And Candide put it on.

"You see," said she, "you are a foreigner. I sometimes make my Parisian lovers languish for fifteen days, but I give myself to you the first night because one must do the honours of one's country to a young man from Westphalia."

The lady having perceived two enormous diamonds upon the hands of the young foreigner praised them with such good faith that from Candide's fingers they passed to her own.

Candide, returning with the Perigordian Abbé, felt some remorse in having been unfaithful to Miss Cunegonde. The Abbé sympathised in his trouble; he had had but a light part of the fifty thousand francs lost at play and of the value of the two brilliants, half given, half extorted. His design was to profit as much as he could by the advantages which the acquaintance of Candide could procure for him. He spoke much of Cunegonde, and Candide told him that he should ask forgiveness of that beautiful one for his infidelity when he should see her in Venice.

The Abbé redoubled his politeness and attentions, and took a tender interest in all that Candide said, in all that he did, in all that he wished to do.

"And so, sir, you have a rendezvous at Venice?"

"Yes, monsieur Abbé," answered Candide. "It is absolutely necessary that I go to meet Miss Cunegonde."

And then the pleasure of talking of that which he loved induced him to relate, according to his custom, part of his adventures with the fair Westphalian.

"I believe," said the Abbé, "that Miss Cunegonde has a great deal of wit, and that she writes charming letters?"

"I have never received any from her," said Candide, "for being expelled from the castle on her account I had not an opportunity for writing to her. Soon after that I heard she was dead; then I found her alive; then I lost her again; and last of all, I sent an express to her two thousand five hundred leagues from here, and I wait for an answer."

The Abbé listened attentively, and seemed to be in a brown study. He soon took his leave of the two foreigners after a most tender embrace. The following day Candide received, on awaking, a letter couched in these terms:

"My very dear love, for eight days I have been ill in this town. I learn that you are here. I would fly to your arms if I could but move. I was informed of your passage at Bordeaux, where I left faithful Cacambo and the old woman, who are to follow me very soon. The Governor of Buenos Ayres has taken all, but there remains to me your heart. Come! your presence will either give me life or kill me with pleasure."

This charming, this unhoped-for letter transported Candide with an inexpressible joy, and the illness of his dear Cunegonde overwhelmed him with grief. Divided between those two passions, he took his gold and his diamonds and hurried away, with Martin, to the hotel where Miss Cunegonde was lodged. He entered her room trembling, his heart palpitating, his voice sobbing; he wished to open the curtains of the bed, and asked for a light.

"Take care what you do," said the servant-maid; "the light hurts her," and immediately she drew the curtain again.

"My dear Cunegonde," said Candide, weeping, "how are you? If you cannot see me, at least speak to me."

"She cannot speak," said the maid.

The lady then put a plump hand out from the bed, and Candide bathed it with his tears and afterwards filled it with diamonds, leaving a bag of gold upon the easy chair.

In the midst of these transports in came an officer, followed by the Abbé and a file of soldiers.

"There," said he, "are the two suspected foreigners," and at the same time he ordered them to be seized and carried to prison.

"Travellers are not treated thus in El Dorado," said Candide.

"I am more a Manichean now than ever," said Martin.

"But pray, sir, where are you going to carry us?" said Candide.

"To a dungeon," answered the officer.

Martin, having recovered himself a little, judged that the lady who acted the part of Cunegonde was a cheat, that the Perigordian Abbé was a knave who had imposed upon the honest simplicity of Candide, and that the officer was another knave whom they might easily silence.

Candide, advised by Martin and impatient to see the real Cunegonde, rather than expose himself before a court of justice, proposed to the officer to give him three small diamonds, each worth about three thousand pistoles.

"Ah, sir," said the man with the ivory baton, "had you committed all the imaginable crimes you would be to me the most honest man in the world. Three diamonds! Each worth three thousand pistoles! Sir, instead of carrying you to jail I would lose my life to serve you. There are orders for arresting all foreigners, but leave it to me. I have a brother at Dieppe in Normandy! I'll conduct you thither, and if you have a diamond to give him he'll take as much care of you as I would."

"And why," said Candide, "should all foreigners be arrested?"

"It is," the Perigordian Abbé then made answer, "because a poor beggar of the country of Atrébatie [28]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window) heard some foolish things said. This induced him to commit a parricide, not such as that of 1610 in the month of May,[29]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window) but such as that of 1594 in the month of December, [30]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window) and such as others which have been committed in other years and other months by other poor devils who had heard nonsense spoken."

The officer then explained what the Abbé meant.

"Ah, the monsters!" cried Candide. "What horrors among a people who dance and sing! Is there no way of getting quickly out of this country where monkeys provoke tigers? I have seen no bears in my country, but *men* I have beheld nowhere except in El Dorado. In the name of God, sir, conduct me to Venice, where I am to await Miss Cunegonde."

"I can conduct you no further than lower Normandy," said the officer.

Immediately he ordered his irons to be struck off, acknowledged himself mistaken, sent away his men, set out with Candide and Martin for Dieppe, and left them in the care of his brother.

There was then a small Dutch ship in the harbour. The Norman, who by the virtue of three more diamonds had become the most subservient of men, put Candide and his attendants on board a vessel that was just ready to set sail for Portsmouth in England.

This was not the way to Venice, but Candide thought he had made his way out of hell, and reckoned that he would soon have an opportunity for resuming his journey.

XXIII

CANDIDE AND MARTIN TOUCHED UPON THE COAST OF ENGLAND, AND WHAT THEY SAW THERE.

"Ah, Pangloss! Pangloss! Ah, Martin! Martin! Ah, my dear Cunegonde, what sort of a world is this?" said Candide on board the Dutch ship.

"Something very foolish and abominable," said Martin.

"You know England? Are they as foolish there as in France?"

"It is another kind of folly," said Martin. "You know that these two nations are at war for a few acres of snow in Canada,[31]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window) and that they spend over this beautiful war much more than Canada is worth. To tell you exactly, whether there are more people fit to send to a madhouse in one country than the other, is what my imperfect intelligence will not permit. I only know in general that the people we are going to see are very atrabilious."

Talking thus they arrived at Portsmouth. The coast was lined with crowds of people, whose eyes were fixed on a fine man kneeling, with his eyes bandaged, on board one of the men of war in the harbour. Four soldiers stood opposite to this man; each of them fired three balls at his head, with all the calmness in the world; and the whole assembly went away very well satisfied.

"What is all this?" said Candide; "and what demon is it that exercises his empire in this country?"

He then asked who was that fine man who had been killed with so much ceremony. They answered, he was an Admiral.[32]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)

"And why kill this Admiral?"

"It is because he did not kill a sufficient number of men himself. He gave battle to a French Admiral; and it has been proved that he was not near enough to him."

"But," replied Candide, "the French Admiral was as far from the English Admiral."

"There is no doubt of it; but in this country it is found good, from time to time, to kill one Admiral to encourage the others."

Candide was so shocked and bewildered by what he saw and heard, that he would not set foot on shore, and he made a bargain with the Dutch skipper (were he even to rob him like the Surinam captain) to conduct him without delay to Venice.

The skipper was ready in two days. They coasted France; they passed in sight of Lisbon, and Candide trembled. They passed through the Straits, and entered the Mediterranean. At last they landed at Venice.

"God be praised!" said Candide, embracing Martin. "It is here that I shall see again my beautiful Cunegonde. I trust Cacambo as myself. All is well, all will be well, all goes as well as possible."

XXIV

OF PAQUETTE AND FRIAR GIROFLÉE.

Upon their arrival at Venice, Candide went to search for Cacambo at every inn and coffee-house, and among all the ladies of pleasure, but to no purpose. He sent every day to inquire on all the ships that came in. But there was no news of Cacambo.

"What!" said he to Martin, "I have had time to voyage from Surinam to Bordeaux, to go from Bordeaux to Paris, from Paris to Dieppe, from Dieppe to Portsmouth, to coast along Portugal and Spain, to cross the whole Mediterranean, to spend some months, and yet the beautiful Cunegonde has not arrived! Instead of her I have only met a Parisian wench and a Perigordian Abbé. Cunegonde is dead without doubt, and there is nothing for me but to die. Alas! how much better it would have been for me to have remained in the paradise of El Dorado than to come back to this cursed Europe! You are in the right, my dear Martin: all is misery and illusion."

He fell into a deep melancholy, and neither went to see the opera, nor any of the other diversions of the Carnival; nay, he was proof against the temptations of all the ladies.

"You are in truth very simple," said Martin to him, "if you imagine that a mongrel valet, who has five or six millions in his pocket, will go to the other end of the world to seek your mistress and bring her to you to Venice. If he find her, he will keep her to himself; if he do not find her he will get another. I advise you to forget your valet Cacambo and your mistress Cunegonde."

Martin was not consoling. Candide's melancholy increased; and Martin continued to prove to him that there was very little virtue or happiness upon earth, except perhaps in El Dorado, where nobody could gain admittance.

While they were disputing on this important subject and waiting for Cunegonde, Candide saw a young Theatin friar in St. Mark's Piazza, holding a girl on his arm. The Theatin looked fresh coloured, plump, and vigorous; his eyes were sparkling, his air assured, his look lofty, and his step bold. The girl was very pretty, and sang; she looked amorously at her Theatin, and from time to time pinched his fat cheeks.

"At least you will allow me," said Candide to Martin, "that these two are happy. Hitherto I have met with none but unfortunate people in the whole habitable globe, except in El Dorado; but as to this pair, I would venture to lay a wager that they are very happy."

"I lay you they are not," said Martin.

"We need only ask them to dine with us," said Candide, "and you will see whether I am mistaken."

Immediately he accosted them, presented his compliments, and invited them to his inn to eat some macaroni, with Lombard partridges, and caviare, and to drink some Montepulciano, Lachrymæ Christi, Cyprus and Samos wine. The girl blushed, the Theatin accepted the invitation and she followed him, casting her eyes on Candide with confusion and surprise, and dropping a few tears. No sooner had she set foot in Candide's apartment than she cried out:

"Ah! Mr. Candide does not know Paquette again."

Candide had not viewed her as yet with attention, his thoughts being entirely taken up with Cunegonde; but recollecting her as she spoke.

"Alas!" said he, "my poor child, it is you who reduced Doctor Pangloss to the beautiful condition in which I saw him?"

"Alas! it was I, sir, indeed," answered Paquette. "I see that you have heard all. I have been informed of the frightful disasters that befell the family of my lady Baroness, and the fair Cunegonde. I swear to you that my fate has been scarcely less sad. I was very innocent when you knew me. A Grey Friar, who was my confessor, easily seduced me. The consequences were terrible. I was obliged to quit the castle some time after the Baron had sent you away with kicks on the backside. If a famous surgeon had not taken compassion on me, I should have died. For some time I was this surgeon's mistress, merely out of gratitude. His wife, who was mad with jealousy, beat me every day unmercifully; she was a fury. The surgeon was one of the ugliest of men, and I the most wretched of women, to be continually beaten for a man I did not love. You know, sir, what a dangerous thing it is for an ill-natured woman to be married to a doctor. Incensed at the behaviour of his wife, he one day gave her so effectual a remedy to cure her of a slight cold, that she died two hours after, in most horrid convulsions. The wife's relations prosecuted the husband; he took flight, and I was thrown into jail. My innocence would not have saved me if I had not been good-looking. The judge set me free, on condition that he succeeded the surgeon. I was soon supplanted by a rival, turned out of doors quite destitute, and obliged to continue this abominable trade, which appears so pleasant to you men, while to us women it is the utmost abyss of misery. I have come to exercise the profession at Venice. Ah! sir, if you could only imagine what it is to be obliged to caress indifferently an old merchant, a lawyer, a monk, a gondolier, an abbé, to be exposed to abuse and insults; to be often reduced to borrowing a petticoat, only to go and have it raised by a disagreeable man; to be robbed by one of what one has earned from another; to be subject to the extortions of the officers of justice; and to have in prospect only a frightful old age, a hospital, and a dung-hill; you would conclude that I am one of the most unhappy creatures in the world." [33]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)

Paquette thus opened her heart to honest Candide, in the presence of Martin, who said to his friend:

"You see that already I have won half the wager."

Friar Giroflée stayed in the dining-room, and drank a glass or two of wine while he was waiting for dinner.

"But," said Candide to Paquette, "you looked so gay and content when I met you; you sang and you behaved so lovingly to the Theatin, that you seemed to me as happy as you pretend to be now the reverse."

"Ah! sir," answered Paquette, "this is one of the miseries of the trade. Yesterday I was robbed and beaten by an officer; yet to-day I must put on good humour to please a friar."

Candide wanted no more convincing; he owned that Martin was in the right. They sat down to table with Paquette and the Theatin; the repast was entertaining; and towards the end they conversed with all confidence.

"Father," said Candide to the Friar, "you appear to me to enjoy a state that all the world might envy; the flower of health shines in your face, your expression makes plain your happiness; you have a very pretty girl for your recreation, and you seem well satisfied with your state as a Theatin."

"My faith, sir," said Friar Giroflée, "I wish that all the Theatins were at the bottom of the sea. I have been tempted a hundred times to set fire to the convent, and go and become a Turk. My parents forced me at the age of fifteen to put on this detestable habit, to increase the fortune of a cursed elder brother, whom God confound. Jealousy, discord, and fury, dwell in the convent. It is true I have preached a few bad sermons that have brought me in a little money, of which the prior stole half, while the rest serves to maintain my girls; but when I return at night to the monastery, I am ready to dash my head against the walls of the dormitory; and all my fellows are in the same case."

Martin turned towards Candide with his usual coolness.

"Well," said he, "have I not won the whole wager?"

Candide gave two thousand piastres to Paquette, and one thousand to Friar Giroflée.

"I'll answer for it," said he, "that with this they will be happy."

"I do not believe it at all," said Martin; "you will, perhaps, with these piastres only render them the more unhappy."

"Let that be as it may," said Candide, "but one thing consoles me. I see that we often meet with those whom we expected never to see more; so that, perhaps, as I have found my red sheep and Paquette, it may well be that I shall also find Cunegonde."

"I wish," said Martin, "she may one day make you very happy; but I doubt it very much."

"You are very hard of belief," said Candide.

"I have lived," said Martin.

"You see those gondoliers," said Candide, "are they not perpetually singing?"

"You do not see them," said Martin, "at home with their wives and brats. The Doge has his troubles, the gondoliers have theirs. It is true that, all things considered, the life of a gondolier is preferable to that of a Doge; but I believe the difference to be so trifling that it is not worth the trouble of examining."

"People talk," said Candide, "of the Senator Pococurante, who lives in that fine palace on the Brenta, where he entertains foreigners in the politest manner. They pretend that this man has never felt any uneasiness."

"I should be glad to see such a rarity," said Martin.

Candide immediately sent to ask the Lord Pococurante permission to wait upon him the next day.

XXV

THE VISIT TO LORD POCOCURANTE, A NOBLE VENETIAN.

Candide and Martin went in a gondola on the Brenta, and arrived at the palace of the noble Signor Pococurante. The gardens, laid out with taste, were adorned with fine marble statues. The palace was beautifully built. The master of the house was a man of sixty, and very rich. He received the two travellers with polite indifference, which put Candide a little out of countenance, but was not at all disagreeable to Martin.

First, two pretty girls, very neatly dressed, served them with chocolate, which was frothed exceedingly well. Candide could not refrain from commending their beauty, grace, and address.

"They are good enough creatures," said the Senator. "I make them lie with me sometimes, for I am very tired of the ladies of the town, of their coquetries, of their jealousies, of their quarrels, of their humours, of their pettinesses, of their prides, of their follies, and of the sonnets which one must make, or have made, for them. But after all, these two girls begin to weary me."

After breakfast, Candide walking into a long gallery was surprised by the beautiful pictures. He asked, by what master were the two first.

"They are by Raphael," said the Senator. "I bought them at a great price, out of vanity, some years ago. They are said to be the finest things in Italy, but they do not please me at all. The colours are too dark, the figures are not sufficiently rounded, nor in good relief; the draperies in no way resemble stuffs. In a word, whatever may be said, I do not find there a true imitation of nature. I only care for a picture when I think I see nature itself; and there are none of this sort. I have a great many pictures, but I prize them very little."

While they were waiting for dinner Pococurante ordered a concert. Candide found the music delicious.

"This noise," said the Senator, "may amuse one for half an hour; but if it were to last longer it would grow tiresome to everybody, though they durst not own it. Music, to-day, is only the art of executing difficult things, and that which is only difficult cannot please long. Perhaps I should be fonder of the opera if they had not found the secret of making of it a monster which shocks me. Let who will go to see bad tragedies set to music, where the scenes are contrived for no other end than to introduce two or three songs ridiculously out of place, to show off an actress's voice. Let who will, or who can, die away with pleasure at the sight of an eunuch quavering the *rôle* of Cæsar, or of Cato, and strutting awkwardly upon the stage. For my part I have long since renounced those paltry entertainments which constitute the glory of modern Italy, and are purchased so dearly by sovereigns."

Candide disputed the point a little, but with discretion. Martin was entirely of the Senator's opinion.

They sat down to table, and after an excellent dinner they went into the library. Candide, seeing a Homer magnificently bound, commended the virtuoso on his good taste.

"There," said he, "is a book that was once the delight of the great Pangloss, the best philosopher in Germany."

"It is not mine," answered Pococurante coolly. "They used at one time to make me believe that I took a pleasure in reading him. But that continual repetition of battles, so extremely like one another; those gods that are always active without doing anything decisive; that Helen who is the cause of the war, and who yet scarcely appears in the piece; that Troy, so long besieged without being taken; all these together caused me great weariness. I have sometimes asked learned men whether they were not as weary as I of that work. Those who were sincere have owned to me that the poem made them fall asleep; yet it was necessary to have it in their library as a monument of antiquity, or like those rusty medals which are no longer of use in commerce."

"But your Excellency does not think thus of Virgil?" said Candide.

"I grant," said the Senator, "that the second, fourth, and sixth books of his *Æneid* are excellent, but as for his pious Æneas, his strong Cloanthus, his friend Achates, his little Ascanius, his silly King Latinus, his bourgeois Amata, his insipid Lavinia, I think there can be nothing more flat and disagreeable. I prefer Tasso a good deal, or even the soporific tales of Ariosto."

"May I presume to ask you, sir," said Candide, "whether you do not receive a great deal of pleasure from reading Horace?"

"There are maxims in this writer," answered Pococurante, "from which a man of the world may reap great benefit, and being written in energetic verse they are more easily impressed upon the memory. But I care little for his journey to Brundusium, and his account of a bad dinner, or of his low quarrel between one Rupilius whose words he says were full of poisonous filth, and another whose language was imbued with vinegar. I have read with much distaste his indelicate verses against old women and witches; nor do I see any merit in telling his friend Mæcenas that if he will but rank him in the choir of lyric poets, his lofty head shall touch the stars. Fools admire everything in an author of reputation. For my part, I read only to please myself. I like only that which serves my purpose."

Candide, having been educated never to judge for himself, was much surprised at what he heard. Martin found there was a good deal of reason in Pococurante's remarks.

"Oh! here is Cicero," said Candide. "Here is the great man whom I fancy you are never tired of reading."

"I never read him," replied the Venetian. "What is it to me whether he pleads for Rabirius or Cluentius? I try causes enough myself; his philosophical works seem to me better, but when I found that he doubted of everything, I concluded that I knew as much as he, and that I had no need of a guide to learn ignorance."

"Ha! here are four-score volumes of the Academy of Sciences," cried Martin. "Perhaps there is something valuable in this collection."

"There might be," said Pococurante, "if only one of those rakers of rubbish had shown how to make pins; but in all these volumes there is nothing but chimerical systems, and not a single useful thing."

"And what dramatic works I see here," said Candide, "in Italian, Spanish, and French."

"Yes," replied the Senator, "there are three thousand, and not three dozen of them good for anything. As to those collections of sermons, which altogether are not worth a single page of Seneca, and those huge volumes of theology, you may well imagine that neither I nor any one else ever opens them."

Martin saw some shelves filled with English books.

"I have a notion," said he, "that a Republican must be greatly pleased with most of these books, which are written with a spirit of freedom."

"Yes," answered Pococurante, "it is noble to write as one thinks; this is the privilege of humanity. In all our Italy we write only what we do not think; those who inhabit the country of the Cæsars and the Antoninuses dare not acquire a single idea without the permission of a Dominican friar. I should be pleased with the liberty which inspires the English genius if passion and party spirit did not corrupt all that is estimable in this precious liberty."

Candide, observing a Milton, asked whether he did not look upon this author as a great man.

"Who?" said Pococurante, "that barbarian, who writes a long commentary in ten books of harsh verse on the first chapter of Genesis; that coarse imitator of the Greeks, who disfigures the Creation, and who, while Moses represents the Eternal producing the world by a word, makes the Messiah take a great pair of compasses from the armoury of heaven to circumscribe His work? How can I have any esteem for a writer who has spoiled Tasso's hell and the devil, who transforms Lucifer sometimes into a toad and other times into a pigmy, who makes him repeat the same things a hundred times, who makes him dispute on theology, who, by a serious imitation of Ariosto's comic invention of firearms, represents the devils cannonading in heaven? Neither I nor any man in Italy could take pleasure in those melancholy extravagances; and the marriage of Sin and Death, and the snakes brought forth by Sin, are enough to turn the stomach of any one with the least taste, [and his long description of a pest-house is good only for a grave-digger]. This obscure, whimsical, and disagreeable poem was despised upon its first publication, and I only treat it now as it was treated in its own country by contemporaries. For the matter of that I say what I think, and I care very little whether others think as I do."

Candide was grieved at this speech, for he had a respect for Homer and was fond of Milton.

"Alas!" said he softly to Martin, "I am afraid that this man holds our German poets in very great contempt."

"There would not be much harm in that," said Martin.

"Oh! what a superior man," said Candide below his breath. "What a great genius is this Pococurante! Nothing can please him."

After their survey of the library they went down into the garden, where Candide praised its several beauties.

"I know of nothing in so bad a taste," said the master. "All you see here is merely trifling. After to-morrow I will have it planted with a nobler design."

"Well," said Candide to Martin when they had taken their leave, "you will agree that this is the happiest of mortals, for he is above everything he possesses."

"But do you not see," answered Martin, "that he is disgusted with all he possesses? Plato observed a long while ago that those stomachs are not the best that reject all sorts of food."

"But is there not a pleasure," said Candide,"in criticising everything, in pointing out faults where others see nothing but beauties?"

"That is to say," replied Martin, "that there is some pleasure in having no pleasure."

"Well, well," said Candide, "I find that I shall be the only happy man when I am blessed with the sight of my dear Cunegonde."

"It is always well to hope," said Martin.

However, the days and the weeks passed. Cacambo did not come, and Candide was so overwhelmed with grief that he did not even reflect that Paquette and Friar Giroflée did not return to thank him.

XXVI

OF A SUPPER WHICH CANDIDE AND MARTIN TOOK WITH SIX STRANGERS, AND WHO THEY WERE.

[34]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)

One evening that Candide and Martin were going to sit down to supper with some foreigners who lodged in the same inn, a man whose complexion was as black as soot, came behind Candide, and taking him by the arm, said:

"Get yourself ready to go along with us; do not fail."

Upon this he turned round and saw—Cacambo! Nothing but the sight of Cunegonde could have astonished and delighted him more. He was on the point of going mad with joy. He embraced his dear friend.

"Cunegonde is here, without doubt; where is she? Take me to her that I may die of joy in her company."

"Cunegonde is not here," said Cacambo, "she is at Constantinople."

"Oh, heavens! at Constantinople! But were she in China I would fly thither; let us be off."

"We shall set out after supper," replied Cacambo. "I can tell you nothing more; I am a slave, my master awaits me, I must serve him at table; speak not a word, eat, and then get ready."

Candide, distracted between joy and grief, delighted at seeing his faithful agent again, astonished at finding him a slave, filled with the fresh hope of recovering his mistress, his heart palpitating, his understanding confused, sat down to table with Martin, who saw all these scenes quite unconcerned, and with six strangers who had come to spend the Carnival at Venice.

Cacambo waited at table upon one of the strangers; towards the end of the entertainment he drew near his master, and whispered in his ear:

"Sire, your Majesty may start when you please, the vessel is ready."

On saying these words he went out. The company in great surprise looked at one another without speaking a word, when another domestic approached his master and said to him:

"Sire, your Majesty's chaise is at Padua, and the boat is ready."

The master gave a nod and the servant went away. The company all stared at one another again, and their surprise redoubled. A third valet came up to a third stranger, saying:

"Sire, believe me, your Majesty ought not to stay here any longer. I am going to get everything ready."

And immediately he disappeared. Candide and Martin did not doubt that this was a masquerade of the Carnival. Then a fourth domestic said to a fourth master:

"Your Majesty may depart when you please."

Saying this he went away like the rest. The fifth valet said the same thing to the fifth master. But the sixth valet spoke differently to the sixth stranger, who sat near Candide. He said to him:

"Faith, Sire, they will no longer give credit to your Majesty nor to me, and we may perhaps both of us be put in jail this very night. Therefore I will take care of myself. Adieu."

The servants being all gone, the six strangers, with Candide and Martin, remained in a profound silence. At length Candide broke it.

"Gentlemen," said he, "this is a very good joke indeed, but why should you all be kings? For me I own that neither Martin nor I is a king."

Cacambo's master then gravely answered in Italian:

"I am not at all joking. My name is Achmet III. I was Grand Sultan many years. I dethroned my brother; my nephew dethroned me, my viziers were beheaded, and I am condemned to end my days in the old Seraglio. My nephew, the great Sultan Mahmoud, permits me to travel sometimes for my health, and I am come to spend the Carnival at Venice."

A young man who sat next to Achmet, spoke then as follows:

"My name is Ivan. I was once Emperor of all the Russias, but was dethroned in my cradle. My parents were confined in prison and I was educated there; yet I am sometimes allowed to travel in company with persons who act as guards; and I am come to spend the Carnival at Venice."

The third said:

"I am Charles Edward, King of England; my father has resigned all his legal rights to me. I have fought in defence of them; and above eight hundred of my adherents have been hanged, drawn, and quartered. I have been confined in prison; I am going to Rome, to pay a visit to the King, my father, who was dethroned as well as myself and my grandfather, and I am come to spend the Carnival at Venice."

The fourth spoke thus in his turn:

"I am the King of Poland; the fortune of war has stripped me of my hereditary dominions; my father underwent the same vicissitudes; I resign myself to Providence in the same manner as Sultan Achmet, the Emperor Ivan, and King Charles Edward, whom God long preserve; and I am come to the Carnival at Venice."

The fifth said:

"I am King of Poland also; I have been twice dethroned; but Providence has given me another country, where I have done more good than all the Sarmatian kings were ever capable of doing on the banks of the Vistula; I resign myself likewise to Providence,

and am come to pass the Carnival at Venice."

It was now the sixth monarch's turn to speak:

"Gentlemen," said he, "I am not so great a prince as any of you; however, I am a king. I am Theodore, elected King of Corsica; I had the title of Majesty, and now I am scarcely treated as a gentleman. I have coined money, and now am not worth a farthing; I have had two secretaries of state, and now I have scarce a valet; I have seen myself on a throne, and I have seen myself upon straw in a common jail in London. I am afraid that I shall meet with the same treatment here though, like your majesties, I am come to see the Carnival at Venice."

The other five kings listened to this speech with generous compassion. Each of them gave twenty sequins to King Theodore to buy him clothes and linen; and Candide made him a present of a diamond worth two thousand sequins.

"Who can this private person be," said the five kings to one another, "who is able to give, and really has given, a hundred times as much as any of us?"

Just as they rose from table, in came four Serene Highnesses, who had also been stripped of their territories by the fortune of war, and were come to spend the Carnival at Venice. But Candide paid no regard to these newcomers, his thoughts were entirely employed on his voyage to Constantinople, in search of his beloved Cunegonde.

XXVII

CANDIDE'S VOYAGE TO CONSTANTINOPLE.

The faithful Cacambo had already prevailed upon the Turkish skipper, who was to conduct the Sultan Achmet to Constantinople, to receive Candide and Martin on his ship. They both embarked after having made their obeisance to his miserable Highness.

"You see," said Candide to Martin on the way, "we supped with six dethroned kings, and of those six there was one to whom I gave charity. Perhaps there are many other princes yet more unfortunate. For my part, I have only lost a hundred sheep; and now I am flying into Cunegonde's arms. My dear Martin, yet once more Pangloss was right: all is for the best."

"I wish it," answered Martin.

"But," said Candide, "it was a very strange adventure we met with at Venice. It has never before been seen or heard that six dethroned kings have supped together at a public inn."

"It is not more extraordinary," said Martin, "than most of the things that have happened to us. It is a very common thing for kings to be dethroned; and as for the honour we have had of supping in their company, it is a trifle not worth our attention."

No sooner had Candide got on board the vessel than he flew to his old valet and friend Cacambo, and tenderly embraced him.

"Well," said he, "what news of Cunegonde? Is she still a prodigy of beauty? Does she love me still? How is she? Thou hast doubtless bought her a palace at Constantinople?"

"My dear master," answered Cacambo, "Cunegonde washes dishes on the banks of the Propontis, in the service of a prince, who has very few dishes to wash; she is a slave in the family of an ancient sovereign named Ragotsky,[35]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window) to whom the Grand Turk allows three crowns a day in his exile. But what is worse still is, that she has lost her beauty and has become horribly ugly."

"Well, handsome or ugly," replied Candide, "I am a man of honour, and it is my duty to love her still. But how came she to be reduced to so abject a state with the five or six millions that you took to her?"

"Ah!" said Cacambo, "was I not to give two millions to Senor Don Fernando d'Ibaraa, y Figueora, y Mascarenes, y Lampourdos, y Souza, Governor of Buenos Ayres, for permitting Miss Cunegonde to come away? And did not a corsair bravely rob us of all the rest? Did not this corsair carry us to Cape Matapan, to Milo, to Nicaria, to Samos, to Petra, to the Dardanelles, to Marmora, to Scutari? Cunegonde and the old woman serve the prince I now mentioned to you, and I am slave to the dethroned Sultan."

"What a series of shocking calamities!" cried Candide. "But after all, I have some diamonds left; and I may easily pay Cunegonde's ransom. Yet it is a pity that she is grown so ugly."

Then, turning towards Martin: "Who do you think," said he, "is most to be pitied—the Sultan Achmet, the Emperor Ivan, King Charles Edward, or I?"

"How should I know!" answered Martin. "I must see into your hearts to be able to tell."

"Ah!" said Candide, "if Pangloss were here, he could tell."

"I know not," said Martin, "in what sort of scales your Pangloss would weigh the misfortunes of mankind and set a just estimate on their sorrows. All that I can presume to say is, that there are millions of people upon earth who have a hundred times more to complain of than King Charles Edward, the Emperor Ivan, or the Sultan Achmet."

"That may well be," said Candide.

In a few days they reached the Bosphorus, and Candide began by paying a very high ransom for Cacambo. Then without losing time, he and his companions went on board a galley, in order to search on the banks of the Propontis for his Cunegonde, however ugly she might have become.

Among the crew there were two slaves who rowed very badly, and to whose bare shoulders the Levantine captain would now and then apply blows from a bull's pizzle. Candide, from a natural impulse, looked at these two slaves more attentively than at the other oarsmen, and approached them with pity. Their features though greatly disfigured, had a slight resemblance to those of Pangloss and the unhappy Jesuit and Westphalian Baron, brother to Miss Cunegonde. This moved and saddened him. He looked at them still more attentively.

"Indeed," said he to Cacambo, "if I had not seen Master Pangloss hanged, and if I had not had the misfortune to kill the Baron, I should think it was they that were rowing."

At the names of the Baron and of Pangloss, the two galley-slaves uttered a loud cry, held fast by the seat, and let drop their oars. The captain ran up to them and redoubled his blows with the bull's pizzle.

"Stop! stop! sir," cried Candide. "I will give you what money you please."

"What! it is Candide!" said one of the slaves.

"What! it is Candide!" said the other.

"Do I dream?" cried Candide; "am I awake? or am I on board a galley? Is this the Baron whom I killed? Is this Master Pangloss whom I saw hanged?"

"It is we! it is we!" answered they.

"Well! is this the great philosopher?" said Martin.

"Ah! captain," said Candide, "what ransom will you take for Monsieur de Thunder-ten-Tronckh, one of the first barons of the empire, and for Monsieur Pangloss, the profoundest metaphysician in Germany?"

"Dog of a Christian," answered the Levantine captain, "since these two dogs of Christian slaves are barons and metaphysicians, which I doubt not are high dignities in their country, you shall give me fifty thousand sequins."

"You shall have them, sir. Carry me back at once to Constantinople, and you shall receive the money directly. But no; carry me first to Miss Cunegonde."

Upon the first proposal made by Candide, however, the Levantine captain had already tacked about, and made the crew ply their oars quicker than a bird cleaves the air.

Candide embraced the Baron and Pangloss a hundred times.

"And how happened it, my dear Baron, that I did not kill you? And, my dear Pangloss, how came you to life again after being hanged? And why are you both in a Turkish galley?"

"And it is true that my dear sister is in this country?" said the Baron.

"Yes," answered Cacambo.

"Then I behold, once more, my dear Candide," cried Pangloss.

Candide presented Martin and Cacambo to them; they embraced each other, and all spoke at once. The galley flew; they were already in the port. Instantly Candide sent for a Jew, to whom he sold for fifty thousand sequins a diamond worth a hundred

thousand, though the fellow swore to him by Abraham that he could give him no more. He immediately paid the ransom for the Baron and Pangloss. The latter threw himself at the feet of his deliverer, and bathed them with his tears; the former thanked him with a nod, and promised to return him the money on the first opportunity.

"But is it indeed possible that my sister can be in Turkey?" said he.

"Nothing is more possible," said Cacambo, "since she scours the dishes in the service of a Transylvanian prince."

Candide sent directly for two Jews and sold them some more diamonds, and then they all set out together in another galley to deliver Cunegonde from slavery.

XXVIII

WHAT HAPPENED TO CANDIDE, CUNEGONDE, PANGLOSS, MARTIN, ETC.

"I ask your pardon once more," said Candide to the Baron, "your pardon, reverend father, for having run you through the body."

"Say no more about it," answered the Baron. "I was a little too hasty, I own, but since you wish to know by what fatality I came to be a galley-slave I will inform you. After I had been cured by the surgeon of the college of the wound you gave me, I was attacked and carried off by a party of Spanish troops, who confined me in prison at Buenos Ayres at the very time my sister was setting out thence. I asked leave to return to Rome to the General of my Order. I was appointed chaplain to the French Ambassador at Constantinople. I had not been eight days in this employment when one evening I met with a young Ichoglan, who was a very handsome fellow. The weather was warm. The young man wanted to bathe, and I took this opportunity of bathing also. I did not know that it was a capital crime for a Christian to be found naked with a young Mussulman. A cadi ordered me a hundred blows on the soles of the feet, and condemned me to the galleys. I do not think there ever was a greater act of injustice. But I should be glad to know how my sister came to be scullion to a Transylvanian prince who has taken shelter among the Turks."

"But you, my dear Pangloss," said Candide, "how can it be that I behold you again?"

"It is true," said Pangloss, "that you saw me hanged. I should have been burnt, but you may remember it rained exceedingly hard when they were going to roast me; the storm was so violent that they despaired of lighting the fire, so I was hanged because they could do no better. A surgeon purchased my body, carried me home, and dissected me. He began with making a crucial incision on me from the navel to the clavicula. One could not have been worse hanged than I was. The executioner of the Holy Inquisition was a sub-deacon, and knew how to burn people marvellously well, but he was not accustomed to hanging. The cord was wet and did not slip properly, and besides it was badly tied; in short, I still drew my breath, when the crucial incision made me give such a frightful scream that my surgeon fell flat upon his back, and imagining that he had been dissecting the devil he ran away, dying with fear, and fell down the staircase in his flight. His wife, hearing the noise, flew from the next room. She saw me stretched out upon the table with my crucial incision. She was seized with yet greater fear than her husband, fled, and tumbled over him. When they came to themselves a little, I heard the wife say to her husband: 'My dear, how could you take it into your head to dissect a heretic? Do you not know that these people always have the devil in their bodies? I will go and fetch a priest this minute to exorcise him.' At this proposal I shuddered, and mustering up what little courage I had still remaining I cried out aloud, 'Have mercy on me!' At length the Portuguese barber plucked up his spirits. He sewed up my wounds; his wife even nursed me. I was upon my legs at the end of fifteen days. The barber found me a place as lackey to a knight of Malta who was going to Venice, but finding that my master had no money to pay me my wages I entered the service of a Venetian merchant, and went with him to Constantinople. One day I took it into my head to step into a mosque, where I saw an old Iman and a very pretty young devotee who was saying her paternosters. Her bosom was uncovered, and between her breasts she had a beautiful bouquet of tulips, roses, anemones, ranunculus, hyacinths, and auriculas. She dropped her bouquet; I picked it up, and presented it to her with a profound reverence. I was so long in delivering it that the Iman began to get angry, and seeing that I was a Christian he called out for help. They carried me before the cadi, who ordered me a hundred lashes on the soles of the feet and sent me to the galleys. I was chained to the very same galley and the same bench as the young Baron. On board this galley there were four young men from Marseilles, five Neapolitan priests, and two monks from Corfu, who told us similar adventures happened daily. The Baron maintained that he had suffered greater injustice than I, and I insisted that it was far more innocent to take up a bouquet and place it again on a woman's bosom than to be found stark naked with an Ichoglan. We were continually disputing, and received twenty lashes with a bull's pizzle when the concatenation of universal events brought you to our galley, and you were good enough to ransom us."

"Well, my dear Pangloss," said Candide to him, "when you had been hanged, dissected, whipped, and were tugging at the oar, did you always think that everything happens for the best?"

"I am still of my first opinion," answered Pangloss, "for I am a philosopher and I cannot retract, especially as Leibnitz could never be wrong; and besides, the pre-established harmony is the finest thing in the world, and so is his *plenum* and *materia subtilis*."

XXIX

HOW CANDIDE FOUND CUNEGONDE AND THE OLD WOMAN AGAIN.

While Candide, the Baron, Pangloss, Martin, and Cacambo were relating their several adventures, were reasoning on the contingent or non-contingent events of the universe, disputing on effects and causes, on moral and physical evil, on liberty and necessity, and on the consolations a slave may feel even on a Turkish galley, they arrived at the house of the Transylvanian prince on the banks of the Propontis. The first objects which met their sight were Cunegonde and the old woman hanging towels out to dry.

The Baron paled at this sight. The tender, loving Candide, seeing his beautiful Cunegonde embrowned, with blood-shot eyes, withered neck, wrinkled cheeks, and rough, red arms, recoiled three paces, seized with horror, and then advanced out of good manners. She embraced Candide and her brother; they embraced the old woman, and Candide ransomed them both.

There was a small farm in the neighbourhood which the old woman proposed to Candide to make a shift with till the company could be provided for in a better manner. Cunegonde did not know she had grown ugly, for nobody had told her of it; and she reminded Candide of his promise in so positive a tone that the good man durst not refuse her. He therefore intimated to the Baron that he intended marrying his sister.

"I will not suffer," said the Baron, "such meanness on her part, and such insolence on yours; I will never be reproached with this scandalous thing; my sister's children would never be able to enter the church in Germany. No; my sister shall only marry a baron of the empire."

Cunegonde flung herself at his feet, and bathed them with her tears; still he was inflexible.

"Thou foolish fellow," said Candide; "I have delivered thee out of the galleys, I have paid thy ransom, and thy sister's also; she was a scullion, and is very ugly, yet I am so condescending as to marry her; and dost thou pretend to oppose the match? I should kill thee again, were I only to consult my anger."

"Thou mayest kill me again," said the Baron, "but thou shalt not marry my sister, at least whilst I am living."

XXX

THE CONCLUSION.

At the bottom of his heart Candide had no wish to marry Cunegonde. But the extreme impertinence of the Baron determined him to conclude the match, and Cunegonde pressed him so strongly that he could not go from his word. He consulted Pangloss, Martin, and the faithful Cacambo. Pangloss drew up an excellent memorial, wherein he proved that the Baron had no right over his sister, and that according to all the laws of the empire, she might marry Candide with her left hand. Martin was for throwing the Baron into the sea; Cacambo decided that it would be better to deliver him up again to the captain of the galley, after which they thought to send him back to the General Father of the Order at Rome by the first ship. This advice was well received, the old woman approved it; they said not a word to his sister; the thing was executed for a little money, and they had the double pleasure of entrapping a Jesuit, and punishing the pride of a German baron.

It is natural to imagine that after so many disasters Candide married, and living with the philosopher Pangloss, the philosopher Martin, the prudent Cacambo, and the old woman, having besides brought so many diamonds from the country of the ancient Incas, must have led a very happy life. But he was so much imposed upon by the Jews that he had nothing left except his small farm; his wife became uglier every day, more peevish and unsupportable; the old woman was infirm and even more fretful than Cunegonde. Cacambo, who worked in the garden, and took vegetables for sale to Constantinople, was fatigued with hard work, and cursed his destiny. Pangloss was in despair at not shining in some German university. For Martin, he was firmly persuaded that he would be as badly off elsewhere, and therefore bore things patiently. Candide, Martin, and Pangloss sometimes disputed about morals and metaphysics. They often saw passing under the windows of their farm boats full of Effendis, Pashas, and Cadis, who were going into banishment to Lemnos, Mitylene, or Erzeroum. And they saw other Cadis, Pashas, and Effendis coming to supply the place of

the exiles, and afterwards exiled in their turn. They saw heads decently impaled for presentation to the Sublime Porte. Such spectacles as these increased the number of their dissertations; and when they did not dispute time hung so heavily upon their hands, that one day the old woman ventured to say to them:

"I want to know which is worse, to be ravished a hundred times by negro pirates, to have a buttock cut off, to run the gauntlet among the Bulgarians, to be whipped and hanged at an *auto-da-fé*, to be dissected, to row in the galleys—in short, to go through all the miseries we have undergone, or to stay here and have nothing to do?"

"It is a great question," said Candide.

This discourse gave rise to new reflections, and Martin especially concluded that man was born to live either in a state of distracting inquietude or of lethargic disgust. Candide did not quite agree to that, but he affirmed nothing. Pangloss owned that he had always suffered horribly, but as he had once asserted that everything went wonderfully well, he asserted it still, though he no longer believed it.

What helped to confirm Martin in his detestable principles, to stagger Candide more than ever, and to puzzle Pangloss, was that one day they saw Paquette and Friar Giroflée land at the farm in extreme misery. They had soon squandered their three thousand piastres, parted, were reconciled, quarrelled again, were thrown into gaol, had escaped, and Friar Giroflée had at length become Turk. Paquette continued her trade wherever she went, but made nothing of it.

"I foresaw," said Martin to Candide, "that your presents would soon be dissipated, and only make them the more miserable. You have rolled in millions of money, you and Cacambo; and yet you are not happier than Friar Giroflée and Paquette."

"Ha!" said Pangloss to Paquette, "Providence has then brought you amongst us again, my poor child! Do you know that you cost me the tip of my nose, an eye, and an ear, as you may see? What a world is this!"

And now this new adventure set them philosophising more than ever.

In the neighbourhood there lived a very famous Dervish who was esteemed the best philosopher in all Turkey, and they went to consult him. Pangloss was the speaker.

"Master," said he, "we come to beg you to tell why so strange an animal as man was made."

"With what meddlest thou?" said the Dervish; "is it thy business?"

"But, reverend father," said Candide, "there is horrible evil in this world."

"What signifies it," said the Dervish, "whether there be evil or good? When his highness sends a ship to Egypt, does he trouble his head whether the mice on board are at their ease or not?"

"What, then, must we do?" said Pangloss.

"Hold your tongue," answered the Dervish.

"I was in hopes," said Pangloss, "that I should reason with you a little about causes and effects, about the best of possible worlds, the origin of evil, the nature of the soul, and the pre-established harmony."

At these words, the Dervish shut the door in their faces.

During this conversation, the news was spread that two Viziers and the Mufti had been strangled at Constantinople, and that several of their friends had been impaled. This catastrophe made a great noise for some hours. Pangloss, Candide, and Martin, returning to the little farm, saw a good old man taking the fresh air at his door under an orange bower. Pangloss, who was as inquisitive as he was argumentative, asked the old man what was the name of the strangled Mufti.

"I do not know," answered the worthy man, "and I have not known the name of any Mufti, nor of any Vizier. I am entirely ignorant of the event you mention; I presume in general that they who meddle with the administration of public affairs die sometimes miserably, and that they deserve it; but I never trouble my head about what is transacting at Constantinople; I content myself with sending there for sale the fruits of the garden which I cultivate."

Having said these words, he invited the strangers into his house; his two sons and two daughters presented them with several sorts of sherbet, which they made themselves, with Kaimak enriched with the candied-peel of citrons, with oranges, lemons, pine-apples,

pistachio-nuts, and Mocha coffee unadulterated with the bad coffee of Batavia or the American islands. After which the two daughters of the honest Mussulman perfumed the strangers' beards.

"You must have a vast and magnificent estate," said Candide to the Turk.

"I have only twenty acres," replied the old man; "I and my children cultivate them; our labour preserves us from three great evils—weariness, vice, and want."

Candide, on his way home, made profound reflections on the old man's conversation.

"This honest Turk," said he to Pangloss and Martin, "seems to be in a situation far preferable to that of the six kings with whom we had the honour of supping."

"Grandeur," said Pangloss, "is extremely dangerous according to the testimony of philosophers. For, in short, Eglon, King of Moab, was assassinated by Ehud; Absalom was hung by his hair, and pierced with three darts; King Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, was killed by Baasa; King Ela by Zimri; Ahaziah by Jehu; Athaliah by Jehoiada; the Kings Jehoiakim, Jeconiah, and Zedekiah, were led into captivity. You know how perished Crœsus, Astyages, Darius, Dionysius of Syracuse, Pyrrhus, Perseus, Hannibal, Jugurtha, Ariovistus, Cæsar, Pompey, Nero, Otho, Vitellius, Domitian, Richard II. of England, Edward II., Henry VI., Richard III., Mary Stuart, Charles I., the three Henrys of France, the Emperor Henry IV.! You know——"

"I know also," said Candide, "that we must cultivate our garden."

"You are right," said Pangloss, "for when man was first placed in the Garden of Eden, he was put there *ut operaretur eum*, that he might cultivate it; which shows that man was not born to be idle."

"Let us work," said Martin, "without disputing; it is the only way to render life tolerable."

The whole little society entered into this laudable design, according to their different abilities. Their little plot of land produced plentiful crops. Cunegonde was, indeed, very ugly, but she became an excellent pastry cook; Paquette worked at embroidery; the old woman looked after the linen. They were all, not excepting Friar Giroflée, of some service or other; for he made a good joiner, and became a very honest man.

Pangloss sometimes said to Candide:

"There is a concatenation of events in this best of all possible worlds: for if you had not been kicked out of a magnificent castle for love of Miss Cunegonde: if you had not been put into the Inquisition: if you had not walked over America: if you had not stabbed the Baron: if you had not lost all your sheep from the fine country of El Dorado: you would not be here eating preserved citrons and pistachio-nuts."

"All that is very well," answered Candide, "but let us cultivate our garden."

FOOTNOTES:

[17]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)By the *Journal of Trevoux* Voltaire meant a critical periodical printed by the Jesuits at Trevoux under the title of *Mémoires pour servir à l'Historie des Sciences et des Beaux-Arts*. It existed from 1701 until 1767, during which period its title underwent many changes.

[18]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)It has been suggested that Voltaire, in speaking of red sheep, referred to the llama, a South American ruminant allied to the camel. These animals are sometimes of a reddish colour, and were notable as pack-carriers and for their fleetness.

[19]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)The first English translator curiously gives "a tourene of bouilli that weighed two hundred pounds," as the equivalent of "*un contour bouilli qui pesait deux cent livres*." The French editor of the 1869 reprint points out that the South American vulture, or condor, is meant; the name of this bird, it may be added, is taken from "*cuntur*," that given it by the aborigines.

[20]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)Spanish half-crowns.

[21]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)*Socinians*; followers of the teaching of Lalius and Faustus Socinus (16th century), which denied the doctrine of the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the personality of the devil, the native and total depravity of man, the vicarious atonement and eternal punishment. The Socinians are now represented by the Unitarians.

Manicheans; followers of Manes or Manichæus (3rd century), a Persian who maintained that there are two principles, the one good and the other evil, each equally powerful in the government of the world.

[22]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)In the 1759 editions, in place of the long passage in brackets from here to page 215, there was only the following: "'Sir,' said the Perigordian Abbé to him, 'have you noticed that young person who has so roguish a face and so fine a figure? You may have her for ten thousand francs a month, and fifty thousand crowns in diamonds.' 'I have only a day or two to give her,' answered Candide, 'because I have a rendezvous at Venice.' In the evening after supper the insinuating Perigordian redoubled his politeness and attentions."

[23]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)The play referred to is supposed to be "Le Comte d'Essex," by Thomas Corneille.

[24]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)In France actors were at one time looked upon as excommunicated persons, not worthy of burial in holy ground or with Christian rites. In 1730 the "honours of sepulture" were refused to Mademoiselle Lecouvreur (doubtless the Miss Monime of this passage). Voltaire's miscellaneous works contain a paper on the matter.

[25]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)Élie-Catherine Fréron was a French critic (1719-1776) who incurred the enmity of Voltaire. In 1752 Fréron, in *Lettres sur quelques écrits du temps*, wrote pointedly of Voltaire as one who chose to be all things to all men, and Voltaire retaliated by references such as these in *Candide*.

[26]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)Gabriel Gauchat (1709-1779), French ecclesiastical writer, was author of a number of works on religious subjects.

[27]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)Nicholas Charles Joseph Trublet (1697-1770) was a French writer whose criticism of Voltaire was revenged in passages such as this one in *Candide*, and one in the *Pauvre Diable* beginning:

L'abbé Trublet avait alors le rageD'être à Paris un petit personage.

[28]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)Damiens, who attempted the life of Louis XV. in 1757, was born at Arras, capital of Artois (Atrébatie).

[29]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)On May 14, 1610, Ravaillac assassinated Henry VI.

[30]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)On December 27, 1594, Jean Châtel attempted to assassinate Henry IV.

[31]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)This same curiously inept criticism of the war which cost France her American provinces occurs in Voltaire's *Memoirs*, wherein he says, "In 1756 England made a piratical war upon France for some acres of snow." See also his *Précis du Siècle de Louis* XV.

[32]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)Admiral Byng was shot on March 14, 1757.

[33]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)Commenting upon this passage, M. Sarcey says admirably: "All is there! In those ten lines Voltaire has gathered all the griefs and all the terrors of these creatures; the picture is admirable for its truth and power! But do you not feel the pity and sympathy of the painter? Here irony becomes sad, and in a way an avenger. Voltaire cries out with horror against the society which throws some of its members into such an abyss. He has his 'Bartholomew' fever; we tremble with him through contagion."

[34]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)The following particulars of the six monarchs may prove not uninteresting. Achmet III. (*b.* 1673, *d.* 1739) was dethroned in 1730. Ivan VI. (*b.* 1740, *d.* 1762) was dethroned in 1741. Charles Edward Stuart, the Pretender (*b.* 1720, *d.* 1788). Auguste III. (*b.* 1696, *d.* 1763). Stanislaus (*b.* 1682, *d.* 1766). Theodore (*b.* 1690, *d.* 1755). It will be observed that, although quite impossible for the six kings ever to have met, five of them might have been made to do so without any anachronism.

[35]Links to an external site.Links to an external site.(opens in new window)François Leopold Ragotsky (1676-1735).

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: Rousseau's CONFESSIONS (Book I)

5.1: Editor's Introduction
5.2: Rousseau's Confessions, Book I

PROFESSOR'S INTRODUCTION and Rousseau's CONFESSIONS (Book I)

PROFESSOR'S INTRODUCTION

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions*, written between 1765 and 1770 but published posthumously in 1782 and 1789, is one of Western literature's earliest, most important autobiographies. *Confessions* broke new ground in various ways, both in its content and in the way in which Rousseau describes his private inner self and most personal feelings to the reader.

In the opening, Rousseau states, "I have resolved on an undertaking that has no model, and which will have no imitator. I desire to set before my fellow-mortals a man in all the truth of nature; and this man shall be myself." His ambition was not just to recount the events of his life, but also reveal the internal workings of his heart and mind. Rousseau felt that his contemporaries failed to see his true character, and by exposing his faults, emotions, and deepest thoughts, he hoped to vindicate himself from numerous controversies and accusations he faced during his lifetime, and explain his actions.

Rousseau also saw *Confessions* as a means of confronting the paradox of his own existence, the tension between his public persona as a leading philosopher and his private life, which was fraught with contradictions, vulnerabilities, and moral lapses. He was determined to be entirely honest, exposing not just his virtues but also his weaknesses, mistakes, and embarrassments. For Rousseau, this act of radical honesty was a kind of moral experiment. He believed that by presenting his life with total transparency, he could achieve some form of personal redemption and moral clarity.

Confessions was a revolutionary work. Most autobiographies of the time focused on public achievements and moral instruction. Writers often presented their lives in a highly curated way, highlighting successes and contributions while downplaying flaws. Rousseau sought to instead lay bare his entire self, including his most shameful and/or awkward experiences. He exposed intimate details of his emotional struggles, romantic entanglements, and moments of personal failure.

This unflinching self-examination was unprecedented. Rousseau gave readers a vivid picture of his psychological development, discussing how his early childhood experiences, relationships, and encounters with society shaped his thoughts and actions. In this sense, *Confessions* was groundbreaking because it emphasized the inner life of the individual, not merely external events. Rousseau's deep focus on emotions, desires, and personal contradictions paved the way for later developments in psychological autobiography and the emphasis on individual subjectivity.

Another way *Confessions* broke new ground was in its style and tone. Rousseau adopted a conversational and intimate voice, directly addressing the reader and often anticipating their judgment. This direct engagement with the audience was novel and helped create a sense of immediacy and authenticity. Rousseau's decision to write in the first person and to explore his life in a non-linear way also marked a departure from traditional autobiographical forms. He blended personal anecdotes with philosophical reflections, making the work not just a recounting of events but a commentary on the human condition. Most Enlightenment thinkers explored abstract questions about society, reason, and human nature, but Rousseau turned the lens inward, examining his own emotions, desires, and failings as a way of understanding broader human experiences. This introspective style would become particularly important during the Romantic movement of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, as writers and artists sought to explore the depths of human emotion and the self.

Moreover, Rousseau's portrayal of himself as an outsider and a misunderstood genius resonated with later generations of writers and thinkers. His depiction of his emotional sensitivity, his mistrust of social institutions, and his desire for authenticity became core themes within Romantic and existential thought.

His early life was marked by personal tragedies and complicated relationships that had a profound influence on his development, shaping both his personality and his philosophical outlook. The death of his mother, his older brother's failure, and his formative experiences with women, particularly as authority figures, played pivotal roles in his evolving understanding of human nature, social relationships, and the self.

Rousseau's mother, Suzanne Bernard, died shortly after his birth in 1712. This loss had a significant psychological impact on Rousseau and colored his perceptions of family, love, and dependency throughout his life. His mother's death created a deep sense of emotional absence, as he never had the opportunity to form a bond with her. This missing maternal connection, combined with the romanticized image he developed of his mother, fueled a lifelong idealization of women.

At the same time, Rousseau's experience of growing up without a mother likely contributed to his feelings of isolation and alienation. Rousseau often felt misunderstood and persecuted, and his childhood sense of abandonment may have contributed. The absence of maternal care also led him to form relationships with surrogate maternal figures in later life, but these relationships were complex.

Rousseau's family life was further destabilized by the early failure of his older brother, François, who left the family when Rousseau was still a young child, reportedly falling into a life of irresponsibility and delinquency. His departure left a significant mark on Rousseau's upbringing, as it placed an additional burden on Rousseau's father, Isaac, and left Rousseau as the sole remaining child.

Also, without a stable sibling relationship, Rousseau felt even more alone and vulnerable, relying on his father and other authority figures for emotional support. This in turn may have contributed to his complex, often fraught relationships with women, particularly those who acted as authority figures.

For example, his experiences with Madame Lambercier, particularly the episodes of punishment and care she provided, left an indelible mark on his emotional, psychological, and sexual development. This relationship, which blended maternal affection with the authority to discipline, shaped Rousseau's understanding of power, submission, gender dynamics, and sexuality. A central episode in Rousseau's relationship with Madame Lambercier was the experience of corporal punishment, which left a profound imprint on his sexual and psychological development. What made this event so significant for Rousseau was his unexpected emotional and physical response to the punishment. He describes feeling a mixture of shame, submission, and, crucially, arousal—an experience that he would later recognize as the awakening of his sexual desires.

This episode marked the beginning of Rousseau's lifelong association between authority, punishment, and sexual pleasure. He speaks openly in *Confessions* about the paradoxical nature of this experience: though he was humiliated by the punishment, he found it strangely pleasurable, leading to an early association between submission and desire. This early experience of eroticized submission formed the basis of what would later be understood as a masochistic tendency, where physical pain or humiliation is linked to sexual arousal.

Perhaps the most formative of Rousseau's adolescent relationships was with Madame de Warens, a wealthy and independent woman who took Rousseau in when he was a teenager. Rousseau was sent to live with her, and she became both a maternal figure and a lover to him. Their relationship was deeply complicated by the imbalance of power, as she provided for Rousseau financially and emotionally, while also engaging in a romantic and sexual relationship with him.

Madame de Warens' influence was profound, shaping his views on love, dependency, and gender dynamics. In many ways, Rousseau was torn between admiration for her independence and discomfort with his own vulnerability. He often felt a sense of guilt and inadequacy due to his reliance on her, feelings that would later shape his views on gender and authority. In his writings, Rousseau emphasized traditional gender roles, arguing that men should be strong and independent, while women should occupy a nurturing and domestic role, ideas that may have emerged as a reaction to his early experience of being dependent on a powerful woman.

Early experiences with women as authority figures left Rousseau with conflicting attitudes. On the one hand, he idealized women as caretakers and moral guides, but on the other, he often struggled with feelings of insecurity and resentment when he felt subordinated to them.

Rousseau's early life experiences, including his mother's death, his brother's failure, and his complicated relationships with women, all had significant impacts on his broader philosophical outlook. These experiences contributed to his convictions about

the fundamental goodness of human nature, which he contrasted with the corrupting influence of society. Rousseau's sense of personal loss and alienation reinforced his idea that individuals are born free and good but are gradually deformed by societal pressures and expectations.

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THE CONFESSIONS OF JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU

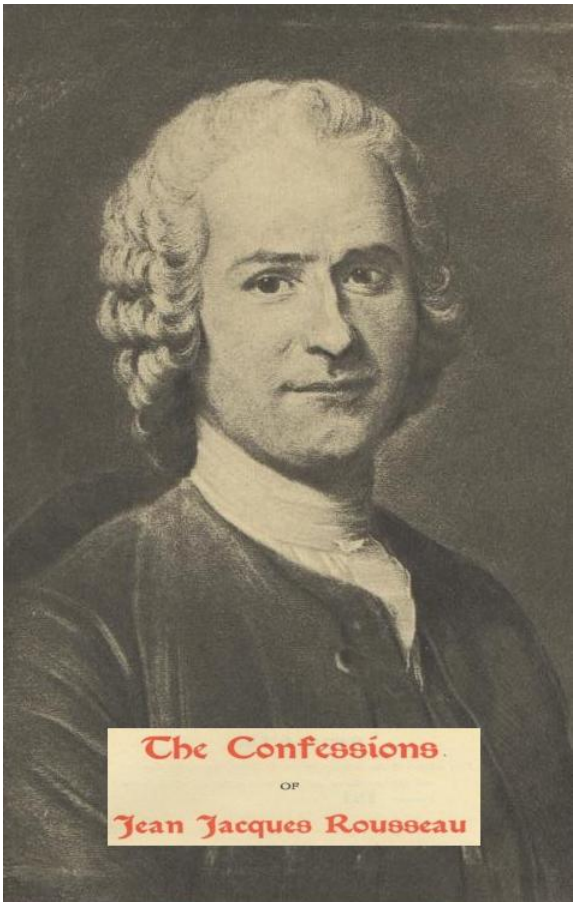
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By Jean Jacques Rousseau

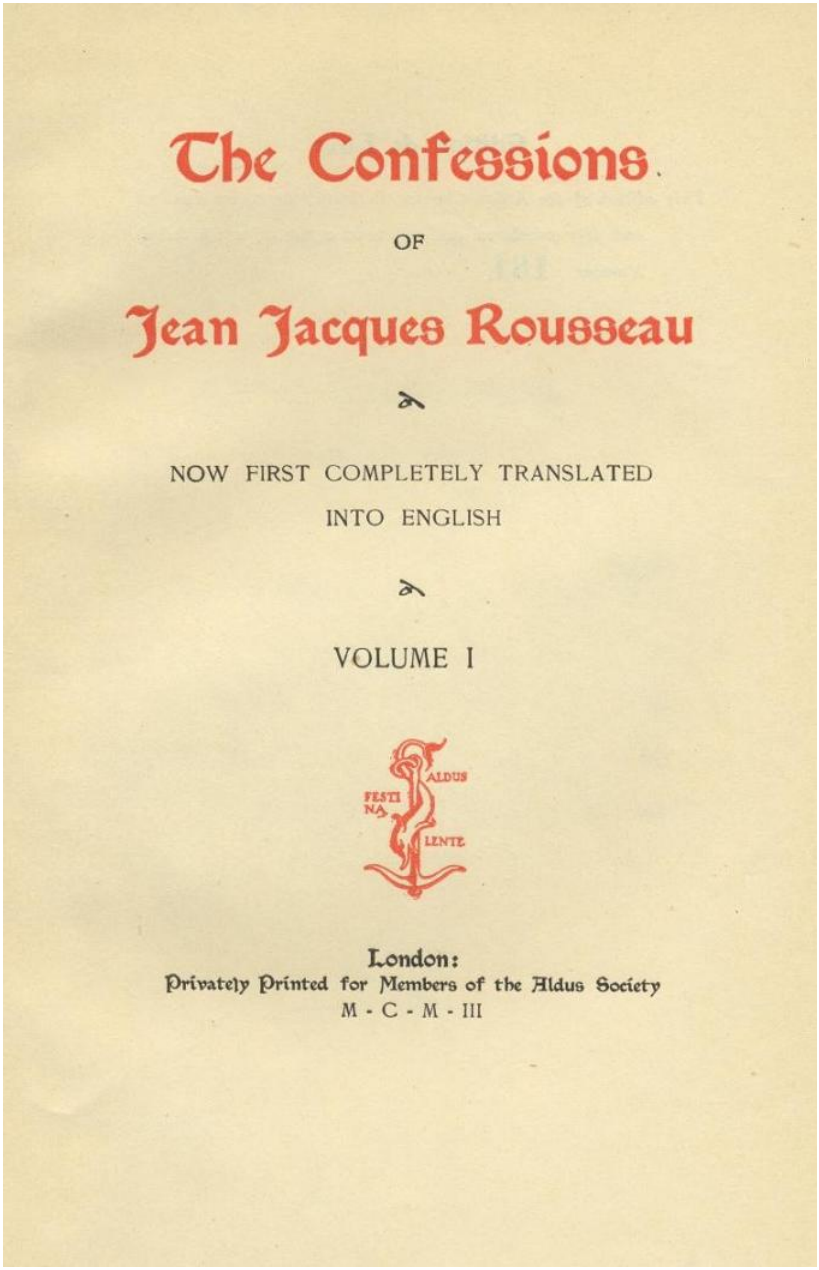
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The Confessions

OF

Jean Jacques Rousseau

NOW FIRST COMPLETELY TRANSLATED
INTO ENGLISH

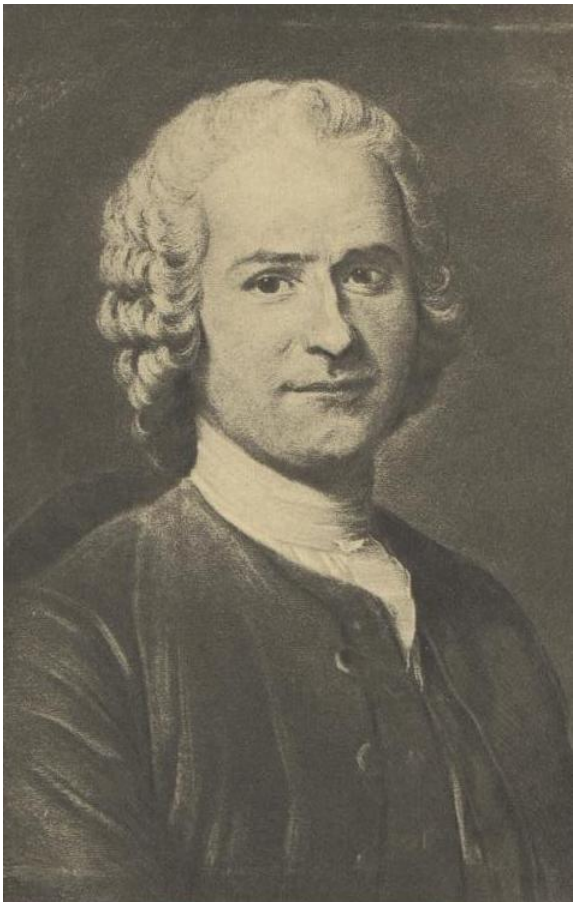
VOLUME I

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BOOK I.

I have entered upon a performance which is without example, whose accomplishment will have no imitator. I mean to present my fellow-mortals with a man in all the integrity of nature; and this man shall be myself.

I know my heart, and have studied mankind; I am not made like any one I have been acquainted with, perhaps like no one in existence; if not better, I at least claim originality, and whether Nature did wisely in breaking the mould with which she formed me, can only be determined after having read this work.

Whenever the last trumpet shall sound, I will present myself before the sovereign judge with this book in my hand, and loudly proclaim, thus have I acted; these were my thoughts; such was I. With equal freedom and veracity have I related what was laudable or wicked, I have concealed no crimes, added no virtues; and if I have sometimes introduced superfluous ornament, it was merely to occupy a void occasioned by defect of memory: I may have supposed that certain, which I only knew to be probable, but have never asserted as truth, a conscious falsehood. Such as I was, I have declared myself; sometimes vile and despicable, at others, virtuous, generous and sublime; even as thou hast read my inmost soul: Power eternal! assemble round thy throne an innumerable throng of my fellow-mortals, let them listen to my confessions, let them blush at my depravity, let them tremble at my sufferings; let each in his turn expose with equal sincerity the failings, the wanderings of his heart, and, if he dare, aver, I was better than that man.

I was born at Geneva, in 1712, son of Isaac Rousseau and Susannah Bernard, citizens. My father's share of a moderate competency, which was divided among fifteen children, being very trivial, his business of a watchmaker (in which he had the reputation of great ingenuity) was his only dependence. My mother's circumstances were more affluent; she was daughter of a Mons. Bernard, minister, and possessed a considerable share of modesty and beauty; indeed, my father found some difficulty in obtaining her hand.

The affection they entertained for each other was almost as early as their existence; at eight or nine years old they walked together every evening on the banks of the Treille, and before they were ten, could not support the idea of separation. A natural sympathy of soul confined those sentiments of predilection which habit at first produced; born with minds susceptible of the most exquisite sensibility and tenderness, it was only necessary to encounter similar dispositions; that moment fortunately presented itself, and each surrendered a willing heart.

The obstacles that opposed served only to give a decree of vivacity to their affection, and the young lover, not being able to obtain his mistress, was overwhelmed with sorrow and despair. She advised him to travel—to forget her. He consented—he travelled, but returned more passionate than ever, and had the happiness to find her equally constant, equally tender. After this proof of mutual affection, what could they resolve?—to dedicate their future lives to love! the resolution was ratified with a vow, on which Heaven shed its benediction.

Fortunately, my mother's brother, Gabriel Bernard, fell in love with one of my father's sisters; she had no objection to the match, but made the marriage of his sister with her brother an indispensable preliminary. Love soon removed every obstacle, and the two weddings were celebrated the same day: thus my uncle became the husband of my aunt, and their children were doubly cousins german. Before a year was expired, both had the happiness to become fathers, but were soon after obliged to submit to a separation.

My uncle Bernard, who was an engineer, went to serve in the empire and Hungary, under Prince Eugene, and distinguished himself both at the siege and battle of Belgrade. My father, after the birth of my only brother, set off, on recommendation, for Constantinople, and was appointed watchmaker to the Seraglio. During his absence, the beauty, wit, and accomplishments of my mother attracted a number of admirers, among whom Mons. de la Closure, Resident of France, was the most assiduous in his attentions.

> [They were too brilliant for her situation, the minister, her father, having bestowed great pains on her education. She was taught drawing, singing, and to play on the theorbo; had learning, and wrote very agreeable verses. The following is an extempore piece which she composed in the absence of her husband and brother, in a conversation with some person relative to them, while walking with her sister-in-law, and their two children:
>
> Ces deux messieurs, qui sont absens,
> Nous sont chers de bien des manieres;
> Ce sont nos amis, nos amans,
> Ce sont nos maris et nos freres,
> Et les peres de ces enfans.
>
> These absent ones, who just claim
> Our hearts, by every tender name,
> To whom each wish extends
> Our husbands and our brothers are,
> The fathers of this blooming pair,
> Our lovers and our friends.]

His passion must have been extremely violent, since after a period of thirty years I have seen him affected at the very mention of her name. My mother had a defence more powerful even than her virtue; she tenderly loved my father, and conjured him to return;

his inclination seconding his request, he gave up every prospect of emolument, and hastened to Geneva.

I was the unfortunate fruit of this return, being born ten months after, in a very weakly and infirm state; my birth cost my mother her life, and was the first of my misfortunes. I am ignorant how my father supported her loss at that time, but I know he was ever after inconsolable. In me he still thought he saw her he so tenderly lamented, but could never forget I had been the innocent cause of his misfortune, nor did he ever embrace me, but his sighs, the convulsive pressure of his arms, witnessed that a bitter regret mingled itself with his caresses, though, as may be supposed, they were not on this account less ardent. When he said to me, “Jean Jacques, let us talk of your mother,” my usual reply was, “Yes, father, but then, you know, we shall cry,” and immediately the tears started from his eyes. “Ah!” exclaimed he, with agitation, “Give me back my wife; at least console me for her loss; fill up, dear boy, the void she has left in my soul. Could I love thee thus wert thou only my son?” Forty years after this loss he expired in the arms of his second wife, but the name of the first still vibrated on his lips, still was her image engraved on his heart.

Such were the authors of my being: of all the gifts it had pleased Heaven to bestow on them, a feeling heart was the only one that descended to me; this had been the source of their felicity, it was the foundation of all my misfortunes.

I came into the world with so few signs of life, that they entertained but little hope of preserving me, with the seeds of a disorder that has gathered strength with years, and from which I am now relieved at intervals, only to suffer a different, though more intolerable evil. I owed my preservation to one of my father’s sisters, an amiable and virtuous girl, who took the most tender care of me; she is yet living, nursing, at the age of four-score, a husband younger than herself, but worn out with excessive drinking. Dear aunt! I freely forgive your having preserved my life, and only lament that it is not in my power to bestow on the decline of your days the tender solicitude and care you lavished on the first dawn of mine. My nurse, Jaqueline, is likewise living: and in good health—the hands that opened my eyes to the light of this world may close them at my death. We suffer before we think; it is the common lot of humanity. I experienced more than my proportion of it. I have no knowledge of what passed prior to my fifth or sixth year; I recollect nothing of learning to read, I only remember what effect the first considerable exercise of it produced on my mind; and from that moment I date an uninterrupted knowledge of myself.

Every night, after supper, we read some part of a small collection of romances which had been my mother’s. My father’s design was only to improve me in reading, and he thought these entertaining works were calculated to give me a fondness for it; but we soon found ourselves so interested in the adventures they contained, that we alternately read whole nights together, and could not bear to give over until at the conclusion of a volume. Sometimes, in a morning, on hearing the swallows at our window, my father, quite ashamed of this weakness, would cry, “Come, come, let us go to bed; I am more a child than thou art.”

I soon acquired, by this dangerous custom, not only an extreme facility in reading and comprehending, but, for my age, a too intimate acquaintance with the passions. An infinity of sensations were familiar to me, without possessing any precise idea of the objects to which they related—I had conceived nothing—I had felt the whole. This confused succession of emotions did not retard the future efforts of my reason, though they added an extravagant, romantic notion of human life, which experience and reflection have never been able to eradicate.

My romance reading concluded with the summer of 1719, the following winter was differently employed. My mother’s library being quite exhausted, we had recourse to that part of her father’s which had devolved to us; here we happily found some valuable books, which was by no means extraordinary, having been selected by a minister that truly deserved that title, in whom learning (which was the rage of the times) was but a secondary commendation, his taste and good sense being most conspicuous. The history of the Church and Empire by Le Sueur, Bossuett’s Discourses on Universal History, Plutarch’s Lives, the history of Venice by Nani, Ovid’s Metamorphoses, La Bruyere, Fontenelle’s World, his Dialogues of the Dead, and a few volumes of Moliere, were soon ranged in my father’s closet, where, during the hours he was employed in his business, I daily read them, with an avidity and taste uncommon, perhaps unprecedented at my age.

Plutarch presently became my greatest favorite. The satisfaction I derived from repeated readings I gave this author, extinguished my passion for romances, and I shortly preferred Agesilaus, Brutus, and Aristides, to Orondates, Artemenes, and Juba. These interesting studies, seconded by the conversations they frequently occasioned with my father, produced that republican spirit and love of liberty, that haughty and invincible turn of mind, which rendered me impatient of restraint or servitude, and became the torment of my life, as I continually found myself in situations incompatible with these sentiments. Incessantly occupied with Rome and Athens, conversing, if I may so express myself with their illustrious heroes; born the citizen of a republic, of a father whose ruling passion was a love of his country, I was fired with these examples; could fancy myself a Greek or Roman, and readily give

into the character of the personage whose life I read; transported by the recital of any extraordinary instance of fortitude or intrepidity, animation flashed from my eyes, and gave my voice additional strength and energy. One day, at table, while relating the fortitude of Scoevola, they were terrified at seeing me start from my seat and hold my hand over a hot chafing—dish, to represent more forcibly the action of that determined Roman.

My brother, who was seven years older than myself, was brought up to my father's profession. The extraordinary affection they lavished on me might be the reason he was too much neglected: this certainly was a fault which cannot be justified. His education and morals suffered by this neglect, and he acquired the habits of a libertine before he arrived at an age to be really one. My father tried what effect placing him with a master would produce, but he still persisted in the same ill conduct. Though I saw him so seldom that it could hardly be said we were acquainted, I loved him tenderly, and believe he had as strong an affection for me as a youth of his dissipated turn of mind could be supposed capable of. One day, I remember, when my father was correcting him severely, I threw myself between them, embracing my brother, whom I covered with my body, receiving the strokes designed for him; I persisted so obstinately in my protection, that either softened by my cries and tears, or fearing to hurt me most, his anger subsided, and he pardoned his fault. In the end, my brother's conduct became so bad that he suddenly disappeared, and we learned some time after that he was in Germany, but he never wrote to us, and from that day we heard no news of him: thus I became an only son.

If this poor lad was neglected, it was quite different with his brother, for the children of a king could not be treated with more attention and tenderness than were bestowed on my infancy, being the darling of the family; and what is rather uncommon, though treated as a beloved, never a spoiled child; was never permitted, while under paternal inspection, to play in the street with other children; never had any occasion to contradict or indulge those fantastical humors which are usually attributed to nature, but are in reality the effects of an injudicious education. I had the faults common to my age, was talkative, a glutton, and sometimes a liar, made no scruple of stealing sweetmeats, fruits, or, indeed, any kind of eatables; but never took delight in mischievous waste, in accusing others, or tormenting harmless animals. I recollect, indeed, that one day, while Madam Clot, a neighbor of ours, was gone to church, I made water in her kettle: the remembrance even now makes me smile, for Madame Clot (though, if you please, a good sort of creature) was one of the most tedious grumbling old women I ever knew. Thus have I given a brief, but faithful, history of my childish transgressions.

How could I become cruel or vicious, when I had before my eyes only examples of mildness, and was surrounded by some of the best people in the world? My father, my aunt, my nurse, my relations, our friends, our neighbors, all I had any connection with, did not obey me, it is true, but loved me tenderly, and I returned their affection. I found so little to excite my desires, and those I had were so seldom contradicted, that I was hardly sensible of possessing any, and can solemnly aver I was an absolute stranger to caprice until after I had experienced the authority of a master.

Those hours that were not employed in reading or writing with my father, or walking with my governess, Jaqueline, I spent with my aunt; and whether seeing her embroider, or hearing her sing, whether sitting or standing by her side, I was ever happy. Her tenderness and unaffected gayety, the charms of her figure and countenance have left such indelible impressions on my mind, that her manner, look, and attitude are still before my eyes; I recollect a thousand little caressing questions; could describe her clothes, her head-dress, nor have the two curls of fine black hair which hung on her temples, according to the mode of that time, escaped my memory.

Though my taste, or rather passion, for music, did not show itself until a considerable time after, I am fully persuaded it is to her I am indebted for it. She knew a great number of songs, which she sung with great sweetness and melody. The serenity and cheerfulness which were conspicuous in this lovely girl, banished melancholy, and made all round her happy.

The charms of her voice had such an effect on me, that not only several of her songs have ever since remained on my memory, but some I have not thought of from my infancy, as I grow old, return upon my mind with a charm altogether inexpressible. Would any one believe that an old dotard like me, worn out with care and infirmity, should sometime surprise himself weeping like a child, and in a voice querulous, and broken by age, muttering out one of those airs which were the favorites of my infancy? There is one song in particular, whose tune I perfectly recollect, but the words that compose the latter half of it constantly refuse every effort to recall them, though I have a confused idea of the rhymes. The beginning, with what I have been able to recollect of the remainder, is as follows:

> Tircis, je n’ose
> Ecouter ton Chalumeau
> Sous l’Ormeau;
> Car on en cause
> Deja dans notre hameau.
> —— —— ———-
> ——— —- un Berger
> s’engager
> sans danger,
> Et toujours l’epine est sons la rose.

I have endeavored to account for the invincible charm my heart feels on the recollection of this fragment, but it is altogether inexplicable. I only know, that before I get to the end of it, I always find my voice interrupted by tenderness, and my eyes suffused with tears. I have a hundred times formed the resolution of writing to Paris for the remainder of these words, if any one should chance to know them: but I am almost certain the pleasure I take in the recollection would be greatly diminished was I assured any one but my poor aunt Susan had sung them.

Such were my affections on entering this life. Thus began to form and demonstrate itself, a heart, at once haughty and tender, a character effeminate, yet invincible; which, fluctuating between weakness and courage, luxury and virtue, has ever set me in contradiction to myself; causing abstinence and enjoyment, pleasure and prudence, equally to shun me.

This course of education was interrupted by an accident, whose consequences influenced the rest of my life. My father had a quarrel with M. G——, who had a captain’s commission in France, and was related to several of the Council. This G——, who was an insolent, ungenerous man, happening to bleed at the nose, in order to be revenged, accused my father of having drawn his sword on him in the city, and in consequence of this charge they were about to conduct him to prison. He insisted (according to the law of this republic) that the accuser should be confined at the same time; and not being able to obtain this, preferred a voluntary banishment for the remainder of his life, to giving up a point by which he must sacrifice his honor and liberty.

I remained under the tuition of my uncle Bernard, who was at that time employed in the fortifications of Geneva. He had lost his eldest daughter, but had a son about my own age, and we were sent together to Bossey, to board with the Minister Lambercier. Here we were to learn Latin, with all the insignificant trash that has obtained the name of education.

Two years spent in this village softened, in some degree, my Roman fierceness, and again reduced me to a state of childhood. At Geneva, where nothing was exacted, I loved reading, which was, indeed, my principal amusement; but, at Bossey, where application was expected, I was fond of play as a relaxation. The country was so new, so charming in my idea, that it seemed impossible to find satiety in its enjoyments, and I conceived a passion for rural life, which time has not been able to extinguish; nor have I ever ceased to regret the pure and tranquil pleasures I enjoyed at this place in my childhood; the remembrance having followed me through every age, even to that in which I am hastening again towards it.

M. Lambercier was a worthy, sensible man, who, without neglecting our instruction, never made our acquisitions burthensome, or tasks tedious. What convinces me of the rectitude of his method is, that notwithstanding my extreme aversion to restraint, the recollection of my studies is never attended with disgust; and, if my improvement was trivial, it was obtained with ease, and has never escaped memory.

The simplicity of this rural life was of infinite advantage in opening my heart to the reception of true friendship. The sentiments I had hitherto formed on this subject were extremely elevated, but altogether imaginary. The habit of living in this peaceful manner soon united me tenderly to my cousin Bernard; my affection was more ardent than that I had felt for my brother, nor has time ever been able to efface it. He was a tall, lank, weakly boy, with a mind as mild as his body was feeble, and who did not wrong the good opinion they were disposed to entertain for the son of my guardian. Our studies, amusements, and tasks, were the same; we were alone; each wanted a playmate; to separate would in some measure, have been to annihilate us. Though we had not many opportunities of demonstrating our attachment to each other, it was certainly extreme; and so far from enduring the thought of separation, we could not even form an idea that we should ever be able to submit to it. Each of a disposition to be won by kindness,

and complaisant, when not soured by contradiction, we agreed in every particular. If, by the favor of those who governed us he had the ascendant while in their presence, I was sure to acquire it when we were alone, and this preserved the equilibrium so necessary in friendship. If he hesitated in repeating his task, I prompted him; when my exercises were finished, I helped to write his; and, in our amusements, my disposition being most active, ever had the lead. In a word, our characters accorded so well, and the friendship that subsisted between us was so cordial, that during the five years we were at Bossey and Geneva we were inseparable: we often fought, it is true, but there never was any occasion to separate us. No one of our quarrels lasted more than a quarter of an hour, and never in our lives did we make any complaint of each other. It may be said, these remarks are frivolous; but, perhaps, a similiar example among children can hardly be produced.

The manner in which I passed my time at Bossey was so agreeable to my disposition, that it only required a longer duration absolutely to have fixed my character, which would have had only peaceable, affectionate, benevolent sentiments for its basis. I believe no individual of our kind ever possessed less natural vanity than myself. At intervals, by an extraordinary effort, I arrived at sublime ideas, but presently sunk again into my original languor. To be loved by every one who knew me was my most ardent wish. I was naturally mild, my cousin was equally so, and those who had the care of us were of similiar dispositions. Everything contributed to strengthen those propensities which nature had implanted in my breast, and during the two years I was neither the victim nor witness of any violent emotions.

I knew nothing so delightful as to see every one content, not only with me, but all that concerned them. When repeating our catechism at church, nothing could give me greater vexation, on being obliged to hesitate, than to see Miss Lambercier's countenance express disapprobation and uneasiness. This alone was more afflicting to me than the shame of faltering before so many witnesses, which, notwithstanding, was sufficiently painful; for though not oversolicitous of praise, I was feelingly alive to shame; yet I can truly affirm, the dread of being reprimanded by Miss Lambercier alarmed me less than the thought of making her uneasy.

Neither she nor her brother were deficient in a reasonable severity, but as this was scarce ever exerted without just cause, I was more afflicted at their disapprobation than the punishment. Certainly the method of treating youth would be altered if the distant effects this indiscriminate, and frequently indiscreet method produces, were more conspicuous. I would willingly excuse myself from a further explanation, did not the lesson this example conveys (which points out an evil as frequent as it is pernicious) forbid my silence.

As Miss Lambercier felt a mother's affection, she sometimes exerted a mother's authority, even to inflicting on us when we deserved it, the punishment of infants. She had often threatened it, and this threat of a treatment entirely new, appeared to me extremely dreadful; but I found the reality much less terrible than the idea, and what is still more unaccountable, this punishment increased my affection for the person who had inflicted it. All this affection, aided by my natural mildness, was scarcely sufficient to prevent my seeking, by fresh offences, a return of the same chastisement; for a degree of sensuality had mingled with the smart and shame, which left more desire than fear of a repetition. I was well convinced the same discipline from her brother would have produced a quite contrary effect; but from a man of his disposition this was not probable, and if I abstained from meriting correction it was merely from a fear of offending Miss Lambercier, for benevolence, aided by the passions, has ever maintained an empire over me which has given law to my heart.

This event, which, though desirable, I had not endeavored to accelerate, arrived without my fault; I should say, without my seeking; and I profited by it with a safe conscience; but this second, was also the last time, for Miss Lambercier, who doubtless had some reason to imagine this chastisement did not produce the desired effect, declared it was too fatiguing, and that she renounced it for the future. Till now we had slept in her chamber, and during the winter, even in her bed; but two days after another room was prepared for us, and from that moment I had the honor (which I could very well have dispensed with) of being treated by her as a great boy.

Who would believe this childish discipline, received at eight years old, from the hands of a woman of thirty, should influence my propensities, my desires, my passions, for the rest of my life, and that in quite a contrary sense from what might naturally have been expected? The very incident that inflamed my senses, gave my desires such an extraordinary turn, that, confined to what I had already experienced, I sought no further, and, with blood boiling with sensuality, almost from my birth, preserved my purity beyond the age when the coldest constitutions lose their insensibility; long tormented, without knowing by what, I gazed on every handsome woman with delight; imagination incessantly brought their charms to my remembrance, only to transform them into so many Miss Lamberciers.

If ever education was perfectly chaste, it was certainly that I received; my three aunts were not only of exemplary prudence, but maintained a degree of modest reserve which women have long since thought unnecessary. My father, it is true, loved pleasure, but his gallantry was rather of the last than the present century, and he never expressed his affection for any woman he regarded in terms a virgin could have blushed at; indeed, it was impossible more attention should be paid to that regard we owe the morals of children than was uniformly observed by every one I had any concern with. An equal degree of reserve in this particular was observed at M. Lambercier's, where a good maid-servant was discharged for having once made use of an expression before us which was thought to contain some degree of indelicacy. I had no precise idea of the ultimate effect of the passions, but the conception I had formed was extremely disgusting; I entertained a particular aversion for courtesans, nor could I look on a rake without a degree of disdain mingled with terror.

These prejudices of education, proper in themselves to retard the first explosions of a combustible constitution, were strengthened, as I have already hinted, by the effect the first moments of sensuality produced in me, for notwithstanding the troublesome ebullition of my blood, I was satisfied with the species of voluptuousness I had already been acquainted with, and sought no further.

Thus I passed the age of puberty, with a constitution extremely ardent, without knowing or even wishing for any other gratification of the passions than what Miss Lambercier had innocently given me an idea of; and when I became a man, that childish taste, instead of vanishing, only associated with the other. This folly, joined to a natural timidity, has always prevented my being very enterprising with women, so that I have passed my days in languishing in silence for those I most admired, without daring to disclose my wishes.

To fall at the feet of an imperious mistress, obey her mandates, or implore pardon, were for me the most exquisite enjoyments, and the more my blood was inflamed by the efforts of a lively imagination the more I acquired the appearance of a whining lover.

It will be readily conceived that this mode of making love is not attended with a rapid progress or imminent danger to the virtue of its object; yet, though I have few favors to boast of, I have not been excluded from enjoyment, however imaginary. Thus the senses, in concurrence with a mind equally timid and romantic, have preserved my moral chaste, and feelings uncorrupted, with precisely the same inclinations, which, seconded with a moderate portion of effrontery, might have plunged me into the most unwarrantable excesses.

I have made the first, most difficult step, in the obscure and painful maze of my Confessions. We never feel so great a degree of repugnance in divulging what is really criminal, as what is merely ridiculous. I am now assured of my resolution, for after what I have dared disclose, nothing can have power to deter me. The difficulty attending these acknowledgments will be readily conceived, when I declare, that during the whole of my life, though frequently laboring under the most violent agitation, being hurried away with the impetuosity of a passion which (when in company with those I loved) deprived me of the faculty of sight and hearing, I could never, in the course of the most unbounded familiarity, acquire sufficient resolution to declare my folly, and implore the only favor that remained to bestow.

In thus investigating the first traces of my sensible existence, I find elements, which, though seemingly incompatible, have united to produce a simple and uniform effect; while others, apparently the same, have, by the concurrence of certain circumstances, formed such different combinations, that it would never be imagined they had any affinity; who would believe, for example, that one of the most vigorous springs of my soul was tempered in the identical source from whence luxury and ease mingled with my constitution and circulated in my veins? Before I quit this subject, I will add a striking instance of the different effects they produced.

One day, while I was studying in a chamber contiguous to the kitchen, the maid set some of Miss Lambercier's combs to dry by the fire, and on coming to fetch them some time after, was surprised to find the teeth of one of them broken off. Who could be suspected of this mischief? No one but myself had entered the room: I was questioned, but denied having any knowledge of it. Mr. and Miss Lambercier consult, exhort, threaten, but all to no purpose; I obstinately persist in the denial; and, though this was the first time I had been detected in a confirmed falsehood, appearances were so strong that they overthrew all my protestations. This affair was thought serious; the mischief, the lie, the obstinacy, were considered equally deserving of punishment, which was not now to be administered by Miss Lambercier. My uncle Bernard was written to; he arrived; and my poor cousin being charged with a crime no less serious, we were conducted to the same execution, which was inflicted with great severity. If finding a remedy in

the evil itself, they had sought ever to allay my depraved desires, they could not have chosen a shorter method to accomplish their designs, and, I can assure my readers, I was for a long time freed from the dominion of them.

As this severity could not draw from me the expected acknowledgment, which obstinacy brought on several repetitions, and reduced me to a deplorable situation, yet I was immovable, and resolutely determined to suffer death rather than submit. Force, at length, was obliged to yield to the diabolical infatuation of a child, for no better name was bestowed on my constancy, and I came out of this dreadful trial, torn, it is true, but triumphant. Fifty years have expired since this adventure—the fear of punishment is no more. Well, then, I aver, in the face of Heaven, I was absolutely innocent: and, so far from breaking, or even touching the comb, never came near the fire. It will be asked, how did this mischief happen? I can form no conception of it, I only know my own innocence.

Let any one figure to himself a character whose leading traits were docility and timidity, but haughty, ardent, and invincible, in its passions; a child, hitherto governed by the voice of reason, treated with mildness, equity, and complaisance, who could not even support the idea of injustice, experiencing, for the first time, so violent an instance of it, inflicted by those he most loved and respected. What perversion of ideas! What confusion in the heart, the brain, in all my little being, intelligent and moral!—let any one, I say, if possible, imagine all this, for I am incapable of giving the least idea of what passed in my mind at that period.

My reason was not sufficiently established to enable me to put myself in the place of others, and judge how much appearances condemned me, I only beheld the rigor of a dreadful chastisement, inflicted for a crime I had not committed; yet I can truly affirm, the smart I suffered, though violent, was inconsiderable compared to what I felt from indignation, rage, and despair. My cousin, who was almost in similar circumstances, having been punished for an involuntary fault as guilty of a premediated crime, became furious by my example. Both in the same bed, we embraced each other with convulsive transport; we were almost suffocated; and when our young hearts found sufficient relief to breathe out our indigination, we sat up in the bed, and with all our force, repeated a hundred times, Carnifex! Carnifex! Carnifex! executioner, tormentor.

Even while I write this I feel my pulse quicken, and should I live a hundred thousand years, the agitation of that moment would still be fresh in my memory. The first instance of violence and oppression is so deeply engraved on my soul, that every relative idea renews my emotion: the sentiment of indignation, which in its origin had reference only to myself, has acquired such strength, and is at present so completely detached from personal motives, that my heart is as much inflamed at the sight or relation of any act of injustice (whatever may be the object, or wheresoever it may be perpetrated) as if I was the immediate sufferer. When I read the history of a merciless tyrant, or the dark and the subtle machination of a knavish designing priest, I could on the instant set off to stab the miscreants, though I was certain to perish in the attempt.

I have frequently fatigued myself by running after and stoning a cock, a cow, a dog, or any animal I saw tormenting another, only because it was conscious of possessing superior strength. This may be natural to me, and I am inclined to believe it is, though the lively impression of the first injustice I became the victim of was too long and too powerfully remembered not to have added considerable force to it.

This occurrence terminated my infantine serenity; from that moment I ceased to enjoy a pure unadulterated happiness, and on a retrospection of the pleasure of my childhood, I yet feel they ended here. We continue at Bossey some months after this event, but were like our first parents in the Garden of Eden after they had lost their innocence; in appearance our situation was the same, in effect it was totally different.

Affection, respect; intimacy, confidence, no longer attached the pupils to their guides; we beheld them no longer as divinities, who could read the secrets of our hearts; we were less ashamed of committing faults, more afraid of being accused of them: we learned to dissemble, to rebel, to lie: all the vices common to our years began to corrupt our happy innocence, mingle with our sports, and embitter our amusements. The country itself, losing those sweet and simple charms which captivate the heart, appeared a gloomy desert, or covered with a veil that concealed its beauties. We cultivated our little gardens no more: our flowers were neglected. We no longer scratched away the mould, and broke out into exclamations of delight, on discovering that the grain we had sown began to shoot. We were disgusted with our situation; our preceptors were weary of us. In a word, my uncle wrote for our return, and we left Mr. and Miss Lambercier without feeling any regret at the separation.

Near thirty years passed away from my leaving Bossey, without once recalling the place to my mind with any degree of satisfaction; but after having passed the prime of life, as I decline into old age (while more recent occurrences are wearing out apace) I feel these remembrances revive and imprint themselves on my heart, with a force and charm that every day acquires fresh

strength; as if, feeling life fleet from me, I endeavored to catch it again by its commencement. The most trifling incident of those happy days delight me, for no other reason than being of those days. I recall every circumstance of time, place, and persons; I see the maid or footman busy in the chamber, a swallow entering the window, a fly settling on my hand while repeating my lessons. I see the whole economy of the apartment; on the right hand Mr. Lambercier's closet, with a print representing all the popes, a barometer, a large almanac, the windows of the house (which stood in a hollow at the bottom of the garden) shaded by raspberry shrubs, whose shoots sometimes found entrance; I am sensible the reader has no occasion to know all this, but I feel a kind of necessity for relating it. Why am I not permitted to recount all the little anecdotes of that thrice happy age, at the recollection of whose joys I ever tremble with delight? Five or six particularly—let us compromise the matter—I will give up five, but then I must have one, and only one, provided I may draw it out to its utmost length, in order to prolong my satisfaction.

If I only sought yours, I should choose that of Miss Lambercier's backside, which by an unlucky fall at the bottom of the meadow, was exposed to the view of the King of Sardinia, who happened to be passing by; but that of the walnut tree on the terrace is more amusing to me, since here I was an actor, whereas, in the abovementioned scene I was only a spectator; and I must confess I see nothing that should occasion risibility in an accident, which, however laughable in itself, alarmed me for a person I loved as a mother, or perhaps something more.

Ye curious readers, whose expectations are already on the stretch for the noble history of the terrace, listen to the tragedy, and abstain from trembling, if you can, at the horrible catastrophe!

At the outside of the courtyard door, on the left hand, was a terrace; here they often sat after dinner; but it was subject to one inconvenience, being too much exposed to the rays of the sun; to obviate this defect, Mr. Lambercier had a walnut tree set there, the planting of which was attended with great solemnity. The two boarders were godfathers, and while the earth was replacing round the root, each held the tree with one hand, singing songs of triumph. In order to water it with more effect, they formed a kind of luson around its foot: myself and cousin, who were every day ardent spectators of this watering, confirmed each other in the very natural idea that it was nobler to plant trees on the terrace than colors on a breach, and this glory we were resolved to procure without dividing it with any one.

In pursuance of this resolution, we cut a slip off a willow, and planted it on the terrace, at about eight or ten feet distance from the august walnut tree. We did not forget to make a hollow round it, but the difficulty was how to procure a supply of water, which was brought from a considerable distance, and we not permitted to fetch it: but water was absolutely necessary for our willow, and we made use of every stratagem to obtain it.

For a few days everything succeeded so well that it began to bud, and throw out small leaves, which we hourly measured convinced (tho' now scarce a foot from the ground) it would soon afford us a refreshing shade. This unfortunate willow, by engrossing our whole time, rendered us incapable of application to any other study, and the cause of our inattention not being known, we were kept closer than before. The fatal moment approached when water must fail, and we were already afflicted with the idea that our tree must perish with drought. At length necessity, the parent of industry, suggested an invention, by which we might save our tree from death, and ourselves from despair; it was to make a furrow underground, which would privately conduct a part of the water from the walnut tree to our willow. This undertaking was executed with ardor, but did not immediately succeed—our descent was not skilfully planned—the water did not run, the earth falling in and stopping up the furrow; yet, though all went contrary, nothing discouraged us, 'omnia vincit labor improbus'. We made the bason deeper, to give the water a more sensible descent; we cut the bottom of a box into narrow planks; increased the channel from the walnut tree to our willow and laying a row flat at the bottom, set two others inclining towards each other, so as to form a triangular channel; we formed a kind of grating with small sticks at the end next the walnut tree, to prevent the earth and stones from stopping it up, and having carefully covered our work with well-trodden earth, in a transport of hope and fear attended the hour of watering. After an interval, which seemed an age of expectation, this hour arrived. Mr. Lambercier, as usual, assisted at the operation; we contrived to get between him and our tree, towards which he fortunately turned his back. They no sooner began to pour the first pail of water, than we perceived it running to the willow; this sight was too much for our prudence, and we involuntarily expressed our transport by a shout of joy. The sudden exclamation made Mr. Lambercier turn about, though at that instant he was delighted to observe how greedily the earth, which surrounded the root of his walnut tree, imbibed the water. Surprised at seeing two trenches partake of it, he shouted in his turn, examines, perceives the roguery, and, sending instantly for a pick axe, at one fatal blow makes two or three of our planks fly, crying out meantime with all his strength, an aqueduct! an aqueduct! His strokes redoubled, every one of which made an impression on our hearts; in a moment the planks, the channel, the bason, even our favorite willow, all were ploughed up, nor was one word pronounced during this

terrible transaction, except the above mentioned exclamation. An aqueduct! repeated he, while destroying all our hopes, an aqueduct! an aqueduct!

It maybe supposed this adventure had a still more melancholy end for the young architects; this, however, was not the case; the affair ended here. Mr. Lambercier never reproached us on this account, nor was his countenance clouded with a frown; we even heard him mention the circumstance to his sister with loud bursts of laughter. The laugh of Mr. Lambercier might be heard to a considerable distance. But what is still more surprising after the first transport of sorrow had subsided, we did not find ourselves violently afflicted; we planted a tree in another spot, and frequently recollected the catastrophe of the former, repeating with a significant emphasis, an aqueduct! an aqueduct! Till then, at intervals, I had fits of ambition, and could fancy myself Brutus or Aristides, but this was the first visible effect of my vanity. To have constructed an aqueduct with our own hands, to have set a slip of willow in competition with a flourishing tree, appeared to me a supreme degree of glory! I had a juster conception of it at ten than Caesar entertained at thirty.

The idea of this walnut tree, with the little anecdotes it gave rise to, have so well continued, or returned to my memory, that the design which conveyed the most pleasing sensations, during my journey to Geneva, in the year 1754, was visiting Bossey, and reviewing the monuments of my infantine amusement, above all, the beloved walnut tree, whose age at that time must have been verging on a third of a century, but I was so beset with company that I could not find a moment to accomplish my design. There is little appearance now of the occasion being renewed; but should I ever return to that charming spot, and find my favorite walnut tree still existing, I am convinced I should water it with my tears.

On my return to Geneva, I passed two or three years at my uncle's, expecting the determination of my friends respecting my future establishment. His own son being devoted to genius, was taught drawing, and instructed by his father in the elements of Euclid; I partook of these instructions, but was principally fond of drawing. Meantime, they were irresolute, whether to make me a watchmaker, a lawyer, or a minister. I should have preferred being a minister, as I thought it must be a charming thing to preach, but the trifling income which had been my mother's, and was to be divided between my brother and myself, was too inconsiderable to defray the expense attending the prosecution of my studies. As my age did not render the choice very pressing, I remained with my uncle, passing my time with very little improvement, and paying pretty dear, though not unreasonably, for my board.

My uncle, like my father, was a man of pleasure, but had not learned, like him, to abridge his amusements for the sake of instructing his family, consequently our education was neglected. My aunt was a devotee, who loved singing psalms better than thinking of our improvement, so that we were left entirely to ourselves, which liberty we never abused.

Ever inseparable, we were all the world to each other; and, feeling no inclination to frequent the company of a number of disorderly lads of our own age, we learned none of those habits of libertinism to which our idle life exposed us. Perhaps I am wrong in charging myself and cousin with idleness at this time, for, in our lives, we were never less so; and what was extremely fortunate, so incessantly occupied with our amusements, that we found no temptation to spend any part of our time in the streets. We made cages, pipes, kites, drums, houses, ships, and bows; spoiled the tools of my good old grandfather by endeavoring to make watches in imitation of him; but our favorite amusement was wasting paper, in drawing, washing, coloring, etc. There came an Italian mountebank to Geneva, called Gamber-Corta, who had an exhibition of puppets, that he made play a kind of comedy. We went once to see them, but could not spare time to go again, being busily employed in making puppets of our own and inventing comedies, which we immediately set about making them perform, mimicking to the best of our abilities the uncouth voice of Punch; and, to complete the business, my good aunt and uncle Bernard had the patience to see and listen to our imitations; but my uncle, having one day read an elaborate discourse to his family, we instantly gave up our comedies, and began composing sermons.

These details, I confess, are not very amusing, but they serve to demonstrate that the former part of our education was well directed, since being, at such an early age, the absolute masters of our time, we found no inclination to abuse it; and so little in want of other companions, that we constantly neglected every occasion of seeking them. When taking our walks together, we observed their diversions without feeling any inclination to partake of them. Friendship so entirely occupied our hearts, that, pleased with each other's company the simplest pastimes were sufficient to delight us.

We were soon remarked for being thus inseparable: and what rendered us more conspicuous, my cousin was very tall, myself extremely short, so that we exhibited a very whimsical contrast. This meagre figure, small, sallow countenance, heavy air, and supine gait, excited the ridicule of the children, who, in the gibberish of the country, nicknamed him 'Barna Bredanna'; and we no sooner got out of doors than our ears were assailed with a repetition of "Barna Bredanna." He bore this indignity with tolerable

patience, but I was instantly for fighting. This was what the young rogues aimed at. I engaged accordingly, and was beat. My poor cousin did all in his power to assist me, but he was weak, and a single stroke brought him to the ground. I then became furious, and received several smart blows, some of which were aimed at ‘Barna Bredanna’. This quarrel so far increased the evil, that, to avoid their insults, we could only show ourselves in the streets while they were employed at school.

I had already become a redresser of grievances; there only wanted a lady in the way to be a knight-errant in form. This defect was soon supplied; I presently had two. I frequently went to see my father at Nion, a small city in the Vaudois country, where he was now settled. Being universally respected, the affection entertained for him extended to me: and, during my visits, the question seemed to be, who should show me most kindness. A Madame de Vulson, in particular, loaded me with caresses; and, to complete all, her daughter made me her gallant. I need not explain what kind of gallant a boy of eleven must be to a girl of two and twenty; the artful hussies know how to set these puppets up in front, to conceal more serious engagements. On my part I saw no inequality between myself and Miss Vulson, was flattered by the circumstance, and went into it with my whole heart, or rather my whole head, for this passion certainly reached no further, though it transported me almost to madness, and frequently produced scenes sufficient to make even a cynic expire with laughter.

I have experienced two kinds of love, equally real, which have scarce any affinity, yet each differing materially from tender friendship. My whole life has been divided between these affections, and I have frequently felt the power of both at the same instant. For example, at the very time I so publically and tyrannically claimed Miss Vulson, that I could not suffer any other of my sex to approach her, I had short, but passionate, assignations with a Miss Goton, who thought proper to act the schoolmistress with me. Our meetings, though absolutely childish, afforded me the height of happiness. I felt the whole charm of mystery, and repaid Miss Vulson in kind, when she least expected it, the use she made of me in concealing her amours. To my great mortification, this secret was soon discovered, and I presently lost my young schoolmistress.

Miss Goton was, in fact, a singular personage. She was not handsome, yet there was a certain something in her figure which could not easily be forgotten, and this for an old fool, I am too often convinced of. Her eyes, in particular, neither corresponded with her age, her height, nor her manner; she had a lofty imposing air, which agreed extremely well with the character she assumed, but the most extraordinary part of her composition was a mixture of forwardness and reserve difficult to be conceived; and while she took the greatest liberties with me, would never permit any to be taken with her in return, treating me precisely like a child. This makes me suppose she had either ceased herself to be one, or was yet sufficiently so to behold as play the danger to which this folly exposed her.

I was so absolutely in the power of both these mistresses, that when in the presence of either, I never thought of her who was absent; in other respects, the effects they produced on me bore no affinity. I could have passed my whole life with Miss Vulson, without forming a wish to quit her; but then, my satisfaction was attended with a pleasing serenity; and, in numerous companies, I was particularly charmed with her. The sprightly sallies of her wit, the arch glance of her eye, even jealousy itself, strengthened my attachment, and I triumphed in the preference she seemed to bestow on me, while addressed by more powerful rivals; applause, encouragement, and smiles, gave animation to my happiness. Surrounded by a throng of observers, I felt the whole force of love—I was passionate, transported; in a tete-a-tete, I should have been constrained, thoughtful, perhaps unhappy. If Miss Vulson was ill, I suffered with her; would willingly have given up my own health to establish hers (and, observe I knew the want of it from experience); if absent, she employed my thoughts, I felt the want of her; when present, her caresses came with warmth and rapture to my heart, though my senses were unaffected. The familiarities she bestowed on me I could not have supported the idea of her granting to another; I loved her with a brother’s affection only, but experienced all the jealousy of a lover.

With Miss Goton this passion might have acquired a degree of fury; I should have been a Turk, a tiger, had I once imagined she bestowed her favors on any but myself. The pleasure I felt on approaching Miss Vulson was sufficiently ardent, though unattended with uneasy sensations; but at sight of Miss Goton, I felt myself bewildered—every sense was absorbed in ecstasy. I believe it would have been impossible to have remained long with her; I must have been suffocated with the violence of my palpitations. I equally dreaded giving either of them displeasure; with one I was more complaisant; with the other, more submissive. I would not have offended Miss Vulson for the world; but if Miss Goton had commanded me to throw myself into the flames, I think I should have instantly obeyed her. Happily, both for her and myself, our amours; or rather rendezvous, were not of long duration: and though my connection with Miss Vulson was less dangerous, after a continuance of some greater length, that likewise had its catastrophe; indeed the termination of a love affair is good for nothing, unless it partakes of the romantic, and can furnish out at least an exclamation.

Though my correspondence with Miss Vulson was less animated, it was perhaps more endearing; we never separated without tears, and it can hardly be conceived what a void I felt in my heart. I could neither think nor speak of anything but her. These romantic sorrows were not affected, though I am inclined to believe they did not absolutely centre in her, for I am persuaded (though I did not perceive it at that time) being deprived of amusement bore a considerable share in them.

To soften the rigor of absence, we agreed to correspond with each other, and the pathetic expressions these letters contained were sufficient to have split a rock. In a word, I had the honor of her not being able to endure the pain of separation. She came to see me at Geneva.

My head was now completely turned; and during the two days she remained here, I was intoxicated with delight. At her departure, I would have thrown myself into the water after her, and absolutely rent the air with my cries. The week following she sent me sweetmeats, gloves, etc. This certainly would have appeared extremely gallant, had I not been informed of her marriage at the same instant, and that the journey I had thought proper to give myself the honor of, was only to buy her wedding suit.

My indignation may easily be conceived; I shall not attempt to describe it. In this heroic fury, I swore never more to see the perfidious girl, supposing it the greatest punishment that could be inflicted on her. This, however, did not occasion her death, for twenty years after, while on a visit to my father, being on the lake, I asked who those ladies were in a boat not far from ours. “What!” said my father smiling, “does not your heart inform you? It is your former flame, it is Madame Christin, or, if you please, Miss Vulson.” I started at the almost forgotten name, and instantly ordered the waterman to turn off, not judging it worth while to be perjured, however favorable the opportunity for revenge, in renewing a dispute of twenty years past, with a woman of forty.

Thus, before my future destination was determined, did I fool away the most precious moments of my youth. After deliberating a long time on the bent of my natural inclination, they resolved to dispose of me in a manner the most repugnant to them. I was sent to Mr. Masseron, the City Register, to learn (according to the expression of my uncle Bernard) the thriving occupation of a scraper. This nickname was inconceivably displeasing to me, and I promised myself but little satisfaction in the prospect of heaping up money by a mean employment. The assiduity and subjection required, completed my disgust, and I never set foot in the office without feeling a kind of horror, which every day gained fresh strength.

Mr. Masseron, who was not better pleased with my abilities than I was with the employment, treated me with disdain, incessantly upbraiding me with being a fool and blockhead, not forgetting to repeat, that my uncle had assured him I was a knowing one, though he could not find that I knew anything. That he had promised to furnish him with a sprightly boy, but had, in truth, sent him an ass. To conclude, I was turned out of the registry, with the additional ignominy of being pronounced a fool by all Mr. Masseron’s clerks, and fit only to handle a file.

My vocation thus determined, I was bound apprentice; not, however, to a watchmaker, but to an engraver, and I had been so completely humiliated by the contempt of the register, that I submitted without a murmur. My master, whose name was M. Ducommon, was a young man of a very violent and boorish character, who contrived in a short time to tarnish all the amiable qualities of my childhood, to stupefy a disposition naturally sprightly, and reduce my feelings, as well as my condition, to an absolute state of servitude. I forgot my Latin, history, and antiquities; I could hardly recollect whether such people as Romans ever existed. When I visited my father, he no longer beheld his idol, nor could the ladies recognize the gallant Jean Jacques; nay, I was so well convinced that Mr. and Miss Lambercier would scarce receive me as their pupil, that I endeavored to avoid their company, and from that time have never seen them. The vilest inclinations, the basest actions, succeeded my amiable amusements and even obliterated the very remembrance of them. I must have had, in spite of my good education, a great propensity to degenerate, else the declension could not have followed with such ease and rapidity, for never did so promising a Caesar so quickly become a Laradon.

The art itself did not displease me. I had a lively taste for drawing. There was nothing displeasing in the exercise of the graver; and as it required no very extraordinary abilities to attain perfection as a watchcase engraver, I hoped to arrive at it. Perhaps I should have accomplished my design, if unreasonable restraint, added to the brutality of my master, had not rendered my business disgusting. I wasted his time, and employed myself in engraving medals, which served me and my companions as a kind of insignia for a new invented order of chivalry, and though this differed very little from my usual employ, I considered it as a relaxation. Unfortunately, my master caught me at this contraband labor, and a severe beating was the consequence. He reproached me at the same time with attempting to make counterfeit money because our medals bore the arms of the Republic, though, I can

truly aver, I had no conception of false money, and very little of the true, knowing better how to make a Roman As than one of our threepenny pieces.

My master's tyranny rendered insupportable that labor I should otherwise have loved, and drove me to vices I naturally despised, such as falsehood, idleness, and theft. Nothing ever gave me a clearer demonstration of the difference between filial dependence and abject slavery, than the remembrance of the change produced in me at that period. Hitherto I had enjoyed a reasonable liberty; this I had suddenly lost. I was enterprising at my father's, free at Mr. Lambercier's, discreet at my uncle's; but, with my master, I became fearful, and from that moment my mind was vitiated. Accustomed to live on terms of perfect equality, to be witness of no pleasures I could not command, to see no dish I was not to partake of, or be sensible of a desire I might not express; to be able to bring every wish of my heart to my lips—what a transition!—at my master's I was scarce allowed to speak, was forced to quit the table without tasting what I most longed for, and the room when I had nothing particular to do there; was incessantly confined to my work, while the liberty my master and his journeymen enjoyed, served only to increase the weight of my subjection. When disputes happened to arise, though conscious that I understood the subject better than any of them, I dared not offer my opinion; in a word, everything I saw became an object of desire, for no other reason than because I was not permitted to enjoy anything. Farewell gayety, ease, those happy turns of expressions, which formerly even made my faults escape correction. I recollect, with pleasure, a circumstance that happened at my father's, which even now makes me smile. Being for some fault ordered to bed without my supper, as I was passing through the kitchen, with my poor morsel of bread in my hand, I saw the meat turning on the spit; my father and the rest were round the fire; I must bow to every one as I passed. When I had gone through this ceremony, leering with a wistful eye at the roast meat, which looked so inviting, and smelt so savory, I could not abstain from making that a bow likewise, adding in a pitiful tone, good bye, roast meal! This unpremeditated pleasantry put them in such good humor, that I was permitted to stay, and partake of it. Perhaps the same thing might have produced a similar effect at my master's, but such a thought could never have occurred to me, or, if it had, I should not have had courage to express it.

Thus I learned to covet, dissemble, lie, and, at length, to steal, a propensity I never felt the least idea of before, though since that time I have never been able entirely to divest myself of it. Desire and inability united naturally led to this vice, which is the reason pilfering is so common among footmen and apprentices, though the latter, as they grow up, and find themselves in a situation where everything is at their command, lose this shameful propensity. As I never experienced the advantage, I never enjoyed the benefit.

Good sentiments, ill-directed, frequently lead children into vice. Notwithstanding my continual wants and temptations, it was more than a year before I could resolve to take even eatables. My first theft was occasioned by complaisance, but it was productive of others which had not so plausible an excuse.

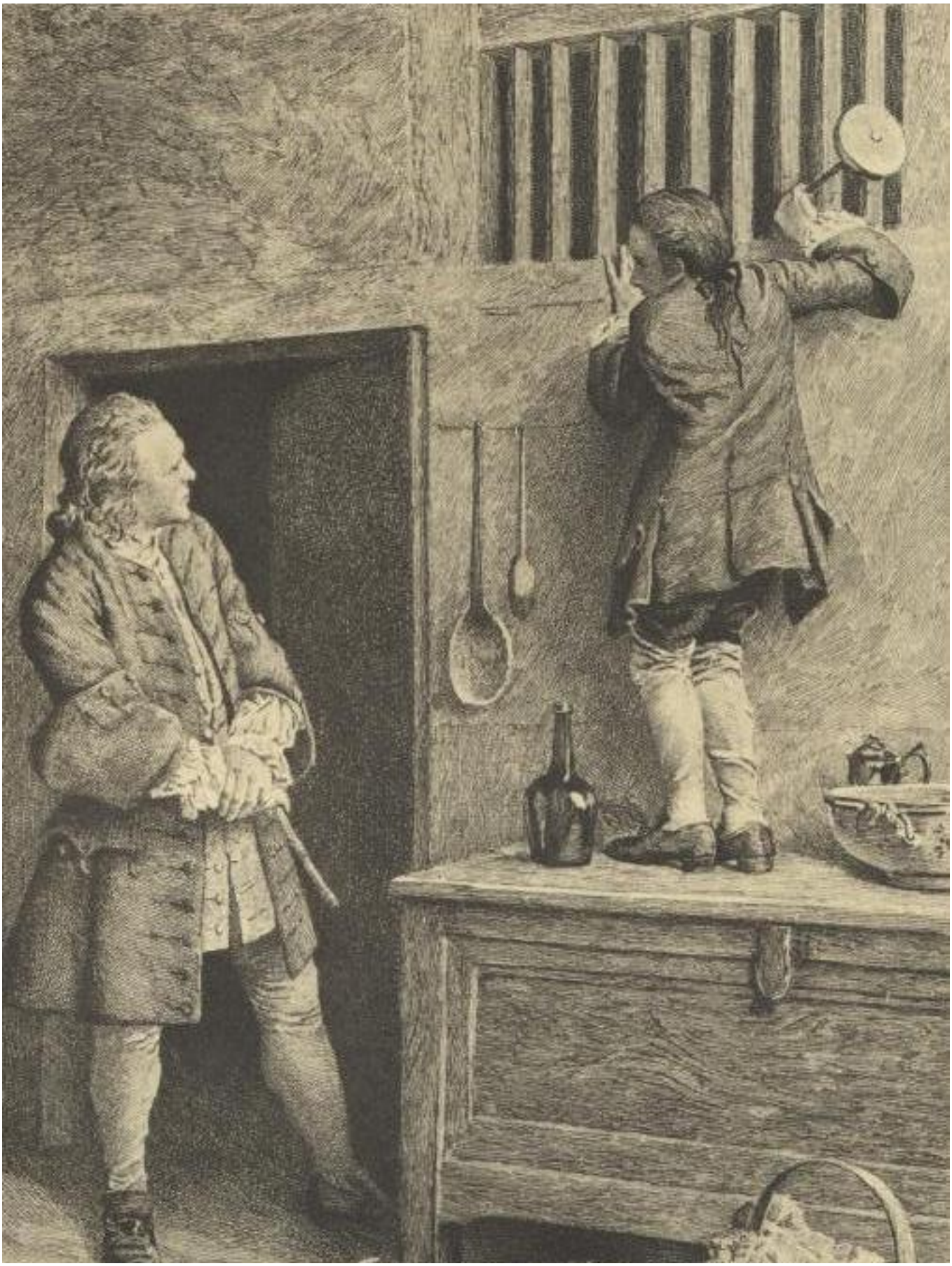
My master had a journeyman named Verrat, whose mother lived in the neighborhood, and had a garden at a considerable distance from the house, which produced excellent asparagus. This Verrat, who had no great plenty of money, took it in his head to rob her of the most early production of her garden, and by the sale of it procure those indulgences he could not otherwise afford himself; but not being very nimble, he did not care to run the hazard of a surprise. After some preliminary flattery, which I did not comprehend the meaning of, he proposed this expedition to me, as an idea which had that moment struck him. At first I would not listen to the proposal; but he persisted in his solicitation, and as I could never resist the attacks of flattery, at length prevailed. In pursuance of this virtuous resolution, I every morning repaired to the garden, gathered the best of the asparagus, and took it to the Holard where some good old women, who guessed how I came by it, wishing to diminish the price, made no secret of their suspicions; this produced the desired effect, for, being alarmed, I took whatever they offered, which being taken to Mr. Verrat, was presently metamorphosed into a breakfast, and divided with a companion of his; for, though I procured it, I never partook of their good cheer, being fully satisfied with an inconsiderable bribe.

I executed my roguery with the greatest fidelity, seeking only to please my employer; and several days passed before it came into my head, to rob the robber, and tithe Mr. Verrat's harvest. I never considered the hazard I run in these expeditions, not only of a torrent of abuse, but what I should have been still more sensible of, a hearty beating; for the miscreant, who received the whole benefit, would certainly have denied all knowledge of the fact, and I should only have received a double portion of punishment for daring to accuse him, since being only an apprentice, I stood no chance of being believed in opposition to a journeyman. Thus, in every situation, powerful rogues know how to save themselves at the expense of the feeble.

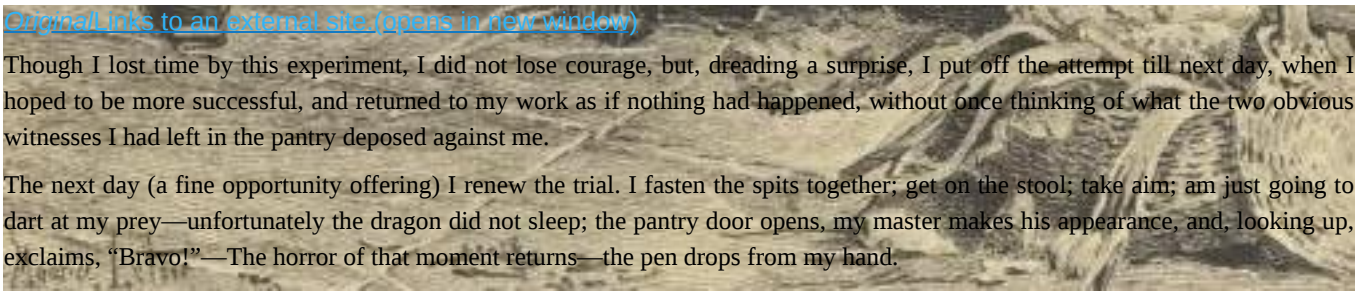
This practice taught me it was not so terrible to thieve as I had imagined: I took care to make this discovery turn to some account, helping myself to everything within my reach, that I conceived an inclination for. I was not absolutely ill-fed at my master's, and

temperance was only painful to me by comparing it with the luxury he enjoyed. The custom of sending young people from table precisely when those things are served up which seem most tempting, is calculated to increase their longing, and induces them to steal what they conceive to be so delicious. It may be supposed I was not backward in this particular: in general my knavery succeeded pretty well, though quite the reverse when I happened to be detected.

I recollect an attempt to procure some apples, which was attended with circumstances that make me smile and shudder even at this instant. The fruit was standing in the pantry, which by a lattice at a considerable height received light from the kitchen. One day, being alone in the house, I climbed up to see these precious apples, which being out of my reach, made this pantry appear the garden of Hesperides. I fetched the spit—tried if it would reach them—it was too short—I lengthened it with a small one which was used for game,—my master being very fond of hunting, darted at them several times without success; at length was more fortunate; being transported to find I was bringing up an apple, I drew it gently to the lattice—was going to seize it when (who can express my grief and astonishment!) I found it would not pass through—it was too large. I tried every expedient to accomplish my design, sought supporters to keep the spits in the same position, a knife to divide the apple, and a lath to hold it with; at length, I so far succeeded as to effect the division, and made no doubt of drawing the pieces through; but it was scarcely separated, (compassionate reader, sympathize with my affliction) when both pieces fell into the pantry.



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Though I lost time by this experiment, I did not lose courage, but, dreading a surprise, I put off the attempt till next day, when I hoped to be more successful, and returned to my work as if nothing had happened, without once thinking of what the two obvious witnesses I had left in the pantry deposed against me.

The next day (a fine opportunity offering) I renew the trial. I fasten the spits together; get on the stool; take aim; am just going to dart at my prey—unfortunately the dragon did not sleep; the pantry door opens, my master makes his appearance, and, looking up, exclaims, “Bravo!”—The horror of that moment returns—the pen drops from my hand.

A continual repetition of ill treatment rendered me callous; it seemed a kind of composition for my crimes, which authorized me to continue them, and, instead of looking back at the punishment, I looked forward to revenge. Being beat like a slave, I judged I had a right to all the vices of one. I was convinced that to rob and be punished were inseparable, and constituted, if I may so express myself, a kind of traffic, in which, if I perform my part of the bargain, my master would take care not to be deficient in his; that preliminary settled, I applied myself to thieving with great tranquility, and whenever this interrogatory occurred to my mind, “What will be the consequence?” the reply was ready, “I know the worst, I shall be beat; no matter, I was made for it.”

I love good eating; am sensual, but not greedy; I have such a variety of inclinations to gratify, that this can never predominate; and unless my heart is unoccupied, which very rarely happens, I pay but little attention to my appetite; to purloining eatables, but extended this propensity to everything I wished to possess, and if I did not become a robber in form, it was only because money never tempted me.

My master had a closet in the workshop, which he kept locked; this I contrived to open and shut as often as I pleased, and laid his best tools, fine drawings, impressions, in a word, everything he wished to keep from me, under contribution.

These thefts were so far innocent, that they were always employed in his service, but I was transported at having the trifles in my possession, and imagined I stole the art with its productions. Besides what I have mentioned, his boxes contained threads of gold and silver, a number of small jewels, valuable medals, and money; yet, though I seldom had five sous in my pocket, I do not recollect ever having cast a wishful look at them; on the contrary, I beheld these valuables rather with terror than with delight.

I am convinced the dread of taking money was, in a great measure, the effect of education. There was mingled with the idea of it the fear of infamy, a prison, punishment, and death: had I even felt the temptation, these objects would have made me tremble; whereas my failings appeared a species of waggery, and, in truth, they were little else; they could but occasion a good trimming, and this I was already prepared for. A sheet of fine drawing paper was a greater temptation than money sufficient to have purchased a ream. This unreasonable caprice is connected with one of the most striking singularities of my character, and has so far influenced my conduct, that it requires a particular explanation.

My passions are extremely violent; while under their influence, nothing can equal my impetuosity; I am an absolute stranger to discretion, respect, fear, or decorum; rude, saucy, violent, and intrepid: no shame can stop, no danger intimidate me. My mind is frequently so engrossed by a single object, that beyond it the whole world is not worth a thought; this is the enthusiasm of a moment, the next, perhaps, I am plunged in a state of annihilation. Take me in my moments of tranquility, I am indolence and timidity itself; a word to speak, the least trifle to perform, appear an intolerable labor; everything alarms and terrifies me; the very buzzing of a fly will make me shudder; I am so subdued by fear and shame, that I would gladly shield myself from mortal view.

When obliged to exert myself, I am ignorant what to do! when forced to speak, I am at a loss for words; and if any one looks at me, I am instantly out of countenance. If animated with my subject, I express my thoughts with ease, but, in ordinary conversations, I can say nothing—absolutely nothing; and, being obliged to speak, renders them insupportable.

I may add, that none of my predominant inclinations centre in those pleasures which are to be purchased: money empoisons my delight; I must have them unadulterated; I love those of the table, for instance, but cannot endure the restraints of good company, or the intemperance of taverns; I can enjoy them only with a friend, for alone it is equally impossible; my imagination is then so occupied with other things, that I find no pleasure in eating. Women who are to be purchased have no charms for me; my beating heart cannot be satisfied without affection; it is the same with every other enjoyment, if not truly disinterested, they are absolutely insipid; in a word, I am fond of those things which are only estimable to minds formed for the peculiar enjoyment of them.

I never thought money so desirable as it is usually imagined; if you would enjoy you must transform it; and this transformation is frequently attended with inconvenience; you must bargain, purchase, pay dear, be badly served, and often duped. I buy an egg, am

assured it is new-laid—I find it stale; fruit in its utmost perfection—'tis absolutely green. I love good wine, but where shall I get it? Not at my wine merchant's—he will poison me to a certainty. I wish to be universally respected; how shall I compass my design? I must make friends, send messages, write letters, come, go, wait, and be frequently deceived. Money is the perpetual source of uneasiness; I fear it more than I love good wine.

A thousand times, both during and since my apprenticeship, have I gone out to purchase some nicety, I approach the pastry-cook's, perceive some women at the counter, and imagine they are laughing at me. I pass a fruit shop, see some fine pears, their appearance tempts me; but then two or three young people are near, or a man I am acquainted with is standing at the door; I take all that pass for persons I have some knowledge of, and my near sight contributes to deceive me. I am everywhere intimidated, restrained by some obstacle, and with money in my pocket return as I went, for want of resolution to purchase what I long for.

I should enter into the most insipid details was I to relate the trouble, shame, repugnance, and inconvenience of all kinds which I have experienced in parting with my money, whether in my own person, or by the agency of others; as I proceed, the reader will get acquainted with my disposition, and perceive all this without my troubling him with the recital.

This once comprehended, one of my apparent contradictions will be easily accounted for, and the most sordid avarice reconciled with the greatest contempt of money. It is a movable which I consider of so little value, that, when destitute of it, I never wish to acquire any; and when I have a sum I keep it by me, for want of knowing how to dispose of it to my satisfaction; but let an agreeable and convenient opportunity present itself, and I empty my purse with the utmost freedom; not that I would have the reader imagine I am extravagant from a motive of ostentation, quite the reverse; it was ever in subservience to my pleasures, and, instead of glorying in expense, I endeavor to conceal it. I so well perceive that money is not made to answer my purposes, that I am almost ashamed to have any, and, still more, to make use of it.

Had I ever possessed a moderate independence, I am convinced I should have had no propensity to become avaricious. I should have required no more, and cheerfully lived up to my income; but my precarious situation has constantly and necessarily kept me in fear. I love liberty, and I loathe constraint, dependence, and all their kindred annoyances. As long as my purse contains money it secures my independence, and exempts me from the trouble of seeking other money, a trouble of which I have always had a perfect horror; and the dread of seeing the end of my independence, makes me proportionately unwilling to part with my money. The money that we possess is the instrument of liberty, that which we lack and strive to obtain is the instrument of slavery. Thence it is that I hold fast to aught that I have, and yet covet nothing more.

My disinterestedness, then, is in reality only idleness, the pleasure of possessing is not in my estimation worth the trouble of acquiring: and my dissipation is only another form of idleness; when we have an opportunity of disbursing pleasantly we should make the best possible use of it.

I am less tempted by money than by other objects, because between the moment of possessing the money and that of using it to obtain the desired object there is always an interval, however short; whereas to possess the thing is to enjoy it. I see a thing and it tempts me; but if I see not the thing itself but only the means of acquiring it, I am not tempted. Therefore it is that I have been a pilferer, and am so even now, in the way of mere trifles to which I take a fancy, and which I find it easier to take than to ask for; but I never in my life recollect having taken a farthing from any one, except about fifteen years ago, when I stole seven francs and ten sous. The story is worth recounting, as it exhibits a concurrence of ignorance and stupidity I should scarcely credit, did it relate to any but myself.

It was in Paris: I was walking with M. de Franceul at the Palais Royal; he pulled out his watch, he looked at it, and said to me, "Suppose we go to the opera?"—"With all my heart." We go: he takes two box tickets, gives me one, and enters himself with the other; I follow, find the door crowded; and, looking in, see every one standing; judging, therefore, that M. de Franceul might suppose me concealed by the company, I go out, ask for my ticket, and, getting the money returned, leave the house, without considering, that by then I had reached the door every one would be seated, and M. de Franceul might readily perceive I was not there.

As nothing could be more opposite to my natural inclination than this abominable meanness, I note it, to show there are moments of delirium when men ought not to be judged by their actions: this was not stealing the money, it was only stealing the use of it, and was the more infamous for wanting the excuse of a temptation.

I should never end these accounts, was I to describe all the gradations through which I passed, during my apprenticeship, from the sublimity of a hero to the baseness of a villain. Though I entered into most of the vices of my situation, I had no relish for its pleasures; the amusements of my companions were displeasing, and when too much restraint had made my business wearisome, I had nothing to amuse me. This renewed my taste for reading which had long been neglected. I thus committed a fresh offence, books made me neglect my work, and brought on additional punishment, while inclination, strengthened by constraint, became an unconquerable passion. La Tribu, a well-known librarian, furnished me with all kinds; good or bad, I perused them with avidity, and without discrimination.

It will be said; “at length, then, money became necessary”—true; but this happened at a time when a taste for study had deprived me both of resolution and activity; totally occupied by this new inclination, I only wished to read, I robbed no longer. This is another of my peculiarities; a mere nothing frequently calls me off from what I appear the most attached to; I give in to the new idea; it becomes a passion, and immediately every former desire is forgotten.

Reading was my new hobby; my heart beat with impatience to run over the new book I carried in my pocket; the first moment I was alone, I seized the opportunity to draw it out, and thought no longer of rummaging my master’s closet. I was even ashamed to think that I had been guilty of such meanness; and had my amusements been more expensive, I no longer felt an inclination to continue it. La Tribu gave me credit, and when once I had the book in my possession, I thought no more of the trifle I was to pay for it; as money came it naturally passed to this woman; and when she chanced to be pressing, nothing was so conveniently at hand as my own effects; to steal in advance required foresight, and robbing to pay was no temptation.

The frequent blows I received from my master, with my private and ill-chosen studies, rendered me reserved, unsociable, and almost deranged my reason. Though my taste had not preserved me from silly unmeaning books, by good fortune I was a stranger to licentious or obscene ones; not that La Tribu (who was very accommodating) had any scruple of lending these, on the contrary, to enhance their worth she spoke of them with an air of mystery; this produced an effect she had not foreseen, for both shame and disgust made me constantly refuse them. Chance so well seconded my bashful disposition, that I was past the age of thirty before I saw any of those dangerous compositions.

In less than a year I had exhausted La Tribu’s scanty library, and was unhappy for want of further amusement. My reading, though frequently bad, had worn off my childish follies, and brought back my heart to nobler sentiments than my condition had inspired; meantime disgusted with all within my reach, and thinking everything charming that was out of it, my present situation appeared extremely miserable. My passions began to acquire strength, I felt their influence, without knowing whither they would conduct me. I sometimes, indeed, thought of my former follies, but sought no further.

At this time my imagination took a turn which helped to calm my increasing emotions; it was, to contemplate those situations in the books I had read, which produced the most striking effect on my mind; to recall, combine, and apply them to myself in such a manner, as to become one of the personages my recollection presented, and be continually in those fancied circumstances which were most agreeable to my inclinations; in a word, by contriving to place myself in these fictitious situations, the idea of my real one was in a great measure obliterated.

This fondness for imaginary objects, and the facility with which I could gain possession of them, completed my disgust for everything around me, and fixed that inclination for solitude which has ever since been predominant. We shall have more than once occasion to remark the effects of a disposition, misanthropic and melancholy in appearance, but which proceed, in fact, from a heart too affectionate, too ardent, which, for want of similar dispositions, is constrained to content itself with nonentities, and be satisfied with fiction. It is sufficient, at present, to have traced the origin of a propensity which has modified my passions, set bounds to each, and by giving too much ardor to my wishes, has ever rendered me too indolent to obtain them.

Thus I attained my sixteenth year, uneasy, discontented with myself and everything that surrounded me; displeased with my occupation; without enjoying the pleasures common to my age, weeping without a cause, sighing I knew not why, and fond of my chimerical ideas for want of more valuable realities.

Every Sunday, after sermon-time, my companions came to fetch me out, wishing me to partake of their diversions. I would willingly have been excused, but when once engaged in amusement, I was more animated and enterprising than any of them; it was equally difficult to engage or restrain me; indeed, this was ever a leading trait in my character. In our country walks I was ever foremost, and never thought of returning till reminded by some of my companions. I was twice obliged to be from my master’s the whole night, the city gates having been shut before I could reach them. The reader may imagine what treatment this procured me

the following mornings; but I was promised such a reception for the third, that I made a firm resolution never to expose myself to the danger of it. Notwithstanding my determination, I repeated this dreaded transgression, my vigilance having been rendered useless by a cursed captain, named M. Minutoli, who, when on guard, always shut the gate he had charge of an hour before the usual time. I was returning home with my two companions, and had got within half a league of the city, when I heard them beat the tattoo; I redouble my pace, I run with my utmost speed, I approach the bridge, see the soldiers already at their posts, I call out to them in a suffocated voice—it is too late; I am twenty paces from the guard, the first bridge is already drawn up, and I tremble to see those terrible horns advanced in the air which announce the fatal and inevitable destiny, which from this moment began to pursue me.

I threw myself on the glacis in a transport of despair, while my companions, who only laughed at the accident, immediately determined what to do. My resolution, though different from theirs, was equally sudden; on the spot, I swore never to return to my master's, and the next morning, when my companions entered the city, I bade them an eternal adieu, conjuring them at the same time to inform my cousin Bernard of my resolution, and the place where he might see me for the last time.

From the commencement of my apprenticeship I had seldom seen him; at first, indeed, we saw each other on Sundays, but each acquiring different habits, our meetings were less frequent. I am persuaded his mother contributed greatly towards this change; he was to consider himself as a person of consequence, I was a pitiful apprentice; notwithstanding our relationship, equality no longer subsisted between us, and it was degrading himself to frequent my company. As he had a natural good heart his mother's lessons did not take an immediate effect, and for some time he continued to visit me.

Having learned my resolution, he hastened to the spot I had appointed, not, however, to dissuade me from it, but to render my flight agreeable, by some trifling presents, as my own resources would not have carried me far. He gave me among other things, a small sword, which I was very proud of, and took with me as far as Turin, where absolute want constrained me to dispose of it. The more I reflect on his behavior at this critical moment, the more I am persuaded he followed the instructions of his mother, and perhaps his father likewise: for, had he been left to his own feelings, he would have endeavored to retain, or have been tempted to accompany me; on the contrary, he encouraged the design, and when he saw me resolutely determined to pursue it, without seeming much affected, left me to my fate. We never saw or wrote to each other from that time; I cannot but regret this loss, for his heart was essentially good, and we seemed formed for a more lasting friendship.

Before I abandon myself to the fatality of my destiny, let me contemplate for a moment the prospect that awaited me had I fallen into the hands of a better master. Nothing could have been more agreeable to my disposition, or more likely to confer happiness, than the peaceful condition of a good artificer, in so respectable a line as engravers are considered at Geneva. I could have obtained an easy subsistence, if not a fortune; this would have bounded my ambition; I should have had means to indulge in moderate pleasures, and should have continued in my natural sphere, without meeting with any temptation to go beyond it. Having an imagination sufficiently fertile to embellish with its chimeras every situation, and powerful enough to transport me from one to another, it was immaterial in which I was fixed: that was best adapted to me, which, requiring the least care or exertion, left the mind most at liberty; and this happiness I should have enjoyed. In my native country, in the bosom of my religion, family and friends, I should have passed a calm and peaceful life, in the uniformity of a pleasing occupation, and among connections dear to my heart. I should have been a good Christian, a good citizen, a good friend, a good man. I should have relished my condition, perhaps have been an honor to it, and after having passed a life of happy obscurity, surrounded by my family, I should have died at peace. Soon it may be forgotten, but while remembered it would have been with tenderness and regret.

Instead of this—what a picture am I about to draw!—Alas! why should I anticipate the miseries I have endured? The reader will have but too much of the melancholy subject.

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5.1: Editor's Introduction

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions*, written between 1765 and 1770 but published posthumously in 1782 and 1789, is one of Western literature's earliest, most important autobiographies. *Confessions* broke new ground in various ways, both in its content and in the way in which Rousseau describes his private inner self and most personal feelings to the reader.

In the opening, Rousseau states, "I have resolved on an undertaking that has no model, and which will have no imitator. I desire to set before my fellow-mortals a man in all the truth of nature; and this man shall be myself." His ambition was not just to recount the events of his life, but also reveal the internal workings of his heart and mind. Rousseau felt that his contemporaries failed to see his true character, and by exposing his faults, emotions, and deepest thoughts, he hoped to vindicate himself from numerous controversies and accusations he faced during his lifetime, and explain his actions.

Rousseau also saw *Confessions* as a means of confronting the paradox of his own existence, the tension between his public persona as a leading philosopher and his private life, which was fraught with contradictions, vulnerabilities, and moral lapses. He was determined to be entirely honest, exposing not just his virtues but also his weaknesses, mistakes, and embarrassments. For Rousseau, this act of radical honesty was a kind of moral experiment. He believed that by presenting his life with total transparency, he could achieve some form of personal redemption and moral clarity.

Confessions was a revolutionary work. Most autobiographies of the time focused on public achievements and moral instruction. Writers often presented their lives in a highly curated way, highlighting successes and contributions while downplaying flaws. Rousseau sought to instead lay bare his entire self, including his most shameful and/or awkward experiences. He exposed intimate details of his emotional struggles, romantic entanglements, and moments of personal failure.

This unflinching self-examination was unprecedented. Rousseau gave readers a vivid picture of his psychological development, discussing how his early childhood experiences, relationships, and encounters with society shaped his thoughts and actions. In this sense, *Confessions* was groundbreaking because it emphasized the inner life of the individual, not merely external events. Rousseau's deep focus on emotions, desires, and personal contradictions paved the way for later developments in psychological autobiography and the emphasis on individual subjectivity.

Another way *Confessions* broke new ground was in its style and tone. Rousseau adopted a conversational and intimate voice, directly addressing the reader and often anticipating their judgment. This direct engagement with the audience was novel and helped create a sense of immediacy and authenticity. Rousseau's decision to write in the first person and to explore his life in a non-linear way also marked a departure from traditional autobiographical forms. He blended personal anecdotes with philosophical reflections, making the work not just a recounting of events but a commentary on the human condition. Most Enlightenment thinkers explored abstract questions about society, reason, and human nature, but Rousseau turned the lens inward, examining his own emotions, desires, and failings as a way of understanding broader human experiences. This introspective style would become particularly important during the Romantic movement of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, as writers and artists sought to explore the depths of human emotion and the self.

Moreover, Rousseau's portrayal of himself as an outsider and a misunderstood genius resonated with later generations of writers and thinkers. His depiction of his emotional sensitivity, his mistrust of social institutions, and his desire for authenticity became core themes within Romantic and existential thought.

His early life was marked by personal tragedies and complicated relationships that had a profound influence on his development, shaping both his personality and his philosophical outlook. The death of his mother, his older brother's failure, and his formative experiences with women, particularly as authority figures, played pivotal roles in his evolving understanding of human nature, social relationships, and the self.

Rousseau's mother, Suzanne Bernard, died shortly after his birth in 1712. This loss had a significant psychological impact on Rousseau and colored his perceptions of family, love, and dependency throughout his life. His mother's death created a deep sense of emotional absence, as he never had the opportunity to form a bond with her. This missing maternal connection, combined with the romanticized image he developed of his mother, fueled a lifelong idealization of women.

At the same time, Rousseau's experience of growing up without a mother likely contributed to his feelings of isolation and alienation. Rousseau often felt misunderstood and persecuted, and his childhood sense of abandonment may have contributed. The

absence of maternal care also led him to form relationships with surrogate maternal figures in later life, but these relationships were complex.

Rousseau's family life was further destabilized by the early failure of his older brother, François, who left the family when Rousseau was still a young child, reportedly falling into a life of irresponsibility and delinquency. His departure left a significant mark on Rousseau's upbringing, as it placed an additional burden on Rousseau's father, Isaac, and left Rousseau as the sole remaining child.

Also, without a stable sibling relationship, Rousseau felt even more alone and vulnerable, relying on his father and other authority figures for emotional support. This in turn may have contributed to his complex, often fraught relationships with women, particularly those who acted as authority figures.

For example, his experiences with Madame Lambercier, particularly the episodes of punishment and care she provided, left an indelible mark on his emotional, psychological, and sexual development. This relationship, which blended maternal affection with the authority to discipline, shaped Rousseau's understanding of power, submission, gender dynamics, and sexuality. A central episode in Rousseau's relationship with Madame Lambercier was the experience of corporal punishment, which left a profound imprint on his sexual and psychological development. What made this event so significant for Rousseau was his unexpected emotional and physical response to the punishment. He describes feeling a mixture of shame, submission, and, crucially, arousal—an experience that he would later recognize as the awakening of his sexual desires.

This episode marked the beginning of Rousseau's lifelong association between authority, punishment, and sexual pleasure. He speaks openly in *Confessions* about the paradoxical nature of this experience: though he was humiliated by the punishment, he found it strangely pleasurable, leading to an early association between submission and desire. This early experience of eroticized submission formed the basis of what would later be understood as a masochistic tendency, where physical pain or humiliation is linked to sexual arousal.

Perhaps the most formative of Rousseau's adolescent relationships was with Madame de Warens, a wealthy and independent woman who took Rousseau in when he was a teenager. Rousseau was sent to live with her, and she became both a maternal figure and a lover to him. Their relationship was deeply complicated by the imbalance of power, as she provided for Rousseau financially and emotionally, while also engaging in a romantic and sexual relationship with him.

Madame de Warens' influence was profound, shaping his views on love, dependency, and gender dynamics. In many ways, Rousseau was torn between admiration for her independence and discomfort with his own vulnerability. He often felt a sense of guilt and inadequacy due to his reliance on her, feelings that would later shape his views on gender and authority. In his writings, Rousseau emphasized traditional gender roles, arguing that men should be strong and independent, while women should occupy a nurturing and domestic role, ideas that may have emerged as a reaction to his early experience of being dependent on a powerful woman.

Early experiences with women as authority figures left Rousseau with conflicting attitudes. On the one hand, he idealized women as caretakers and moral guides, but on the other, he often struggled with feelings of insecurity and resentment when he felt subordinated to them.

Rousseau's early life experiences, including his mother's death, his brother's failure, and his complicated relationships with women, all had significant impacts on his broader philosophical outlook. These experiences contributed to his convictions about the fundamental goodness of human nature, which he contrasted with the corrupting influence of society. Rousseau's sense of personal loss and alienation reinforced his idea that individuals are born free and good but are gradually deformed by societal pressures and expectations.

-Taz Rosenthal

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5.2: Rousseau's Confessions, Book I

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THE CONFESSIONS OF JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU

Complete

By Jean Jacques Rousseau

(In 12 books)

Privately Printed for the Members of the Aldus Society

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BOOK I.

I have entered upon a performance which is without example, whose accomplishment will have no imitator. I mean to present my fellow-mortals with a man in all the integrity of nature; and this man shall be myself.

I know my heart, and have studied mankind; I am not made like any one I have been acquainted with, perhaps like no one in existence; if not better, I at least claim originality, and whether Nature did wisely in breaking the mould with which she formed me, can only be determined after having read this work.

Whenever the last trumpet shall sound, I will present myself before the sovereign judge with this book in my hand, and loudly proclaim, thus have I acted; these were my thoughts; such was I. With equal freedom and veracity have I related what was laudable or wicked, I have concealed no crimes, added no virtues; and if I have sometimes introduced superfluous ornament, it was merely to occupy a void occasioned by defect of memory: I may have supposed that certain, which I only knew to be probable, but have never asserted as truth, a conscious falsehood. Such as I was, I have declared myself; sometimes vile and despicable, at others, virtuous, generous and sublime; even as thou hast read my inmost soul: Power eternal! assemble round thy throne an innumerable throng of my fellow-mortals, let them listen to my confessions, let them blush at my depravity, let them tremble at my sufferings; let each in his turn expose with equal sincerity the failings, the wanderings of his heart, and, if he dare, aver, I was better than that man.

I was born at Geneva, in 1712, son of Isaac Rousseau and Susannah Bernard, citizens. My father’s share of a moderate competency, which was divided among fifteen children, being very trivial, his business of a watchmaker (in which he had the reputation of great ingenuity) was his only dependence. My mother’s circumstances were more affluent; she was daughter of a Mons. Bernard, minister, and possessed a considerable share of modesty and beauty; indeed, my father found some difficulty in obtaining her hand.

The affection they entertained for each other was almost as early as their existence; at eight or nine years old they walked together every evening on the banks of the Treille, and before they were ten, could not support the idea of separation. A natural sympathy of soul confined those sentiments of predilection which habit at first produced; born with minds susceptible of the most exquisite sensibility and tenderness, it was only necessary to encounter similar dispositions; that moment fortunately presented itself, and each surrendered a willing heart.

The obstacles that opposed served only to give a decree of vivacity to their affection, and the young lover, not being able to obtain his mistress, was overwhelmed with sorrow and despair. She advised him to travel—to forget her. He consented—he travelled, but returned more passionate than ever, and had the happiness to find her equally constant, equally tender. After this proof of mutual affection, what could they resolve?—to dedicate their future lives to love! the resolution was ratified with a vow, on which Heaven shed its benediction.

Fortunately, my mother's brother, Gabriel Bernard, fell in love with one of my father's sisters; she had no objection to the match, but made the marriage of his sister with her brother an indispensable preliminary. Love soon removed every obstacle, and the two weddings were celebrated the same day: thus my uncle became the husband of my aunt, and their children were doubly cousins german. Before a year was expired, both had the happiness to become fathers, but were soon after obliged to submit to a separation.

My uncle Bernard, who was an engineer, went to serve in the empire and Hungary, under Prince Eugene, and distinguished himself both at the siege and battle of Belgrade. My father, after the birth of my only brother, set off, on recommendation, for Constantinople, and was appointed watchmaker to the Seraglio. During his absence, the beauty, wit, and accomplishments of my mother attracted a number of admirers, among whom Mons. de la Closure, Resident of France, was the most assiduous in his attentions.

> [They were too brilliant for her situation, the minister, her father, having bestowed great pains on her education. She was taught drawing, singing, and to play on the theorbo; had learning, and wrote very agreeable verses. The following is an extempore piece which she composed in the absence of her husband and brother, in a conversation with some person relative to them, while walking with her sister-in-law, and their two children:
>
> Ces deux messieurs, qui sont absens,
> Nous sont chers de bien des manieres;
> Ce sont nos amis, nos amans,
> Ce sont nos maris et nos freres,
> Et les peres de ces enfans.
>
> These absent ones, who just claim
> Our hearts, by every tender name,
> To whom each wish extends
> Our husbands and our brothers are,
> The fathers of this blooming pair,
> Our lovers and our friends.]

His passion must have been extremely violent, since after a period of thirty years I have seen him affected at the very mention of her name. My mother had a defence more powerful even than her virtue; she tenderly loved my father, and conjured him to return; his inclination seconding his request, he gave up every prospect of emolument, and hastened to Geneva.

I was the unfortunate fruit of this return, being born ten months after, in a very weakly and infirm state; my birth cost my mother her life, and was the first of my misfortunes. I am ignorant how my father supported her loss at that time, but I know he was ever after inconsolable. In me he still thought he saw her he so tenderly lamented, but could never forget I had been the innocent cause of his misfortune, nor did he ever embrace me, but his sighs, the convulsive pressure of his arms, witnessed that a bitter regret mingled itself with his caresses, though, as may be supposed, they were not on this account less ardent. When he said to me, "Jean Jacques, let us talk of your mother," my usual reply was, "Yes, father, but then, you know, we shall cry," and immediately the tears started from his eyes. "Ah!" exclaimed he, with agitation, "Give me back my wife; at least console me for her loss; fill up, dear boy, the void she has left in my soul. Could I love thee thus wert thou only my son?" Forty years after this loss he expired in the arms of his second wife, but the name of the first still vibrated on his lips, still was her image engraved on his heart.

Such were the authors of my being: of all the gifts it had pleased Heaven to bestow on them, a feeling heart was the only one that descended to me; this had been the source of their felicity, it was the foundation of all my misfortunes.

I came into the world with so few signs of life, that they entertained but little hope of preserving me, with the seeds of a disorder that has gathered strength with years, and from which I am now relieved at intervals, only to suffer a different, though more

intolerable evil. I owed my preservation to one of my father's sisters, an amiable and virtuous girl, who took the most tender care of me; she is yet living, nursing, at the age of four-score, a husband younger than herself, but worn out with excessive drinking. Dear aunt! I freely forgive your having preserved my life, and only lament that it is not in my power to bestow on the decline of your days the tender solicitude and care you lavished on the first dawn of mine. My nurse, Jaqueline, is likewise living: and in good health—the hands that opened my eyes to the light of this world may close them at my death. We suffer before we think; it is the common lot of humanity. I experienced more than my proportion of it. I have no knowledge of what passed prior to my fifth or sixth year; I recollect nothing of learning to read, I only remember what effect the first considerable exercise of it produced on my mind; and from that moment I date an uninterrupted knowledge of myself.

Every night, after supper, we read some part of a small collection of romances which had been my mother's. My father's design was only to improve me in reading, and he thought these entertaining works were calculated to give me a fondness for it; but we soon found ourselves so interested in the adventures they contained, that we alternately read whole nights together, and could not bear to give over until at the conclusion of a volume. Sometimes, in a morning, on hearing the swallows at our window, my father, quite ashamed of this weakness, would cry, "Come, come, let us go to bed; I am more a child than thou art."

I soon acquired, by this dangerous custom, not only an extreme facility in reading and comprehending, but, for my age, a too intimate acquaintance with the passions. An infinity of sensations were familiar to me, without possessing any precise idea of the objects to which they related—I had conceived nothing—I had felt the whole. This confused succession of emotions did not retard the future efforts of my reason, though they added an extravagant, romantic notion of human life, which experience and reflection have never been able to eradicate.

My romance reading concluded with the summer of 1719, the following winter was differently employed. My mother's library being quite exhausted, we had recourse to that part of her father's which had devolved to us; here we happily found some valuable books, which was by no means extraordinary, having been selected by a minister that truly deserved that title, in whom learning (which was the rage of the times) was but a secondary commendation, his taste and good sense being most conspicuous. The history of the Church and Empire by Le Sueur, Bossuett's Discourses on Universal History, Plutarch's Lives, the history of Venice by Nani, Ovid's Metamorphoses, La Bruyere, Fontenelle's World, his Dialogues of the Dead, and a few volumes of Moliere, were soon ranged in my father's closet, where, during the hours he was employed in his business, I daily read them, with an avidity and taste uncommon, perhaps unprecedented at my age.

Plutarch presently became my greatest favorite. The satisfaction I derived from repeated readings I gave this author, extinguished my passion for romances, and I shortly preferred Agesilaus, Brutus, and Aristides, to Orondates, Artemenes, and Juba. These interesting studies, seconded by the conversations they frequently occasioned with my father, produced that republican spirit and love of liberty, that haughty and invincible turn of mind, which rendered me impatient of restraint or servitude, and became the torment of my life, as I continually found myself in situations incompatible with these sentiments. Incessantly occupied with Rome and Athens, conversing, if I may so express myself with their illustrious heroes; born the citizen of a republic, of a father whose ruling passion was a love of his country, I was fired with these examples; could fancy myself a Greek or Roman, and readily give into the character of the personage whose life I read; transported by the recital of any extraordinary instance of fortitude or intrepidity, animation flashed from my eyes, and gave my voice additional strength and energy. One day, at table, while relating the fortitude of Scoevola, they were terrified at seeing me start from my seat and hold my hand over a hot chafing—dish, to represent more forcibly the action of that determined Roman.

My brother, who was seven years older than myself, was brought up to my father's profession. The extraordinary affection they lavished on me might be the reason he was too much neglected: this certainly was a fault which cannot be justified. His education and morals suffered by this neglect, and he acquired the habits of a libertine before he arrived at an age to be really one. My father tried what effect placing him with a master would produce, but he still persisted in the same ill conduct. Though I saw him so seldom that it could hardly be said we were acquainted, I loved him tenderly, and believe he had as strong an affection for me as a youth of his dissipated turn of mind could be supposed capable of. One day, I remember, when my father was correcting him severely, I threw myself between them, embracing my brother, whom I covered with my body, receiving the strokes designed for him; I persisted so obstinately in my protection, that either softened by my cries and tears, or fearing to hurt me most, his anger subsided, and he pardoned his fault. In the end, my brother's conduct became so bad that he suddenly disappeared, and we learned some time after that he was in Germany, but he never wrote to us, and from that day we heard no news of him: thus I became an only son.

If this poor lad was neglected, it was quite different with his brother, for the children of a king could not be treated with more attention and tenderness than were bestowed on my infancy, being the darling of the family; and what is rather uncommon, though treated as a beloved, never a spoiled child; was never permitted, while under paternal inspection, to play in the street with other children; never had any occasion to contradict or indulge those fantastical humors which are usually attributed to nature, but are in reality the effects of an injudicious education. I had the faults common to my age, was talkative, a glutton, and sometimes a liar, made no scruple of stealing sweetmeats, fruits, or, indeed, any kind of eatables; but never took delight in mischievous waste, in accusing others, or tormenting harmless animals. I recollect, indeed, that one day, while Madam Clot, a neighbor of ours, was gone to church, I made water in her kettle: the remembrance even now makes me smile, for Madame Clot (though, if you please, a good sort of creature) was one of the most tedious grumbling old women I ever knew. Thus have I given a brief, but faithful, history of my childish transgressions.

How could I become cruel or vicious, when I had before my eyes only examples of mildness, and was surrounded by some of the best people in the world? My father, my aunt, my nurse, my relations, our friends, our neighbors, all I had any connection with, did not obey me, it is true, but loved me tenderly, and I returned their affection. I found so little to excite my desires, and those I had were so seldom contradicted, that I was hardly sensible of possessing any, and can solemnly aver I was an absolute stranger to caprice until after I had experienced the authority of a master.

Those hours that were not employed in reading or writing with my father, or walking with my governess, Jaqueline, I spent with my aunt; and whether seeing her embroider, or hearing her sing, whether sitting or standing by her side, I was ever happy. Her tenderness and unaffected gayety, the charms of her figure and countenance have left such indelible impressions on my mind, that her manner, look, and attitude are still before my eyes; I recollect a thousand little caressing questions; could describe her clothes, her head-dress, nor have the two curls of fine black hair which hung on her temples, according to the mode of that time, escaped my memory.

Though my taste, or rather passion, for music, did not show itself until a considerable time after, I am fully persuaded it is to her I am indebted for it. She knew a great number of songs, which she sung with great sweetness and melody. The serenity and cheerfulness which were conspicuous in this lovely girl, banished melancholy, and made all round her happy.

The charms of her voice had such an effect on me, that not only several of her songs have ever since remained on my memory, but some I have not thought of from my infancy, as I grow old, return upon my mind with a charm altogether inexpressible. Would any one believe that an old dotard like me, worn out with care and infirmity, should sometime surprise himself weeping like a child, and in a voice querulous, and broken by age, muttering out one of those airs which were the favorites of my infancy? There is one song in particular, whose tune I perfectly recollect, but the words that compose the latter half of it constantly refuse every effort to recall them, though I have a confused idea of the rhymes. The beginning, with what I have been able to recollect of the remainder, is as follows:

> Tircis, je n’ose
> Ecouter ton Chalumeau
> Sous l’Ormeau;
> Car on en cause
> Deja dans notre hameau.
> —— —— ———-
> ——— —- un Berger
> s’engager
> sans danger,
> Et toujours l’epine est sons la rose.

I have endeavored to account for the invincible charm my heart feels on the recollection of this fragment, but it is altogether inexplicable. I only know, that before I get to the end of it, I always find my voice interrupted by tenderness, and my eyes suffused with tears. I have a hundred times formed the resolution of writing to Paris for the remainder of these words, if any one should chance to know them: but I am almost certain the pleasure I take in the recollection would be greatly diminished was I assured any one but my poor aunt Susan had sung them.

Such were my affections on entering this life. Thus began to form and demonstrate itself, a heart, at once haughty and tender, a character effeminate, yet invincible; which, fluctuating between weakness and courage, luxury and virtue, has ever set me in contradiction to myself; causing abstinence and enjoyment, pleasure and prudence, equally to shun me.

This course of education was interrupted by an accident, whose consequences influenced the rest of my life. My father had a quarrel with M. G——, who had a captain's commission in France, and was related to several of the Council. This G——, who was an insolent, ungenerous man, happening to bleed at the nose, in order to be revenged, accused my father of having drawn his sword on him in the city, and in consequence of this charge they were about to conduct him to prison. He insisted (according to the law of this republic) that the accuser should be confined at the same time; and not being able to obtain this, preferred a voluntary banishment for the remainder of his life, to giving up a point by which he must sacrifice his honor and liberty.

I remained under the tuition of my uncle Bernard, who was at that time employed in the fortifications of Geneva. He had lost his eldest daughter, but had a son about my own age, and we were sent together to Bossey, to board with the Minister Lambercier. Here we were to learn Latin, with all the insignificant trash that has obtained the name of education.

Two years spent in this village softened, in some degree, my Roman fierceness, and again reduced me to a state of childhood. At Geneva, where nothing was exacted, I loved reading, which was, indeed, my principal amusement; but, at Bossey, where application was expected, I was fond of play as a relaxation. The country was so new, so charming in my idea, that it seemed impossible to find satiety in its enjoyments, and I conceived a passion for rural life, which time has not been able to extinguish; nor have I ever ceased to regret the pure and tranquil pleasures I enjoyed at this place in my childhood; the remembrance having followed me through every age, even to that in which I am hastening again towards it.

M. Lambercier was a worthy, sensible man, who, without neglecting our instruction, never made our acquisitions burthensome, or tasks tedious. What convinces me of the rectitude of his method is, that notwithstanding my extreme aversion to restraint, the recollection of my studies is never attended with disgust; and, if my improvement was trivial, it was obtained with ease, and has never escaped memory.

The simplicity of this rural life was of infinite advantage in opening my heart to the reception of true friendship. The sentiments I had hitherto formed on this subject were extremely elevated, but altogether imaginary. The habit of living in this peaceful manner soon united me tenderly to my cousin Bernard; my affection was more ardent than that I had felt for my brother, nor has time ever been able to efface it. He was a tall, lank, weakly boy, with a mind as mild as his body was feeble, and who did not wrong the good opinion they were disposed to entertain for the son of my guardian. Our studies, amusements, and tasks, were the same; we were alone; each wanted a playmate; to separate would in some measure, have been to annihilate us. Though we had not many opportunities of demonstrating our attachment to each other, it was certainly extreme; and so far from enduring the thought of separation, we could not even form an idea that we should ever be able to submit to it. Each of a disposition to be won by kindness, and complaisant, when not soured by contradiction, we agreed in every particular. If, by the favor of those who governed us he had the ascendant while in their presence, I was sure to acquire it when we were alone, and this preserved the equilibrium so necessary in friendship. If he hesitated in repeating his task, I prompted him; when my exercises were finished, I helped to write his; and, in our amusements, my disposition being most active, ever had the lead. In a word, our characters accorded so well, and the friendship that subsisted between us was so cordial, that during the five years we were at Bossey and Geneva we were inseparable: we often fought, it is true, but there never was any occasion to separate us. No one of our quarrels lasted more than a quarter of an hour, and never in our lives did we make any complaint of each other. It may be said, these remarks are frivolous; but, perhaps, a similiar example among children can hardly be produced.

The manner in which I passed my time at Bossey was so agreeable to my disposition, that it only required a longer duration absolutely to have fixed my character, which would have had only peaceable, affectionate, benevolent sentiments for its basis. I believe no individual of our kind ever possessed less natural vanity than myself. At intervals, by an extraordinary effort, I arrived at sublime ideas, but presently sunk again into my original languor. To be loved by every one who knew me was my most ardent wish. I was naturally mild, my cousin was equally so, and those who had the care of us were of similiar dispositions. Everything contributed to strengthen those propensities which nature had implanted in my breast, and during the two years I was neither the victim nor witness of any violent emotions.

I knew nothing so delightful as to see every one content, not only with me, but all that concerned them. When repeating our catechism at church, nothing could give me greater vexation, on being obliged to hesitate, than to see Miss Lambercier's

countenance express disapprobation and uneasiness. This alone was more afflicting to me than the shame of faltering before so many witnesses, which, notwithstanding, was sufficiently painful; for though not oversolicitous of praise, I was feelingly alive to shame; yet I can truly affirm, the dread of being reprimanded by Miss Lambercier alarmed me less than the thought of making her uneasy.

Neither she nor her brother were deficient in a reasonable severity, but as this was scarce ever exerted without just cause, I was more afflicted at their disapprobation than the punishment. Certainly the method of treating youth would be altered if the distant effects this indiscriminate, and frequently indiscreet method produces, were more conspicuous. I would willingly excuse myself from a further explanation, did not the lesson this example conveys (which points out an evil as frequent as it is pernicious) forbid my silence.

As Miss Lambercier felt a mother's affection, she sometimes exerted a mother's authority, even to inflicting on us when we deserved it, the punishment of infants. She had often threatened it, and this threat of a treatment entirely new, appeared to me extremely dreadful; but I found the reality much less terrible than the idea, and what is still more unaccountable, this punishment increased my affection for the person who had inflicted it. All this affection, aided by my natural mildness, was scarcely sufficient to prevent my seeking, by fresh offences, a return of the same chastisement; for a degree of sensuality had mingled with the smart and shame, which left more desire than fear of a repetition. I was well convinced the same discipline from her brother would have produced a quite contrary effect; but from a man of his disposition this was not probable, and if I abstained from meriting correction it was merely from a fear of offending Miss Lambercier, for benevolence, aided by the passions, has ever maintained an empire over me which has given law to my heart.

This event, which, though desirable, I had not endeavored to accelerate, arrived without my fault; I should say, without my seeking; and I profited by it with a safe conscience; but this second, was also the last time, for Miss Lambercier, who doubtless had some reason to imagine this chastisement did not produce the desired effect, declared it was too fatiguing, and that she renounced it for the future. Till now we had slept in her chamber, and during the winter, even in her bed; but two days after another room was prepared for us, and from that moment I had the honor (which I could very well have dispensed with) of being treated by her as a great boy.

Who would believe this childish discipline, received at eight years old, from the hands of a woman of thirty, should influence my propensities, my desires, my passions, for the rest of my life, and that in quite a contrary sense from what might naturally have been expected? The very incident that inflamed my senses, gave my desires such an extraordinary turn, that, confined to what I had already experienced, I sought no further, and, with blood boiling with sensuality, almost from my birth, preserved my purity beyond the age when the coldest constitutions lose their insensibility; long tormented, without knowing by what, I gazed on every handsome woman with delight; imagination incessantly brought their charms to my remembrance, only to transform them into so many Miss Lamberciers.

If ever education was perfectly chaste, it was certainly that I received; my three aunts were not only of exemplary prudence, but maintained a degree of modest reserve which women have long since thought unnecessary. My father, it is true, loved pleasure, but his gallantry was rather of the last than the present century, and he never expressed his affection for any woman he regarded in terms a virgin could have blushed at; indeed, it was impossible more attention should be paid to that regard we owe the morals of children than was uniformly observed by every one I had any concern with. An equal degree of reserve in this particular was observed at M. Lambercier's, where a good maid-servant was discharged for having once made use of an expression before us which was thought to contain some degree of indelicacy. I had no precise idea of the ultimate effect of the passions, but the conception I had formed was extremely disgusting; I entertained a particular aversion for courtesans, nor could I look on a rake without a degree of disdain mingled with terror.

These prejudices of education, proper in themselves to retard the first explosions of a combustible constitution, were strengthened, as I have already hinted, by the effect the first moments of sensuality produced in me, for notwithstanding the troublesome ebullition of my blood, I was satisfied with the species of voluptuousness I had already been acquainted with, and sought no further.

Thus I passed the age of puberty, with a constitution extremely ardent, without knowing or even wishing for any other gratification of the passions than what Miss Lambercier had innocently given me an idea of; and when I became a man, that childish taste, instead of vanishing, only associated with the other. This folly, joined to a natural timidity, has always prevented my being very

enterprising with women, so that I have passed my days in languishing in silence for those I most admired, without daring to disclose my wishes.

To fall at the feet of an imperious mistress, obey her mandates, or implore pardon, were for me the most exquisite enjoyments, and the more my blood was inflamed by the efforts of a lively imagination the more I acquired the appearance of a whining lover.

It will be readily conceived that this mode of making love is not attended with a rapid progress or imminent danger to the virtue of its object; yet, though I have few favors to boast of, I have not been excluded from enjoyment, however imaginary. Thus the senses, in concurrence with a mind equally timid and romantic, have preserved my moral chaste, and feelings uncorrupted, with precisely the same inclinations, which, seconded with a moderate portion of effrontery, might have plunged me into the most unwarrantable excesses.

I have made the first, most difficult step, in the obscure and painful maze of my Confessions. We never feel so great a degree of repugnance in divulging what is really criminal, as what is merely ridiculous. I am now assured of my resolution, for after what I have dared disclose, nothing can have power to deter me. The difficulty attending these acknowledgments will be readily conceived, when I declare, that during the whole of my life, though frequently laboring under the most violent agitation, being hurried away with the impetuosity of a passion which (when in company with those I loved) deprived me of the faculty of sight and hearing, I could never, in the course of the most unbounded familiarity, acquire sufficient resolution to declare my folly, and implore the only favor that remained to bestow.

In thus investigating the first traces of my sensible existence, I find elements, which, though seemingly incompatible, have united to produce a simple and uniform effect; while others, apparently the same, have, by the concurrence of certain circumstances, formed such different combinations, that it would never be imagined they had any affinity; who would believe, for example, that one of the most vigorous springs of my soul was tempered in the identical source from whence luxury and ease mingled with my constitution and circulated in my veins? Before I quit this subject, I will add a striking instance of the different effects they produced.

One day, while I was studying in a chamber contiguous to the kitchen, the maid set some of Miss Lambercier's combs to dry by the fire, and on coming to fetch them some time after, was surprised to find the teeth of one of them broken off. Who could be suspected of this mischief? No one but myself had entered the room: I was questioned, but denied having any knowledge of it. Mr. and Miss Lambercier consult, exhort, threaten, but all to no purpose; I obstinately persist in the denial; and, though this was the first time I had been detected in a confirmed falsehood, appearances were so strong that they overthrew all my protestations. This affair was thought serious; the mischief, the lie, the obstinacy, were considered equally deserving of punishment, which was not now to be administered by Miss Lambercier. My uncle Bernard was written to; he arrived; and my poor cousin being charged with a crime no less serious, we were conducted to the same execution, which was inflicted with great severity. If finding a remedy in the evil itself, they had sought ever to allay my depraved desires, they could not have chosen a shorter method to accomplish their designs, and, I can assure my readers, I was for a long time freed from the dominion of them.

As this severity could not draw from me the expected acknowledgment, which obstinacy brought on several repetitions, and reduced me to a deplorable situation, yet I was immovable, and resolutely determined to suffer death rather than submit. Force, at length, was obliged to yield to the diabolical infatuation of a child, for no better name was bestowed on my constancy, and I came out of this dreadful trial, torn, it is true, but triumphant. Fifty years have expired since this adventure—the fear of punishment is no more. Well, then, I aver, in the face of Heaven, I was absolutely innocent: and, so far from breaking, or even touching the comb, never came near the fire. It will be asked, how did this mischief happen? I can form no conception of it, I only know my own innocence.

Let any one figure to himself a character whose leading traits were docility and timidity, but haughty, ardent, and invincible, in its passions; a child, hitherto governed by the voice of reason, treated with mildness, equity, and complaisance, who could not even support the idea of injustice, experiencing, for the first time, so violent an instance of it, inflicted by those he most loved and respected. What perversion of ideas! What confusion in the heart, the brain, in all my little being, intelligent and moral!—let any one, I say, if possible, imagine all this, for I am incapable of giving the least idea of what passed in my mind at that period.

My reason was not sufficiently established to enable me to put myself in the place of others, and judge how much appearances condemned me, I only beheld the rigor of a dreadful chastisement, inflicted for a crime I had not committed; yet I can truly affirm, the smart I suffered, though violent, was inconsiderable compared to what I felt from indignation, rage, and despair. My cousin,

who was almost in similar circumstances, having been punished for an involuntary fault as guilty of a premediated crime, became furious by my example. Both in the same bed, we embraced each other with convulsive transport; we were almost suffocated; and when our young hearts found sufficient relief to breathe out our indigination, we sat up in the bed, and with all our force, repeated a hundred times, Carnifex! Carnifex! Carnifex! executioner, tormentor.

Even while I write this I feel my pulse quicken, and should I live a hundred thousand years, the agitation of that moment would still be fresh in my memory. The first instance of violence and oppression is so deeply engraved on my soul, that every relative idea renews my emotion: the sentiment of indignation, which in its origin had reference only to myself, has acquired such strength, and is at present so completely detached from personal motives, that my heart is as much inflamed at the sight or relation of any act of injustice (whatever may be the object, or wheresoever it may be perpetrated) as if I was the immediate sufferer. When I read the history of a merciless tyrant, or the dark and the subtle machination of a knavish designing priest, I could on the instant set off to stab the miscreants, though I was certain to perish in the attempt.

I have frequently fatigued myself by running after and stoning a cock, a cow, a dog, or any animal I saw tormenting another, only because it was conscious of possessing superior strength. This may be natural to me, and I am inclined to believe it is, though the lively impression of the first injustice I became the victim of was too long and too powerfully remembered not to have added considerable force to it.

This occurrence terminated my infantine serenity; from that moment I ceased to enjoy a pure unadulterated happiness, and on a retrospection of the pleasure of my childhood, I yet feel they ended here. We continue at Bossey some months after this event, but were like our first parents in the Garden of Eden after they had lost their innocence; in appearance our situation was the same, in effect it was totally different.

Affection, respect; intimacy, confidence, no longer attached the pupils to their guides; we beheld them no longer as divinities, who could read the secrets of our hearts; we were less ashamed of committing faults, more afraid of being accused of them: we learned to dissemble, to rebel, to lie: all the vices common to our years began to corrupt our happy innocence, mingle with our sports, and embitter our amusements. The country itself, losing those sweet and simple charms which captivate the heart, appeared a gloomy desert, or covered with a veil that concealed its beauties. We cultivated our little gardens no more: our flowers were neglected. We no longer scratched away the mould, and broke out into exclamations of delight, on discovering that the grain we had sown began to shoot. We were disgusted with our situation; our preceptors were weary of us. In a word, my uncle wrote for our return, and we left Mr. and Miss Lambercier without feeling any regret at the separation.

Near thirty years passed away from my leaving Bossey, without once recalling the place to my mind with any degree of satisfaction; but after having passed the prime of life, as I decline into old age (while more recent occurrences are wearing out apace) I feel these remembrances revive and imprint themselves on my heart, with a force and charm that every day acquires fresh strength; as if, feeling life fleet from me, I endeavored to catch it again by its commencement. The most trifling incident of those happy days delight me, for no other reason than being of those days. I recall every circumstance of time, place, and persons; I see the maid or footman busy in the chamber, a swallow entering the window, a fly settling on my hand while repeating my lessons. I see the whole economy of the apartment; on the right hand Mr. Lambercier's closet, with a print representing all the popes, a barometer, a large almanac, the windows of the house (which stood in a hollow at the bottom of the garden) shaded by raspberry shrubs, whose shoots sometimes found entrance; I am sensible the reader has no occasion to know all this, but I feel a kind of necessity for relating it. Why am I not permitted to recount all the little anecdotes of that thrice happy age, at the recollection of whose joys I ever tremble with delight? Five or six particularly—let us compromise the matter—I will give up five, but then I must have one, and only one, provided I may draw it out to its utmost length, in order to prolong my satisfaction.

If I only sought yours, I should choose that of Miss Lambercier's backside, which by an unlucky fall at the bottom of the meadow, was exposed to the view of the King of Sardinia, who happened to be passing by; but that of the walnut tree on the terrace is more amusing to me, since here I was an actor, whereas, in the abovementioned scene I was only a spectator; and I must confess I see nothing that should occasion risibility in an accident, which, however laughable in itself, alarmed me for a person I loved as a mother, or perhaps something more.

Ye curious readers, whose expectations are already on the stretch for the noble history of the terrace, listen to the tragedy, and abstain from trembling, if you can, at the horrible catastrophe!

At the outside of the courtyard door, on the left hand, was a terrace; here they often sat after dinner; but it was subject to one inconvenience, being too much exposed to the rays of the sun; to obviate this defect, Mr. Lambercier had a walnut tree set there, the planting of which was attended with great solemnity. The two boarders were godfathers, and while the earth was replacing round the root, each held the tree with one hand, singing songs of triumph. In order to water it with more effect, they formed a kind of luson around its foot: myself and cousin, who were every day ardent spectators of this watering, confirmed each other in the very natural idea that it was nobler to plant trees on the terrace than colors on a breach, and this glory we were resolved to procure without dividing it with any one.

In pursuance of this resolution, we cut a slip off a willow, and planted it on the terrace, at about eight or ten feet distance from the august walnut tree. We did not forget to make a hollow round it, but the difficulty was how to procure a supply of water, which was brought from a considerable distance, and we not permitted to fetch it: but water was absolutely necessary for our willow, and we made use of every stratagem to obtain it.

For a few days everything succeeded so well that it began to bud, and throw out small leaves, which we hourly measured convinced (tho' now scarce a foot from the ground) it would soon afford us a refreshing shade. This unfortunate willow, by engrossing our whole time, rendered us incapable of application to any other study, and the cause of our inattention not being known, we were kept closer than before. The fatal moment approached when water must fail, and we were already afflicted with the idea that our tree must perish with drought. At length necessity, the parent of industry, suggested an invention, by which we might save our tree from death, and ourselves from despair; it was to make a furrow underground, which would privately conduct a part of the water from the walnut tree to our willow. This undertaking was executed with ardor, but did not immediately succeed—our descent was not skilfully planned—the water did not run, the earth falling in and stopping up the furrow; yet, though all went contrary, nothing discouraged us, 'omnia vincit labor improbus'. We made the bason deeper, to give the water a more sensible descent; we cut the bottom of a box into narrow planks; increased the channel from the walnut tree to our willow and laying a row flat at the bottom, set two others inclining towards each other, so as to form a triangular channel; we formed a kind of grating with small sticks at the end next the walnut tree, to prevent the earth and stones from stopping it up, and having carefully covered our work with well-trodden earth, in a transport of hope and fear attended the hour of watering. After an interval, which seemed an age of expectation, this hour arrived. Mr. Lambercier, as usual, assisted at the operation; we contrived to get between him and our tree, towards which he fortunately turned his back. They no sooner began to pour the first pail of water, than we perceived it running to the willow; this sight was too much for our prudence, and we involuntarily expressed our transport by a shout of joy. The sudden exclamation made Mr. Lambercier turn about, though at that instant he was delighted to observe how greedily the earth, which surrounded the root of his walnut tree, imbibed the water. Surprised at seeing two trenches partake of it, he shouted in his turn, examines, perceives the roguery, and, sending instantly for a pick axe, at one fatal blow makes two or three of our planks fly, crying out meantime with all his strength, an aqueduct! an aqueduct! His strokes redoubled, every one of which made an impression on our hearts; in a moment the planks, the channel, the bason, even our favorite willow, all were ploughed up, nor was one word pronounced during this terrible transaction, except the above mentioned exclamation. An aqueduct! repeated he, while destroying all our hopes, an aqueduct! an aqueduct!

It maybe supposed this adventure had a still more melancholy end for the young architects; this, however, was not the case; the affair ended here. Mr. Lambercier never reproached us on this account, nor was his countenance clouded with a frown; we even heard him mention the circumstance to his sister with loud bursts of laughter. The laugh of Mr. Lambercier might be heard to a considerable distance. But what is still more surprising after the first transport of sorrow had subsided, we did not find ourselves violently afflicted; we planted a tree in another spot, and frequently recollected the catastrophe of the former, repeating with a significant emphasis, an aqueduct! an aqueduct! Till then, at intervals, I had fits of ambition, and could fancy myself Brutus or Aristides, but this was the first visible effect of my vanity. To have constructed an aqueduct with our own hands, to have set a slip of willow in competition with a flourishing tree, appeared to me a supreme degree of glory! I had a juster conception of it at ten than Caesar entertained at thirty.

The idea of this walnut tree, with the little anecdotes it gave rise to, have so well continued, or returned to my memory, that the design which conveyed the most pleasing sensations, during my journey to Geneva, in the year 1754, was visiting Bossey, and reviewing the monuments of my infantine amusement, above all, the beloved walnut tree, whose age at that time must have been verging on a third of a century, but I was so beset with company that I could not find a moment to accomplish my design. There is

little appearance now of the occasion being renewed; but should I ever return to that charming spot, and find my favorite walnut tree still existing, I am convinced I should water it with my tears.

On my return to Geneva, I passed two or three years at my uncle's, expecting the determination of my friends respecting my future establishment. His own son being devoted to genius, was taught drawing, and instructed by his father in the elements of Euclid; I partook of these instructions, but was principally fond of drawing. Meantime, they were irresolute, whether to make me a watchmaker, a lawyer, or a minister. I should have preferred being a minister, as I thought it must be a charming thing to preach, but the trifling income which had been my mother's, and was to be divided between my brother and myself, was too inconsiderable to defray the expense attending the prosecution of my studies. As my age did not render the choice very pressing, I remained with my uncle, passing my time with very little improvement, and paying pretty dear, though not unreasonably, for my board.

My uncle, like my father, was a man of pleasure, but had not learned, like him, to abridge his amusements for the sake of instructing his family, consequently our education was neglected. My aunt was a devotee, who loved singing psalms better than thinking of our improvement, so that we were left entirely to ourselves, which liberty we never abused.

Ever inseparable, we were all the world to each other; and, feeling no inclination to frequent the company of a number of disorderly lads of our own age, we learned none of those habits of libertinism to which our idle life exposed us. Perhaps I am wrong in charging myself and cousin with idleness at this time, for, in our lives, we were never less so; and what was extremely fortunate, so incessantly occupied with our amusements, that we found no temptation to spend any part of our time in the streets. We made cages, pipes, kites, drums, houses, ships, and bows; spoiled the tools of my good old grandfather by endeavoring to make watches in imitation of him; but our favorite amusement was wasting paper, in drawing, washing, coloring, etc. There came an Italian mountebank to Geneva, called Gamber-Corta, who had an exhibition of puppets, that he made play a kind of comedy. We went once to see them, but could not spare time to go again, being busily employed in making puppets of our own and inventing comedies, which we immediately set about making them perform, mimicking to the best of our abilities the uncouth voice of Punch; and, to complete the business, my good aunt and uncle Bernard had the patience to see and listen to our imitations; but my uncle, having one day read an elaborate discourse to his family, we instantly gave up our comedies, and began composing sermons.

These details, I confess, are not very amusing, but they serve to demonstrate that the former part of our education was well directed, since being, at such an early age, the absolute masters of our time, we found no inclination to abuse it; and so little in want of other companions, that we constantly neglected every occasion of seeking them. When taking our walks together, we observed their diversions without feeling any inclination to partake of them. Friendship so entirely occupied our hearts, that, pleased with each other's company the simplest pastimes were sufficient to delight us.

We were soon remarked for being thus inseparable: and what rendered us more conspicuous, my cousin was very tall, myself extremely short, so that we exhibited a very whimsical contrast. This meagre figure, small, sallow countenance, heavy air, and supine gait, excited the ridicule of the children, who, in the gibberish of the country, nicknamed him 'Barna Bredanna'; and we no sooner got out of doors than our ears were assailed with a repetition of "Barna Bredanna." He bore this indignity with tolerable patience, but I was instantly for fighting. This was what the young rogues aimed at. I engaged accordingly, and was beat. My poor cousin did all in his power to assist me, but he was weak, and a single stroke brought him to the ground. I then became furious, and received several smart blows, some of which were aimed at 'Barna Bredanna'. This quarrel so far increased the evil, that, to avoid their insults, we could only show ourselves in the streets while they were employed at school.

I had already become a redresser of grievances; there only wanted a lady in the way to be a knight-errant in form. This defect was soon supplied; I presently had two. I frequently went to see my father at Nion, a small city in the Vaudois country, where he was now settled. Being universally respected, the affection entertained for him extended to me: and, during my visits, the question seemed to be, who should show me most kindness. A Madame de Vulson, in particular, loaded me with caresses; and, to complete all, her daughter made me her gallant. I need not explain what kind of gallant a boy of eleven must be to a girl of two and twenty; the artful hussies know how to set these puppets up in front, to conceal more serious engagements. On my part I saw no inequality between myself and Miss Vulson, was flattered by the circumstance, and went into it with my whole heart, or rather my whole head, for this passion certainly reached no further, though it transported me almost to madness, and frequently produced scenes sufficient to make even a cynic expire with laughter.

I have experienced two kinds of love, equally real, which have scarce any affinity, yet each differing materially from tender friendship. My whole life has been divided between these affections, and I have frequently felt the power of both at the same

instant. For example, at the very time I so publically and tyrannically claimed Miss Vulson, that I could not suffer any other of my sex to approach her, I had short, but passionate, assignations with a Miss Goton, who thought proper to act the schoolmistress with me. Our meetings, though absolutely childish, afforded me the height of happiness. I felt the whole charm of mystery, and repaid Miss Vulson in kind, when she least expected it, the use she made of me in concealing her amours. To my great mortification, this secret was soon discovered, and I presently lost my young schoolmistress.

Miss Goton was, in fact, a singular personage. She was not handsome, yet there was a certain something in her figure which could not easily be forgotten, and this for an old fool, I am too often convinced of. Her eyes, in particular, neither corresponded with her age, her height, nor her manner; she had a lofty imposing air, which agreed extremely well with the character she assumed, but the most extraordinary part of her composition was a mixture of forwardness and reserve difficult to be conceived; and while she took the greatest liberties with me, would never permit any to be taken with her in return, treating me precisely like a child. This makes me suppose she had either ceased herself to be one, or was yet sufficiently so to behold as play the danger to which this folly exposed her.

I was so absolutely in the power of both these mistresses, that when in the presence of either, I never thought of her who was absent; in other respects, the effects they produced on me bore no affinity. I could have passed my whole life with Miss Vulson, without forming a wish to quit her; but then, my satisfaction was attended with a pleasing serenity; and, in numerous companies, I was particularly charmed with her. The sprightly sallies of her wit, the arch glance of her eye, even jealousy itself, strengthened my attachment, and I triumphed in the preference she seemed to bestow on me, while addressed by more powerful rivals; applause, encouragement, and smiles, gave animation to my happiness. Surrounded by a throng of observers, I felt the whole force of love—I was passionate, transported; in a tete-a-tete, I should have been constrained, thoughtful, perhaps unhappy. If Miss Vulson was ill, I suffered with her; would willingly have given up my own health to establish hers (and, observe I knew the want of it from experience); if absent, she employed my thoughts, I felt the want of her; when present, her caresses came with warmth and rapture to my heart, though my senses were unaffected. The familiarities she bestowed on me I could not have supported the idea of her granting to another; I loved her with a brother’s affection only, but experienced all the jealousy of a lover.

With Miss Goton this passion might have acquired a degree of fury; I should have been a Turk, a tiger, had I once imagined she bestowed her favors on any but myself. The pleasure I felt on approaching Miss Vulson was sufficiently ardent, though unattended with uneasy sensations; but at sight of Miss Goton, I felt myself bewildered—every sense was absorbed in ecstasy. I believe it would have been impossible to have remained long with her; I must have been suffocated with the violence of my palpitations. I equally dreaded giving either of them displeasure; with one I was more complaisant; with the other, more submissive. I would not have offended Miss Vulson for the world; but if Miss Goton had commanded me to throw myself into the flames, I think I should have instantly obeyed her. Happily, both for her and myself, our amours; or rather rendezvous, were not of long duration: and though my connection with Miss Vulson was less dangerous, after a continuance of some greater length, that likewise had its catastrophe; indeed the termination of a love affair is good for nothing, unless it partakes of the romantic, and can furnish out at least an exclamation.

Though my correspondence with Miss Vulson was less animated, it was perhaps more endearing; we never separated without tears, and it can hardly be conceived what a void I felt in my heart. I could neither think nor speak of anything but her. These romantic sorrows were not affected, though I am inclined to believe they did not absolutely centre in her, for I am persuaded (though I did not perceive it at that time) being deprived of amusement bore a considerable share in them.

To soften the rigor of absence, we agreed to correspond with each other, and the pathetic expressions these letters contained were sufficient to have split a rock. In a word, I had the honor of her not being able to endure the pain of separation. She came to see me at Geneva.

My head was now completely turned; and during the two days she remained here, I was intoxicated with delight. At her departure, I would have thrown myself into the water after her, and absolutely rent the air with my cries. The week following she sent me sweetmeats, gloves, etc. This certainly would have appeared extremely gallant, had I not been informed of her marriage at the same instant, and that the journey I had thought proper to give myself the honor of, was only to buy her wedding suit.

My indignation may easily be conceived; I shall not attempt to describe it. In this heroic fury, I swore never more to see the perfidious girl, supposing it the greatest punishment that could be inflicted on her. This, however, did not occasion her death, for twenty years after, while on a visit to my father, being on the lake, I asked who those ladies were in a boat not far from ours.

“What!” said my father smiling, “does not your heart inform you? It is your former flame, it is Madame Christin, or, if you please, Miss Vulson.” I started at the almost forgotten name, and instantly ordered the waterman to turn off, not judging it worth while to be perjured, however favorable the opportunity for revenge, in renewing a dispute of twenty years past, with a woman of forty.

Thus, before my future destination was determined, did I fool away the most precious moments of my youth. After deliberating a long time on the bent of my natural inclination, they resolved to dispose of me in a manner the most repugnant to them. I was sent to Mr. Masseron, the City Register, to learn (according to the expression of my uncle Bernard) the thriving occupation of a scraper. This nickname was inconceivably displeasing to me, and I promised myself but little satisfaction in the prospect of heaping up money by a mean employment. The assiduity and subjection required, completed my disgust, and I never set foot in the office without feeling a kind of horror, which every day gained fresh strength.

Mr. Masseron, who was not better pleased with my abilities than I was with the employment, treated me with disdain, incessantly upbraiding me with being a fool and blockhead, not forgetting to repeat, that my uncle had assured him I was a knowing one, though he could not find that I knew anything. That he had promised to furnish him with a sprightly boy, but had, in truth, sent him an ass. To conclude, I was turned out of the registry, with the additional ignominy of being pronounced a fool by all Mr. Masseron’s clerks, and fit only to handle a file.

My vocation thus determined, I was bound apprentice; not, however, to a watchmaker, but to an engraver, and I had been so completely humiliated by the contempt of the register, that I submitted without a murmur. My master, whose name was M. Ducommon, was a young man of a very violent and boorish character, who contrived in a short time to tarnish all the amiable qualities of my childhood, to stupefy a disposition naturally sprightly, and reduce my feelings, as well as my condition, to an absolute state of servitude. I forgot my Latin, history, and antiquities; I could hardly recollect whether such people as Romans ever existed. When I visited my father, he no longer beheld his idol, nor could the ladies recognize the gallant Jean Jacques; nay, I was so well convinced that Mr. and Miss Lambercier would scarce receive me as their pupil, that I endeavored to avoid their company, and from that time have never seen them. The vilest inclinations, the basest actions, succeeded my amiable amusements and even obliterated the very remembrance of them. I must have had, in spite of my good education, a great propensity to degenerate, else the declension could not have followed with such ease and rapidity, for never did so promising a Caesar so quickly become a Laradon.

The art itself did not displease me. I had a lively taste for drawing. There was nothing displeasing in the exercise of the graver; and as it required no very extraordinary abilities to attain perfection as a watchcase engraver, I hoped to arrive at it. Perhaps I should have accomplished my design, if unreasonable restraint, added to the brutality of my master, had not rendered my business disgusting. I wasted his time, and employed myself in engraving medals, which served me and my companions as a kind of insignia for a new invented order of chivalry, and though this differed very little from my usual employ, I considered it as a relaxation. Unfortunately, my master caught me at this contraband labor, and a severe beating was the consequence. He reproached me at the same time with attempting to make counterfeit money because our medals bore the arms of the Republic, though, I can truly aver, I had no conception of false money, and very little of the true, knowing better how to make a Roman As than one of our threepenny pieces.

My master’s tyranny rendered insupportable that labor I should otherwise have loved, and drove me to vices I naturally despised, such as falsehood, idleness, and theft. Nothing ever gave me a clearer demonstration of the difference between filial dependence and abject slavery, than the remembrance of the change produced in me at that period. Hitherto I had enjoyed a reasonable liberty; this I had suddenly lost. I was enterprising at my father’s, free at Mr. Lambercier’s, discreet at my uncle’s; but, with my master, I became fearful, and from that moment my mind was vitiated. Accustomed to live on terms of perfect equality, to be witness of no pleasures I could not command, to see no dish I was not to partake of, or be sensible of a desire I might not express; to be able to bring every wish of my heart to my lips—what a transition!—at my master’s I was scarce allowed to speak, was forced to quit the table without tasting what I most longed for, and the room when I had nothing particular to do there; was incessantly confined to my work, while the liberty my master and his journeymen enjoyed, served only to increase the weight of my subjection. When disputes happened to arise, though conscious that I understood the subject better than any of them, I dared not offer my opinion; in a word, everything I saw became an object of desire, for no other reason than because I was not permitted to enjoy anything. Farewell gayety, ease, those happy turns of expressions, which formerly even made my faults escape correction. I recollect, with pleasure, a circumstance that happened at my father’s, which even now makes me smile. Being for some fault ordered to bed without my supper, as I was passing through the kitchen, with my poor morsel of bread in my hand, I saw the meat turning on the

spit; my father and the rest were round the fire; I must bow to every one as I passed. When I had gone through this ceremony, leering with a wistful eye at the roast meat, which looked so inviting, and smelt so savory, I could not abstain from making that a bow likewise, adding in a pitiful tone, good bye, roast meal! This unpremeditated pleasantry put them in such good humor, that I was permitted to stay, and partake of it. Perhaps the same thing might have produced a similar effect at my master's, but such a thought could never have occurred to me, or, if it had, I should not have had courage to express it.

Thus I learned to covet, dissemble, lie, and, at length, to steal, a propensity I never felt the least idea of before, though since that time I have never been able entirely to divest myself of it. Desire and inability united naturally led to this vice, which is the reason pilfering is so common among footmen and apprentices, though the latter, as they grow up, and find themselves in a situation where everything is at their command, lose this shameful propensity. As I never experienced the advantage, I never enjoyed the benefit.

Good sentiments, ill-directed, frequently lead children into vice. Notwithstanding my continual wants and temptations, it was more than a year before I could resolve to take even eatables. My first theft was occasioned by complaisance, but it was productive of others which had not so plausible an excuse.

My master had a journeyman named Verrat, whose mother lived in the neighborhood, and had a garden at a considerable distance from the house, which produced excellent asparagus. This Verrat, who had no great plenty of money, took it in his head to rob her of the most early production of her garden, and by the sale of it procure those indulgences he could not otherwise afford himself; but not being very nimble, he did not care to run the hazard of a surprise. After some preliminary flattery, which I did not comprehend the meaning of, he proposed this expedition to me, as an idea which had that moment struck him. At first I would not listen to the proposal; but he persisted in his solicitation, and as I could never resist the attacks of flattery, at length prevailed. In pursuance of this virtuous resolution, I every morning repaired to the garden, gathered the best of the asparagus, and took it to the Holard where some good old women, who guessed how I came by it, wishing to diminish the price, made no secret of their suspicions; this produced the desired effect, for, being alarmed, I took whatever they offered, which being taken to Mr. Verrat, was presently metamorphosed into a breakfast, and divided with a companion of his; for, though I procured it, I never partook of their good cheer, being fully satisfied with an inconsiderable bribe.

I executed my roguery with the greatest fidelity, seeking only to please my employer; and several days passed before it came into my head, to rob the robber, and tithe Mr. Verrat's harvest. I never considered the hazard I run in these expeditions, not only of a torrent of abuse, but what I should have been still more sensible of, a hearty beating; for the miscreant, who received the whole benefit, would certainly have denied all knowledge of the fact, and I should only have received a double portion of punishment for daring to accuse him, since being only an apprentice, I stood no chance of being believed in opposition to a journeyman. Thus, in every situation, powerful rogues know how to save themselves at the expense of the feeble.

This practice taught me it was not so terrible to thieve as I had imagined: I took care to make this discovery turn to some account, helping myself to everything within my reach, that I conceived an inclination for. I was not absolutely ill-fed at my master's, and temperance was only painful to me by comparing it with the luxury he enjoyed. The custom of sending young people from table precisely when those things are served up which seem most tempting, is calculated to increase their longing, and induces them to steal what they conceive to be so delicious. It may be supposed I was not backward in this particular: in general my knavery succeeded pretty well, though quite the reverse when I happened to be detected.

I recollect an attempt to procure some apples, which was attended with circumstances that make me smile and shudder even at this instant. The fruit was standing in the pantry, which by a lattice at a considerable height received light from the kitchen. One day, being alone in the house, I climbed up to see these precious apples, which being out of my reach, made this pantry appear the garden of Hesperides. I fetched the spit—tried if it would reach them—it was too short—I lengthened it with a small one which was used for game,—my master being very fond of hunting, darted at them several times without success; at length was more fortunate; being transported to find I was bringing up an apple, I drew it gently to the lattice—was going to seize it when (who can express my grief and astonishment!) I found it would not pass through—it was too large. I tried every expedient to accomplish my design, sought supporters to keep the spits in the same position, a knife to divide the apple, and a lath to hold it with; at length, I so far succeeded as to effect the division, and made no doubt of drawing the pieces through; but it was scarcely separated, (compassionate reader, sympathize with my affliction) when both pieces fell into the pantry.

*Original*Links to an external site.(opens in new window)

Though I lost time by this experiment, I did not lose courage, but, dreading a surprise, I put off the attempt till next day, when I hoped to be more successful, and returned to my work as if nothing had happened, without once thinking of what the two obvious witnesses I had left in the pantry deposed against me.

The next day (a fine opportunity offering) I renew the trial. I fasten the spits together; get on the stool; take aim; am just going to dart at my prey—unfortunately the dragon did not sleep; the pantry door opens, my master makes his appearance, and, looking up, exclaims, “Bravo!”—The horror of that moment returns—the pen drops from my hand.

A continual repetition of ill treatment rendered me callous; it seemed a kind of composition for my crimes, which authorized me to continue them, and, instead of looking back at the punishment, I looked forward to revenge. Being beat like a slave, I judged I had a right to all the vices of one. I was convinced that to rob and be punished were inseparable, and constituted, if I may so express myself, a kind of traffic, in which, if I perform my part of the bargain, my master would take care not to be deficient in his; that preliminary settled, I applied myself to thieving with great tranquility, and whenever this interrogatory occurred to my mind, “What will be the consequence?” the reply was ready, “I know the worst, I shall be beat; no matter, I was made for it.”

I love good eating; am sensual, but not greedy; I have such a variety of inclinations to gratify, that this can never predominate; and unless my heart is unoccupied, which very rarely happens, I pay but little attention to my appetite; to purloining eatables, but extended this propensity to everything I wished to possess, and if I did not become a robber in form, it was only because money never tempted me.

My master had a closet in the workshop, which he kept locked; this I contrived to open and shut as often as I pleased, and laid his best tools, fine drawings, impressions, in a word, everything he wished to keep from me, under contribution.

These thefts were so far innocent, that they were always employed in his service, but I was transported at having the trifles in my possession, and imagined I stole the art with its productions. Besides what I have mentioned, his boxes contained threads of gold and silver, a number of small jewels, valuable medals, and money; yet, though I seldom had five sous in my pocket, I do not recollect ever having cast a wishful look at them; on the contrary, I beheld these valuables rather with terror than with delight.

I am convinced the dread of taking money was, in a great measure, the effect of education. There was mingled with the idea of it the fear of infamy, a prison, punishment, and death: had I even felt the temptation, these objects would have made me tremble; whereas my failings appeared a species of waggery, and, in truth, they were little else; they could but occasion a good trimming, and this I was already prepared for. A sheet of fine drawing paper was a greater temptation than money sufficient to have purchased a ream. This unreasonable caprice is connected with one of the most striking singularities of my character, and has so far influenced my conduct, that it requires a particular explanation.

My passions are extremely violent; while under their influence, nothing can equal my impetuosity; I am an absolute stranger to discretion, respect, fear, or decorum; rude, saucy, violent, and intrepid: no shame can stop, no danger intimidate me. My mind is frequently so engrossed by a single object, that beyond it the whole world is not worth a thought; this is the enthusiasm of a moment, the next, perhaps, I am plunged in a state of annihilation. Take me in my moments of tranquility, I am indolence and timidity itself; a word to speak, the least trifle to perform, appear an intolerable labor; everything alarms and terrifies me; the very buzzing of a fly will make me shudder; I am so subdued by fear and shame, that I would gladly shield myself from mortal view.

When obliged to exert myself, I am ignorant what to do! when forced to speak, I am at a loss for words; and if any one looks at me, I am instantly out of countenance. If animated with my subject, I express my thoughts with ease, but, in ordinary conversations, I can say nothing—absolutely nothing; and, being obliged to speak, renders them insupportable.

I may add, that none of my predominant inclinations centre in those pleasures which are to be purchased: money empoisons my delight; I must have them unadulterated; I love those of the table, for instance, but cannot endure the restraints of good company, or the intemperance of taverns; I can enjoy them only with a friend, for alone it is equally impossible; my imagination is then so occupied with other things, that I find no pleasure in eating. Women who are to be purchased have no charms for me; my beating

heart cannot be satisfied without affection; it is the same with every other enjoyment, if not truly disinterested, they are absolutely insipid; in a word, I am fond of those things which are only estimable to minds formed for the peculiar enjoyment of them.

I never thought money so desirable as it is usually imagined; if you would enjoy you must transform it; and this transformation is frequently attended with inconvenience; you must bargain, purchase, pay dear, be badly served, and often duped. I buy an egg, am assured it is new-laid—I find it stale; fruit in its utmost perfection—'tis absolutely green. I love good wine, but where shall I get it? Not at my wine merchant's—he will poison me to a certainty. I wish to be universally respected; how shall I compass my design? I must make friends, send messages, write letters, come, go, wait, and be frequently deceived. Money is the perpetual source of uneasiness; I fear it more than I love good wine.

A thousand times, both during and since my apprenticeship, have I gone out to purchase some nicety, I approach the pastry-cook's, perceive some women at the counter, and imagine they are laughing at me. I pass a fruit shop, see some fine pears, their appearance tempts me; but then two or three young people are near, or a man I am acquainted with is standing at the door; I take all that pass for persons I have some knowledge of, and my near sight contributes to deceive me. I am everywhere intimidated, restrained by some obstacle, and with money in my pocket return as I went, for want of resolution to purchase what I long for.

I should enter into the most insipid details was I to relate the trouble, shame, repugnance, and inconvenience of all kinds which I have experienced in parting with my money, whether in my own person, or by the agency of others; as I proceed, the reader will get acquainted with my disposition, and perceive all this without my troubling him with the recital.

This once comprehended, one of my apparent contradictions will be easily accounted for, and the most sordid avarice reconciled with the greatest contempt of money. It is a movable which I consider of so little value, that, when destitute of it, I never wish to acquire any; and when I have a sum I keep it by me, for want of knowing how to dispose of it to my satisfaction; but let an agreeable and convenient opportunity present itself, and I empty my purse with the utmost freedom; not that I would have the reader imagine I am extravagant from a motive of ostentation, quite the reverse; it was ever in subservience to my pleasures, and, instead of glorying in expense, I endeavor to conceal it. I so well perceive that money is not made to answer my purposes, that I am almost ashamed to have any, and, still more, to make use of it.

Had I ever possessed a moderate independence, I am convinced I should have had no propensity to become avaricious. I should have required no more, and cheerfully lived up to my income; but my precarious situation has constantly and necessarily kept me in fear. I love liberty, and I loathe constraint, dependence, and all their kindred annoyances. As long as my purse contains money it secures my independence, and exempts me from the trouble of seeking other money, a trouble of which I have always had a perfect horror; and the dread of seeing the end of my independence, makes me proportionately unwilling to part with my money. The money that we possess is the instrument of liberty, that which we lack and strive to obtain is the instrument of slavery. Thence it is that I hold fast to aught that I have, and yet covet nothing more.

My disinterestedness, then, is in reality only idleness, the pleasure of possessing is not in my estimation worth the trouble of acquiring: and my dissipation is only another form of idleness; when we have an opportunity of disbursing pleasantly we should make the best possible use of it.

I am less tempted by money than by other objects, because between the moment of possessing the money and that of using it to obtain the desired object there is always an interval, however short; whereas to possess the thing is to enjoy it. I see a thing and it tempts me; but if I see not the thing itself but only the means of acquiring it, I am not tempted. Therefore it is that I have been a pilferer, and am so even now, in the way of mere trifles to which I take a fancy, and which I find it easier to take than to ask for; but I never in my life recollect having taken a farthing from any one, except about fifteen years ago, when I stole seven francs and ten sous. The story is worth recounting, as it exhibits a concurrence of ignorance and stupidity I should scarcely credit, did it relate to any but myself.

It was in Paris: I was walking with M. de Franceul at the Palais Royal; he pulled out his watch, he looked at it, and said to me, "Suppose we go to the opera?"—"With all my heart." We go: he takes two box tickets, gives me one, and enters himself with the other; I follow, find the door crowded; and, looking in, see every one standing; judging, therefore, that M. de Franceul might suppose me concealed by the company, I go out, ask for my ticket, and, getting the money returned, leave the house, without considering, that by then I had reached the door every one would be seated, and M. de Franceul might readily perceive I was not there.

As nothing could be more opposite to my natural inclination than this abominable meanness, I note it, to show there are moments of delirium when men ought not to be judged by their actions: this was not stealing the money, it was only stealing the use of it, and was the more infamous for wanting the excuse of a temptation.

I should never end these accounts, was I to describe all the gradations through which I passed, during my apprenticeship, from the sublimity of a hero to the baseness of a villain. Though I entered into most of the vices of my situation, I had no relish for its pleasures; the amusements of my companions were displeasing, and when too much restraint had made my business wearisome, I had nothing to amuse me. This renewed my taste for reading which had long been neglected. I thus committed a fresh offence, books made me neglect my work, and brought on additional punishment, while inclination, strengthened by constraint, became an unconquerable passion. La Tribu, a well-known librarian, furnished me with all kinds; good or bad, I perused them with avidity, and without discrimination.

It will be said; “at length, then, money became necessary”—true; but this happened at a time when a taste for study had deprived me both of resolution and activity; totally occupied by this new inclination, I only wished to read, I robbed no longer. This is another of my peculiarities; a mere nothing frequently calls me off from what I appear the most attached to; I give in to the new idea; it becomes a passion, and immediately every former desire is forgotten.

Reading was my new hobby; my heart beat with impatience to run over the new book I carried in my pocket; the first moment I was alone, I seized the opportunity to draw it out, and thought no longer of rummaging my master’s closet. I was even ashamed to think that I had been guilty of such meanness; and had my amusements been more expensive, I no longer felt an inclination to continue it. La Tribu gave me credit, and when once I had the book in my possession, I thought no more of the trifle I was to pay for it; as money came it naturally passed to this woman; and when she chanced to be pressing, nothing was so conveniently at hand as my own effects; to steal in advance required foresight, and robbing to pay was no temptation.

The frequent blows I received from my master, with my private and ill-chosen studies, rendered me reserved, unsociable, and almost deranged my reason. Though my taste had not preserved me from silly unmeaning books, by good fortune I was a stranger to licentious or obscene ones; not that La Tribu (who was very accommodating) had any scruple of lending these, on the contrary, to enhance their worth she spoke of them with an air of mystery; this produced an effect she had not foreseen, for both shame and disgust made me constantly refuse them. Chance so well seconded my bashful disposition, that I was past the age of thirty before I saw any of those dangerous compositions.

In less than a year I had exhausted La Tribu’s scanty library, and was unhappy for want of further amusement. My reading, though frequently bad, had worn off my childish follies, and brought back my heart to nobler sentiments than my condition had inspired; meantime disgusted with all within my reach, and thinking everything charming that was out of it, my present situation appeared extremely miserable. My passions began to acquire strength, I felt their influence, without knowing whither they would conduct me. I sometimes, indeed, thought of my former follies, but sought no further.

At this time my imagination took a turn which helped to calm my increasing emotions; it was, to contemplate those situations in the books I had read, which produced the most striking effect on my mind; to recall, combine, and apply them to myself in such a manner, as to become one of the personages my recollection presented, and be continually in those fancied circumstances which were most agreeable to my inclinations; in a word, by contriving to place myself in these fictitious situations, the idea of my real one was in a great measure obliterated.

This fondness for imaginary objects, and the facility with which I could gain possession of them, completed my disgust for everything around me, and fixed that inclination for solitude which has ever since been predominant. We shall have more than once occasion to remark the effects of a disposition, misanthropic and melancholy in appearance, but which proceed, in fact, from a heart too affectionate, too ardent, which, for want of similar dispositions, is constrained to content itself with nonentities, and be satisfied with fiction. It is sufficient, at present, to have traced the origin of a propensity which has modified my passions, set bounds to each, and by giving too much ardor to my wishes, has ever rendered me too indolent to obtain them.

Thus I attained my sixteenth year, uneasy, discontented with myself and everything that surrounded me; displeased with my occupation; without enjoying the pleasures common to my age, weeping without a cause, sighing I knew not why, and fond of my chimerical ideas for want of more valuable realities.

Every Sunday, after sermon-time, my companions came to fetch me out, wishing me to partake of their diversions. I would willingly have been excused, but when once engaged in amusement, I was more animated and enterprising than any of them; it was equally difficult to engage or restrain me; indeed, this was ever a leading trait in my character. In our country walks I was ever foremost, and never thought of returning till reminded by some of my companions. I was twice obliged to be from my master's the whole night, the city gates having been shut before I could reach them. The reader may imagine what treatment this procured me the following mornings; but I was promised such a reception for the third, that I made a firm resolution never to expose myself to the danger of it. Notwithstanding my determination, I repeated this dreaded transgression, my vigilance having been rendered useless by a cursed captain, named M. Minutoli, who, when on guard, always shut the gate he had charge of an hour before the usual time. I was returning home with my two companions, and had got within half a league of the city, when I heard them beat the tattoo; I redouble my pace, I run with my utmost speed, I approach the bridge, see the soldiers already at their posts, I call out to them in a suffocated voice—it is too late; I am twenty paces from the guard, the first bridge is already drawn up, and I tremble to see those terrible horns advanced in the air which announce the fatal and inevitable destiny, which from this moment began to pursue me.

I threw myself on the glacis in a transport of despair, while my companions, who only laughed at the accident, immediately determined what to do. My resolution, though different from theirs, was equally sudden; on the spot, I swore never to return to my master's, and the next morning, when my companions entered the city, I bade them an eternal adieu, conjuring them at the same time to inform my cousin Bernard of my resolution, and the place where he might see me for the last time.

From the commencement of my apprenticeship I had seldom seen him; at first, indeed, we saw each other on Sundays, but each acquiring different habits, our meetings were less frequent. I am persuaded his mother contributed greatly towards this change; he was to consider himself as a person of consequence, I was a pitiful apprentice; notwithstanding our relationship, equality no longer subsisted between us, and it was degrading himself to frequent my company. As he had a natural good heart his mother's lessons did not take an immediate effect, and for some time he continued to visit me.

Having learned my resolution, he hastened to the spot I had appointed, not, however, to dissuade me from it, but to render my flight agreeable, by some trifling presents, as my own resources would not have carried me far. He gave me among other things, a small sword, which I was very proud of, and took with me as far as Turin, where absolute want constrained me to dispose of it. The more I reflect on his behavior at this critical moment, the more I am persuaded he followed the instructions of his mother, and perhaps his father likewise: for, had he been left to his own feelings, he would have endeavored to retain, or have been tempted to accompany me; on the contrary, he encouraged the design, and when he saw me resolutely determined to pursue it, without seeming much affected, left me to my fate. We never saw or wrote to each other from that time; I cannot but regret this loss, for his heart was essentially good, and we seemed formed for a more lasting friendship.

Before I abandon myself to the fatality of my destiny, let me contemplate for a moment the prospect that awaited me had I fallen into the hands of a better master. Nothing could have been more agreeable to my disposition, or more likely to confer happiness, than the peaceful condition of a good artificer, in so respectable a line as engravers are considered at Geneva. I could have obtained an easy subsistence, if not a fortune; this would have bounded my ambition; I should have had means to indulge in moderate pleasures, and should have continued in my natural sphere, without meeting with any temptation to go beyond it. Having an imagination sufficiently fertile to embellish with its chimeras every situation, and powerful enough to transport me from one to another, it was immaterial in which I was fixed: that was best adapted to me, which, requiring the least care or exertion, left the mind most at liberty; and this happiness I should have enjoyed. In my native country, in the bosom of my religion, family and friends, I should have passed a calm and peaceful life, in the uniformity of a pleasing occupation, and among connections dear to my heart. I should have been a good Christian, a good citizen, a good friend, a good man. I should have relished my condition, perhaps have been an honor to it, and after having passed a life of happy obscurity, surrounded by my family, I should have died at peace. Soon it may be forgotten, but while remembered it would have been with tenderness and regret.

Instead of this—what a picture am I about to draw!—Alas! why should I anticipate the miseries I have endured? The reader will have but too much of the melancholy subject.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: Rousseau's CONFESSIONS (Book II)

6.1: Editor's Introduction

6.2: Rousseau's Confessions, Book II

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6.1: Editor's Introduction

In Book II of *Confessions*, several key themes and important figures emerge that contribute to understanding the early stages of Rousseau's development, as an individual and as a thinker. Book II continues his journey through his formative years, reflecting on his evolving character and early relationships. Key themes in this section include the development of Rousseau's sense of identity, his experiences with authority and education, his complex relationship with guilt and shame, and his early sexual awakenings. Several important figures, most notably Madame de Warens, are introduced, deeply shaping the trajectory of Rousseau's life and thought.

A central theme of Book II is Rousseau's early intellectual development, which begins to flourish as he leaves childhood. He recounts books read and knowledge gained, and how his early intellectual pursuits influenced his self-perception and ambitions. The theme of education is crucial in understanding Rousseau's philosophy. In *Confessions*, we see the origins of his belief that the process of learning should be natural and aligned with one's innate curiosity.

Rousseau's early intellectual curiosity often led him into conflict with traditional learning methods. He describes himself as something of a free spirit, engaging with books and ideas on his own terms. This personal approach to education, in which self-learning plays a key role, reflects his lifelong skepticism about formal education systems that suppress rather than encourage innate talents and interests.

Another key theme in Book II is Rousseau's relationship to authority, a recurring motif. The young Rousseau encounters several authority figures, including his family and teachers, who seek to mold his character and behavior. These often lead to moments of submission and rebellion, illustrating Rousseau's ambivalence about power and control.

Also, Rousseau's early punishments, especially those involving Madame Lambercier, as mentioned in Book I, continued to influence his views on authority. His conflicted feelings toward authority figures, especially women, start in these formative years.

Rousseau's experiences with guilt and shame are also prominent in Book II, especially in the way he reflects on his own moral awakenings. He recounts moments of transgression when he struggles to reconcile his desires with his sense of right and wrong. For example, his theft of a ribbon, a seemingly minor offense, haunts Rousseau with a huge sense of guilt. This event will later serve as a metaphor for his lifelong battle with his conscience, illustrating a deep internalization of guilt, even about relatively minor moral failings.

This heightened sensitivity to guilt and shame impact Rousseau's moral philosophy. His intense feelings about these incidents reflect his belief in the importance of conscience, a theme that also resonates in later works. Rousseau's moral struggles also impact his broader views of the human condition, particularly his belief that humans are innately good but often corrupted by societal expectations and pressures.

Another key theme in Book II is Rousseau's early sexual awakening, which is closely tied to his relationships with women. His experiences with Madame Lambercier in Book I, where he first felt sexual arousal linked to corporal punishment, continue to shape his views in Book II. Rousseau's account of his budding sexuality is marked by confusion, desire, and shame. He presents himself as a passive figure in relationships with women, often consumed by longing but unable to act on his feelings in any straightforward or confident way.

Rousseau's sexual development is notable because it intertwines with his views on power, submission, and morality. The intensity of his feelings about love and desire would become central to his later literary works, such as *Julie, or the New Heloise*, where themes of passion, unrequited love, and moral conflict take center stage.

Madame de Warens is one of the most important figures in Rousseau's life and makes her first significant appearance in Book II. Rousseau's relationship with her profoundly affects his emotional, psychological, and intellectual development. She is introduced as a benefactor and maternal figure, providing him with shelter, guidance, and financial support after he leaves his family. His relationship with her will evolve over time into a more complex and emotionally charged bond, eventually becoming one of both romantic and intellectual dependency.

In addition, though, she is instrumental in introducing him to new ideas, nurturing his intellectual growth, and providing him with a model of affection and care that he has long craved. However, this relationship also sets the stage for Rousseau's complex views of women, authority, and dependency. He often describes his feelings for Madame de Warens in conflicting terms, as at once a mother

figure and romantic interest, foreshadowing the deep psychological entanglements that characterize many of his future relationships.

M. de Pontverre, a Catholic priest, plays an important role in Rousseau's religious and intellectual journey in Book II. Rousseau, born into a Protestant family in Geneva, is introduced to the Catholic Church through his association with M. de Pontverre, who convinces him to convert to Catholicism. This decision has profound consequences for Rousseau's identity, as it leads to his formal break with his Protestant roots and opens the door to new opportunities, most notably, his introduction to Madame de Warens.

Rousseau's conversion, influenced by M. de Pontverre, is indicative of his search for belonging and security. Though he will later grow disillusioned with organized religion and religious institutions, this conversion marks a critical moment in his intellectual development, exposing him to novel philosophical and theological ideas.

Another significant figure in Book II is the Abbé of Confignon, a priest who offers Rousseau temporary sanctuary during his wanderings. He plays a minor but symbolic role in Rousseau's journey, as he represents a kind of moral authority and spiritual guide. The Abbé's influence, however, is short-lived, as Rousseau eventually leaves his care to pursue his own path.

The Abbé's presence in Rousseau's narrative serves as another reflection of the tension Rousseau feels between authority and independence. Though Rousseau seeks out the guidance and protection of religious figures during his youth, he is also keenly cognizant of his wish for personal freedom and autonomy. His ambivalence toward the Abbé is indicative of his broader struggle with authority figures.

Overall, Book II offers crucial insights into Rousseau's formative years, and explores themes including education, authority, guilt, and sexual awakening. The important figures in this section, most notably Madame de Warens and M. de Pontverre, play significant roles in shaping Rousseau's evolving sense of self. Rousseau's reflections on his early experiences reveal the psychological and emotional foundations of many of his later ideas, particularly his beliefs about human nature, morality, and society's corrupting influence. In Book II, we glean deeper understandings of the personal and intellectual struggles that go on to define Rousseau's later life and writings.

-Taz Rosenthal

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6.2: Rousseau's Confessions, Book II

Confessions by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Book II)(opens in new window) [www.gutenberg.org]

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The moment in which fear had instigated my flight, did not seem more terrible than that wherein I put my design in execution appeared delightful. To leave my relations, my resources, while yet a child, in the midst of my apprenticeship, before I had learned enough of my business to obtain a subsistence; to run on inevitable misery and danger: to expose myself in that age of weakness and innocence to all the temptations of vice and despair; to set out in search of errors, misfortunes, snares, slavery, and death; to endure more intolerable evils than those I meant to shun, was the picture I should have drawn, the natural consequence of my hazardous enterprise. How different was the idea I entertained of it!—The independence I seemed to possess was the sole object of my contemplation; having obtained my liberty, I thought everything attainable: I entered with confidence on the vast theatre of the world, which my merit was to captivate: at every step I expected to find amusements, treasures, and adventures; friends ready to serve, and mistresses eager to please me; I had but to show myself, and the whole universe would be interested in my concerns; not but I could have been content with something less; a charming society, with sufficient means, might have satisfied me. My moderation was such, that the sphere in which I proposed to shine was rather circumscribed, but then it was to possess the very quintessence of enjoyment, and myself the principal object. A single castle, for instance, might have bounded my ambition; could I have been the favorite of the lord and lady, the daughter's lover, the son's friend, and protector of the neighbors, I might have been tolerably content, and sought no further.

In expectation of this modest fortune, I passed a few days in the environs of the city, with some country people of my acquaintance, who received me with more kindness than I should have met with in town; they welcomed, lodged, and fed me cheerfully; I could be said to live on charity, these favors were not conferred with a sufficient appearance of superiority to furnish out the idea.

I rambled about in this manner till I got to Confignon, in Savoy, at about two leagues distance from Geneva. The vicar was called M. de Pontverre; this name, so famous in the history of the Republic, caught my attention; I was curious to see what appearance the descendants of the gentlemen of the spoon exhibited; I went, therefore, to visit this M. de Pontverre, and was received with great civility.

He spoke of the heresy of Geneva, declaimed on the authority of holy mother church, and then invited me to dinner. I had little to object to arguments which had so desirable a conclusion, and was inclined to believe that priests, who gave such excellent dinners, might be as good as our ministers. Notwithstanding M. de Pontverre's pedigree, I certainly possessed most learning; but I rather sought to be a good companion than an expert theologian; and his Frangi wine, which I thought delicious, argued so powerfully on his side, that I should have blushed at silencing so kind a host; I, therefore, yielded him the victory, or rather declined the contest. Any one who had observed my precaution, would certainly have pronounced me a dissembler, though, in fact, I was only courteous.

Flattery, or rather condescension, is not always a vice in young people; 'tis oftener a virtue. When treated with kindness, it is natural to feel an attachment for the person who confers the obligation; we do not acquiesce because we wish to deceive, but from dread of giving uneasiness, or because we wish to avoid the ingratitude of rendering evil for good. What interest had M. de Pontverre in entertaining, treating with respect, and endeavoring to convince me? None but mine; my young heart told me this, and I was penetrated with gratitude and respect for the generous priest; I was sensible of my superiority, but scorned to repay his hospitality by taking advantage of it. I had no conception of hypocrisy in this forbearance, or thought of changing my religion, nay, so far was the idea from being familiar to me, that I looked on it with a degree of horror which seemed to exclude the possibility of such an event; I only wished to avoid giving offence to those I was sensible caressed me from that motive; I wished to cultivate their good opinion, and meantime leave them the hope of success by seeming less on my guard than I really was. My conduct in this particular resembled the coquetry of some very honest women, who, to obtain their wishes, without permitting or promising anything, sometimes encourage hopes they never mean to realize.

Reason, piety, and love of order, certainly demanded that instead of being encouraged in my folly, I should have been dissuaded from the ruin I was courting, and sent back to my family; and this conduct any one that was actuated by genuine virtue would have pursued; but it should be observed that though M. de Pontverre was a religious man, he was not a virtuous one, but a bigot, who knew no virtue except worshipping images and telling his beads, in a word, a kind of missionary, who thought the height of merit

consisted in writing libels against the ministers of Geneva. Far from wishing to send me back, he endeavored to favor my escape, and put it out of my power to return even had I been so disposed. It was a thousand to one but he was sending me to perish with hunger, or become a villain; but all this was foreign to his purpose; he saw a soul snatched from heresy, and restored to the bosom of the church: whether I was an honest man or a knave was very immaterial, provided I went to mass.

This ridiculous mode of thinking is not peculiar to Catholics; it is the voice of every dogmatical persuasion where merit consists in belief, and not in virtue.

“You are called by the Almighty,” said M. de Pontverre; “go to Annecy, where you will find a good and charitable lady, whom the bounty of the king enables to turn souls from those errors she has happily renounced.” He spoke of a Madam de Warens, a new convert, to whom the priests contrived to send those wretches who were disposed to sell their faith, and with these she was in a manner constrained to share a pension of two thousand francs bestowed on her by the King of Sardinia. I felt myself extremely humiliated at being supposed to want the assistance of a good and charitable lady. I had no objection to be accommodated with everything I stood in need of, but did not wish to receive it on the footing of charity and to owe this obligation to a devotee was still worse; notwithstanding my scruples the persuasions of M. de Pontverre, the dread of perishing with hunger, the pleasures I promised myself from the journey, and hope of obtaining some desirable situation, determined me; and I set out though reluctantly, for Annecy. I could easily have reached it in a day, but being in no great haste to arrive there, it took me three. My head was filled with the ideas of adventures, and I approached every country-seat I saw in my way, in expectation of having them realized. I had too much timidity to knock at the doors, or even enter if I saw them open, but I did what I dared—which was to sing under those windows that I thought had the most favorable appearance; and was very much disconcerted to find I wasted my breath to no purpose, and that neither old nor young ladies were attracted by the melody of my voice, or the wit of my poetry, though some songs my companions had taught me I thought excellent and that I sung them incomparably. At length I arrived at Annecy, and saw Madam de Warens.

As this period of my life, in a great measure, determined my character, I could not resolve to pass it lightly over. I was in the middle of my sixteenth year, and though I could not be called handsome, was well made for my height; I had a good foot, a well turned leg, and animated countenance; a well proportioned mouth, black hair and eyebrows, and my eyes, though small and rather too far in my head, sparkling with vivacity, darted that innate fire which inflamed my blood; unfortunately for me, I knew nothing of all this, never having bestowed a single thought on my person till it was too late to be of any service to me. The timidity common to my age was heightened by a natural benevolence, which made me dread the idea of giving pain. Though my mind had received some cultivation, having seen nothing of the world, I was an absolute stranger to polite address, and my mental acquisitions, so far from supplying this defect, only served to increase my embarrassment, by making me sensible of every deficiency.

Depending little, therefore, on external appearances, I had recourse to other expedients: I wrote a most elaborate letter, where, mingling all the flowers of rhetoric which I had borrowed from books with the phrases of an apprentice, I endeavored to strike the attention, and insure the good will of Madam de Warens. I enclosed M. de Pontverre’s letter in my own and waited on the lady with a heart palpitating with fear and expectation. It was Palm Sunday, of the year 1728; I was informed she was that moment gone to church; I hasten after her, overtake, and speak to her.—The place is yet fresh in my memory—how can it be otherwise? often have I moistened it with my tears and covered it with kisses.—Why cannot I enclose with gold the happy spot, and render it the object of universal veneration? Whoever wishes to honor monuments of human salvation would only approach it on their knees.

It was a passage at the back of the house, bordered on the left hand by a little rivulet, which separated it from the garden, and, on the right, by the court yard wall; at the end was a private door which opened into the church of the Cordeliers. Madam de Warens was just passing this door; but on hearing my voice, instantly turned about. What an effect did the sight of her produce! I expected to see a devout, forbidding old woman; M. de Pontverre’s pious and worthy lady could be no other in my conception; instead of which, I see a face beaming with charms, fine blue eyes full of sweetness, a complexion whose whiteness dazzled the sight, the form of an enchanting neck, nothing escaped the eager eye of the young proselyte; for that instant I was hers!—a religion preached by such missionaries must lead to paradise!

My letter was presented with a trembling hand; she took it with a smile—opened it, glanced an eye over M. de Pontverre’s and again returned to mine, which she read through and would have read again, had not the footman that instant informed her that service was beginning—“Child,” said she, in a tone of voice which made every nerve vibrate, “you are wandering about at an early

age—it is really a pity!”—and without waiting for an answer, added—“Go to my house, bid them give you something for breakfast, after mass, I will speak to you.”

Louisa-Eleanora de Warens was of the noble and ancient family of La Tour de Pit, of Vevay, a city in the country of the Vaudois. She was married very young to a M. de Warens, of the house of Loys, eldest son of M. de Villardin, of Lausanne; there were no children by this marriage, which was far from being a happy one. Some domestic uneasiness made Madam de Warens take the resolution of crossing the Lake, and throwing herself at the feet of Victor Amadeus, who was then at Evian; thus abandoning her husband, family, and country by a giddiness similar to mine, which precipitation she, too, has found sufficient time and reason to lament.

The king, who was fond of appearing a zealous promoter of the Catholic faith, took her under his protection, and complimented her with a pension of fifteen hundred livres of Piedmont, which was a considerable appointment for a prince who never had the character of being generous; but finding his liberality made some conjecture he had an affection for the lady, he sent her to Annecy escorted by a detachment of his guards, where, under the direction of Michael Gabriel de Bernex, titular bishop of Geneva, she abjured her former religion at the Convent of the Visitation.

I came to Annecy just six years after this event; Madam de Warens was then eight-and-twenty, being born with the century. Her beauty, consisting more in the expressive animation of the countenance, than a set of features, was in its meridian; her manner soothing and tender; an angelic smile played about her mouth, which was small and delicate; she wore her hair (which was of an ash color, and uncommonly beautiful) with an air of negligence that made her appear still more interesting; she was short, and rather thick for her height, though by no means disagreeably so; but there could not be a more lovely face, a finer neck, or hands and arms more exquisitely formed.

Her education had been derived from such a variety of sources, that it formed an extraordinary assemblage. Like me, she had lost her mother at her birth, and had received instruction as it chanced to present itself; she had learned something of her governess, something of her father, a little of her masters, but copiously from her lovers; particularly a M. de Tavel, who, possessing both taste and information, endeavored to adorn with them the mind of her he loved. These various instructions, not being properly arranged, tended to impede each other, and she did not acquire that degree of improvement her natural good sense was capable of receiving; she knew something of philosophy and physic, but not enough to eradicate the fondness she had imbibed from her father for empiricism and alchemy; she made elixirs, tinctures, balsams, pretended to secrets, and prepared magestry; while quacks and pretenders, profiting by her weakness, destroyed her property among furnaces, drugs and minerals, diminishing those charms and accomplishments which might have been the delight of the most elegant circles. But though these interested wretches took advantage of her ill-applied education to obscure her natural good sense, her excellent heart retained its purity; her amiable mildness, sensibility for the unfortunate, inexhaustible bounty, and open, cheerful frankness, knew no variation; even at the approach of old age, when attacked by various calamities, rendered more cutting by indigence, the serenity of her disposition preserved to the end of her life the pleasing gayety of her happiest days.

Her errors proceeded from an inexhaustible fund of activity, which demanded perpetual employment. She found no satisfaction in the customary intrigues of her sex, but, being formed for vast designs, sought the direction of important enterprises and discoveries. In her place Madam de Longueville would have been a mere trifler, in Madam de Longueville’s situation she would have governed the state. Her talents did not accord with her fortune; what would have gained her distinction in a more elevated sphere, became her ruin. In enterprises which suited her disposition, she arranged the plan in her imagination, which was ever carried of its utmost extent, and the means she employed being proportioned rather to her ideas than abilities, she failed by the mismanagement of those upon whom she depended, and was ruined where another would scarce have been a loser. This active disposition, which involved her in so many difficulties, was at least productive of one benefit as it prevented her from passing the remainder of her life in the monastic asylum she had chosen, which she had some thought of. The simple and uniform life of a nun, and the little cabals and gossipings of their parlor, were not adapted to a mind vigorous and active, which, every day forming new systems, had occasions for liberty to attempt their completion.

The good bishop of Bernex, with less wit than Francis of Sales, resembled him in many particulars, and Madam de Warens, whom he loved to call his daughter, and who was like Madam de Chantel in several respects, might have increased the resemblance by retiring like her from the world, had she not been disgusted with the idle trifling of a convent. It was not want of zeal prevented this amiable woman from giving those proofs of devotion which might have been expected from a new convert, under the immediate direction of a prelate. Whatever might have influenced her to change her religion, she was certainly sincere in that she had

embraced; she might find sufficient occasion to repent having abjured her former faith, but no inclination to return to it. She not only died a good Catholic, but truly lived one; nay, I dare affirm (and I think I have had the opportunity to read the secrets of her heart) that it was only her aversion to singularity that prevented her acting the devotee in public; in a word, her piety was too sincere to give way to any affectation of it. But this is not the place to enlarge on her principles: I shall find other occasions to speak of them.

Let those who deny the existence of a sympathy of souls, explain, if they know how, why the first glance, the first word of Madam de Warens inspired me, not only with a lively attachment, but with the most unbounded confidence, which has since known no abatement. Say this was love (which will at least appear doubtful to those who read the sequel of our attachment) how could this passion be attended with sentiments which scarce ever accompany its commencement, such as peace, serenity, security, and confidence. How, when making application to an amiable and polished woman, whose situation in life was so superior to mine, so far above any I had yet approached, on whom, in a great measure, depended my future fortune by the degree of interest she might take in it; how, I say with so many reasons to depress me, did I feel myself as free, as much at my ease, as if I had been perfectly secure of pleasing her! Why did I not experience a moment of embarrassment, timidity or restraint? Naturally bashful, easily confused, having seen nothing of the world, could I, the first time, the first moment I beheld her, adopt caressing language, and a familiar tone, as readily as after ten years' intimacy had rendered these freedoms natural? Is it possible to possess love, I will not say without desires, for I certainly had them, but without inquietude, without jealousy? Can we avoid feeling an anxious wish at least to know whether our affection is returned? Yet such a question never entered my imagination; I should as soon have inquired, do I love myself; nor did she ever express a greater degree of curiosity; there was, certainly, something extraordinary in my attachment to this charming woman and it will be found in the sequel, that some extravagances, which cannot be foreseen, attended it.

What could be done for me, was the present question, and in order to discuss the point with greater freedom, she made me dine with her. This was the first meal in my life where I had experienced a want of appetite, and her woman, who waited, observed it was the first time she had seen a traveller of my age and appearance deficient in that particular: this remark, which did me no injury in the opinion of her mistress, fell hard on an overgrown clown, who was my fellow guest, and devoured sufficient to have served at least six moderate feeders. For me, I was too much charmed to think of eating; my heart began to imbibe a delicious sensation, which engrossed my whole being, and left no room for other objects.

Madam de Warens wished to hear the particulars of my little history—all the vivacity I had lost during my servitude returned and assisted the recital. In proportion to the interest this excellent woman took in my story, did she lament the fate to which I had exposed myself; compassion was painted on her features, and expressed by every action. She could not exhort me to return to Geneva, being too well aware that her words and actions were strictly scrutinized, and that such advice would be thought high treason against Catholicism, but she spoke so feelingly of the affliction I must give my father, that it was easy to perceive she would have approved my returning to console him. Alas! she little thought how powerfully this pleaded against herself; the more eloquently persuasive she appeared, the less could I resolve to tear myself from her. I knew that returning to Geneva would be putting an insuperable barrier between us, unless I repeated the expedient which had brought me here, and it was certainly better to preserve than expose myself to the danger of a relapse; besides all this, my conduct was predetermined, I was resolved not to return. Madam de Warens, seeing her endeavors would be fruitless, became less explicit, and only added, with an air of commiseration, "Poor child! thou must go where Providence directs thee, but one day thou wilt think of me."—I believe she had no conception at that time how fatally her prediction would be verified.

The difficulty still remained how I was to gain a subsistence? I have already observed that I knew too little of engraving for that to furnish my resource, and had I been more expert, Savoy was too poor a country to give much encouragement to the arts. The above-mentioned glutton, who ate for us as well as himself, being obliged to pause in order to gain some relaxation from the fatigue of it, imparted a piece of advice, which, according to him, came express from Heaven; though to judge by its effects it appeared to have been dictated from a direct contrary quarter: this was that I should go to Turin, where, in a hospital instituted for the instruction of catechumens, I should find food, both spiritual and temporal, be reconciled to the bosom of the church, and meet with some charitable Christians, who would make it a point to procure me a situation that would turn to my advantage. "In regard to the expenses of the journey," continued our advisor, "his grace, my lord bishop, will not be backward, when once madam has proposed this holy work, to offer his charitable donation, and madam, the baroness, whose charity is so well known," once more addressing himself to the continuation of his meal, "will certainly contribute."

I was by no means pleased with all these charities; I said nothing, but my heart was ready to burst with vexation. Madam de Warens, who did not seem to think so highly of this expedient as the projector pretended to do, contented herself by saying, everyone should endeavor to promote good actions, and that she would mention it to his lordship; but the meddling devil, who had some private interest in this affair, and questioned whether she would urge it to his satisfaction, took care to acquaint the almoners with my story, and so far influenced those good priests, that when Madam de Warens, who disliked the journey on my account, mentioned it to the bishop, she found it so far concluded on, that he immediately put into her hands the money designed for my little viaticum. She dared not advance anything against it; I was approaching an age when a woman like her could not, with any propriety, appear anxious to retain me.

My departure being thus determined by those who undertook the management of my concerns, I had only to submit; and I did it without much repugnance. Though Turin was at a greater distance from Madam de Warens than Geneva, yet being the capital of the country I was now in, it seemed to have more connection with Annecy than a city under a different government and of a contrary religion; besides, as I undertook this journey in obedience to her, I considered myself as living under her direction, which was more flattering than barely to continue in the neighborhood; to sum up all, the idea of a long journey coincided with my insurmountable passion for rambling, which already began to demonstrate itself. To pass the mountains, to my eye appeared delightful; how charming the reflection of elevating myself above my companions by the whole height of the Alps! To see the world is an almost irresistible temptation to a Genevan, accordingly I gave my consent.

He who suggested the journey was to set off in two days with his wife. I was recommended to their care; they were likewise made my purse-bearers, which had been augmented by Madam de Warens, who, not contented with these kindnesses, added secretly a pecuniary reinforcement, attended with the most ample instructions, and we departed on the Wednesday before Easter.

The day following, my father arrived at Annecy, accompanied by his friend, a Mr. Rival, who was likewise a watchmaker; he was a man of sense and letters, who wrote better verses than La Motte, and spoke almost as well; what is still more to his praise, he was a man of the strictest integrity, but whose taste for literature only served to make one of his sons a comedian. Having traced me to the house of Madam de Warens, they contented themselves with lamenting, like her, my fate, instead of overtaking me, which, (as they were on horseback and I on foot) they might have accomplished with the greatest ease.

My uncle Bernard did the same thing, he arrived at Consignon, received information that I was gone to Annecy, and immediately returned back to Geneva; thus my nearest relations seemed to have conspired with my adverse stars to consign me to misery and ruin. By a similar negligence, my brother was so entirely lost, that it was never known what was become of him.

My father was not only a man of honor but of the strictest probity, and endured with that magnanimity which frequently produces the most shining virtues: I may add, he was a good father, particularly to me whom he tenderly loved; but he likewise loved his pleasures, and since we had been separated other connections had weakened his paternal affections. He had married again at Nion, and though his second wife was too old to expect children, she had relations; my father was united to another family, surrounded by other objects, and a variety of cares prevented my returning to his remembrance. He was in the decline of life and had nothing to support the inconveniences of old age; my mother’s property devolved to me and my brother, but, during our absence, the interest of it was enjoyed by my father: I do not mean to infer that this consideration had an immediate effect on his conduct, but it had an imperceptible one, and prevented him making use of that exertion to regain me which he would otherwise have employed; and this, I think, was the reason that having traced me as far as Annecy, he stopped short, without proceeding to Chambery, where he was almost certain I should be found; and likewise accounts why, on visiting him several times since my flight, he always received me with great kindness, but never made any efforts to retain me.

This conduct in a father, whose affection and virtue I was so well convinced of, has given birth to reflections on the regulation of my own conduct which have greatly contributed to preserve the integrity of my heart. It has taught me this great lesson of morality, perhaps the only one that can have any conspicuous influence on our actions, that we should ever carefully avoid putting our interests in competition with our duty, or promise ourselves felicity from the misfortunes of others; certain that in such circumstances, however sincere our love of virtue may be, sooner or later it will give way and we shall imperceptibly become unjust and wicked, in fact, however upright in our intentions.

This maxim, strongly imprinted on my mind, and reduced, though rather too late, to practice, has given my conduct an appearance of folly and whimsicality, not only in public, but still more among my acquaintances: it has been said, I affected originality, and sought to act different from other people; the truth is, I neither endeavor to conform or be singular, I desire only to act virtuously

and avoid situations, which, by setting my interest in opposition to that of another person's, might inspire me with a secret, though involuntary wish to his disadvantage.

Two years ago, My Lord Marshal would have put my name in his will, which I took every method to prevent, assuring him I would not for the world know myself in the will of any one, much less in his; he gave up the idea; but insisted in return, that I should accept an annuity on his life; this I consented to. It will be said, I find my account in the alteration; perhaps I may; but oh, my benefactor! my father, I am now sensible that, should I have the misfortune to survive thee, I should have everything to lose, nothing to gain.

This, in my idea, in true philosophy, the surest bulwark of human rectitude; every day do I receive fresh conviction of its profound solidity. I have endeavored to recommend it in all my latter writings, but the multitude read too superficially to have made the remark. If I survive my present undertaking, and am able to begin another, I mean, in a continuation of Emilius, to give such a lively and marking example of this maxim as cannot fail to strike attention. But I have made reflections enough for a traveller, it is time to continue my journey.

It turned out more agreeable than I expected: my clownish conductor was not so morose as he appeared to be. He was a middle-aged man, wore his black, grizzly hair, in a queue, had a martial air, a strong voice, was tolerably cheerful, and to make up for not having been taught any trade, could turn his hand to every one. Having proposed to establish some kind of manufactory at Annecy, he had consulted Madam de Warens, who immediately gave into the project, and he was now going to Turin to lay the plan before the minister and get his approbation, for which journey he took care to be well rewarded.

This drole had the art of ingratiating himself with the priests, whom he ever appeared eager to serve; he adopted a certain jargon which he had learned by frequenting their company, and thought himself a notable preacher; he could even repeat one passage from the Bible in Latin, and it answered his purpose as well as if he had known a thousand, for he repeated it a thousand times a day. He was seldom at a loss for money when he knew what purse contained it; yet, was rather artful than knavish, and when dealing out in an affected tone his unmeaning discourses, resembled Peter the Hermit, preaching up the crusade with a sabre at his side.

Madam Sabran, his wife, was a tolerable, good sort of woman; more peaceable by day than by night; as I slept in the same chamber I was frequently disturbed by her wakefulness, and should have been more so had I comprehended the cause of it; but I was in the chapter of dullness, which left to nature the whole care of my own instruction.

I went on gayly with my pious guide and his hopeful companion, no sinister accident impeding our journey. I was in the happiest circumstances both of mind and body that I ever recollect having experienced; young, full of health and security, placing unbounded confidence in myself and others; in that short but charming moment of human life, whose expansive energy carries, if I may so express myself, our being to the utmost extent of our sensations, embellishing all nature with an inexpressible charm, flowing from the conscious and rising enjoyment of our existence.

My pleasing inquietudes became less wandering: I had now an object on which imagination could fix. I looked on myself as the work, the pupil, the friend, almost the lover of Madam de Warens; the obliging things she had said, the caresses she had bestowed on me; the tender interest she seemed to take in everything that concerned me; those charming looks, which seemed replete with love, because they so powerfully inspired it, every consideration flattered my ideas during this journey, and furnished the most delicious reveries, which, no doubt, no fear of my future condition arose to embitter. In sending me to Turin, I thought they engaged to find me an agreeable subsistence there; thus eased of every care I passed lightly on, while young desires, enchanting hopes, and brilliant prospects employed my mind; each object that presented itself seemed to insure my approaching felicity. I imagined that every house was filled with joyous festivity, the meadows resounded with sports and revelry, the rivers offered refreshing baths, delicious fish wantoned in these streams, and how delightful was it to ramble along the flowery banks! The trees were loaded with the choicest fruits, while their shade afforded the most charming and voluptuous retreats to happy lovers; the mountains abounded with milk and cream; peace and leisure, simplicity and joy, mingled with the charm of going I knew not whither, and everything I saw carried to my heart some new cause for rapture. The grandeur, variety, and real beauty of the scene, in some measure rendered the charm reasonable, in which vanity came in for its share; to go so young to Italy, view such an extent of country, and pursue the route of Hannibal over the Alps, appeared a glory beyond my age; add to all this our frequent and agreeable halts, with a good appetite and plenty to satisfy it; for in truth it was not worth while to be sparing; at Mr. Sabran's table what I eat could scarce be missed. In the whole course of my life I cannot recollect an interval more perfectly exempt from care, than the seven or eight days I was passing from Annecy to Turin. As we were obliged to walk Madam Sabran's pace, it rather

appeared an agreeable jaunt than a fatiguing journey; there still remains the most pleasing impressions of it on my mind, and the idea of a pedestrian excursion, particularly among the mountains, has from this time seemed delightful.

It was only in my happiest days that I travelled on foot, and ever with the most unbounded satisfaction; afterwards, occupied with business and encumbered with baggage, I was forced to act the gentleman and employ a carriage, where care, embarrassment, and restraint, were sure to be my companions, and instead of being delighted with the journey, I only wished to arrive at the place of destination.

I was a long time at Paris, wishing to meet with two companions of similar dispositions, who would each agree to appropriate fifty guineas of his property and a year of his time to making the tour of Italy on foot, with no other attendance than a young fellow to carry our necessaries; I have met with many who seemed enchanted with the project, but considered it only as a visionary scheme, which served well enough to talk of, without any design of putting it in execution. One day, speaking with enthusiasm of this project to Diderot and Grimm, they gave into the proposal with such warmth that I thought the matter concluded on; but it only turned out a journey on paper, in which Grimm thought nothing so pleasing as making Diderot commit a number of impieties, and shutting me up in the Inquisition for them, instead of him.

My regret at arriving so soon at Turin was compensated by the pleasure of viewing a large city, and the hope of figuring there in a conspicuous character, for my brain already began to be intoxicated with the fumes of ambition; my present situation appeared infinitely above that of an apprentice, and I was far from foreseeing how soon I should be much below it.

Before I proceed, I ought to offer an excuse, or justification to the reader for the great number of unentertaining particulars I am necessitated to repeat. In pursuance of the resolution I have formed to enter on this public exhibition of myself, it is necessary that nothing should bear the appearance of obscurity or concealment. I should be continually under the eye of the reader, he should be enabled to follow me In all the wanderings of my heart, through every intricacy of my adventures; he must find no void or chasm in my relation, nor lose sight of me an instant, lest he should find occasion to say, what was he doing at this time; and suspect me of not having dared to reveal the whole. I give sufficient scope to malignity in what I say; it is unnecessary I should furnish still more by my silence.

My money was all gone, even that I had secretly received from Madam de Warens: I had been so indiscreet as to divulge this secret, and my conductors had taken care to profit by it. Madam Sabran found means to deprive me of everything I had, even to a ribbon embroidered with silver, with which Madam de Warens had adorned the hilt of my sword; this I regretted more than all the rest; indeed the sword itself would have gone the same way, had I been less obstinately bent on retaining it. They had, it is true, supported me during the journey, but left me nothing at the end of it, and I arrived at Turin, without money, clothes, or linen, being precisely in the situation to owe to my merit alone the whole honor of that fortune I was about to acquire.

I took care in the first place to deliver the letters I was charged with, and was presently conducted to the hospital of the catechumens, to be instructed in that religion, for which, in return, I was to receive subsistence. On entering, I passed an iron-barred gate, which was immediately double-locked on me; this beginning was by no means calculated to give me a favorable opinion of my situation. I was then conducted to a large apartment, whose furniture consisted of a wooden altar at the farther end, on which was a large crucifix, and round it several indifferent chairs, of the same materials. In this hall of audience were assembled four or five ill-looking banditti, my comrades in instruction, who would rather have been taken for trusty servants of the devil than candidates for the kingdom of heaven. Two of these fellows were Sclavonians, but gave out they were African Jews, and (as they assured me) had run through Spain and Italy, embracing the Christian faith, and being baptised wherever they thought it worth their labor.

Soon after they opened another iron gate, which divided a large balcony that overlooked a court yard, and by this avenue entered our sister catechumens, who, like me, were going to be regenerated, not by baptism but a solemn abjuration. A viler set of idle, dirty, abandoned harlots, never disgraced any persuasion; one among them, however, appeared pretty and interesting; she might be about my own age, perhaps a year or two older, and had a pair of roguish eyes, which frequently encountered mine; this was enough to inspire me with the desire of becoming acquainted with her, but she had been so strongly recommended to the care of the old governess of this respectable sisterhood, and was so narrowly watched by the pious missionary, who labored for her conversion with more zeal than diligence, that during the two months we remained together in this house (where she had already been three) I found it absolutely impossible to exchange a word with her. She must have been extremely stupid, though she had not the appearance of it, for never was a longer course of instruction; the holy man could never bring her to a state of mind fit for

abjuration; meantime she became weary of her cloister, declaring that, Christian or not, she would stay there no longer; and they were obliged to take her at her word, lest she should grow refractory, and insist on departing as great a sinner as she came.

This hopeful community were assembled in honor of the new-comer; when our guides made us a short exhortation: I was conjured to be obedient to the grace that Heaven had bestowed on me; the rest were admonished to assist me with their prayers, and give me edification by their good example. Our virgins then retired to another apartment, and I was left to contemplate, at leisure, that wherein I found myself.

The next morning we were again assembled for instruction: I now began to reflect, for the first time, on the step I was about to take, and the circumstances which had led me to it.

I repeat, and shall perhaps repeat again, an assertion I have already advanced, and of whose truth I every day receive fresh conviction, which is, that if ever child received a reasonable and virtuous education, it was myself. Born in a family of unexceptionable morals, every lesson I received was replete with maxims of prudence and virtue. My father (though fond of gallantry) not only possessed distinguished probity, but much religion; in the world he appeared a man of pleasure, in his family he was a Christian, and implanted early in my mind those sentiments he felt the force of. My three aunts were women of virtue and piety; the two eldest were professed devotees, and the third, who united all the graces of wit and good sense, was, perhaps, more truly religious than either, though with less ostentation. From the bosom of this amiable family I was transplanted to M. Lambercier's, a man dedicated to the ministry, who believed the doctrine he taught, and acted up to its precepts. He and his sister matured by their instructions those principles of judicious piety I had already imbibed, and the means employed by these worthy people were so well adapted to the effect they meant to produce, that so far from being fatigued, I scarce ever listened to their admonitions without finding myself sensibly affected, and forming resolutions to live virtuously, from which, except in moments of forgetfulness, I seldom swerved. At my uncle's, religion was far more tiresome, because they made it an employment; with my master I thought no more of it, though my sentiments continued the same: I had no companions to vitiate my morals: I became idle, careless, and obstinate, but my principles were not impaired.

I possessed as much religion, therefore, as a child could be supposed capable of acquiring. Why should I now disguise my thoughts? I am persuaded I had more. In my childhood, I was not a child; I felt, I thought as a man: as I advanced in years, I mingled with the ordinary class; in my infancy I was distinguished from it. I shall doubtless incur ridicule by thus modestly holding myself up for a prodigy—I am content. Let those who find themselves disposed to it, laugh their fill; afterward, let them find a child that at six years old is delighted, interested, affected with romances, even to the shedding floods of tears; I shall then feel my ridiculous vanity, and acknowledge myself in an error.

Thus when I said we should not converse with children on religion, if we wished them ever to possess any; when I asserted they were incapable of communion with the Supreme Being, even in our confined degree, I drew my conclusions from general observation; I knew they were not applicable to particular instances: find J. J. Rousseau of six years old, converse with them on religious subjects at seven, and I will be answerable that the experiment will be attended with no danger.

It is understood, I believe, that a child, or even a man, is likely to be most sincere while persevering in that religion in whose belief he was born and educated; we frequently detract from, seldom make any additions to it: dogmatical faith is the effect of education. In addition to this general principle which attached me to the religion of my forefathers, I had that particular aversion our city entertains for Catholicism, which is represented there as the most monstrous idolatry, and whose clergy are painted in the blackest colors. This sentiment was so firmly imprinted on my mind, that I never dared to look into their churches—I could not bear to meet a priest in his surplice, and never did I hear the bells of a procession sound without shuddering with horror; these sensations soon wore off in great cities, but frequently returned in country parishes, which bore more similarity to the spot where I first experienced them; meantime this dislike was singularly contrasted by the remembrance of those caresses which priests in the neighborhood of Geneva are fond of bestowing on the children of that city. If the bells of the viaticum alarmed me, the chiming for mass or vespers called me to a breakfast, a collation, to the pleasure of regaling on fresh butter, fruits, or milk; the good cheer of M. de Pontverre had produced a considerable effect on me; my former abhorrence began to diminish, and looking on popery through the medium of amusement and good living, I easily reconciled myself to the idea of enduring, though I never entertained but a very transient and distant idea of making a solemn profession of it.

At this moment such a transaction appeared in all its horrors; I shuddered at the engagement I had entered into, and its inevitable consequences. The future neophytes with which I was surrounded were not calculated to sustain my courage by their example, and

I could not help considering the holy work I was about to perform as the action of a villain. Though young, I was sufficiently convinced, that whatever religion might be the true one, I was about to sell mine; and even should I chance to chose the best, I lied to the Holy Ghost, and merited the disdain of every good man. The more I considered, the more I despised myself, and trembled at the fate which had led me into such a predicament, as if my present situation had not been of my own seeking. There were moments when these compunctions were so strong that had I found the door open but for an instant, I should certainly have made my escape; but this was impossible, nor was the resolution of any long duration, being combated by too many secret motives to stand any chance of gaining the victory.

My fixed determination not to return to Geneva, the shame that would attend it, the difficulty of repassing the mountains, at a distance from my country, without friends, and without resources, everything concurred to make me consider my remorse of conscience, as a too late repentance. I affected to reproach myself for what I had done, to seek excuses for that I intended to do, and by aggravating the errors of the past, looked on the future as an inevitable consequence. I did not say, nothing is yet done, and you may be innocent if you please; but I said, tremble at the crime thou hast committed, which hath reduced thee to the necessity of filling up the measure of thine iniquities.

It required more resolution than was natural to my age to revoke those expectations which I had given them reason to entertain, break those chains with which I was enthralled, and resolutely declare I would continue in the religion of my forefathers, whatever might be the consequence. The affair was already too far advanced, and spite of all my efforts they would have made a point of bringing it to a conclusion.

The sophism which ruined me has had a similar affect on the greater part of mankind, who lament the want of resolution when the opportunity for exercising it is over. The practice of virtue is only difficult from our own negligence; were we always discreet, we should seldom have occasion for any painful exertion of it; we are captivated by desires we might readily surmount, give into temptations that might easily be resisted, and insensibly get into embarrassing, perilous situations, from which we cannot extricate ourselves but with the utmost difficulty; intimidated by the effort, we fall into the abyss, saying to the Almighty, why hast thou made us such weak creatures? But, notwithstanding our vain pretexts, He replies, by our consciences, I formed ye too weak to get out of the gulf, because I gave ye sufficient strength not to have fallen into it.

I was not absolutely resolved to become a Catholic, but, as it was not necessary to declare my intentions immediately, I gradually accustomed myself to the idea; hoping, meantime, that some unforeseen event would extricate me from my embarrassment. In order to gain time, I resolved to make the best defence I possibly could in favor of my own opinion; but my vanity soon rendered this resolution unnecessary, for on finding I frequently embarrassed those who had the care of my instruction, I wished to heighten my triumph by giving them a complete overthrow. I zealously pursued my plan, not without the ridiculous hope of being able to convert my convertors; for I was simple enough to believe, that could I convince them of their errors, they would become Protestants; they did not find, therefore, that facility in the work which they had expected, as I differed both in regard to will and knowledge from the opinion they had entertained of me.

Protestants, in general, are better instructed in the principles of their religion than Catholics; the reason is obvious; the doctrine of the former requires discussion, of the latter a blind submission; the Catholic must content himself with the decisions of others, the Protestant must learn to decide for himself; they were not ignorant of this, but neither my age nor appearance promised much difficulty to men so accustomed to disputation. They knew, likewise, that I had not received my first communion, nor the instructions which accompany it; but, on the other hand, they had no idea of the information I received at M. Lambercier's, or that I had learned the history of the church and empire almost by heart at my father's; and though, since that time, nearly forgot, when warmed by the dispute (very unfortunately for these gentlemen), it again returned to my memory.

A little old priest, but tolerably venerable, held the first conference; at which we were all convened. On the part of my comrades, it was rather a catechism than a controversy, and he found more pains in giving them instruction than answering their objections; but when it came to my turn, it was a different matter; I stopped him at every article, and did not spare a single remark that I thought would create a difficulty: this rendered the conference long and extremely tiresome to the assistants. My old priest talked a great deal, was very warm, frequently rambled from the subject, and extricated himself from difficulties by saying he was not sufficiently versed in the French language.

The next day, lest my indiscreet objections should injure the minds of those who were better disposed, I was led into a separate chamber and put under the care of a younger priest, a fine speaker; that is, one who was fond of long perplexed sentences, and

proud of his own abilities, if ever doctor was. I did not, however, suffer myself to be intimidated by his overbearing looks: and being sensible that I could maintain my ground, I combated his assertions, exposed his mistakes, and laid about me in the best manner I was able. He thought to silence me at once with St. Augustine, St. Gregory, and the rest of the fathers, but found, to his ineffable surprise, that I could handle these almost as dexterously as himself; not that I had ever read them, or he either, perhaps, but I retained a number of passages taken from my Le Sueur, and when he bore hard on me with one citation, without standing to dispute, I parried it with another, which method embarrassed him extremely. At length, however, he got the better of me for two very potent reasons; in the first place, he was of the strongest side; young as I was, I thought it might be dangerous to drive him to extremities, for I plainly saw the old priest was neither satisfied with me nor my erudition. In the next place, he had studied, I had not; this gave a degree of method to his arguments which I could not follow; and whenever he found himself pressed by an unforeseen objection he put it off to the next conference, pretending I rambled from the question in dispute. Sometimes he even rejected all my quotations, maintaining they were false, and, offering to fetch the book, defied me to find them. He knew he ran very little risk, and that, with all my borrowed learning, I was not sufficiently accustomed to books, and too poor a Latinist to find a passage in a large volume, had I been ever so well assured it was there. I even suspected him of having been guilty of a perfidy with which he accused our ministers, and that he fabricated passages sometimes in order to evade an objection that incommoded him.

Meanwhile the hospital became every day more disagreeable to me, and seeing but one way to get out of it, I endeavored to hasten my abjuration with as much eagerness as I had hitherto sought to retard it.

The two Africans had been baptised with great ceremony, they were habited in white from head to foot to signify the purity of their regenerated souls. My turn came a month after; for all this time was thought necessary by my directors, that they might have the honor of a difficult conversion, and every dogma of their faith was recapitulated, in order to triumph the more completely over my new docility.

At length, sufficiently instructed and disposed to the will of my masters, I was led in procession to the metropolitan church of St. John, to make a solemn abjuration, and undergo a ceremony made use of on these occasions, which, though not baptism, is very similar, and serves to persuade the people that Protestants are not Christians. I was clothed in a kind of gray robe, decorated with white Brandenburgs. Two men, one behind, the other before me, carried copper basins which they kept striking with a key, and in which those who were charitably disposed put their alms, according as they found themselves influenced by religion or good will for the new convert; in a word, nothing of Catholic pageantry was omitted that could render the solemnity edifying to the populace, or humiliating to me. The white dress might have been serviceable, but as I had not the honor to be either Moor or Jew, they did not think fit to compliment me with it.

The affair did not end here, I must now go to the Inquisition to be absolved from the dreadful sin of heresy, and return to the bosom of the church with the same ceremony to which Henry the Fourth was subjected by his ambassador. The air and manner of the right reverend Father Inquisitor was by no means calculated to dissipate the secret horror that seized my spirits on entering this holy mansion. After several questions relative to my faith, situation, and family, he asked me bluntly if my mother was damned? Terror repressed the first gust of indignation; this gave me time to recollect myself, and I answered, I hope not, for God might have enlightened her last moments. The monk made no reply, but his silence was attended with a look by no means expressive of approbation.

All these ceremonies ended, the very moment I flattered myself I should be plentifully provided for, they exhorted me to continue a good Christian, and live in obedience to the grace I had received; then wishing me good fortune, with rather more than twenty francs of small money in my pocket, the produce of the above-mentioned collection, turned me out, shut the door on me, and I saw no more of them!

Thus, in a moment, all my flattering expectations were at an end; and nothing remained from my interested conversion but the remembrance of having been made both a dupe and an apostate. It is easy to imagine what a sudden revolution was produced in my ideas, when every brilliant expectation of making a fortune terminated by seeing myself plunged in the completest misery. In the morning I was deliberating what palace I should inhabit, before night I was reduced to seek my lodging in the street. It may be supposed that I gave myself up to the most violent transports of despair, rendered more bitter by a consciousness that my own folly had reduced me to these extremities; but the truth is, I experienced none of these disagreeable sensations. I had passed two months in absolute confinement; this was new to me; I was now emancipated, and the sentiment I felt most forcibly, was joy at my recovered liberty. After a slavery which had appeared tedious, I was again master of my time and actions, in a great city, abundant

in resources, crowded with people of fortune, to whom my merit and talents could not fail to recommend me. I had sufficient time before me to expect this good fortune, for my twenty livres seemed an inexhaustible treasure, which I might dispose of without rendering an account of to anyone. It was the first time I had found myself so rich, and far from giving way to melancholy reflections, I only adopted other hopes, in which self-love was by no means a loser. Never did I feel so great a degree of confidence and security; I looked on my fortune as already made and was pleased to think I should have no one but myself to thank for the acquisition of it.

The first thing I did was to satisfy my curiosity by rambling all over the city, and I seemed to consider it as a confirmation of my liberty; I went to see the soldiers mount guard, and was delighted with their military accouterment; I followed processions, and was pleased with the solemn music of the priests; I next went to see the king's palace, which I approached with awe, but seeing others enter, I followed their example, and no one prevented me; perhaps I owed this favor to the small parcel I carried under my arm; be that as it may, I conceived a high opinion of my consequence from this circumstance, and already thought myself an inhabitant there. The weather was hot; I had walked about till I was both fatigued and hungry; wishing for some refreshment, I went into a milk-house; they brought me some cream-cheese curds and whey, and two slices of that excellent Piedmont bread, which I prefer to any other; and for five or six sous I had one of the most delicious meals I ever recollect to have made.

It was time to seek a lodging: as I already knew enough of the Piedmontese language to make myself understood, this was a work of no great difficulty; and I had so much prudence, that I wished to adapt it rather to the state of my purse than the bent of my inclinations. In the course of my inquiries, I was informed that a soldier's wife, in Po-street, furnished lodgings to servants out of place at only one sou a night, and finding one of her poor beds disengaged, I took possession of it. She was young and newly married, though she already had five or six children. Mother, children and lodgers, all slept in the same chamber, and it continued thus while I remained there. She was good-natured, swore like a carman, and wore neither cap nor handkerchief; but she had a gentle heart, was officious; and to me both kind and serviceable.

For several days I gave myself up to the pleasures of independence and curiosity; I continued wandering about the city and its environs, examining every object that seemed curious or new; and, indeed, most things had that appearance to a young novice. I never omitted visiting the court, and assisted regularly every morning at the king's mass. I thought it a great honor to be in the same chapel with this prince and his retinue; but my passion for music, which now began to make its appearance, was a greater incentive than the splendor of the court, which, soon seen and always the same, presently lost its attraction. The King of Sardinia had at that time the best music in Europe; Somis, Desjardins, and the Bezuzzi shone there alternately; all these were not necessary to fascinate a youth whom the sound of the most simple instrument, provided it was just, transported with joy. Magnificence only produced a stupid admiration, without any violent desire to partake of it, my thoughts were principally employed in observing whether any young princess was present that merited my homage, and whom I could make the heroine of a romance.

Meantime, I was on the point of beginning one; in a less elevated sphere, it is true, but where could I have brought it to a conclusion, I should have found pleasures a thousand times more delicious.

Though I lived with the strictest economy, my purse insensibly grew lighter. This economy was, however, less the effect of prudence than that love of simplicity, which, even to this day, the use of the most expensive tables has not been able to vitiate. Nothing in my idea, either at that time or since, could exceed a rustic repast; give me milk, vegetables, eggs, and brown bread, with tolerable wine and I shall always think myself sumptuously regaled; a good appetite will furnish out the rest, if the maitre d' hotel, with a number of unnecessary footmen, do not satiate me with their important attentions. Five or six sous would then procure me a more agreeable meal than as many livres would have done since; I was abstemious, therefore, for want of a temptation to be otherwise: though I do not know but I am wrong to call this abstinence, for with my pears, new cheese, bread and some glasses of Montferrat wine, which you might have cut with a knife, I was the greatest of epicures. Notwithstanding my expenses were very moderate, it was possible to see the end of twenty livres; I was every day more convinced of this, and, spite of the giddiness of youth, my apprehensions for the future amounted almost to terror. All my castles in the air were vanished, and I became sensible of the necessity of seeking some occupation that would procure me a subsistence.

Even this was a work of difficulty; I thought of my engraving, but knew too little of it to be employed as a journeyman, nor do masters abound in Turin; I resolved, therefore, till something better presented itself, to go from shop to shop, offering to engrave ciphers, or coats of arms, on pieces of plate, etc., and hoped to get employment by working at a low price; or taking what they chose to give me. Even this expedient did not answer my expectations; almost all my applications were ineffectual, the little I procured being hardly sufficient to produce a few scanty meals.

Walking one morning pretty early in the ‘Contra nova’, I saw a young tradeswoman behind a counter, whose looks were so charmingly attractive, that, notwithstanding my timidity with the ladies, I entered the shop without hesitation, offered my services as usual: and had the happiness to have it accepted. She made me sit down and recite my little history, pitied my forlorn situation; bade me be cheerful, and endeavored to make me so by an assurance that every good Christian would give me assistance; then (while she had occasion for) she went up stairs and fetched me something for breakfast. This seemed a promising beginning, nor was what followed less flattering: she was satisfied with my work, and, when I had a little recovered myself, still more with my discourse. She was rather elegantly dressed and notwithstanding her gentle looks this appearance of gayety had disconcerted me; but her good-nature, the compassionate tone of her voice, with her gentle and caressing manner, soon set me at ease with myself; I saw my endeavors to please were crowned with success, and this assurance made me succeed the more. Though an Italian, and too pretty to be entirely devoid of coquetry, she had so much modesty, and I so great a share of timidity, that our adventure was not likely to be brought to a very speedy conclusion, nor did they give us time to make any good of it. I cannot recall the few short moments I passed with this lovely woman without being sensible of an inexpressible charm, and can yet say, it was there I tasted in their utmost perfection the most delightful, as well as the purest pleasures of love.

She was a lively pleasing brunette, and the good nature that was painted on her lovely face rendered her vivacity more interesting. She was called Madam Basile: her husband, who was considerably older than herself, consigned her, during his absence, to the care of a clerk, too disagreeable to be thought dangerous; but who, notwithstanding, had pretensions that he seldom showed any signs of, except of ill-humors, a good share of which he bestowed on me; though I was pleased to hear him play the flute, on which he was a tolerable musician. This second Egistus was sure to grumble whenever he saw me go into his mistress’ apartment, treating me with a degree of disdain which she took care to repay him with interest; seeming pleased to caress me in his presence, on purpose to torment him. This kind of revenge, though perfectly to my taste, would have been still more charming in a ‘tete a tete’, but she did not proceed so far; at least, there was a difference in the expression of her kindness. Whether she thought me too young, that it was my place to make advances, or that she was seriously resolved to be virtuous, she had at such times a kind of reserve, which, though not absolutely discouraging, kept my passion within bounds.

I did not feel the same real and tender respect for her as I did for Madam de Warens: I was embarrassed, agitated, feared to look, and hardly dared to breathe in her presence, yet to have left her would have been worse than death: How fondly did my eyes devour whatever they could gaze on without being perceived! the flowers on her gown, the point of her pretty foot, the interval of a round white arm that appeared between her glove and ruffle, the least part of her neck, each object increased the force of all the rest, and added to the infatuation. Gazing thus on what was to be seen, and even more than was to be seen, my sight became confused, my chest seemed contracted, respiration was every moment more painful. I had the utmost difficulty to hide my agitation, to prevent my sighs from being heard, and this difficulty was increased by the silence in which we were frequently plunged. Happily, Madam Basile, busy at her work, saw nothing of all this, or seemed not to see it: yet I sometimes observed a kind of sympathy, especially at the frequent rising of her handkerchief, and this dangerous sight almost mastered every effort, but when on the point of giving way to my transports, she spoke a few words to me with an air of tranquility, and in an instant the agitation subsided.

I saw her several times in this manner without a word, a gesture, or even a look, too expressive, making the least intelligence between us. The situation was both my torment and delight, for hardly in the simplicity of my heart, could I imagine the cause of my uneasiness. I should suppose these ‘tete a tete’ could not be displeasing to her, at least, she sought frequent occasions to renew them; this was a very disinterested labor, certainly, as appeared by the use she made, or ever suffered me to make of them.

Being, one day, wearied with the clerk’s discourse, she had retired to her chamber; I made haste to finish what I had to do in the back shop, and followed her; the door was half open, and I entered without being perceived. She was embroidering near a window on the opposite side of the room; she could not see me; and the carts in the streets made too much noise for me to be heard. She was always well dressed, but this day her attire bordered on coquetry. Her attitude was graceful, her head leaning gently forward, discovered a small circle of her neck; her hair, elegantly dressed, was ornamented with flowers; her figure was universally charming, and I had an uninterrupted opportunity to admire it. I was absolutely in a state of ecstasy, and, involuntary, sinking on my knees, I passionately extended my arms towards her, certain she could not hear, and having no conception that she could see me; but there was a chimney glass at the end of the room that betrayed all my proceedings. I am ignorant what effect this transport produced on her; she did not speak; she did not look on me; but, partly turning her head, with the movement of her finger only, she pointed to the mat that was at her feet—To start up, with an articulate cry of joy, and occupy the place she had indicated, was the work of a moment; but it will hardly be believed I dared attempt no more, not even to speak, raise my eyes to hers, or rest an instant

on her knees, though in an attitude which seemed to render such a support necessary. I was dumb, immovable, but far enough from a state of tranquility; agitation, joy, gratitude, ardent indefinite wishes, restrained by the fear of giving displeasure, which my unpractised heart too much dreaded, were sufficiently discernible. She neither appeared more tranquil, nor less intimidated than myself—uneasy at my present situation; confounded at having brought me there, beginning to tremble for the effects of a sign which she had made without reflecting on the consequences, neither giving encouragement, nor expressing disapprobation, with her eyes fixed on her work, she endeavored to appear unconscious of everything that passed; but all my stupidity could not hinder me from concluding that she partook of my embarrassment, perhaps, my transports, and was only hindered by a bashfulness like mine, without even that supposition giving me power to surmount it. Five or six years older than myself, every advance, according to my idea, should have been made by her, and, since she did nothing to encourage mine, I concluded they would offend her. Even at this time, I am inclined to believe I thought right; she certainly had wit enough to perceive that a novice like me had occasion, not only for encouragement but instruction.

I am ignorant how this animated, though dumb scene would have ended, or how long I should have continued immovable in this ridiculous, though delicious, situation, had we not been interrupted—in the height of my agitation, I heard the kitchen door open, which joined Madam Basile's chamber; who, being alarmed, said, with a quick voice and action, "Get up! Here's Rosina!" Rising hastily I seized one of her hands, which she held out to me, and gave it two eager kisses; at the second I felt this charming hand press gently on my lips. Never in my life did I enjoy so sweet a moment; but the occasion I had lost returned no more, this being the conclusion of our amours.

This may be the reason why her image yet remains imprinted on my heart in such charming colors, which have even acquired fresh lustre since I became acquainted with the world and women. Had she been mistress of the least degree of experience, she would have taken other measures to animate so youthful a lover; but if her heart was weak, it was virtuous; and only suffered itself to be borne away by a powerful though involuntary inclination. This was, apparently, her first infidelity, and I should, perhaps, have found more difficulty in vanquishing her scruples than my own; but, without proceeding so far, I experienced in her company the most inexpressible delights. Never did I taste with any other woman pleasures equal to those two minutes which I passed at the feet of Madam Basile without even daring to touch her gown. I am convinced no satisfaction can be compared to that we feel with a virtuous woman we esteem; all is transport!—A sign with the finger, a hand lightly pressed against my lips, were the only favors I ever received from Madam Basile, yet the bare remembrance of these trifling condescensions continues to transport me.

It was in vain I watched the two following days for another tete a tete; it was impossible to find an opportunity; nor could I perceive on her part any desire to forward it; her behavior was not colder, but more distant than usual, and I believe she avoided my looks for fear of not being able sufficiently to govern her own. The cursed clerk was more vexatious than ever; he even became a wit, telling me, with a satirical sneer, that I should unquestionably make my way among the ladies. I trembled lest I should have been guilty of some indiscretion, and looking at myself as already engaged in an intrigue, endeavored to cover with an air of mystery an inclination which hitherto certainly had no great need of it; this made me more circumspect in my choice of opportunities, and by resolving only to seize such as should be absolutely free from the danger of a surprise, I met none.

Another romantic folly, which I could never overcome, and which, joined to my natural timidity, tended directly to contradict the clerk's predictions, is, I always loved too sincerely, too perfectly, I may say, to find happiness easily attainable. Never were passions at the same time more lively and pure than mine; never was love more tender, more true, or more disinterested; freely would I have sacrificed my own happiness to that of the object of my affection; her reputation was dearer than my life, and I could promise myself no happiness for which I would have exposed her peace of mind for a moment. This disposition has ever made me employ so much care, use so many precautions, such secrecy in my adventures, that all of them have failed; in a word, my want of success with the women has ever proceeded from having loved them too well.

To return to our Egistus, the fluter; it was remarkable that in becoming more insupportable, the traitor put on the appearance of complaisance. From the first day Madam Basile had taken me under her protection, she had endeavored to make me serviceable in the warehouse; and finding I understood arithmetic tolerably well, she proposed his teaching me to keep the books; a proposition that was but indifferently received by this humorist, who might, perhaps, be fearful of being supplanted. As this failed, my whole employ, besides what engraving I had to do, was to transcribe some bills and accounts, to write several books over fair, and translate commercial letters from Italian into French. All at once he thought fit to accept the before rejected proposal, saying, he would teach me bookkeeping by double-entry, and put me in a situation to offer my services to M. Basile on his return; but there was something so false, malicious, and ironical, in his air and manner, that it was by no means calculated to inspire me with

confidence. Madam Basile, replied archly, that I was much obliged to him for his kind offer, but she hoped fortune would be more favorable to my merits, for it would be a great misfortune, with so much sense, that I should only be a pitiful clerk.

She often said, she would procure me some acquaintance that might be useful; she doubtless felt the necessity of parting with me, and had prudently resolved on it. Our mute declaration had been made on Thursday, the Sunday following she gave a dinner. A Jacobin of good appearance was among the guests, to whom she did me the honor to present me. The monk treated me very affectionately, congratulated me on my late conversion, mentioned several particulars of my story, which plainly showed he had been made acquainted with it, then, tapping me familiarly on the cheek, bade me be good, to keep up my spirits, and come to see him at his convent, where he should have more opportunity to talk with me. I judged him to be a person of some consequence by the deference that was paid him; and by the paternal tone he assumed with Madam Basile, to be her confessor. I likewise remember that his decent familiarity was attended with an appearance of esteem, and even respect for his fair penitent, which then made less impression on me than at present. Had I possessed more experience how should I have congratulated myself on having touched the heart of a young woman respected by her confessor!

The table not being large enough to accommodate all the company, a small one was prepared, where I had the satisfaction of dining with our agreeable clerk; but I lost nothing with regard to attention and good cheer, for several plates were sent to the side-table which were certainly not intended for him.

Thus far all went well; the ladies were in good spirits, and the gentlemen very gallant, while Madam Basile did the honors of the table with peculiar grace. In the midst of the dinner we heard a chaise stop at the door, and presently some one coming up stairs—it was M. Basile. Methinks I now see him entering, in his scarlet coat with gold buttons— from that day I have held the color in abhorrence. M. Basile was a tall handsome man, of good address: he entered with a consequential look and an air of taking his family unawares, though none but friends were present. His wife ran to meet him, threw her arms about his neck, and gave him a thousand caresses, which he received with the utmost indifference; and without making any return saluted the company and took his place at table. They were just beginning to speak of his journey, when casting his eye on the small table he asked in a sharp tone, what lad that was? Madam Basile answered ingenuously. He then inquired whether I lodged in the house; and was answered in the negative. “Why not?” replied he, rudely, “since he stays here all day, he might as well remain all night too.” The monk now interfered, with a serious and true eulogium on Madam Basile: in a few words he made mine also, adding, that so far from blaming, he ought to further the pious charity of his wife, since it was evident she had not passed the bounds of discretion. The husband answered with an air of petulance, which (restrained by the presence of the monk) he endeavored to stifle; it was, however, sufficient to let me understand he had already received information of me, and that our worthy clerk had rendered me an ill office.

We had hardly risen from table, when the latter came in triumph from his employer, to inform me, I must leave the house that instant, and never more during my life dare to set foot there. He took care to aggravate this commission by everything that could render it cruel and insulting. I departed without a word, my heart overwhelmed with sorrow, less for being obliged to quit this amiable woman, than at the thought of leaving her to the brutality of such a husband. He was certainly right to wish her faithful; but though prudent and wellborn, she was an Italian, that is to say, tender and vindictive; which made me think, he was extremely imprudent in using means the most likely in the world to draw on himself the very evil he so much dreaded.

Such was the success of my first adventure. I walked several times up and down the street, wishing to get a sight of what my heart incessantly regretted; but I could only discover her husband, or the vigilant clerk, who, perceiving me, made a sign with the ell they used in the shop, which was more expressive than alluring: finding, therefore, that I was so completely watched, my courage failed, and I went no more. I wished, at least, to find out the patron she had provided me, but, unfortunately, I did not know his name. I ranged several times round the convent, endeavoring in vain to meet with him. At length, other events banished the delightful remembrance of Madam Basile; and in a short time I so far forgot her, that I remained as simple, as much a novice as ever, nor did my penchant for pretty women even receive any sensible augmentation.

Her liberality had, however, increased my little wardrobe, though she had done this with precaution and prudence, regarding neatness more than decoration, and to make me comfortable rather than brilliant. The coat I had brought from Geneva was yet wearable, she only added a hat and some linen. I had no ruffles, nor would she give me any, not but I felt a great inclination for them. She was satisfied with having put it in my power to keep myself clean, though a charge to do this was unnecessary while I was to appear before her.

A few days after this catastrophe; my hostess, who, as I have already observed, was very friendly, with great satisfaction informed me she had heard of a situation, and that a lady of rank desired to see me. I immediately thought myself in the road to great adventures; that being the point to which all my ideas tended: this, however, did not prove so brilliant as I had conceived it. I waited on the lady with the servant who had mentioned me: she asked a number of questions, and my answers not displeasing her, I immediately entered into her service not, indeed, in the quality of favorite, but as a footman. I was clothed like the rest of her people, the only difference being, they wore a shoulder-knot, which I had not, and, as there was no lace on her livery, it appeared merely a tradesman's suit. This was the unforeseen conclusion of all my great expectancies!

The Countess of Vercellis, with whom I now lived, was a widow without children; her husband was a Piedmontese, but I always believed her to be a Savoyard, as I could have no conception that a native of Piedmont could speak such good French, and with so pure an accent. She was a middle-aged woman, of a noble appearance and cultivated understanding, being fond of French literature, in which she was well versed. Her letters had the expression, and almost the elegance of Madam de Savigne's; some of them might have been taken for hers. My principal employ, which was by no means displeasing to me, was to write from her dictating; a cancer in the breast, from which she suffered extremely, not permitting her to write herself.

Madam de Vercellis not only possessed a good understanding, but a strong and elevated soul. I was with her during her last illness, and saw her suffer and die, without showing an instant of weakness, or the least effort of constraint; still retaining her feminine manners, without entertaining an idea that such fortitude gave her any claim to philosophy; a word which was not yet in fashion, nor comprehended by her in the sense it is held at present. This strength of disposition sometimes extended almost to apathy, ever appearing to feel as little for others as herself; and when she relieved the unfortunate, it was rather for the sake of acting right, than from a principle of real commiseration. I have frequently experienced this insensibility, in some measure, during the three months I remained with her. It would have been natural to have had an esteem for a young man of some abilities, who was incessantly under her observation, and that she should think, as she felt her dissolution approaching, that after her death he would have occasion for assistance and support: but whether she judged me unworthy of particular attention, or that those who narrowly watched all her motions, gave her no opportunity to think of any but themselves, she did nothing for me.

I very well recollect that she showed some curiosity to know my story, frequently questioning me, and appearing pleased when I showed her the letters I wrote to Madam de Warens, or explained my sentiments; but as she never discovered her own, she certainly did not take the right means to come at them. My heart, naturally communicative, loved to display its feelings, whenever I encountered a similar disposition; but dry, cold interrogatories, without any sign of blame or approbation on my answers, gave me no confidence. Not being able to determine whether my discourse was agreeable or displeasing, I was ever in fear, and thought less of expressing my ideas, than of being careful not to say anything that might seem to my disadvantage. I have since remarked that this dry method of questioning themselves into people's characters is a common trick among women who pride themselves on superior understanding. These imagine, that by concealing their own sentiments, they shall the more easily penetrate into those of others; being ignorant that this method destroys the confidence so necessary to make us reveal them. A man, on being questioned, is immediately on his guard: and if once he supposes that, without any interest in his concerns, you only wish to set him a-talking, either he entertains you with lies, is silent, or, examining every word before he utters it, rather chooses to pass for a fool, than to be the dupe of your curiosity. In short, it is ever a bad method to attempt to read the hearts of others by endeavoring to conceal our own.

Madam de Vercellis never addressed a word to me which seemed to express affection, pity, or benevolence. She interrogated me coldly, and my answers were uttered with so much timidity, that she doubtless entertained but a mean opinion of my intellects, for latterly she never asked me any questions, nor said anything but what was absolutely necessary for her service. She drew her judgment less from what I really was, than from what she had made me, and by considering me as a footman prevented my appearing otherwise.

I am inclined to think I suffered at that time by the same interested game of concealed manoeuvre, which has counteracted me throughout my life, and given me a very natural aversion for everything that has the least appearance of it. Madam de Vercellis having no children, her nephew, the Count de la Roque, was her heir, and paid his court assiduously, as did her principal domestics, who, seeing her end approaching, endeavored to take care of themselves; in short, so many were busy about her, that she could hardly have found time to think of me. At the head of her household was a M. Lorenzy, an artful genius, with a still more artful wife; who had so far insinuated herself into the good graces of her mistress, that she was rather on the footing of a friend than a servant. She had introduced a niece of hers as lady's maid: her name was Mademoiselle Pontal; a cunning gypsy, that gave herself

all the airs of a waiting-woman, and assisted her aunt so well in besetting the countess, that she only saw with their eyes, and acted through their hands. I had not the happiness to please this worthy triumvirate; I obeyed, but did not wait on them, not conceiving that my duty to our general mistress required me to be a servant to her servants. Besides this, I was a person that gave them some inquietude; they saw I was not in my proper situation, and feared the countess would discover it likewise, and by placing me in it, decrease their portions; for such sort of people, too greedy to be just, look on every legacy given to others as a diminution of their own wealth; they endeavored, therefore, to keep me as much out of her sight as possible. She loved to write letters, in her situation, but they contrived to give her a distaste to it; persuading her, by the aid of the doctor, that it was too fatiguing; and, under pretence that I did not understand how to wait on her, they employed two great lubberly chairmen for that purpose; in a word, they managed the affair so well, that for eight days before she made her will, I had not been permitted to enter the chamber. Afterwards I went in as usual, and was even more assiduous than any one, being afflicted at the sufferings of the unhappy lady, whom I truly respected and beloved for the calmness and fortitude with which she bore her illness, and often did I shed tears of real sorrow without being perceived by any one.

At length we lost her—I saw her expire. She had lived like a woman of sense and virtue, her death was that of a philosopher. I can truly say, she rendered the Catholic religion amiable to me by the serenity with which she fulfilled its dictates, without any mixture of negligence or affectation. She was naturally serious, but towards the end of her illness she possessed a kind of gayety, too regular to be assumed, which served as a counterpoise to the melancholy of her situation. She only kept her bed two days, continuing to discourse cheerfully with those about her to the very last.

She had bequeathed a year's wages to all the under servants, but, not being on the household list, I had nothing: the Count de la Roque, however, ordered me thirty livres, and the new coat I had on, which M. Lorenzy would certainly have taken from me. He even promised to procure me a place; giving me permission to wait on him as often as I pleased. Accordingly, I went two or three times, without being able to speak to him, and as I was easily repulsed, returned no more; whether I did wrong will be seen hereafter.

Would I had finished what I have to say of my living at Madam de Vercellis's. Though my situation apparently remained the same, I did not leave her house as I had entered it: I carried with me the long and painful remembrance of a crime; an insupportable weight of remorse which yet hangs on my conscience, and whose bitter recollection, far from weakening, during a period of forty years, seems to gather strength as I grow old. Who would believe, that a childish fault should be productive of such melancholy consequences? But it is for the more than probable effects that my heart cannot be consoled. I have, perhaps, caused an amiable, honest, estimable girl, who surely merited a better fate than myself, to perish with shame and misery.

Though it is very difficult to break up housekeeping without confusion, and the loss of some property; yet such was the fidelity of the domestics, and the vigilance of M. and Madam Lorenzy, that no article of the inventory was found wanting; in short, nothing was missing but a pink and silver ribbon, which had been worn, and belonged to Mademoiselle Pontal. Though several things of more value were in my reach, this ribbon alone tempted me, and accordingly I stole it. As I took no great pains to conceal the bauble, it was soon discovered; they immediately insisted on knowing from whence I had taken it; this perplexed me—I hesitated, and at length said, with confusion, that Marion gave it me.

Marion was a young Mauriennese, and had been cook to Madam de Vercellis ever since she left off giving entertainments, for being sensible she had more need of good broths than fine ragouts, she had discharged her former one. Marion was not only pretty, but had that freshness of color only to be found among the mountains, and, above all, an air of modesty and sweetness, which made it impossible to see her without affection; she was besides a good girl, virtuous, and of such strict fidelity, that everyone was surprised at hearing her named. They had not less confidence in me, and judged it necessary to certify which of us was the thief. Marion was sent for; a great number of people were present, among whom was the Count de la Roque: she arrives; they show her the ribbon; I accuse her boldly: she remains confused and speechless, casting a look on me that would have disarmed a demon, but which my barbarous heart resisted. At length, she denied it with firmness, but without anger, exhorting me to return to myself, and not injure an innocent girl who had never wronged me. With infernal impudence, I confirmed my accusation, and to her face maintained she had given me the ribbon: on which, the poor girl, bursting into tears, said these words—"Ah, Rousseau! I thought you a good disposition—you render me very unhappy, but I would not be in your situation." She continued to defend herself with as much innocence as firmness, but without uttering the least invective against me. Her moderation, compared to my positive tone, did her an injury; as it did not appear natural to suppose, on one side such diabolical assurance; on the other, such angelic mildness. The affair could not be absolutely decided, but the presumption was in my favor; and the Count de la Roque, in sending us both

away, contented himself with saying, “The conscience of the guilty would revenge the innocent.” His prediction was true, and is being daily verified.

I am ignorant what became of the victim of my calumny, but there is little probability of her having been able to place herself agreeably after this, as she labored under an imputation cruel to her character in every respect. The theft was a trifle, yet it was a theft, and, what was worse, employed to seduce a boy; while the lie and obstinacy left nothing to hope from a person in whom so many vices were united. I do not even look on the misery and disgrace in which I plunged her as the greatest evil: who knows, at her age, whither contempt and disregarded innocence might have led her?—Alas! if remorse for having made her unhappy is insupportable, what must I have suffered at the thought of rendering her even worse than myself. The cruel remembrance of this transaction, sometimes so troubles and disorders me, that, in my disturbed slumbers, I imagine I see this poor girl enter and reproach me with my crime, as though I had committed it but yesterday. While in easy tranquil circumstances, I was less miserable on this account, but, during a troubled agitated life, it has robbed me of the sweet consolation of persecuted innocence, and made me wofully experience, what, I think, I have remarked in some of my works, that remorse sleeps in the calm sunshine of prosperity, but wakes amid the storms of adversity. I could never take on me to discharge my heart of this weight in the bosom of a friend; nor could the closest intimacy ever encourage me to it, even with Madam de Warens: all I could do, was to own I had to accuse myself of an atrocious crime, but never said in what it consisted. The weight, therefore, has remained heavy on my conscience to this day; and I can truly own the desire of relieving myself, in some measure, from it, contributed greatly to the resolution of writing my Confessions.

I have proceeded truly in that I have just made, and it will certainly be thought I have not sought to palliate the turpitude of my offence; but I should not fulfill the purpose of this undertaking, did I not, at the same time, divulge my interior disposition, and excuse myself as far as is conformable with truth.

Never was wickedness further from my thoughts, than in that cruel moment; and when I accused the unhappy girl, it is strange, but strictly true, that my friendship for her was the immediate cause of it. She was present to my thoughts; I formed my excuse from the first object that presented itself: I accused her with doing what I meant to have done, and as I designed to have given her the ribbon, asserted she had given it to me. When she appeared, my heart was agonized, but the presence of so many people was more powerful than my compunction. I did not fear punishment, but I dreaded shame: I dreaded it more than death, more than the crime, more than all the world. I would have buried, hid myself in the centre of the earth: invincible shame bore down every other sentiment; shame alone caused all my impudence, and in proportion as I became criminal, the fear of discovery rendered me intrepid. I felt no dread but that of being detected, of being publicly, and to my face, declared a thief, liar, and calumniator; an unconquerable fear of this overcame every other sensation. Had I been left to myself, I should infallibly have declared the truth. Or if M. de la Roque had taken me aside, and said—“Do not injure this poor girl; if you are guilty own it,”—I am convinced I should instantly have thrown myself at his feet; but they intimidated, instead of encouraging me. I was hardly out of my childhood, or rather, was yet in it. It is also just to make some allowance for my age. In youth, dark, premeditated villainy is more criminal than in a riper age, but weaknesses are much less so; my fault was truly nothing more; and I am less afflicted at the deed itself than for its consequences. It had one good effect, however, in preserving me through the rest of my life from any criminal action, from the terrible impression that has remained from the only one I ever committed; and I think my aversion for lying proceeds in a great measure from regret at having been guilty of so black a one. If it is a crime that can be expiated, as I dare believe, forty years of uprightness and honor on various difficult occasions, with the many misfortunes that have overwhelmed my latter years, may have completed it. Poor Marion has found so many avengers in this world, that however great my offence towards her, I do not fear to bear the guilt with me. Thus have I disclosed what I had to say on this painful subject; may I be permitted never to mention it again.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

7: "Bartleby the Scrivener" by Melville (first half)

7.1: Editor's Introduction
7.2: Bartleby the Scrivener, First Half

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7.1: Editor's Introduction

In the first half of Herman Melville's *Bartleby, the Scrivener*, several key themes, conflicts, and characterizations emerge that set the tone for the story and introduce philosophical and social questions author Herman Melville explores throughout. The environment of Wall Street law offices, the main characters, and the tension between personal autonomy and societal expectations, are all established. The narrator, an unnamed Wall Street lawyer, gives us insight into his own character and developing relationship with Bartleby, a new employee whose disrupts the formerly smooth-running environment of the lawyer's office.

An early theme is the isolation and alienation experienced, equally yet differently, by both the narrator and Bartleby. Although the office sits in the heart of Wall Street, its setting and atmosphere are cold, impersonal, and detached. Workers are confined to small spaces. Workplace alienation is especially evident in Bartleby, who, from the outset is distant from his work and his coworkers.

Bartleby's passive resistance, signaled by his repeated phrase "I would prefer not to," indicates his alienation. His refusal to engage in the duties of the office shows his disconnect from his boss and co-workers' expectations.

His "I would prefer not to," also introduces his passive resistance and nonconformity, central to his character and the story's broader conflicts. Bartleby's refusal to perform even simple tasks challenges assumptions of what is considered appropriate. His resistance is not violent or overtly defiant but a calm, quiet refusal, leaving the lawyer mystified and unsure how to respond. Bartleby's nonconformity also suggests a deeper rejection of the values that govern the workplace, and society as a whole.

Scriveners are expected to function like machines, endlessly copying documents. Bartleby's refusal to work disrupts this system. Melville's depiction of this sterile environment critiques the ways in which society alienates people from their labor, stripping them of individuality and/or personal fulfillment.

The lawyer is a cautious, reasonable man who values order, stability, and efficiency. However, he is also somewhat complacent, avoiding conflict rather than confronting it. As the story progresses, he becomes more sympathetic as he struggles to understand Bartleby's behavior while maintaining the authority of his position.

Also, the lawyer's evolving relationship with Bartleby introduces a theme of compassion versus responsibility, in the context of professional and moral obligations. As Bartleby's boss, the attorney at first sees him as merely another worker, but Bartleby's odd behavior eventually causes within the lawyer a mix of confusion, pity, and sense of obligation. In fact, he is both baffled and fascinated by Bartleby's passivity, and while he tries to be patient, he is also keenly aware of the disruption Bartleby causes. Conflict arises from his wish to maintain control while also grappling with the sense of duty he feels toward Bartleby, who seems to be in some sort of distress. Bartleby's nonconformity, defies either logic or self-interest. As the lawyer tries to manage the situation with increasingly awkward attempts at diplomacy, Bartleby's passive resistance deepens the conflict, leaving the lawyer at a loss.

In addition, Turkey, Nippers, and Ginger Nut, all possess their own quirks and inefficiencies, but ultimately conform to workplace demands. Bartleby, in contrast, represents a challenge to the very structure of the office, which depends on predictable output. His refusals not only frustrate the lawyer but also his co-workers.

Bartleby is a mysterious, passive figure. He starts out as a diligent worker but soon refuses to do even the easiest tasks. His repeated "I would prefer not to" is his passive resistance to any demands placed on him. His refusal to conform could be an act of resistance against the dehumanizing effects of his work, or a manifestation of some deeper disturbance. He is, perhaps, both a symbol of modern alienation and an individual struggling with forces beyond his control.

-Taz Rosenthal

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7.2: Bartleby the Scrivener, First Half

Source:

Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall-Street(opens in new window) [www.gutenberg.org]

by Herman Melville

I am a rather elderly man. The nature of my avocations for the last thirty years has brought me into more than ordinary contact with what would seem an interesting and somewhat singular set of men, of whom as yet nothing that I know of has ever been written:—I mean the law-copyists or scriveners. I have known very many of them, professionally and privately, and if I pleased, could relate divers histories, at which good-natured gentlemen might smile, and sentimental souls might weep. But I waive the biographies of all other scriveners for a few passages in the life of Bartleby, who was a scrivener of the strangest I ever saw or heard of. While of other law-copyists I might write the complete life, of Bartleby nothing of that sort can be done. I believe that no materials exist for a full and satisfactory biography of this man. It is an irreparable loss to literature. Bartleby was one of those beings of whom nothing is ascertainable, except from the original sources, and in his case those are very small. What my own astonished eyes saw of Bartleby, *that* is all I know of him, except, indeed, one vague report which will appear in the sequel.

Ere introducing the scrivener, as he first appeared to me, it is fit I make some mention of myself, my employés, my business, my chambers, and general surroundings; because some such description is indispensable to an adequate understanding of the chief character about to be presented.

Imprimis: I am a man who, from his youth upwards, has been filled with a profound conviction that the easiest way of life is the best. Hence, though I belong to a profession proverbially energetic and nervous, even to turbulence, at times, yet nothing of that sort have I ever suffered to invade my peace. I am one of those unambitious lawyers who never addresses a jury, or in any way draws down public applause; but in the cool tranquility of a snug retreat, do a snug business among rich men's bonds and mortgages and title-deeds. All who know me, consider me an eminently *safe* man. The late John Jacob Astor, a personage little given to poetic enthusiasm, had no hesitation in pronouncing my first grand point to be prudence; my next, method. I do not speak it in vanity, but simply record the fact, that I was not unemployed in my profession by the late John Jacob Astor; a name which, I admit, I love to repeat, for it hath a rounded and orbicular sound to it, and rings like unto bullion. I will freely add, that I was not insensible to the late John Jacob Astor's good opinion.

Some time prior to the period at which this little history begins, my avocations had been largely increased. The good old office, now extinct in the State of New York, of a Master in Chancery, had been conferred upon me. It was not a very arduous office, but very pleasantly remunerative. I seldom lose my temper; much more seldom indulge in dangerous indignation at wrongs and outrages; but I must be permitted to be rash here and declare, that I consider the sudden and violent abrogation of the office of Master in Chancery, by the new Constitution, as a—premature act; inasmuch as I had counted upon a life-lease of the profits, whereas I only received those of a few short years. But this is by the way.

My chambers were up stairs at No.—Wall-street. At one end they looked upon the white wall of the interior of a spacious sky-light shaft, penetrating the building from top to bottom. This view might have been considered rather tame than otherwise, deficient in what landscape painters call "life." But if so, the view from the other end of my chambers offered, at least, a contrast, if nothing more. In that direction my windows commanded an unobstructed view of a lofty brick wall, black by age and everlasting shade; which wall required no spy-glass to bring out its lurking beauties, but for the benefit of all near-sighted spectators, was pushed up to within ten feet of my window panes. Owing to the great height of the surrounding buildings, and my chambers being on the second floor, the interval between this wall and mine not a little resembled a huge square cistern.

At the period just preceding the advent of Bartleby, I had two persons as copyists in my employment, and a promising lad as an office-boy. First, Turkey; second, Nippers; third, Ginger Nut. These may seem names, the like of which are not usually found in the Directory. In truth they were nicknames, mutually conferred upon each other by my three clerks, and were deemed expressive of their respective persons or characters. Turkey was a short, pursy Englishman of about my own age, that is, somewhere not far from sixty. In the morning, one might say, his face was of a fine florid hue, but after twelve o'clock, meridian—his dinner hour—it blazed like a grate full of Christmas coals; and continued blazing—but, as it were, with a gradual wane—till 6 o'clock, P.M. or thereabouts, after which I saw no more of the proprietor of the face, which gaining its meridian with the sun, seemed to set with it,

to rise, culminate, and decline the following day, with the like regularity and undiminished glory. There are many singular coincidences I have known in the course of my life, not the least among which was the fact, that exactly when Turkey displayed his fullest beams from his red and radiant countenance, just then, too, at that critical moment, began the daily period when I considered his business capacities as seriously disturbed for the remainder of the twenty-four hours. Not that he was absolutely idle, or averse to business then; far from it. The difficulty was, he was apt to be altogether too energetic. There was a strange, inflamed, flurried, flighty recklessness of activity about him. He would be incautious in dipping his pen into his inkstand. All his blots upon my documents, were dropped there after twelve o'clock, meridian. Indeed, not only would he be reckless and sadly given to making blots in the afternoon, but some days he went further, and was rather noisy. At such times, too, his face flamed with augmented blazonry, as if cannel coal had been heaped on anthracite. He made an unpleasant racket with his chair; spilled his sand-box; in mending his pens, impatiently split them all to pieces, and threw them on the floor in a sudden passion; stood up and leaned over his table, boxing his papers about in a most indecorous manner, very sad to behold in an elderly man like him. Nevertheless, as he was in many ways a most valuable person to me, and all the time before twelve o'clock, meridian, was the quickest, steadiest creature too, accomplishing a great deal of work in a style not easy to be matched—for these reasons, I was willing to overlook his eccentricities, though indeed, occasionally, I remonstrated with him. I did this very gently, however, because, though the civilest, nay, the blandest and most reverential of men in the morning, yet in the afternoon he was disposed, upon provocation, to be slightly rash with his tongue, in fact, insolent. Now, valuing his morning services as I did, and resolved not to lose them; yet, at the same time made uncomfortable by his inflamed ways after twelve o'clock; and being a man of peace, unwilling by my admonitions to call forth unseemly retorts from him; I took upon me, one Saturday noon (he was always worse on Saturdays), to hint to him, very kindly, that perhaps now that he was growing old, it might be well to abridge his labors; in short, he need not come to my chambers after twelve o'clock, but, dinner over, had best go home to his lodgings and rest himself till teatime. But no; he insisted upon his afternoon devotions. His countenance became intolerably fervid, as he oratorically assured me—gesticulating with a long ruler at the other end of the room—that if his services in the morning were useful, how indispensable, then, in the afternoon?

"With submission, sir," said Turkey on this occasion, "I consider myself your right-hand man. In the morning I but marshal and deploy my columns; but in the afternoon I put myself at their head, and gallantly charge the foe, thus!"—and he made a violent thrust with the ruler.

"But the blots, Turkey," intimated I.

"True,—but, with submission, sir, behold these hairs! I am getting old. Surely, sir, a blot or two of a warm afternoon is not to be severely urged against gray hairs. Old age—even if it blot the page—is honorable. With submission, sir, we *both* are getting old."

This appeal to my fellow-feeling was hardly to be resisted. At all events, I saw that go he would not. So I made up my mind to let him stay, resolving, nevertheless, to see to it, that during the afternoon he had to do with my less important papers.

Nippers, the second on my list, was a whiskered, sallow, and, upon the whole, rather piratical-looking young man of about five and twenty. I always deemed him the victim of two evil powers—ambition and indigestion. The ambition was evinced by a certain impatience of the duties of a mere copyist, an unwarrantable usurpation of strictly professional affairs, such as the original drawing up of legal documents. The indigestion seemed betokened in an occasional nervous testiness and grinning irritability, causing the teeth to audibly grind together over mistakes committed in copying; unnecessary maledictions, hissed, rather than spoken, in the heat of business; and especially by a continual discontent with the height of the table where he worked. Though of a very ingenious mechanical turn, Nippers could never get this table to suit him. He put chips under it, blocks of various sorts, bits of pasteboard, and at last went so far as to attempt an exquisite adjustment by final pieces of folded blotting paper. But no invention would answer. If, for the sake of easing his back, he brought the table lid at a sharp angle well up towards his chin, and wrote there like a man using the steep roof of a Dutch house for his desk:—then he declared that it stopped the circulation in his arms. If now he lowered the table to his waistbands, and stooped over it in writing, then there was a sore aching in his back. In short, the truth of the matter was, Nippers knew not what he wanted. Or, if he wanted any thing, it was to be rid of a scrivener's table altogether. Among the manifestations of his diseased ambition was a fondness he had for receiving visits from certain ambiguous-looking fellows in seedy coats, whom he called his clients. Indeed I was aware that not only was he, at times, considerable of a ward-politician, but he occasionally did a little business at the Justices' courts, and was not unknown on the steps of the Tombs. I have good reason to believe, however, that one individual who called upon him at my chambers, and who, with a grand air, he insisted was his client, was no other than a dun, and the alleged title-deed, a bill. But with all his failings, and the annoyances he caused me, Nippers, like his compatriot Turkey, was a very useful man to me; wrote a neat, swift hand; and, when he chose, was not deficient in a

gentlemanly sort of deportment. Added to this, he always dressed in a gentlemanly sort of way; and so, incidentally, reflected credit upon my chambers. Whereas with respect to Turkey, I had much ado to keep him from being a reproach to me. His clothes were apt to look oily and smell of eating-houses. He wore his pantaloons very loose and baggy in summer. His coats were execrable; his hat not to be handled. But while the hat was a thing of indifference to me, inasmuch as his natural civility and deference, as a dependent Englishman, always led him to doff it the moment he entered the room, yet his coat was another matter. Concerning his coats, I reasoned with him; but with no effect. The truth was, I suppose, that a man of so small an income, could not afford to sport such a lustrous face and a lustrous coat at one and the same time. As Nippers once observed, Turkey's money went chiefly for red ink. One winter day I presented Turkey with a highly-respectable looking coat of my own, a padded gray coat, of a most comfortable warmth, and which buttoned straight up from the knee to the neck. I thought Turkey would appreciate the favor, and abate his rashness and obstreperousness of afternoons. But no. I verily believe that buttoning himself up in so downy and blanket-like a coat had a pernicious effect upon him; upon the same principle that too much oats are bad for horses. In fact, precisely as a rash, restive horse is said to feel his oats, so Turkey felt his coat. It made him insolent. He was a man whom prosperity harmed.

Though concerning the self-indulgent habits of Turkey I had my own private surmises, yet touching Nippers I was well persuaded that whatever might be his faults in other respects, he was, at least, a temperate young man. But indeed, nature herself seemed to have been his vintner, and at his birth charged him so thoroughly with an irritable, brandy-like disposition, that all subsequent potations were needless. When I consider how, amid the stillness of my chambers, Nippers would sometimes impatiently rise from his seat, and stooping over his table, spread his arms wide apart, seize the whole desk, and move it, and jerk it, with a grim, grinding motion on the floor, as if the table were a perverse voluntary agent, intent on thwarting and vexing him; I plainly perceive that for Nippers, brandy and water were altogether superfluous.

It was fortunate for me that, owing to its peculiar cause—indigestion—the irritability and consequent nervousness of Nippers, were mainly observable in the morning, while in the afternoon he was comparatively mild. So that Turkey's paroxysms only coming on about twelve o'clock, I never had to do with their eccentricities at one time. Their fits relieved each other like guards. When Nippers' was on, Turkey's was off; and *vice versa*. This was a good natural arrangement under the circumstances.

Ginger Nut, the third on my list, was a lad some twelve years old. His father was a carman, ambitious of seeing his son on the bench instead of a cart, before he died. So he sent him to my office as student at law, errand boy, and cleaner and sweeper, at the rate of one dollar a week. He had a little desk to himself, but he did not use it much. Upon inspection, the drawer exhibited a great array of the shells of various sorts of nuts. Indeed, to this quick-witted youth the whole noble science of the law was contained in a nut-shell. Not the least among the employments of Ginger Nut, as well as one which he discharged with the most alacrity, was his duty as cake and apple purveyor for Turkey and Nippers. Copying law papers being proverbially dry, husky sort of business, my two scriveners were fain to moisten their mouths very often with Spitzenbergs to be had at the numerous stalls nigh the Custom House and Post Office. Also, they sent Ginger Nut very frequently for that peculiar cake—small, flat, round, and very spicy—after which he had been named by them. Of a cold morning when business was but dull, Turkey would gobble up scores of these cakes, as if they were mere wafers—indeed they sell them at the rate of six or eight for a penny—the scrape of his pen blending with the crunching of the crisp particles in his mouth. Of all the fiery afternoon blunders and flurried rashnesses of Turkey, was his once moistening a ginger-cake between his lips, and clapping it on to a mortgage for a seal. I came within an ace of dismissing him then. But he mollified me by making an oriental bow, and saying—"With submission, sir, it was generous of me to find you in stationery on my own account."

Now my original business—that of a conveyancer and title hunter, and drawer-up of recondite documents of all sorts—was considerably increased by receiving the master's office. There was now great work for scriveners. Not only must I push the clerks already with me, but I must have additional help. In answer to my advertisement, a motionless young man one morning, stood upon my office threshold, the door being open, for it was summer. I can see that figure now—pallidly neat, pitiably respectable, incurably forlorn! It was Bartleby.

After a few words touching his qualifications, I engaged him, glad to have among my corps of copyists a man of so singularly sedate an aspect, which I thought might operate beneficially upon the flighty temper of Turkey, and the fiery one of Nippers.

I should have stated before that ground glass folding-doors divided my premises into two parts, one of which was occupied by my scriveners, the other by myself. According to my humor I threw open these doors, or closed them. I resolved to assign Bartleby a corner by the folding-doors, but on my side of them, so as to have this quiet man within easy call, in case any trifling thing was to be done. I placed his desk close up to a small side-window in that part of the room, a window which originally had afforded a

lateral view of certain grimy back-yards and bricks, but which, owing to subsequent erections, commanded at present no view at all, though it gave some light. Within three feet of the panes was a wall, and the light came down from far above, between two lofty buildings, as from a very small opening in a dome. Still further to a satisfactory arrangement, I procured a high green folding screen, which might entirely isolate Bartleby from my sight, though not remove him from my voice. And thus, in a manner, privacy and society were conjoined.

At first Bartleby did an extraordinary quantity of writing. As if long famishing for something to copy, he seemed to gorge himself on my documents. There was no pause for digestion. He ran a day and night line, copying by sun-light and by candle-light. I should have been quite delighted with his application, had he been cheerfully industrious. But he wrote on silently, palely, mechanically.

It is, of course, an indispensable part of a scrivener's business to verify the accuracy of his copy, word by word. Where there are two or more scriveners in an office, they assist each other in this examination, one reading from the copy, the other holding the original. It is a very dull, wearisome, and lethargic affair. I can readily imagine that to some sanguine temperaments it would be altogether intolerable. For example, I cannot credit that the mettlesome poet Byron would have contentedly sat down with Bartleby to examine a law document of, say five hundred pages, closely written in a crimpy hand.

Now and then, in the haste of business, it had been my habit to assist in comparing some brief document myself, calling Turkey or Nippers for this purpose. One object I had in placing Bartleby so handy to me behind the screen, was to avail myself of his services on such trivial occasions. It was on the third day, I think, of his being with me, and before any necessity had arisen for having his own writing examined, that, being much hurried to complete a small affair I had in hand, I abruptly called to Bartleby. In my haste and natural expectancy of instant compliance, I sat with my head bent over the original on my desk, and my right hand sideways, and somewhat nervously extended with the copy, so that immediately upon emerging from his retreat, Bartleby might snatch it and proceed to business without the least delay.

In this very attitude did I sit when I called to him, rapidly stating what it was I wanted him to do—namely, to examine a small paper with me. Imagine my surprise, nay, my consternation, when without moving from his privacy, Bartleby in a singularly mild, firm voice, replied, "I would prefer not to."

I sat awhile in perfect silence, rallying my stunned faculties. Immediately it occurred to me that my ears had deceived me, or Bartleby had entirely misunderstood my meaning. I repeated my request in the clearest tone I could assume. But in quite as clear a one came the previous reply, "I would prefer not to."

"Prefer not to," echoed I, rising in high excitement, and crossing the room with a stride. "What do you mean? Are you moon-struck? I want you to help me compare this sheet here—take it," and I thrust it towards him.

"I would prefer not to," said he.

I looked at him steadfastly. His face was leanly composed; his gray eye dimly calm. Not a wrinkle of agitation rippled him. Had there been the least uneasiness, anger, impatience or impertinence in his manner; in other words, had there been any thing ordinarily human about him, doubtless I should have violently dismissed him from the premises. But as it was, I should have as soon thought of turning my pale plaster-of-paris bust of Cicero out of doors. I stood gazing at him awhile, as he went on with his own writing, and then reseated myself at my desk. This is very strange, thought I. What had one best do? But my business hurried me. I concluded to forget the matter for the present, reserving it for my future leisure. So calling Nippers from the other room, the paper was speedily examined.

A few days after this, Bartleby concluded four lengthy documents, being quadruplicates of a week's testimony taken before me in my High Court of Chancery. It became necessary to examine them. It was an important suit, and great accuracy was imperative. Having all things arranged I called Turkey, Nippers and Ginger Nut from the next room, meaning to place the four copies in the hands of my four clerks, while I should read from the original. Accordingly Turkey, Nippers and Ginger Nut had taken their seats in a row, each with his document in hand, when I called to Bartleby to join this interesting group.

"Bartleby! quick, I am waiting."

I heard a slow scrape of his chair legs on the uncarpeted floor, and soon he appeared standing at the entrance of his hermitage.

"What is wanted?" said he mildly.

“The copies, the copies,” said I hurriedly. “We are going to examine them. There”—and I held towards him the fourth quadruplicate.

“I would prefer not to,” he said, and gently disappeared behind the screen.

For a few moments I was turned into a pillar of salt, standing at the head of my seated column of clerks. Recovering myself, I advanced towards the screen, and demanded the reason for such extraordinary conduct.

“*Why* do you refuse?”

“I would prefer not to.”

With any other man I should have flown outright into a dreadful passion, scorned all further words, and thrust him ignominiously from my presence. But there was something about Bartleby that not only strangely disarmed me, but in a wonderful manner touched and disconcerted me. I began to reason with him.

“These are your own copies we are about to examine. It is labor saving to you, because one examination will answer for your four papers. It is common usage. Every copyist is bound to help examine his copy. Is it not so? Will you not speak? Answer!”

“I prefer not to,” he replied in a flute-like tone. It seemed to me that while I had been addressing him, he carefully revolved every statement that I made; fully comprehended the meaning; could not gainsay the irresistible conclusions; but, at the same time, some paramount consideration prevailed with him to reply as he did.

“You are decided, then, not to comply with my request—a request made according to common usage and common sense?”

He briefly gave me to understand that on that point my judgment was sound. Yes: his decision was irreversible.

It is not seldom the case that when a man is browbeaten in some unprecedented and violently unreasonable way, he begins to stagger in his own plainest faith. He begins, as it were, vaguely to surmise that, wonderful as it may be, all the justice and all the reason is on the other side. Accordingly, if any disinterested persons are present, he turns to them for some reinforcement for his own faltering mind.

“Turkey,” said I, “what do you think of this? Am I not right?”

“With submission, sir,” said Turkey, with his blandest tone, “I think that you are.”

“Nippers,” said I, “what do *you* think of it?”

“I think I should kick him out of the office.”

(The reader of nice perceptions will here perceive that, it being morning, Turkey’s answer is couched in polite and tranquil terms, but Nippers replies in ill-tempered ones. Or, to repeat a previous sentence, Nippers’ ugly mood was on duty and Turkey’s off.)

“Ginger Nut,” said I, willing to enlist the smallest suffrage in my behalf, “what do you think of it?”

“I think, sir, he’s a little *luny*,” replied Ginger Nut with a grin.

“You hear what they say,” said I, turning towards the screen, “come forth and do your duty.”

But he vouchsafed no reply. I pondered a moment in sore perplexity. But once more business hurried me. I determined again to postpone the consideration of this dilemma to my future leisure. With a little trouble we made out to examine the papers without Bartleby, though at every page or two, Turkey deferentially dropped his opinion that this proceeding was quite out of the common; while Nippers, twitching in his chair with a dyspeptic nervousness, ground out between his set teeth occasional hissing maledictions against the stubborn oaf behind the screen. And for his (Nippers’) part, this was the first and the last time he would do another man’s business without pay.

Meanwhile Bartleby sat in his hermitage, oblivious to every thing but his own peculiar business there.

Some days passed, the scrivener being employed upon another lengthy work. His late remarkable conduct led me to regard his ways narrowly. I observed that he never went to dinner; indeed that he never went any where. As yet I had never of my personal knowledge known him to be outside of my office. He was a perpetual sentry in the corner. At about eleven o’clock though, in the morning, I noticed that Ginger Nut would advance toward the opening in Bartleby’s screen, as if silently beckoned thither by a

gesture invisible to me where I sat. The boy would then leave the office jingling a few pence, and reappear with a handful of ginger-nuts which he delivered in the hermitage, receiving two of the cakes for his trouble.

He lives, then, on ginger-nuts, thought I; never eats a dinner, properly speaking; he must be a vegetarian then; but no; he never eats even vegetables, he eats nothing but ginger-nuts. My mind then ran on in reveries concerning the probable effects upon the human constitution of living entirely on ginger-nuts. Ginger-nuts are so called because they contain ginger as one of their peculiar constituents, and the final flavoring one. Now what was ginger? A hot, spicy thing. Was Bartleby hot and spicy? Not at all. Ginger, then, had no effect upon Bartleby. Probably he preferred it should have none.

Nothing so aggravates an earnest person as a passive resistance. If the individual so resisted be of a not inhumane temper, and the resisting one perfectly harmless in his passivity; then, in the better moods of the former, he will endeavor charitably to construe to his imagination what proves impossible to be solved by his judgment. Even so, for the most part, I regarded Bartleby and his ways. Poor fellow! thought I, he means no mischief; it is plain he intends no insolence; his aspect sufficiently evinces that his eccentricities are involuntary. He is useful to me. I can get along with him. If I turn him away, the chances are he will fall in with some less indulgent employer, and then he will be rudely treated, and perhaps driven forth miserably to starve. Yes. Here I can cheaply purchase a delicious self-approval. To befriend Bartleby; to humor him in his strange willfulness, will cost me little or nothing, while I lay up in my soul what will eventually prove a sweet morsel for my conscience. But this mood was not invariable with me. The passiveness of Bartleby sometimes irritated me. I felt strangely goaded on to encounter him in new opposition, to elicit some angry spark from him answerable to my own. But indeed I might as well have essayed to strike fire with my knuckles against a bit of Windsor soap. But one afternoon the evil impulse in me mastered me, and the following little scene ensued:

“Bartleby,” said I, “when those papers are all copied, I will compare them with you.”

“I would prefer not to.”

“How? Surely you do not mean to persist in that mulish vagary?”

No answer.

I threw open the folding-doors near by, and turning upon Turkey and Nippers, exclaimed in an excited manner—

“He says, a second time, he won’t examine his papers. What do you think of it, Turkey?”

It was afternoon, be it remembered. Turkey sat glowing like a brass boiler, his bald head steaming, his hands reeling among his blotted papers.

“Think of it?” roared Turkey; “I think I’ll just step behind his screen, and black his eyes for him!”

So saying, Turkey rose to his feet and threw his arms into a pugilistic position. He was hurrying away to make good his promise, when I detained him, alarmed at the effect of incautiously rousing Turkey’s combativeness after dinner.

“Sit down, Turkey,” said I, “and hear what Nippers has to say. What do you think of it, Nippers? Would I not be justified in immediately dismissing Bartleby?”

“Excuse me, that is for you to decide, sir. I think his conduct quite unusual, and indeed unjust, as regards Turkey and myself. But it may only be a passing whim.”

“Ah,” exclaimed I, “you have strangely changed your mind then—you speak very gently of him now.”

“All beer,” cried Turkey; “gentleness is effects of beer—Nippers and I dined together to-day. You see how gentle *I* am, sir. Shall I go and black his eyes?”

“You refer to Bartleby, I suppose. No, not to-day, Turkey,” I replied; “pray, put up your fists.”

I closed the doors, and again advanced towards Bartleby. I felt additional incentives tempting me to my fate. I burned to be rebelled against again. I remembered that Bartleby never left the office.

“Bartleby,” said I, “Ginger Nut is away; just step round to the Post Office, won’t you? (it was but a three minute walk,) and see if there is any thing for me.”

“I would prefer not to.”

“You *will* not?”

"I *prefer* not."

I staggered to my desk, and sat there in a deep study. My blind inveteracy returned. Was there any other thing in which I could procure myself to be ignominiously repulsed by this lean, penniless wight?—my hired clerk? What added thing is there, perfectly reasonable, that he will be sure to refuse to do?

"Bartleby!"

No answer.

"Bartleby," in a louder tone.

No answer.

"Bartleby," I roared.

Like a very ghost, agreeably to the laws of magical invocation, at the third summons, he appeared at the entrance of his hermitage.

"Go to the next room, and tell Nippers to come to me."

"I prefer not to," he respectfully and slowly said, and mildly disappeared.

"Very good, Bartleby," said I, in a quiet sort of serenely severe self-possessed tone, intimating the unalterable purpose of some terrible retribution very close at hand. At the moment I half intended something of the kind. But upon the whole, as it was drawing towards my dinner-hour, I thought it best to put on my hat and walk home for the day, suffering much from perplexity and distress of mind.

Shall I acknowledge it? The conclusion of this whole business was, that it soon became a fixed fact of my chambers, that a pale young scrivener, by the name of Bartleby, and a desk there; that he copied for me at the usual rate of four cents a folio (one hundred words); but he was permanently exempt from examining the work done by him, that duty being transferred to Turkey and Nippers, one of compliment doubtless to their superior acuteness; moreover, said Bartleby was never on any account to be dispatched on the most trivial errand of any sort; and that even if entreated to take upon him such a matter, it was generally understood that he would prefer not to—in other words, that he would refuse pointblank.

As days passed on, I became considerably reconciled to Bartleby. His steadiness, his freedom from all dissipation, his incessant industry (except when he chose to throw himself into a standing revery behind his screen), his great stillness, his unalterableness of demeanor under all circumstances, made him a valuable acquisition. One prime thing was this,—*he was always there;*—first in the morning, continually through the day, and the last at night. I had a singular confidence in his honesty. I felt my most precious papers perfectly safe in his hands. Sometimes to be sure I could not, for the very soul of me, avoid falling into sudden spasmodic passions with him. For it was exceeding difficult to bear in mind all the time those strange peculiarities, privileges, and unheard of exemptions, forming the tacit stipulations on Bartleby's part under which he remained in my office. Now and then, in the eagerness of dispatching pressing business, I would inadvertently summon Bartleby, in a short, rapid tone, to put his finger, say, on the incipient tie of a bit of red tape with which I was about compressing some papers. Of course, from behind the screen the usual answer, "I prefer not to," was sure to come; and then, how could a human creature with the common infirmities of our nature, refrain from bitterly exclaiming upon such perverseness—such unreasonableness. However, every added repulse of this sort which I received only tended to lessen the probability of my repeating the inadvertence.

Here it must be said, that according to the custom of most legal gentlemen occupying chambers in densely-populated law buildings, there were several keys to my door. One was kept by a woman residing in the attic, which person weekly scrubbed and daily swept and dusted my apartments. Another was kept by Turkey for convenience sake. The third I sometimes carried in my own pocket. The fourth I knew not who had.

Now, one Sunday morning I happened to go to Trinity Church, to hear a celebrated preacher, and finding myself rather early on the ground, I thought I would walk around to my chambers for a while. Luckily I had my key with me; but upon applying it to the lock, I found it resisted by something inserted from the inside. Quite surprised, I called out; when to my consternation a key was turned from within; and thrusting his lean visage at me, and holding the door ajar, the apparition of Bartleby appeared, in his shirt sleeves, and otherwise in a strangely tattered dishabille, saying quietly that he was sorry, but he was deeply engaged just then, and—preferred not admitting me at present. In a brief word or two, he moreover added, that perhaps I had better walk round the block two or three times, and by that time he would probably have concluded his affairs.

Now, the utterly unsurmised appearance of Bartleby, tenanting my law-chambers of a Sunday morning, with his cadaverously gentlemanly *nonchalance*, yet withal firm and self-possessed, had such a strange effect upon me, that incontinently I slunk away from my own door, and did as desired. But not without sundry twinges of impotent rebellion against the mild effrontery of this unaccountable scrivener. Indeed, it was his wonderful mildness chiefly, which not only disarmed me, but unmanned me, as it were. For I consider that one, for the time, is a sort of unmanned when he tranquilly permits his hired clerk to dictate to him, and order him away from his own premises. Furthermore, I was full of uneasiness as to what Bartleby could possibly be doing in my office in his shirt sleeves, and in an otherwise dismantled condition of a Sunday morning. Was any thing amiss going on? Nay, that was out of the question. It was not to be thought of for a moment that Bartleby was an immoral person. But what could he be doing there?—copying? Nay again, whatever might be his eccentricities, Bartleby was an eminently decorous person. He would be the last man to sit down to his desk in any state approaching to nudity. Besides, it was Sunday; and there was something about Bartleby that forbade the supposition that he would by any secular occupation violate the proprieties of the day.

Nevertheless, my mind was not pacified; and full of a restless curiosity, at last I returned to the door. Without hindrance I inserted my key, opened it, and entered. Bartleby was not to be seen. I looked round anxiously, peeped behind his screen; but it was very plain that he was gone. Upon more closely examining the place, I surmised that for an indefinite period Bartleby must have ate, dressed, and slept in my office, and that too without plate, mirror, or bed. The cushioned seat of a rickety old sofa in one corner bore the faint impress of a lean, reclining form. Rolled away under his desk, I found a blanket; under the empty grate, a blacking box and brush; on a chair, a tin basin, with soap and a ragged towel; in a newspaper a few crumbs of ginger-nuts and a morsel of cheese. Yes, thought I, it is evident enough that Bartleby has been making his home here, keeping bachelor's hall all by himself. Immediately then the thought came sweeping across me, What miserable friendlessness and loneliness are here revealed! His poverty is great; but his solitude, how horrible! Think of it. Of a Sunday, Wall-street is deserted as Petra; and every night of every day it is an emptiness. This building too, which of week-days hums with industry and life, at nightfall echoes with sheer vacancy, and all through Sunday is forlorn. And here Bartleby makes his home; sole spectator of a solitude which he has seen all populous—a sort of innocent and transformed Marius brooding among the ruins of Carthage!

For the first time in my life a feeling of overpowering stinging melancholy seized me. Before, I had never experienced aught but a not-unpleasing sadness. The bond of a common humanity now drew me irresistibly to gloom. A fraternal melancholy! For both I and Bartleby were sons of Adam. I remembered the bright silks and sparkling faces I had seen that day, in gala trim, swan-like sailing down the Mississippi of Broadway; and I contrasted them with the pallid copyist, and thought to myself, Ah, happiness courts the light, so we deem the world is gay; but misery hides aloof, so we deem that misery there is none. These sad fancyings—chimeras, doubtless, of a sick and silly brain—led on to other and more special thoughts, concerning the eccentricities of Bartleby. Presentiments of strange discoveries hovered round me. The scrivener's pale form appeared to me laid out, among uncaring strangers, in its shivering winding sheet.

Suddenly I was attracted by Bartleby's closed desk, the key in open sight left in the lock.

I mean no mischief, seek the gratification of no heartless curiosity, thought I; besides, the desk is mine, and its contents too, so I will make bold to look within. Every thing was methodically arranged, the papers smoothly placed. The pigeon holes were deep, and removing the files of documents, I groped into their recesses. Presently I felt something there, and dragged it out. It was an old bandanna handkerchief, heavy and knotted. I opened it, and saw it was a savings' bank.

I now recalled all the quiet mysteries which I had noted in the man. I remembered that he never spoke but to answer; that though at intervals he had considerable time to himself, yet I had never seen him reading—no, not even a newspaper; that for long periods he would stand looking out, at his pale window behind the screen, upon the dead brick wall; I was quite sure he never visited any refectory or eating house; while his pale face clearly indicated that he never drank beer like Turkey, or tea and coffee even, like other men; that he never went any where in particular that I could learn; never went out for a walk, unless indeed that was the case at present; that he had declined telling who he was, or whence he came, or whether he had any relatives in the world; that though so thin and pale, he never complained of ill health. And more than all, I remembered a certain unconscious air of pallid—how shall I call it?—of pallid haughtiness, say, or rather an austere reserve about him, which had positively awed me into my tame compliance with his eccentricities, when I had feared to ask him to do the slightest incidental thing for me, even though I might know, from his long-continued motionlessness, that behind his screen he must be standing in one of those dead-wall reveries of his.

Revolving all these things, and coupling them with the recently discovered fact that he made my office his constant abiding place and home, and not forgetful of his morbid moodiness; revolving all these things, a prudential feeling began to steal over me. My

first emotions had been those of pure melancholy and sincerest pity; but just in proportion as the forlornness of Bartleby grew and grew to my imagination, did that same melancholy merge into fear, that pity into repulsion. So true it is, and so terrible too, that up to a certain point the thought or sight of misery enlists our best affections; but, in certain special cases, beyond that point it does not. They err who would assert that invariably this is owing to the inherent selfishness of the human heart. It rather proceeds from a certain hopelessness of remedying excessive and organic ill. To a sensitive being, pity is not seldom pain. And when at last it is perceived that such pity cannot lead to effectual succor, common sense bids the soul rid of it. What I saw that morning persuaded me that the scrivener was the victim of innate and incurable disorder. I might give alms to his body; but his body did not pain him; it was his soul that suffered, and his soul I could not reach.

I did not accomplish the purpose of going to Trinity Church that morning. Somehow, the things I had seen disqualified me for the time from church-going. I walked homeward, thinking what I would do with Bartleby. Finally, I resolved upon this;—I would put certain calm questions to him the next morning, touching his history, etc., and if he declined to answer them openly and unreservedly (and I supposed he would prefer not), then to give him a twenty dollar bill over and above whatever I might owe him, and tell him his services were no longer required; but that if in any other way I could assist him, I would be happy to do so, especially if he desired to return to his native place, wherever that might be, I would willingly help to defray the expenses. Moreover, if, after reaching home, he found himself at any time in want of aid, a letter from him would be sure of a reply.

The next morning came.

“Bartleby,” said I, gently calling to him behind his screen.

No reply.

“Bartleby,” said I, in a still gentler tone, “come here; I am not going to ask you to do any thing you would prefer not to do—I simply wish to speak to you.”

Upon this he noiselessly slid into view.

“Will you tell me, Bartleby, where you were born?”

“I would prefer not to.”

“Will you tell me *any thing* about yourself?”

“I would prefer not to.”

“But what reasonable objection can you have to speak to me? I feel friendly towards you.”

He did not look at me while I spoke, but kept his glance fixed upon my bust of Cicero, which as I then sat, was directly behind me, some six inches above my head.

“What is your answer, Bartleby?” said I, after waiting a considerable time for a reply, during which his countenance remained immovable, only there was the faintest conceivable tremor of the white attenuated mouth.

“At present I prefer to give no answer,” he said, and retired into his hermitage.

It was rather weak in me I confess, but his manner on this occasion nettled me. Not only did there seem to lurk in it a certain calm disdain, but his perverseness seemed ungrateful, considering the undeniable good usage and indulgence he had received from me.

Again I sat ruminating what I should do. Mortified as I was at his behavior, and resolved as I had been to dismiss him when I entered my offices, nevertheless I strangely felt something superstitious knocking at my heart, and forbidding me to carry out my purpose, and denouncing me for a villain if I dared to breathe one bitter word against this forlornest of mankind. At last, familiarly drawing my chair behind his screen, I sat down and said: “Bartleby, never mind then about revealing your history; but let me entreat you, as a friend, to comply as far as may be with the usages of this office. Say now you will help to examine papers to-morrow or next day: in short, say now that in a day or two you will begin to be a little reasonable:—say so, Bartleby.”

“At present I would prefer not to be a little reasonable,” was his mildly cadaverous reply.

Just then the folding-doors opened, and Nippers approached. He seemed suffering from an unusually bad night’s rest, induced by severer indigestion than common. He overheard those final words of Bartleby.

"*Prefer not*, eh?" gritted Nippers—"I'd *prefer* him, if I were you, sir," addressing me—"I'd *prefer* him; I'd give him preferences, the stubborn mule! What is it, sir, pray, that he *prefers* not to do now?"

Bartleby moved not a limb.

"Mr. Nippers," said I, "I'd prefer that you would withdraw for the present."

Somehow, of late I had got into the way of involuntarily using this word "prefer" upon all sorts of not exactly suitable occasions. And I trembled to think that my contact with the scrivener had already and seriously affected me in a mental way. And what further and deeper aberration might it not yet produce? This apprehension had not been without efficacy in determining me to summary means.

As Nippers, looking very sour and sulky, was departing, Turkey blandly and deferentially approached.

"With submission, sir," said he, "yesterday I was thinking about Bartleby here, and I think that if he would but prefer to take a quart of good ale every day, it would do much towards mending him, and enabling him to assist in examining his papers."

"So you have got the word too," said I, slightly excited.

"With submission, what word, sir," asked Turkey, respectfully crowding himself into the contracted space behind the screen, and by so doing, making me jostle the scrivener. "What word, sir?"

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

8: "Bartleby the Scrivener" by Melville (second half)

8.1: Editor's Introduction

8.2: Bartleby the Scrivener, Second Half

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8.1: Editor's Introduction

"Bartleby the Scrivener's" themes of isolation and alienation deepen in the second half, in which the title character grows even more detached from both his work and his environment. He stops performing his duties altogether, and when asked to leave the office, refuses. Thus, Bartleby's detachment from society deepens as he isolates himself physically within the walls of the office, even living there after hours. This withdrawal indicates profound alienation. Now he rejects not only work, but the very essence of modern life. The lawyer's attempts to understand and help Bartleby only deepen the chasm, as Bartleby's alienation is not something that can be easily remedied.

In this part of the story, the lawyer's struggle with his feelings of compassion and moral responsibility also grows to be central. Increasingly, he is troubled by Bartleby's refusal to leave the office, his apparent homelessness, and his psychological distress. However, while the lawyer wants to help Bartleby, he is constrained by society's expectations.

Therefore, the theme of powerlessness extends to the lawyer's inability to help. Despite his sympathy, his efforts are ineffective. His eventual decision to move his office rather than confront the situation directly underscores the limits of his compassion. It also reflects broader societal issues raised by individuals who do not or cannot conform to society's rules and expectations.

Bartleby's behavior raises questions about free will and determinism, since it is unclear whether he is truly exercising free will, or compelled by some internal force. Therefore, the tension between free will and determinism remains unresolved. Bartleby's actions could be seen as a deliberate rejection of societal norms, existential defiance, or the result of an inner paralysis that prevents him from engaging with the world. The ambiguity surrounding his motivations increases the complexity of the story and leaves the reader questioning whether he is an active agent of his own fate or a tragic figure, somehow caught in circumstances beyond his control.

The second half and conclusion of *Bartleby the Scrivener* deepen the story's exploration of themes including isolation, passive resistance, and alienation. The conflicts between Bartleby and the lawyer, and between him and other characters, demonstrate the tension between individual autonomy and the demands of the world. The unresolved issues, especially the mystery of Bartleby's past, the limits of the lawyer's compassion, and the meaning of Bartleby's refusal, leave the story open to interpretation, making it a baffling yet thought-provoking examination of the human condition.

-Taz Rosenthal

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8.2: Bartleby the Scrivener, Second Half

Bartleby, The Scrivener: A Story of Wall-Street (Second Half)(opens in new window) [www.gutenberg.org]

Accessed September 26, 2024

“I would prefer to be left alone here,” said Bartleby, as if offended at being mobbed in his privacy.

“*That’s* the word, Turkey,” said I—“that’s it.”

“Oh, *prefer*? oh yes—queer word. I never use it myself. But, sir, as I was saying, if he would but prefer—”

“Turkey,” interrupted I, “you will please withdraw.”

“Oh certainly, sir, if you prefer that I should.”

As he opened the folding-door to retire, Nippers at his desk caught a glimpse of me, and asked whether I would prefer to have a certain paper copied on blue paper or white. He did not in the least roguishly accent the word prefer. It was plain that it involuntarily rolled from his tongue. I thought to myself, surely I must get rid of a demented man, who already has in some degree turned the tongues, if not the heads of myself and clerks. But I thought it prudent not to break the dismission at once.

The next day I noticed that Bartleby did nothing but stand at his window in his dead-wall revery. Upon asking him why he did not write, he said that he had decided upon doing no more writing.

“Why, how now? what next?” exclaimed I, “do no more writing?”

“No more.”

“And what is the reason?”

“Do you not see the reason for yourself,” he indifferently replied.

I looked steadfastly at him, and perceived that his eyes looked dull and glazed. Instantly it occurred to me, that his unexampled diligence in copying by his dim window for the first few weeks of his stay with me might have temporarily impaired his vision.

I was touched. I said something in condolence with him. I hinted that of course he did wisely in abstaining from writing for a while; and urged him to embrace that opportunity of taking wholesome exercise in the open air. This, however, he did not do. A few days after this, my other clerks being absent, and being in a great hurry to dispatch certain letters by the mail, I thought that, having nothing else earthly to do, Bartleby would surely be less inflexible than usual, and carry these letters to the post-office. But he blankly declined. So, much to my inconvenience, I went myself.

Still added days went by. Whether Bartleby’s eyes improved or not, I could not say. To all appearance, I thought they did. But when I asked him if they did, he vouchsafed no answer. At all events, he would do no copying. At last, in reply to my urgings, he informed me that he had permanently given up copying.

“What!” exclaimed I; “suppose your eyes should get entirely well—better than ever before—would you not copy then?”

“I have given up copying,” he answered, and slid aside.

He remained as ever, a fixture in my chamber. Nay—if that were possible—he became still more of a fixture than before. What was to be done? He would do nothing in the office: why should he stay there? In plain fact, he had now become a millstone to me, not only useless as a necklace, but afflictive to bear. Yet I was sorry for him. I speak less than truth when I say that, on his own account, he occasioned me uneasiness. If he would but have named a single relative or friend, I would instantly have written, and urged their taking the poor fellow away to some convenient retreat. But he seemed alone, absolutely alone in the universe. A bit of wreck in the mid Atlantic. At length, necessities connected with my business tyrannized over all other considerations. Decently as I could, I told Bartleby that in six days’ time he must unconditionally leave the office. I warned him to take measures, in the interval, for procuring some other abode. I offered to assist him in this endeavor, if he himself would but take the first step towards a removal. “And when you finally quit me, Bartleby,” added I, “I shall see that you go not away entirely unprovided. Six days from this hour, remember.”

At the expiration of that period, I peeped behind the screen, and lo! Bartleby was there.

I buttoned up my coat, balanced myself; advanced slowly towards him, touched his shoulder, and said, “The time has come; you must quit this place; I am sorry for you; here is money; but you must go.”

“I would prefer not,” he replied, with his back still towards me.

“You *must*.”

He remained silent.

Now I had an unbounded confidence in this man’s common honesty. He had frequently restored to me sixpences and shillings carelessly dropped upon the floor, for I am apt to be very reckless in such shirt-button affairs. The proceeding then which followed will not be deemed extraordinary.

“Bartleby,” said I, “I owe you twelve dollars on account; here are thirty-two; the odd twenty are yours.—Will you take it?” and I handed the bills towards him.

But he made no motion.

“I will leave them here then,” putting them under a weight on the table. Then taking my hat and cane and going to the door I tranquilly turned and added—“After you have removed your things from these offices, Bartleby, you will of course lock the door—since every one is now gone for the day but you—and if you please, slip your key underneath the mat, so that I may have it in the morning. I shall not see you again; so good-bye to you. If hereafter in your new place of abode I can be of any service to you, do not fail to advise me by letter. Good-bye, Bartleby, and fare you well.”

But he answered not a word; like the last column of some ruined temple, he remained standing mute and solitary in the middle of the otherwise deserted room.

As I walked home in a pensive mood, my vanity got the better of my pity. I could not but highly plume myself on my masterly management in getting rid of Bartleby. Masterly I call it, and such it must appear to any dispassionate thinker. The beauty of my procedure seemed to consist in its perfect quietness. There was no vulgar bullying, no bravado of any sort, no choleric hectoring, and striding to and fro across the apartment, jerking out vehement commands for Bartleby to bundle himself off with his beggarly traps. Nothing of the kind. Without loudly bidding Bartleby depart—as an inferior genius might have done—I *assumed* the ground that depart he must; and upon that assumption built all I had to say. The more I thought over my procedure, the more I was charmed with it. Nevertheless, next morning, upon awakening, I had my doubts,—I had somehow slept off the fumes of vanity. One of the coolest and wisest hours a man has, is just after he awakes in the morning. My procedure seemed as sagacious as ever.—but only in theory. How it would prove in practice—there was the rub. It was truly a beautiful thought to have assumed Bartleby’s departure; but, after all, that assumption was simply my own, and none of Bartleby’s. The great point was, not whether I had assumed that he would quit me, but whether he would prefer so to do. He was more a man of preferences than assumptions.

After breakfast, I walked down town, arguing the probabilities *pro* and *con*. One moment I thought it would prove a miserable failure, and Bartleby would be found all alive at my office as usual; the next moment it seemed certain that I should see his chair empty. And so I kept veering about. At the corner of Broadway and Canal-street, I saw quite an excited group of people standing in earnest conversation.

“I’ll take odds he doesn’t,” said a voice as I passed.

“Doesn’t go?—done!” said I, “put up your money.”

I was instinctively putting my hand in my pocket to produce my own, when I remembered that this was an election day. The words I had overheard bore no reference to Bartleby, but to the success or non-success of some candidate for the mayoralty. In my intent frame of mind, I had, as it were, imagined that all Broadway shared in my excitement, and were debating the same question with me. I passed on, very thankful that the uproar of the street screened my momentary absent-mindedness.

As I had intended, I was earlier than usual at my office door. I stood listening for a moment. All was still. He must be gone. I tried the knob. The door was locked. Yes, my procedure had worked to a charm; he indeed must be vanished. Yet a certain melancholy mixed with this: I was almost sorry for my brilliant success. I was fumbling under the door mat for the key, which Bartleby was to

have left there for me, when accidentally my knee knocked against a panel, producing a summoning sound, and in response a voice came to me from within—"Not yet; I am occupied."

It was Bartleby.

I was thunderstruck. For an instant I stood like the man who, pipe in mouth, was killed one cloudless afternoon long ago in Virginia, by a summer lightning; at his own warm open window he was killed, and remained leaning out there upon the dreamy afternoon, till some one touched him, when he fell.

"Not gone!" I murmured at last. But again obeying that wondrous ascendancy which the inscrutable scrivener had over me, and from which ascendancy, for all my chafing, I could not completely escape, I slowly went down stairs and out into the street, and while walking round the block, considered what I should next do in this unheard-of perplexity. Turn the man out by an actual thrusting I could not; to drive him away by calling him hard names would not do; calling in the police was an unpleasant idea; and yet, permit him to enjoy his cadaverous triumph over me,—this too I could not think of. What was to be done? or, if nothing could be done, was there any thing further that I could *assume* in the matter? Yes, as before I had prospectively assumed that Bartleby would depart, so now I might retrospectively assume that departed he was. In the legitimate carrying out of this assumption, I might enter my office in a great hurry, and pretending not to see Bartleby at all, walk straight against him as if he were air. Such a proceeding would in a singular degree have the appearance of a home-thrust. It was hardly possible that Bartleby could withstand such an application of the doctrine of assumptions. But upon second thoughts the success of the plan seemed rather dubious. I resolved to argue the matter over with him again.

"Bartleby," said I, entering the office, with a quietly severe expression, "I am seriously displeased. I am pained, Bartleby. I had thought better of you. I had imagined you of such a gentlemanly organization, that in any delicate dilemma a slight hint would have suffice—in short, an assumption. But it appears I am deceived. Why," I added, unaffectedly starting, "you have not even touched that money yet," pointing to it, just where I had left it the evening previous.

He answered nothing.

"Will you, or will you not, quit me?" I now demanded in a sudden passion, advancing close to him.

"I would prefer *not* to quit you," he replied, gently emphasizing the *not*.

"What earthly right have you to stay here? Do you pay any rent? Do you pay my taxes? Or is this property yours?"

He answered nothing.

"Are you ready to go on and write now? Are your eyes recovered? Could you copy a small paper for me this morning? or help examine a few lines? or step round to the post-office? In a word, will you do any thing at all, to give a coloring to your refusal to depart the premises?"

He silently retired into his hermitage.

I was now in such a state of nervous resentment that I thought it but prudent to check myself at present from further demonstrations. Bartleby and I were alone. I remembered the tragedy of the unfortunate Adams and the still more unfortunate Colt in the solitary office of the latter; and how poor Colt, being dreadfully incensed by Adams, and imprudently permitting himself to get wildly excited, was at unawares hurried into his fatal act—an act which certainly no man could possibly deplore more than the actor himself. Often it had occurred to me in my ponderings upon the subject, that had that altercation taken place in the public street, or at a private residence, it would not have terminated as it did. It was the circumstance of being alone in a solitary office, up stairs, of a building entirely unhallowed by humanizing domestic associations—an uncarpeted office, doubtless, of a dusty, haggard sort of appearance;—this it must have been, which greatly helped to enhance the irritable desperation of the hapless Colt.

But when this old Adam of resentment rose in me and tempted me concerning Bartleby, I grappled him and threw him. How? Why, simply by recalling the divine injunction: "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another." Yes, this it was that saved me. Aside from higher considerations, charity often operates as a vastly wise and prudent principle—a great safeguard to its possessor. Men have committed murder for jealousy's sake, and anger's sake, and hatred's sake, and selfishness' sake, and spiritual pride's sake; but no man that ever I heard of, ever committed a diabolical murder for sweet charity's sake. Mere self-interest, then, if no better motive can be enlisted, should, especially with high-tempered men, prompt all beings to charity and philanthropy. At any rate, upon the occasion in question, I strove to drown my exasperated feelings towards the scrivener by benevolently

construing his conduct. Poor fellow, poor fellow! thought I, he don't mean any thing; and besides, he has seen hard times, and ought to be indulged.

I endeavored also immediately to occupy myself, and at the same time to comfort my despondency. I tried to fancy that in the course of the morning, at such time as might prove agreeable to him, Bartleby, of his own free accord, would emerge from his hermitage, and take up some decided line of march in the direction of the door. But no. Half-past twelve o'clock came; Turkey began to glow in the face, overturn his inkstand, and become generally obstreperous; Nippers abated down into quietude and courtesy; Ginger Nut munched his noon apple; and Bartleby remained standing at his window in one of his profoundest dead-wall reveries. Will it be credited? Ought I to acknowledge it? That afternoon I left the office without saying one further word to him.

Some days now passed, during which, at leisure intervals I looked a little into "Edwards on the Will," and "Priestly on Necessity." Under the circumstances, those books induced a salutary feeling. Gradually I slid into the persuasion that these troubles of mine touching the scrivener, had been all predestinated from eternity, and Bartleby was billeted upon me for some mysterious purpose of an all-wise Providence, which it was not for a mere mortal like me to fathom. Yes, Bartleby, stay there behind your screen, thought I; I shall persecute you no more; you are harmless and noiseless as any of these old chairs; in short, I never feel so private as when I know you are here. At last I see it, I feel it; I penetrate to the predestinated purpose of my life. I am content. Others may have loftier parts to enact; but my mission in this world, Bartleby, is to furnish you with office-room for such period as you may see fit to remain.

I believe that this wise and blessed frame of mind would have continued with me, had it not been for the unsolicited and uncharitable remarks obtruded upon me by my professional friends who visited the rooms. But thus it often is, that the constant friction of illiberal minds wears out at last the best resolves of the more generous. Though to be sure, when I reflected upon it, it was not strange that people entering my office should be struck by the peculiar aspect of the unaccountable Bartleby, and so be tempted to throw out some sinister observations concerning him. Sometimes an attorney having business with me, and calling at my office and finding no one but the scrivener there, would undertake to obtain some sort of precise information from him touching my whereabouts; but without heeding his idle talk, Bartleby would remain standing immovable in the middle of the room. So after contemplating him in that position for a time, the attorney would depart, no wiser than he came.

Also, when a Reference was going on, and the room full of lawyers and witnesses and business was driving fast; some deeply occupied legal gentleman present, seeing Bartleby wholly unemployed, would request him to run round to his (the legal gentleman's) office and fetch some papers for him. Thereupon, Bartleby would tranquilly decline, and yet remain idle as before. Then the lawyer would give a great stare, and turn to me. And what could I say? At last I was made aware that all through the circle of my professional acquaintance, a whisper of wonder was running round, having reference to the strange creature I kept at my office. This worried me very much. And as the idea came upon me of his possibly turning out a long-lived man, and keep occupying my chambers, and denying my authority; and perplexing my visitors; and scandalizing my professional reputation; and casting a general gloom over the premises; keeping soul and body together to the last upon his savings (for doubtless he spent but half a dime a day), and in the end perhaps outlive me, and claim possession of my office by right of his perpetual occupancy: as all these dark anticipations crowded upon me more and more, and my friends continually intruded their relentless remarks upon the apparition in my room; a great change was wrought in me. I resolved to gather all my faculties together, and for ever rid me of this intolerable incubus.

Ere revolving any complicated project, however, adapted to this end, I first simply suggested to Bartleby the propriety of his permanent departure. In a calm and serious tone, I commended the idea to his careful and mature consideration. But having taken three days to meditate upon it, he apprised me that his original determination remained the same; in short, that he still preferred to abide with me.

What shall I do? I now said to myself, buttoning up my coat to the last button. What shall I do? what ought I to do? what does conscience say I *should* do with this man, or rather ghost. Rid myself of him, I must; go, he shall. But how? You will not thrust him, the poor, pale, passive mortal,—you will not thrust such a helpless creature out of your door? you will not dishonor yourself by such cruelty? No, I will not, I cannot do that. Rather would I let him live and die here, and then mason up his remains in the wall. What then will you do? For all your coaxing, he will not budge. Bribes he leaves under your own paperweight on your table; in short, it is quite plain that he prefers to cling to you.

Then something severe, something unusual must be done. What! surely you will not have him collared by a constable, and commit his innocent pallor to the common jail? And upon what ground could you procure such a thing to be done?—a vagrant, is he? What! he a vagrant, a wanderer, who refuses to budge? It is because he will *not* be a vagrant, then, that you seek to count him *as* a vagrant. That is too absurd. No visible means of support: there I have him. Wrong again: for indubitably he *does* support himself, and that is the only unanswerable proof that any man can show of his possessing the means so to do. No more then. Since he will not quit me, I must quit him. I will change my offices; I will move elsewhere; and give him fair notice, that if I find him on my new premises I will then proceed against him as a common trespasser.

Acting accordingly, next day I thus addressed him: “I find these chambers too far from the City Hall; the air is unwholesome. In a word, I propose to remove my offices next week, and shall no longer require your services. I tell you this now, in order that you may seek another place.”

He made no reply, and nothing more was said.

On the appointed day I engaged carts and men, proceeded to my chambers, and having but little furniture, every thing was removed in a few hours. Throughout, the scrivener remained standing behind the screen, which I directed to be removed the last thing. It was withdrawn; and being folded up like a huge folio, left him the motionless occupant of a naked room. I stood in the entry watching him a moment, while something from within me upbraided me.

I re-entered, with my hand in my pocket—and—and my heart in my mouth.

“Good-bye, Bartleby; I am going—good-bye, and God some way bless you; and take that,” slipping something in his hand. But it dropped upon the floor, and then,—strange to say—I tore myself from him whom I had so longed to be rid of.

Established in my new quarters, for a day or two I kept the door locked, and started at every footfall in the passages. When I returned to my rooms after any little absence, I would pause at the threshold for an instant, and attentively listen, ere applying my key. But these fears were needless. Bartleby never came nigh me.

I thought all was going well, when a perturbed looking stranger visited me, inquiring whether I was the person who had recently occupied rooms at No.—Wall-street.

Full of forebodings, I replied that I was.

“Then sir,” said the stranger, who proved a lawyer, “you are responsible for the man you left there. He refuses to do any copying; he refuses to do any thing; he says he prefers not to; and he refuses to quit the premises.”

“I am very sorry, sir,” said I, with assumed tranquility, but an inward tremor, “but, really, the man you allude to is nothing to me—he is no relation or apprentice of mine, that you should hold me responsible for him.”

“In mercy’s name, who is he?”

“I certainly cannot inform you. I know nothing about him. Formerly I employed him as a copyist; but he has done nothing for me now for some time past.”

“I shall settle him then,—good morning, sir.”

Several days passed, and I heard nothing more; and though I often felt a charitable prompting to call at the place and see poor Bartleby, yet a certain squeamishness of I know not what withheld me.

All is over with him, by this time, thought I at last, when through another week no further intelligence reached me. But coming to my room the day after, I found several persons waiting at my door in a high state of nervous excitement.

“That’s the man—here he comes,” cried the foremost one, whom I recognized as the lawyer who had previously called upon me alone.

“You must take him away, sir, at once,” cried a portly person among them, advancing upon me, and whom I knew to be the landlord of No.—Wall-street. “These gentlemen, my tenants, cannot stand it any longer; Mr. B—” pointing to the lawyer, “has turned him out of his room, and he now persists in haunting the building generally, sitting upon the banisters of the stairs by day, and sleeping in the entry by night. Every body is concerned; clients are leaving the offices; some fears are entertained of a mob; something you must do, and that without delay.”

Aghast at this torrent, I fell back before it, and would fain have locked myself in my new quarters. In vain I persisted that Bartleby was nothing to me—no more than to any one else. In vain:—I was the last person known to have any thing to do with him, and they held me to the terrible account. Fearful then of being exposed in the papers (as one person present obscurely threatened) I considered the matter, and at length said, that if the lawyer would give me a confidential interview with the scrivener, in his (the lawyer's) own room, I would that afternoon strive my best to rid them of the nuisance they complained of.

Going up stairs to my old haunt, there was Bartleby silently sitting upon the banister at the landing.

"What are you doing here, Bartleby?" said I.

"Sitting upon the banister," he mildly replied.

I motioned him into the lawyer's room, who then left us.

"Bartleby," said I, "are you aware that you are the cause of great tribulation to me, by persisting in occupying the entry after being dismissed from the office?"

No answer.

"Now one of two things must take place. Either you must do something, or something must be done to you. Now what sort of business would you like to engage in? Would you like to re-engage in copying for some one?"

"No; I would prefer not to make any change."

"Would you like a clerkship in a dry-goods store?"

"There is too much confinement about that. No, I would not like a clerkship; but I am not particular."

"Too much confinement," I cried, "why you keep yourself confined all the time!"

"I would prefer not to take a clerkship," he rejoined, as if to settle that little item at once.

"How would a bar-tender's business suit you? There is no trying of the eyesight in that."

"I would not like it at all; though, as I said before, I am not particular."

His unwonted wordiness inspirited me. I returned to the charge.

"Well then, would you like to travel through the country collecting bills for the merchants? That would improve your health."

"No, I would prefer to be doing something else."

"How then would going as a companion to Europe, to entertain some young gentleman with your conversation,—how would that suit you?"

"Not at all. It does not strike me that there is any thing definite about that. I like to be stationary. But I am not particular."

"Stationary you shall be then," I cried, now losing all patience, and for the first time in all my exasperating connection with him fairly flying into a passion. "If you do not go away from these premises before night, I shall feel bound—indeed I *am* bound—to—to—to quit the premises myself!" I rather absurdly concluded, knowing not with what possible threat to try to frighten his immobility into compliance. Despairing of all further efforts, I was precipitately leaving him, when a final thought occurred to me—one which had not been wholly unindulged before.

"Bartleby," said I, in the kindest tone I could assume under such exciting circumstances, "will you go home with me now—not to my office, but my dwelling—and remain there till we can conclude upon some convenient arrangement for you at our leisure? Come, let us start now, right away."

"No: at present I would prefer not to make any change at all."

I answered nothing; but effectually dodging every one by the suddenness and rapidity of my flight, rushed from the building, ran up Wall-street towards Broadway, and jumping into the first omnibus was soon removed from pursuit. As soon as tranquility returned I distinctly perceived that I had now done all that I possibly could, both in respect to the demands of the landlord and his tenants, and with regard to my own desire and sense of duty, to benefit Bartleby, and shield him from rude persecution. I now strove to be entirely care-free and quiescent; and my conscience justified me in the attempt; though indeed it was not so successful as I could

have wished. So fearful was I of being again hunted out by the incensed landlord and his exasperated tenants, that, surrendering my business to Nippers, for a few days I drove about the upper part of the town and through the suburbs, in my rockaway; crossed over to Jersey City and Hoboken, and paid fugitive visits to Manhattanville and Astoria. In fact I almost lived in my rockaway for the time.

When again I entered my office, lo, a note from the landlord lay upon the desk. I opened it with trembling hands. It informed me that the writer had sent to the police, and had Bartleby removed to the Tombs as a vagrant. Moreover, since I knew more about him than any one else, he wished me to appear at that place, and make a suitable statement of the facts. These tidings had a conflicting effect upon me. At first I was indignant; but at last almost approved. The landlord's energetic, summary disposition had led him to adopt a procedure which I do not think I would have decided upon myself; and yet as a last resort, under such peculiar circumstances, it seemed the only plan.

As I afterwards learned, the poor scrivener, when told that he must be conducted to the Tombs, offered not the slightest obstacle, but in his pale unmoving way, silently acquiesced.

Some of the compassionate and curious bystanders joined the party; and headed by one of the constables arm in arm with Bartleby, the silent procession filed its way through all the noise, and heat, and joy of the roaring thoroughfares at noon.

The same day I received the note I went to the Tombs, or to speak more properly, the Halls of Justice. Seeking the right officer, I stated the purpose of my call, and was informed that the individual I described was indeed within. I then assured the functionary that Bartleby was a perfectly honest man, and greatly to be compassionated, however unaccountably eccentric. I narrated all I knew, and closed by suggesting the idea of letting him remain in as indulgent confinement as possible till something less harsh might be done—though indeed I hardly knew what. At all events, if nothing else could be decided upon, the alms-house must receive him. I then begged to have an interview.

Being under no disgraceful charge, and quite serene and harmless in all his ways, they had permitted him freely to wander about the prison, and especially in the inclosed grass-platted yard thereof. And so I found him there, standing all alone in the quietest of the yards, his face towards a high wall, while all around, from the narrow slits of the jail windows, I thought I saw peering out upon him the eyes of murderers and thieves.

"Bartleby!"

"I know you," he said, without looking round,—"and I want nothing to say to you."

"It was not I that brought you here, Bartleby," said I, keenly pained at his implied suspicion. "And to you, this should not be so vile a place. Nothing reproachful attaches to you by being here. And see, it is not so sad a place as one might think. Look, there is the sky, and here is the grass."

"I know where I am," he replied, but would say nothing more, and so I left him.

As I entered the corridor again, a broad meat-like man, in an apron, accosted me, and jerking his thumb over his shoulder said—"Is that your friend?"

"Yes."

"Does he want to starve? If he does, let him live on the prison fare, that's all."

"Who are you?" asked I, not knowing what to make of such an unofficially speaking person in such a place.

"I am the grub-man. Such gentlemen as have friends here, hire me to provide them with something good to eat."

"Is this so?" said I, turning to the turnkey.

He said it was.

"Well then," said I, slipping some silver into the grub-man's hands (for so they called him). "I want you to give particular attention to my friend there; let him have the best dinner you can get. And you must be as polite to him as possible."

"Introduce me, will you?" said the grub-man, looking at me with an expression which seemed to say he was all impatience for an opportunity to give a specimen of his breeding.

Thinking it would prove of benefit to the scrivener, I acquiesced; and asking the grub-man his name, went up with him to Bartleby.

“Bartleby, this is Mr. Cutlets; you will find him very useful to you.”

“Your sarvant, sir, your sarvant,” said the grub-man, making a low salutation behind his apron. “Hope you find it pleasant here, sir; —spacious grounds—cool apartments, sir—hope you’ll stay with us some time—try to make it agreeable. May Mrs. Cutlets and I have the pleasure of your company to dinner, sir, in Mrs. Cutlets’ private room?”

“I prefer not to dine to-day,” said Bartleby, turning away. “It would disagree with me; I am unused to dinners.” So saying he slowly moved to the other side of the inclosure, and took up a position fronting the dead-wall.

“How’s this?” said the grub-man, addressing me with a stare of astonishment. “He’s odd, aint he?”

“I think he is a little deranged,” said I, sadly.

“Deranged? deranged is it? Well now, upon my word, I thought that friend of yourn was a gentleman forger; they are always pale and genteel-like, them forgers. I can’t pity’em—can’t help it, sir. Did you know Monroe Edwards?” he added touchingly, and paused. Then, laying his hand pityingly on my shoulder, sighed, “he died of consumption at Sing-Sing. So you weren’t acquainted with Monroe?”

“No, I was never socially acquainted with any forgers. But I cannot stop longer. Look to my friend yonder. You will not lose by it. I will see you again.”

Some few days after this, I again obtained admission to the Tombs, and went through the corridors in quest of Bartleby; but without finding him.

“I saw him coming from his cell not long ago,” said a turnkey, “may be he’s gone to loiter in the yards.”

So I went in that direction.

“Are you looking for the silent man?” said another turnkey passing me. “Yonder he lies—sleeping in the yard there. ’Tis not twenty minutes since I saw him lie down.”

The yard was entirely quiet. It was not accessible to the common prisoners. The surrounding walls, of amazing thickness, kept off all sounds behind them. The Egyptian character of the masonry weighed upon me with its gloom. But a soft imprisoned turf grew under foot. The heart of the eternal pyramids, it seemed, wherein, by some strange magic, through the clefts, grass-seed, dropped by birds, had sprung.

Strangely huddled at the base of the wall, his knees drawn up, and lying on his side, his head touching the cold stones, I saw the wasted Bartleby. But nothing stirred. I paused; then went close up to him; stooped over, and saw that his dim eyes were open; otherwise he seemed profoundly sleeping. Something prompted me to touch him. I felt his hand, when a tingling shiver ran up my arm and down my spine to my feet.

The round face of the grub-man peered upon me now. “His dinner is ready. Won’t he dine to-day, either? Or does he live without dining?”

“Lives without dining,” said I, and closed his eyes.

“Eh!—He’s asleep, aint he?”

“With kings and counselors,” murmured I.

There would seem little need for proceeding further in this history. Imagination will readily supply the meager recital of poor Bartleby’s interment. But ere parting with the reader, let me say, that if this little narrative has sufficiently interested him, to awaken curiosity as to who Bartleby was, and what manner of life he led prior to the present narrator’s making his acquaintance, I can only reply, that in such curiosity I fully share, but am wholly unable to gratify it. Yet here I hardly know whether I should divulge one little item of rumor, which came to my ear a few months after the scrivener’s decease. Upon what basis it rested, I could never ascertain; and hence, how true it is I cannot now tell. But inasmuch as this vague report has not been without certain strange suggestive interest to me, however sad, it may prove the same with some others; and so I will briefly mention it. The report was this: that Bartleby had been a subordinate clerk in the Dead Letter Office at Washington, from which he had been suddenly removed by a change in the administration. When I think over this rumor, I cannot adequately express the emotions which seize me. Dead letters! does it not sound like dead men? Conceive a man by nature and misfortune prone to a pallid hopelessness, can any business seem more fitted to heighten it than that of continually handling these dead letters, and assorting them for the flames?

For by the cart-load they are annually burned. Sometimes from out the folded paper the pale clerk takes a ring:—the finger it was meant for, perhaps, moulders in the grave; a bank-note sent in swiftest charity:—he whom it would relieve, nor eats nor hungers any more; pardon for those who died despairing; hope for those who died unhoping; good tidings for those who died stifled by unrelieved calamities. On errands of life, these letters speed to death.

Ah Bartleby! Ah humanity!

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

9: Narrative of the Life of a Slave by Frederick Douglass (first half)

9.1: Editor's Introduction

9.2: Narrative of the Life of a Slave by Frederick Douglass (first half)

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9.1: Editor's Introduction

The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, published in 1845, is one of the most significant literary works describing, first-hand, the brutality and stark realities of American slavery. Written by Frederick Douglass, a former slave who became one of the most influential abolitionists of the 19th century, the *Narrative* not only documents Douglass's own experiences as a slave but also provides a powerful critique of slavery's moral, social, and political implications. This autobiography also had a profound impact on the abolitionist movement.

Douglass's *Narrative* is a firsthand account of the dehumanizing, violent nature of slavery, presenting vivid, often harrowing descriptions of physical and psychological abuses that slaves, including Douglass, endured. His detailed accounts of beatings, deprivation, and forced labor bring the reality of slavery into sharp focus. The narrative's personal nature also humanizes the millions of enslaved people, giving them a voice and an identity denied them by slavery.

In the first half of this narrative, Douglass describes how slavery was not only physically oppressive but intellectually stifling. He recalls how learning to read and write became a form of resistance for him, as it allowed him to see through the lies that supported slavery. The story of how he defied his masters by secretly learning to read and write is a powerful aspect of this story, and illustrates the inherent human desire for knowledge and autonomy.

Another central theme is the moral hypocrisy of a society that claims to value freedom and Christianity while condoning slavery. In this work, Douglass exposes the contradiction between the principles of liberty and justice enshrined in the American founding documents and the realities of slavery. He frequently points out how slaveholders used religion to justify cruel treatment of slaves, yet acted in ways completely contrary to Christian teachings.

Examples include the brutal treatment he witnessed at the hands of a slaveholder who considered himself a devout Christian, showing how religious belief was often twisted to serve the interests of slaveholders. This critique resonated strongly with abolitionist readers at the time and continues to be a powerful argument in modern discussions of the unfortunate legacy of the institution of slavery.

Douglass’s autobiography was written not only as a memoir but also to galvanize the abolitionist cause. By detailing his escape from slavery and subsequent efforts to gain freedom, Douglass provided a compelling argument for the abolition of slavery. Moreover, his articulate account served as proof that African Americans were as capable of intellectual and moral reasoning as whites, challenging racist justifications for slavery.

Further, the *Narrative* helped dispel the myth of the "contented slave," a common pro-slavery argument that claimed African Americans were naturally suited to bondage and preferred it. Douglass’s descriptions of his intense longing for freedom, his determination to escape, and his refusal to be treated as property effectively debunked this idea.

Douglass's Narrative stands alongside other slave narratives, such as those by Harriet Jacobs and Solomon Northup, as a vital piece of the historical record. The clarity and power of Douglass's prose, combined with his keen insights into both human nature and the institution of slavery, have earned the *Narrative* a lasting place in the canon of American literature. Douglass’s ability to weave together personal experience, political critique, and moral philosophy makes the work not only a historical document but also a profound meditation on freedom, human dignity, and resistance

The first half sets the stage for Douglass’s life as a young boy, providing insight into the dehumanizing system of slavery and introducing themes that resonate throughout. Using a combination of personal anecdotes, reflections on his own experiences, and commentary on the broader institution of slavery, Douglass explores the horrors of slavery, the dehumanization of both the enslaved and the enslavers, and the importance of education in the fight for freedom. He draws attention to the ways in which slaves are stripped of their humanity. For example, at the outset Douglass describes is his own uncertain parentage. He never knows his exact birth date, a fact that underscores how slaves were denied even basic personal knowledge. Douglass reveals that he was separated from his mother, Harriet Bailey, at a young age—a common practice among slaveholders to prevent the development of familial bonds. He only saw his mother a few times before her death, and their separation was so complete that when she passed away, Douglass barely felt the loss.

This experience of separation serves as a powerful example of how slavery robbed people of family connections. Moreover, the descriptions of overseers like Mr. Severe and Mr. Gore reinforce the idea that the enslavers viewed slaves as disposable property,

subject to brutal punishment to maintain control and authority. Douglass provides vivid, disturbing accounts of the brutality inflicted upon slaves. Moreover, the sheer size of Colonel Lloyd's plantation, with hundreds of slaves working in the fields, creates a backdrop for the oppressive and inhumane treatment Douglass describes. The first half also delves into the psychological toll of slavery, including the constant threat of violence and the lack of hope for a better future.

Also, Douglass explores how slavery corrupts the morality of the enslavers. This theme is powerfully illustrated in his description of Sophia Auld, the wife of his new master in Baltimore. At first Mrs. Auld is kind and sympathetic, teaching Frederick the alphabet and treating him well. However, as she grows accustomed to owning slaves, her kindness fades, and she becomes increasingly cruel and domineering. In this way, Douglass describes how slavery poisons the character of even those who were once compassionate, illustrating its corrosive effect.

In the first half, Douglass also details the important role of education in the path to freedom. When he is sent to live with the Auld family in Baltimore, he experiences a turning point in his life, since it is here that he first begins to learn to read and write. His newfound literacy opens up a world of possibilities. Mrs. Auld starts teaching him the alphabet, but when her husband discovers this, he forbids her from continuing, arguing that educating slaves would make them "unmanageable."

However, this moment is a crucial turning point for Frederick, as it reveals to him the power of education. From then on, Frederick is determined to learn all he can, despite the obstacles. The theme that education is a path to freedom resonates further as Douglass continues to pursue literacy as an act of resistance against slavery.

-Taz Rosenthal

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9.2: Narrative of the Life of a Slave by Frederick Douglass (first half)

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS, AN AMERICAN SLAVE ***

Narrative
of the
Life
of
FREDERICK DOUGLASS

AN
AMERICAN SLAVE.
WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

BOSTON

PUBLISHED AT THE ANTI-SLAVERY OFFICE,
NO. 25 CORNHILL
1845

ENTERED, ACCORDING TO ACT OF CONGRESS,
IN THE YEAR 1845
BY FREDERICK DOUGLASS,
IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT COURT
OF MASSACHUSETTS.

Note from the original file: This electronic book is being released at this time to honor the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. [Born January 15, 1929] [Officially celebrated January 20, 1992]

FREDERICK DOUGLASS.

Frederick Douglass was born in slavery as Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey near Easton in Talbot County, Maryland. He was not sure of the exact year of his birth, but he knew that it was 1817 or 1818. As a young boy he was sent to Baltimore, to be a house servant, where he learned to read and write, with the assistance of his master's wife. In 1838 he escaped from slavery and went to New York City, where he married Anna Murray, a free colored woman whom he had met in Baltimore. Soon thereafter he changed his name to Frederick Douglass. In 1841 he addressed a convention of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in Nantucket and so greatly impressed the group that they immediately employed him as an agent. He was such an impressive orator that numerous persons doubted if he had ever been a slave, so he wrote *Narrative Of The Life Of Frederick Douglass*. During the Civil War he assisted in the recruiting of colored men for the 54th and 55th Massachusetts Regiments and consistently argued for the emancipation of slaves. After the war he was active in securing and protecting the rights of the freemen. In his later years, at different times, he was secretary of the Santo Domingo Commission, marshall and recorder of deeds of the District of Columbia, and United States Minister to Haiti. His other autobiographical works are *My Bondage And My Freedom* and *Life And Times Of Frederick Douglass*, published in 1855 and 1881 respectively. He died in 1895.

CHAPTER I

I was born in Tuckahoe, near Hillsborough, and about twelve miles from Easton, in Talbot county, Maryland. I have no accurate knowledge of my age, never having seen any authentic record containing it. By far the larger part of the slaves know as little of their ages as horses know of theirs, and it is the wish of most masters within my knowledge to keep their slaves thus ignorant. I do not remember to have ever met a slave who could tell of his birthday. They seldom come nearer to it than planting-time, harvest-time, cherry-time, spring-time, or fall-time. A want of information concerning my own was a source of unhappiness to me even during childhood. The white children could tell their ages. I could not tell why I ought to be deprived of the same privilege. I was not allowed to make any inquiries of my master concerning it. He deemed all such inquiries on the part of a slave improper and impertinent, and evidence of a restless spirit. The nearest estimate I can give makes me now between twenty-seven and twenty-eight years of age. I come to this, from hearing my master say, some time during 1835, I was about seventeen years old.

My mother was named Harriet Bailey. She was the daughter of Isaac and Betsey Bailey, both colored, and quite dark. My mother was of a darker complexion than either my grandmother or grandfather.

My father was a white man. He was admitted to be such by all I ever heard speak of my parentage. The opinion was also whispered that my master was my father; but of the correctness of this opinion, I know nothing; the means of knowing was withheld from me. My mother and I were separated when I was but an infant—before I knew her as my mother. It is a common custom, in the part of Maryland from which I ran away, to part children from their mothers at a very early age. Frequently, before the child has reached its twelfth month, its mother is taken from it, and hired out on some farm a considerable distance off, and the child is placed under the care of an old woman, too old for field labor. For what this separation is done, I do not know, unless it be to hinder the development of the child's affection toward its mother, and to blunt and destroy the natural affection of the mother for the child. This is the inevitable result.

I never saw my mother, to know her as such, more than four or five times in my life; and each of these times was very short in duration, and at night. She was hired by a Mr. Stewart, who lived about twelve miles from my home. She made her journeys to see me in the night, travelling the whole distance on foot, after the performance of her day's work. She was a field hand, and a whipping is the penalty of not being in the field at sunrise, unless a slave has special permission from his or her master to the contrary—a permission which they seldom get, and one that gives to him that gives it the proud name of being a kind master. I do not recollect of ever seeing my mother by the light of day. She was with me in the night. She would lie down with me, and get me to sleep, but long before I waked she was gone. Very little communication ever took place between us. Death soon ended what little we could have while she lived, and with it her hardships and suffering. She died when I was about seven years old, on one of my master's farms, near Lee's Mill. I was not allowed to be present during her illness, at her death, or burial. She was gone long before I knew any thing about it. Never having enjoyed, to any considerable extent, her soothing presence, her tender and watchful care, I received the tidings of her death with much the same emotions I should have probably felt at the death of a stranger.

Called thus suddenly away, she left me without the slightest intimation of who my father was. The whisper that my master was my father, may or may not be true; and, true or false, it is of but little consequence to my purpose whilst the fact remains, in all its glaring odiousness, that slaveholders have ordained, and by law established, that the children of slave women shall in all cases follow the condition of their mothers; and this is done too obviously to administer to their own lusts, and make a gratification of their wicked desires profitable as well as pleasurable; for by this cunning arrangement, the slaveholder, in cases not a few, sustains to his slaves the double relation of master and father.

I know of such cases; and it is worthy of remark that such slaves invariably suffer greater hardships, and have more to contend with, than others. They are, in the first place, a constant offence to their mistress. She is ever disposed to find fault with them; they can seldom do any thing to please her; she is never better pleased than when she sees them under the lash, especially when she suspects her husband of showing to his mulatto children favors which he withholds from his black slaves. The master is frequently compelled to sell this class of his slaves, out of deference to the feelings of his white wife; and, cruel as the deed may strike any one to be, for a man to sell his own children to human flesh-mongers, it is often the dictate of humanity for him to do so; for, unless he does this, he must not only whip them himself, but must stand by and see one white son tie up his brother, of but few shades darker complexion than himself, and ply the gory lash to his naked back; and if he lisp one word of disapproval, it is set down to his parental partiality, and only makes a bad matter worse, both for himself and the slave whom he would protect and defend.

Every year brings with it multitudes of this class of slaves. It was doubtless in consequence of a knowledge of this fact, that one great statesman of the south predicted the downfall of slavery by the inevitable laws of population. Whether this prophecy is ever fulfilled or not, it is nevertheless plain that a very different-looking class of people are springing up at the south, and are now held in slavery, from those originally brought to this country from Africa; and if their increase do no other good, it will do away the force of the argument, that God cursed Ham, and therefore American slavery is right. If the lineal descendants of Ham are alone to be scripturally enslaved, it is certain that slavery at the south must soon become unscriptural; for thousands are ushered into the world, annually, who, like myself, owe their existence to white fathers, and those fathers most frequently their own masters.

I have had two masters. My first master's name was Anthony. I do not remember his first name. He was generally called Captain Anthony—a title which, I presume, he acquired by sailing a craft on the Chesapeake Bay. He was not considered a rich slaveholder. He owned two or three farms, and about thirty slaves. His farms and slaves were under the care of an overseer. The overseer's name was Plummer. Mr. Plummer was a miserable drunkard, a profane swearer, and a savage monster. He always went armed with a cowskin and a heavy cudgel. I have known him to cut and slash the women's heads so horribly, that even master would be enraged at his cruelty, and would threaten to whip him if he did not mind himself. Master, however, was not a humane slaveholder. It required extraordinary barbarity on the part of an overseer to affect him. He was a cruel man, hardened by a long life of slaveholding. He would at times seem to take great pleasure in whipping a slave. I have often been awakened at the dawn of day by the most heart-rending shrieks of an own aunt of mine, whom he used to tie up to a joist, and whip upon her naked back till she was literally covered with blood. No words, no tears, no prayers, from his gory victim, seemed to move his iron heart from its bloody purpose. The louder she screamed, the harder he whipped; and where the blood ran fastest, there he whipped longest. He would whip her to make her scream, and whip her to make her hush; and not until overcome by fatigue, would he cease to swing the blood-clotted cowskin. I remember the first time I ever witnessed this horrible exhibition. I was quite a child, but I well remember it. I never shall forget it whilst I remember any thing. It was the first of a long series of such outrages, of which I was doomed to be a witness and a participant. It struck me with awful force. It was the blood-stained gate, the entrance to the hell of slavery, through which I was about to pass. It was a most terrible spectacle. I wish I could commit to paper the feelings with which I beheld it.

This occurrence took place very soon after I went to live with my old master, and under the following circumstances. Aunt Hester went out one night,—where or for what I do not know,—and happened to be absent when my master desired her presence. He had ordered her not to go out evenings, and warned her that she must never let him catch her in company with a young man, who was paying attention to her belonging to Colonel Lloyd. The young man's name was Ned Roberts, generally called Lloyd's Ned. Why master was so careful of her, may be safely left to conjecture. She was a woman of noble form, and of graceful proportions, having very few equals, and fewer superiors, in personal appearance, among the colored or white women of our neighborhood.

Aunt Hester had not only disobeyed his orders in going out, but had been found in company with Lloyd's Ned; which circumstance, I found, from what he said while whipping her, was the chief offence. Had he been a man of pure morals himself, he might have been thought interested in protecting the innocence of my aunt; but those who knew him will not suspect him of any such virtue. Before he commenced whipping Aunt Hester, he took her into the kitchen, and stripped her from neck to waist, leaving

her neck, shoulders, and back, entirely naked. He then told her to cross her hands, calling her at the same time a d——d b—-h. After crossing her hands, he tied them with a strong rope, and led her to a stool under a large hook in the joist, put in for the purpose. He made her get upon the stool, and tied her hands to the hook. She now stood fair for his infernal purpose. Her arms were stretched up at their full length, so that she stood upon the ends of her toes. He then said to her, “Now, you d——d b—-h, I’ll learn you how to disobey my orders!” and after rolling up his sleeves, he commenced to lay on the heavy cowskin, and soon the warm, red blood (amid heart-rending shrieks from her, and horrid oaths from him) came dripping to the floor. I was so terrified and horror-stricken at the sight, that I hid myself in a closet, and dared not venture out till long after the bloody transaction was over. I expected it would be my turn next. It was all new to me. I had never seen any thing like it before. I had always lived with my grandmother on the outskirts of the plantation, where she was put to raise the children of the younger women. I had therefore been, until now, out of the way of the bloody scenes that often occurred on the plantation.

CHAPTER II

My master’s family consisted of two sons, Andrew and Richard; one daughter, Lucretia, and her husband, Captain Thomas Auld. They lived in one house, upon the home plantation of Colonel Edward Lloyd. My master was Colonel Lloyd’s clerk and superintendent. He was what might be called the overseer of the overseers. I spent two years of childhood on this plantation in my old master’s family. It was here that I witnessed the bloody transaction recorded in the first chapter; and as I received my first impressions of slavery on this plantation, I will give some description of it, and of slavery as it there existed. The plantation is about twelve miles north of Easton, in Talbot county, and is situated on the border of Miles River. The principal products raised upon it were tobacco, corn, and wheat. These were raised in great abundance; so that, with the products of this and the other farms belonging to him, he was able to keep in almost constant employment a large sloop, in carrying them to market at Baltimore. This sloop was named Sally Lloyd, in honor of one of the colonel’s daughters. My master’s son-in-law, Captain Auld, was master of the vessel; she was otherwise manned by the colonel’s own slaves. Their names were Peter, Isaac, Rich, and Jake. These were esteemed very highly by the other slaves, and looked upon as the privileged ones of the plantation; for it was no small affair, in the eyes of the slaves, to be allowed to see Baltimore.

Colonel Lloyd kept from three to four hundred slaves on his home plantation, and owned a large number more on the neighboring farms belonging to him. The names of the farms nearest to the home plantation were Wye Town and New Design. “Wye Town” was under the overseership of a man named Noah Willis. New Design was under the overseership of a Mr. Townsend. The overseers of these, and all the rest of the farms, numbering over twenty, received advice and direction from the managers of the home plantation. This was the great business place. It was the seat of government for the whole twenty farms. All disputes among the overseers were settled here. If a slave was convicted of any high misdemeanor, became unmanageable, or evinced a determination to run away, he was brought immediately here, severely whipped, put on board the sloop, carried to Baltimore, and sold to Austin Woolfolk, or some other slave-trader, as a warning to the slaves remaining.

Here, too, the slaves of all the other farms received their monthly allowance of food, and their yearly clothing. The men and women slaves received, as their monthly allowance of food, eight pounds of pork, or its equivalent in fish, and one bushel of corn meal. Their yearly clothing consisted of two coarse linen shirts, one pair of linen trousers, like the shirts, one jacket, one pair of trousers for winter, made of coarse negro cloth, one pair of stockings, and one pair of shoes; the whole of which could not have cost more than seven dollars. The allowance of the slave children was given to their mothers, or the old women having the care of them. The children unable to work in the field had neither shoes, stockings, jackets, nor trousers, given to them; their clothing consisted of two coarse linen shirts per year. When these failed them, they went naked until the next allowance-day. Children from seven to ten years old, of both sexes, almost naked, might be seen at all seasons of the year.

There were no beds given the slaves, unless one coarse blanket be considered such, and none but the men and women had these. This, however, is not considered a very great privation. They find less difficulty from the want of beds, than from the want of time to sleep; for when their day’s work in the field is done, the most of them having their washing, mending, and cooking to do, and having few or none of the ordinary facilities for doing either of these, very many of their sleeping hours are consumed in preparing for the field the coming day; and when this is done, old and young, male and female, married and single, drop down side by side, on one common bed,—the cold, damp floor,—each covering himself or herself with their miserable blankets; and here they sleep till they are summoned to the field by the driver’s horn. At the sound of this, all must rise, and be off to the field. There must be no halting; every one must be at his or her post; and woe betides them who hear not this morning summons to the field; for if they are not awakened by the sense of hearing, they are by the sense of feeling: no age nor sex finds any favor. Mr. Severe, the overseer,

used to stand by the door of the quarter, armed with a large hickory stick and heavy cowskin, ready to whip any one who was so unfortunate as not to hear, or, from any other cause, was prevented from being ready to start for the field at the sound of the horn.

Mr. Severe was rightly named: he was a cruel man. I have seen him whip a woman, causing the blood to run half an hour at the time; and this, too, in the midst of her crying children, pleading for their mother's release. He seemed to take pleasure in manifesting his fiendish barbarity. Added to his cruelty, he was a profane swearer. It was enough to chill the blood and stiffen the hair of an ordinary man to hear him talk. Scarce a sentence escaped him but that was commenced or concluded by some horrid oath. The field was the place to witness his cruelty and profanity. His presence made it both the field of blood and of blasphemy. From the rising till the going down of the sun, he was cursing, raving, cutting, and slashing among the slaves of the field, in the most frightful manner. His career was short. He died very soon after I went to Colonel Lloyd's; and he died as he lived, uttering, with his dying groans, bitter curses and horrid oaths. His death was regarded by the slaves as the result of a merciful providence.

Mr. Severe's place was filled by a Mr. Hopkins. He was a very different man. He was less cruel, less profane, and made less noise, than Mr. Severe. His course was characterized by no extraordinary demonstrations of cruelty. He whipped, but seemed to take no pleasure in it. He was called by the slaves a good overseer.

The home plantation of Colonel Lloyd wore the appearance of a country village. All the mechanical operations for all the farms were performed here. The shoemaking and mending, the blacksmithing, cartwrighting, coopering, weaving, and grain-grinding, were all performed by the slaves on the home plantation. The whole place wore a business-like aspect very unlike the neighboring farms. The number of houses, too, conspired to give it advantage over the neighboring farms. It was called by the slaves the *Great House Farm.* Few privileges were esteemed higher, by the slaves of the out-farms, than that of being selected to do errands at the Great House Farm. It was associated in their minds with greatness. A representative could not be prouder of his election to a seat in the American Congress, than a slave on one of the out-farms would be of his election to do errands at the Great House Farm. They regarded it as evidence of great confidence reposed in them by their overseers; and it was on this account, as well as a constant desire to be out of the field from under the driver's lash, that they esteemed it a high privilege, one worth careful living for. He was called the smartest and most trusty fellow, who had this honor conferred upon him the most frequently. The competitors for this office sought as diligently to please their overseers, as the office-seekers in the political parties seek to please and deceive the people. The same traits of character might be seen in Colonel Lloyd's slaves, as are seen in the slaves of the political parties.

The slaves selected to go to the Great House Farm, for the monthly allowance for themselves and their fellow-slaves, were peculiarly enthusiastic. While on their way, they would make the dense old woods, for miles around, reverberate with their wild songs, revealing at once the highest joy and the deepest sadness. They would compose and sing as they went along, consulting neither time nor tune. The thought that came up, came out—if not in the word, in the sound;—and as frequently in the one as in the other. They would sometimes sing the most pathetic sentiment in the most rapturous tone, and the most rapturous sentiment in the most pathetic tone. Into all of their songs they would manage to weave something of the Great House Farm. Especially would they do this, when leaving home. They would then sing most exultingly the following words:—

"I am going away to the Great House Farm!
O, yea! O, yea! O!"

This they would sing, as a chorus, to words which to many would seem unmeaning jargon, but which, nevertheless, were full of meaning to themselves. I have sometimes thought that the mere hearing of those songs would do more to impress some minds with the horrible character of slavery, than the reading of whole volumes of philosophy on the subject could do.

I did not, when a slave, understand the deep meaning of those rude and apparently incoherent songs. I was myself within the circle; so that I neither saw nor heard as those without might see and hear. They told a tale of woe which was then altogether beyond my feeble comprehension; they were tones loud, long, and deep; they breathed the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish. Every tone was a testimony against slavery, and a prayer to God for deliverance from chains. The hearing of those wild notes always depressed my spirit, and filled me with ineffable sadness. I have frequently found myself in tears while hearing them. The mere recurrence to those songs, even now, afflicts me; and while I am writing these lines, an expression of feeling has already found its way down my cheek. To those songs I trace my first glimmering conception of the dehumanizing character of slavery. I can never get rid of that conception. Those songs still follow me, to deepen my hatred of slavery, and quicken my sympathies for my brethren in bonds. If any one wishes to be impressed with the soul-killing effects of slavery, let him go to Colonel Lloyd's plantation, and, on allowance-day, place himself in the deep pine woods, and there let him, in silence, analyze the

sounds that shall pass through the chambers of his soul,—and if he is not thus impressed, it will only be because “there is no flesh in his obdurate heart.”

I have often been utterly astonished, since I came to the north, to find persons who could speak of the singing, among slaves, as evidence of their contentment and happiness. It is impossible to conceive of a greater mistake. Slaves sing most when they are most unhappy. The songs of the slave represent the sorrows of his heart; and he is relieved by them, only as an aching heart is relieved by its tears. At least, such is my experience. I have often sung to drown my sorrow, but seldom to express my happiness. Crying for joy, and singing for joy, were alike uncommon to me while in the jaws of slavery. The singing of a man cast away upon a desolate island might be as appropriately considered as evidence of contentment and happiness, as the singing of a slave; the songs of the one and of the other are prompted by the same emotion.

CHAPTER III

Colonel Lloyd kept a large and finely cultivated garden, which afforded almost constant employment for four men, besides the chief gardener, (Mr. M’Durmond.) This garden was probably the greatest attraction of the place. During the summer months, people came from far and near—from Baltimore, Easton, and Annapolis—to see it. It abounded in fruits of almost every description, from the hardy apple of the north to the delicate orange of the south. This garden was not the least source of trouble on the plantation. Its excellent fruit was quite a temptation to the hungry swarms of boys, as well as the older slaves, belonging to the colonel, few of whom had the virtue or the vice to resist it. Scarcely a day passed, during the summer, but that some slave had to take the lash for stealing fruit. The colonel had to resort to all kinds of stratagems to keep his slaves out of the garden. The last and most successful one was that of tarring his fence all around; after which, if a slave was caught with any tar upon his person, it was deemed sufficient proof that he had either been into the garden, or had tried to get in. In either case, he was severely whipped by the chief gardener. This plan worked well; the slaves became as fearful of tar as of the lash. They seemed to realize the impossibility of touching *tar* without being defiled.

The colonel also kept a splendid riding equipage. His stable and carriage-house presented the appearance of some of our large city livery establishments. His horses were of the finest form and noblest blood. His carriage-house contained three splendid coaches, three or four gigs, besides dearborns and barouches of the most fashionable style.

This establishment was under the care of two slaves—old Barney and young Barney—father and son. To attend to this establishment was their sole work. But it was by no means an easy employment; for in nothing was Colonel Lloyd more particular than in the management of his horses. The slightest inattention to these was unpardonable, and was visited upon those, under whose care they were placed, with the severest punishment; no excuse could shield them, if the colonel only suspected any want of attention to his horses—a supposition which he frequently indulged, and one which, of course, made the office of old and young Barney a very trying one. They never knew when they were safe from punishment. They were frequently whipped when least deserving, and escaped whipping when most deserving it. Every thing depended upon the looks of the horses, and the state of Colonel Lloyd’s own mind when his horses were brought to him for use. If a horse did not move fast enough, or hold his head high enough, it was owing to some fault of his keepers. It was painful to stand near the stable-door, and hear the various complaints against the keepers when a horse was taken out for use. “This horse has not had proper attention. He has not been sufficiently rubbed and curried, or he has not been properly fed; his food was too wet or too dry; he got it too soon or too late; he was too hot or too cold; he had too much hay, and not enough of grain; or he had too much grain, and not enough of hay; instead of old Barney’s attending to the horse, he had very improperly left it to his son.” To all these complaints, no matter how unjust, the slave must answer never a word. Colonel Lloyd could not brook any contradiction from a slave. When he spoke, a slave must stand, listen, and tremble; and such was literally the case. I have seen Colonel Lloyd make old Barney, a man between fifty and sixty years of age, uncover his bald head, kneel down upon the cold, damp ground, and receive upon his naked and toil-worn shoulders more than thirty lashes at the time. Colonel Lloyd had three sons—Edward, Murray, and Daniel,—and three sons-in-law, Mr. Winder, Mr. Nicholson, and Mr. Lowndes. All of these lived at the Great House Farm, and enjoyed the luxury of whipping the servants when they pleased, from old Barney down to William Wilkes, the coach-driver. I have seen Winder make one of the house-servants stand off from him a suitable distance to be touched with the end of his whip, and at every stroke raise great ridges upon his back.

To describe the wealth of Colonel Lloyd would be almost equal to describing the riches of Job. He kept from ten to fifteen house-servants. He was said to own a thousand slaves, and I think this estimate quite within the truth. Colonel Lloyd owned so many that he did not know them when he saw them; nor did all the slaves of the out-farms know him. It is reported of him, that, while riding along the road one day, he met a colored man, and addressed him in the usual manner of speaking to colored people on the public

highways of the south: “Well, boy, whom do you belong to?” “To Colonel Lloyd,” replied the slave. “Well, does the colonel treat you well?” “No, sir,” was the ready reply. “What, does he work you too hard?” “Yes, sir.” “Well, don’t he give you enough to eat?” “Yes, sir, he gives me enough, such as it is.”

The colonel, after ascertaining where the slave belonged, rode on; the man also went on about his business, not dreaming that he had been conversing with his master. He thought, said, and heard nothing more of the matter, until two or three weeks afterwards. The poor man was then informed by his overseer that, for having found fault with his master, he was now to be sold to a Georgia trader. He was immediately chained and handcuffed; and thus, without a moment’s warning, he was snatched away, and forever sundered, from his family and friends, by a hand more unrelenting than death. This is the penalty of telling the truth, of telling the simple truth, in answer to a series of plain questions.

It is partly in consequence of such facts, that slaves, when inquired of as to their condition and the character of their masters, almost universally say they are contented, and that their masters are kind. The slaveholders have been known to send in spies among their slaves, to ascertain their views and feelings in regard to their condition. The frequency of this has had the effect to establish among the slaves the maxim, that a still tongue makes a wise head. They suppress the truth rather than take the consequences of telling it, and in so doing prove themselves a part of the human family. If they have any thing to say of their masters, it is generally in their masters’ favor, especially when speaking to an untried man. I have been frequently asked, when a slave, if I had a kind master, and do not remember ever to have given a negative answer; nor did I, in pursuing this course, consider myself as uttering what was absolutely false; for I always measured the kindness of my master by the standard of kindness set up among slaveholders around us. Moreover, slaves are like other people, and imbibe prejudices quite common to others. They think their own better than that of others. Many, under the influence of this prejudice, think their own masters are better than the masters of other slaves; and this, too, in some cases, when the very reverse is true. Indeed, it is not uncommon for slaves even to fall out and quarrel among themselves about the relative goodness of their masters, each contending for the superior goodness of his own over that of the others. At the very same time, they mutually execrate their masters when viewed separately. It was so on our plantation. When Colonel Lloyd’s slaves met the slaves of Jacob Jepson, they seldom parted without a quarrel about their masters; Colonel Lloyd’s slaves contending that he was the richest, and Mr. Jepson’s slaves that he was the smartest, and most of a man. Colonel Lloyd’s slaves would boast his ability to buy and sell Jacob Jepson. Mr. Jepson’s slaves would boast his ability to whip Colonel Lloyd. These quarrels would almost always end in a fight between the parties, and those that whipped were supposed to have gained the point at issue. They seemed to think that the greatness of their masters was transferable to themselves. It was considered as being bad enough to be a slave; but to be a poor man’s slave was deemed a disgrace indeed!

CHAPTER IV

Mr. Hopkins remained but a short time in the office of overseer. Why his career was so short, I do not know, but suppose he lacked the necessary severity to suit Colonel Lloyd. Mr. Hopkins was succeeded by Mr. Austin Gore, a man possessing, in an eminent degree, all those traits of character indispensable to what is called a first-rate overseer. Mr. Gore had served Colonel Lloyd, in the capacity of overseer, upon one of the out-farms, and had shown himself worthy of the high station of overseer upon the home or Great House Farm.

Mr. Gore was proud, ambitious, and persevering. He was artful, cruel, and obdurate. He was just the man for such a place, and it was just the place for such a man. It afforded scope for the full exercise of all his powers, and he seemed to be perfectly at home in it. He was one of those who could torture the slightest look, word, or gesture, on the part of the slave, into impudence, and would treat it accordingly. There must be no answering back to him; no explanation was allowed a slave, showing himself to have been wrongfully accused. Mr. Gore acted fully up to the maxim laid down by slaveholders,—“It is better that a dozen slaves should suffer under the lash, than that the overseer should be convicted, in the presence of the slaves, of having been at fault.” No matter how innocent a slave might be—it availed him nothing, when accused by Mr. Gore of any misdemeanor. To be accused was to be convicted, and to be convicted was to be punished; the one always following the other with immutable certainty. To escape punishment was to escape accusation; and few slaves had the fortune to do either, under the overseership of Mr. Gore. He was just proud enough to demand the most debasing homage of the slave, and quite servile enough to crouch, himself, at the feet of the master. He was ambitious enough to be contented with nothing short of the highest rank of overseers, and persevering enough to reach the height of his ambition. He was cruel enough to inflict the severest punishment, artful enough to descend to the lowest trickery, and obdurate enough to be insensible to the voice of a reproving conscience. He was, of all the overseers, the most dreaded

by the slaves. His presence was painful; his eye flashed confusion; and seldom was his sharp, shrill voice heard, without producing horror and trembling in their ranks.

Mr. Gore was a grave man, and, though a young man, he indulged in no jokes, said no funny words, seldom smiled. His words were in perfect keeping with his looks, and his looks were in perfect keeping with his words. Overseers will sometimes indulge in a witty word, even with the slaves; not so with Mr. Gore. He spoke but to command, and commanded but to be obeyed; he dealt sparingly with his words, and bountifully with his whip, never using the former where the latter would answer as well. When he whipped, he seemed to do so from a sense of duty, and feared no consequences. He did nothing reluctantly, no matter how disagreeable; always at his post, never inconsistent. He never promised but to fulfil. He was, in a word, a man of the most inflexible firmness and stone-like coolness.

His savage barbarity was equalled only by the consummate coolness with which he committed the grossest and most savage deeds upon the slaves under his charge. Mr. Gore once undertook to whip one of Colonel Lloyd's slaves, by the name of Demby. He had given Demby but few stripes, when, to get rid of the scourging, he ran and plunged himself into a creek, and stood there at the depth of his shoulders, refusing to come out. Mr. Gore told him that he would give him three calls, and that, if he did not come out at the third call, he would shoot him. The first call was given. Demby made no response, but stood his ground. The second and third calls were given with the same result. Mr. Gore then, without consultation or deliberation with any one, not even giving Demby an additional call, raised his musket to his face, taking deadly aim at his standing victim, and in an instant poor Demby was no more. His mangled body sank out of sight, and blood and brains marked the water where he had stood.

A thrill of horror flashed through every soul upon the plantation, excepting Mr. Gore. He alone seemed cool and collected. He was asked by Colonel Lloyd and my old master, why he resorted to this extraordinary expedient. His reply was, (as well as I can remember,) that Demby had become unmanageable. He was setting a dangerous example to the other slaves,—one which, if suffered to pass without some such demonstration on his part, would finally lead to the total subversion of all rule and order upon the plantation. He argued that if one slave refused to be corrected, and escaped with his life, the other slaves would soon copy the example; the result of which would be, the freedom of the slaves, and the enslavement of the whites. Mr. Gore's defence was satisfactory. He was continued in his station as overseer upon the home plantation. His fame as an overseer went abroad. His horrid crime was not even submitted to judicial investigation. It was committed in the presence of slaves, and they of course could neither institute a suit, nor testify against him; and thus the guilty perpetrator of one of the bloodiest and most foul murders goes unwhipped of justice, and uncensured by the community in which he lives. Mr. Gore lived in St. Michael's, Talbot county, Maryland, when I left there; and if he is still alive, he very probably lives there now; and if so, he is now, as he was then, as highly esteemed and as much respected as though his guilty soul had not been stained with his brother's blood.

I speak advisedly when I say this,—that killing a slave, or any colored person, in Talbot county, Maryland, is not treated as a crime, either by the courts or the community. Mr. Thomas Lanman, of St. Michael's, killed two slaves, one of whom he killed with a hatchet, by knocking his brains out. He used to boast of the commission of the awful and bloody deed. I have heard him do so laughingly, saying, among other things, that he was the only benefactor of his country in the company, and that when others would do as much as he had done, we should be relieved of "the d——d niggers."

The wife of Mr. Giles Hicks, living but a short distance from where I used to live, murdered my wife's cousin, a young girl between fifteen and sixteen years of age, mangling her person in the most horrible manner, breaking her nose and breastbone with a stick, so that the poor girl expired in a few hours afterward. She was immediately buried, but had not been in her untimely grave but a few hours before she was taken up and examined by the coroner, who decided that she had come to her death by severe beating. The offence for which this girl was thus murdered was this:—She had been set that night to mind Mrs. Hicks's baby, and during the night she fell asleep, and the baby cried. She, having lost her rest for several nights previous, did not hear the crying. They were both in the room with Mrs. Hicks. Mrs. Hicks, finding the girl slow to move, jumped from her bed, seized an oak stick of wood by the fireplace, and with it broke the girl's nose and breastbone, and thus ended her life. I will not say that this most horrid murder produced no sensation in the community. It did produce sensation, but not enough to bring the murderess to punishment. There was a warrant issued for her arrest, but it was never served. Thus she escaped not only punishment, but even the pain of being arraigned before a court for her horrid crime.

Whilst I am detailing bloody deeds which took place during my stay on Colonel Lloyd's plantation, I will briefly narrate another, which occurred about the same time as the murder of Demby by Mr. Gore.

Colonel Lloyd's slaves were in the habit of spending a part of their nights and Sundays in fishing for oysters, and in this way made up the deficiency of their scanty allowance. An old man belonging to Colonel Lloyd, while thus engaged, happened to get beyond the limits of Colonel Lloyd's, and on the premises of Mr. Beal Bondly. At this trespass, Mr. Bondly took offence, and with his musket came down to the shore, and blew its deadly contents into the poor old man.

Mr. Bondly came over to see Colonel Lloyd the next day, whether to pay him for his property, or to justify himself in what he had done, I know not. At any rate, this whole fiendish transaction was soon hushed up. There was very little said about it at all, and nothing done. It was a common saying, even among little white boys, that it was worth a half-cent to kill a "nigger," and a half-cent to bury one.

CHAPTER V

As to my own treatment while I lived on Colonel Lloyd's plantation, it was very similar to that of the other slave children. I was not old enough to work in the field, and there being little else than field work to do, I had a great deal of leisure time. The most I had to do was to drive up the cows at evening, keep the fowls out of the garden, keep the front yard clean, and run of errands for my old master's daughter, Mrs. Lucretia Auld. The most of my leisure time I spent in helping Master Daniel Lloyd in finding his birds, after he had shot them. My connection with Master Daniel was of some advantage to me. He became quite attached to me, and was a sort of protector of me. He would not allow the older boys to impose upon me, and would divide his cakes with me.

I was seldom whipped by my old master, and suffered little from any thing else than hunger and cold. I suffered much from hunger, but much more from cold. In hottest summer and coldest winter, I was kept almost naked—no shoes, no stockings, no jacket, no trousers, nothing on but a coarse tow linen shirt, reaching only to my knees. I had no bed. I must have perished with cold, but that, the coldest nights, I used to steal a bag which was used for carrying corn to the mill. I would crawl into this bag, and there sleep on the cold, damp, clay floor, with my head in and feet out. My feet have been so cracked with the frost, that the pen with which I am writing might be laid in the gashes.

We were not regularly allowanced. Our food was coarse corn meal boiled. This was called *mush*. It was put into a large wooden tray or trough, and set down upon the ground. The children were then called, like so many pigs, and like so many pigs they would come and devour the mush; some with oyster-shells, others with pieces of shingle, some with naked hands, and none with spoons. He that ate fastest got most; he that was strongest secured the best place; and few left the trough satisfied.

I was probably between seven and eight years old when I left Colonel Lloyd's plantation. I left it with joy. I shall never forget the ecstasy with which I received the intelligence that my old master (Anthony) had determined to let me go to Baltimore, to live with Mr. Hugh Auld, brother to my old master's son-in-law, Captain Thomas Auld. I received this information about three days before my departure. They were three of the happiest days I ever enjoyed. I spent the most part of all these three days in the creek, washing off the plantation scurf, and preparing myself for my departure.

The pride of appearance which this would indicate was not my own. I spent the time in washing, not so much because I wished to, but because Mrs. Lucretia had told me I must get all the dead skin off my feet and knees before I could go to Baltimore; for the people in Baltimore were very cleanly, and would laugh at me if I looked dirty. Besides, she was going to give me a pair of trousers, which I should not put on unless I got all the dirt off me. The thought of owning a pair of trousers was great indeed! It was almost a sufficient motive, not only to make me take off what would be called by pig-drovers the mange, but the skin itself. I went at it in good earnest, working for the first time with the hope of reward.

The ties that ordinarily bind children to their homes were all suspended in my case. I found no severe trial in my departure. My home was charmless; it was not home to me; on parting from it, I could not feel that I was leaving any thing which I could have enjoyed by staying. My mother was dead, my grandmother lived far off, so that I seldom saw her. I had two sisters and one brother, that lived in the same house with me; but the early separation of us from our mother had well nigh blotted the fact of our relationship from our memories. I looked for home elsewhere, and was confident of finding none which I should relish less than the one which I was leaving. If, however, I found in my new home hardship, hunger, whipping, and nakedness, I had the consolation that I should not have escaped any one of them by staying. Having already had more than a taste of them in the house of my old master, and having endured them there, I very naturally inferred my ability to endure them elsewhere, and especially at Baltimore; for I had something of the feeling about Baltimore that is expressed in the proverb, that "being hanged in England is preferable to dying a natural death in Ireland." I had the strongest desire to see Baltimore. Cousin Tom, though not fluent in speech, had inspired me with that desire by his eloquent description of the place. I could never point out any thing at the Great House, no matter how

beautiful or powerful, but that he had seen something at Baltimore far exceeding, both in beauty and strength, the object which I pointed out to him. Even the Great House itself, with all its pictures, was far inferior to many buildings in Baltimore. So strong was my desire, that I thought a gratification of it would fully compensate for whatever loss of comforts I should sustain by the exchange. I left without a regret, and with the highest hopes of future happiness.

We sailed out of Miles River for Baltimore on a Saturday morning. I remember only the day of the week, for at that time I had no knowledge of the days of the month, nor the months of the year. On setting sail, I walked aft, and gave to Colonel Lloyd's plantation what I hoped would be the last look. I then placed myself in the bows of the sloop, and there spent the remainder of the day in looking ahead, interesting myself in what was in the distance rather than in things near by or behind.

In the afternoon of that day, we reached Annapolis, the capital of the State. We stopped but a few moments, so that I had no time to go on shore. It was the first large town that I had ever seen, and though it would look small compared with some of our New England factory villages, I thought it a wonderful place for its size—more imposing even than the Great House Farm!

We arrived at Baltimore early on Sunday morning, landing at Smith's Wharf, not far from Bowley's Wharf. We had on board the sloop a large flock of sheep; and after aiding in driving them to the slaughterhouse of Mr. Curtis on Louden Slater's Hill, I was conducted by Rich, one of the hands belonging on board of the sloop, to my new home in Alliciana Street, near Mr. Gardner's ship-yard, on Fells Point.

Mr. and Mrs. Auld were both at home, and met me at the door with their little son Thomas, to take care of whom I had been given. And here I saw what I had never seen before; it was a white face beaming with the most kindly emotions; it was the face of my new mistress, Sophia Auld. I wish I could describe the rapture that flashed through my soul as I beheld it. It was a new and strange sight to me, brightening up my pathway with the light of happiness. Little Thomas was told, there was his Freddy,—and I was told to take care of little Thomas; and thus I entered upon the duties of my new home with the most cheering prospect ahead.

I look upon my departure from Colonel Lloyd's plantation as one of the most interesting events of my life. It is possible, and even quite probable, that but for the mere circumstance of being removed from that plantation to Baltimore, I should have to-day, instead of being here seated by my own table, in the enjoyment of freedom and the happiness of home, writing this Narrative, been confined in the galling chains of slavery. Going to live at Baltimore laid the foundation, and opened the gateway, to all my subsequent prosperity. I have ever regarded it as the first plain manifestation of that kind providence which has ever since attended me, and marked my life with so many favors. I regarded the selection of myself as being somewhat remarkable. There were a number of slave children that might have been sent from the plantation to Baltimore. There were those younger, those older, and those of the same age. I was chosen from among them all, and was the first, last, and only choice.

I may be deemed superstitious, and even egotistical, in regarding this event as a special interposition of divine Providence in my favor. But I should be false to the earliest sentiments of my soul, if I suppressed the opinion. I prefer to be true to myself, even at the hazard of incurring the ridicule of others, rather than to be false, and incur my own abhorrence. From my earliest recollection, I date the entertainment of a deep conviction that slavery would not always be able to hold me within its foul embrace; and in the darkest hours of my career in slavery, this living word of faith and spirit of hope departed not from me, but remained like ministering angels to cheer me through the gloom. This good spirit was from God, and to him I offer thanksgiving and praise.

CHAPTER VI

My new mistress proved to be all she appeared when I first met her at the door,—a woman of the kindest heart and finest feelings. She had never had a slave under her control previously to myself, and prior to her marriage she had been dependent upon her own industry for a living. She was by trade a weaver; and by constant application to her business, she had been in a good degree preserved from the blighting and dehumanizing effects of slavery. I was utterly astonished at her goodness. I scarcely knew how to behave towards her. She was entirely unlike any other white woman I had ever seen. I could not approach her as I was accustomed to approach other white ladies. My early instruction was all out of place. The crouching servility, usually so acceptable a quality in a slave, did not answer when manifested toward her. Her favor was not gained by it; she seemed to be disturbed by it. She did not deem it impudent or unmannerly for a slave to look her in the face. The meanest slave was put fully at ease in her presence, and none left without feeling better for having seen her. Her face was made of heavenly smiles, and her voice of tranquil music.

But, alas! this kind heart had but a short time to remain such. The fatal poison of irresponsible power was already in her hands, and soon commenced its infernal work. That cheerful eye, under the influence of slavery, soon became red with rage; that voice, made

all of sweet accord, changed to one of harsh and horrid discord; and that angelic face gave place to that of a demon.

Very soon after I went to live with Mr. and Mrs. Auld, she very kindly commenced to teach me the A, B, C. After I had learned this, she assisted me in learning to spell words of three or four letters. Just at this point of my progress, Mr. Auld found out what was going on, and at once forbade Mrs. Auld to instruct me further, telling her, among other things, that it was unlawful, as well as unsafe, to teach a slave to read. To use his own words, further, he said, "If you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell. A nigger should know nothing but to obey his master—to do as he is told to do. Learning would *spoil* the best nigger in the world. Now," said he, "if you teach that nigger (speaking of myself) how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave. He would at once become unmanageable, and of no value to his master. As to himself, it could do him no good, but a great deal of harm. It would make him discontented and unhappy." These words sank deep into my heart, stirred up sentiments within that lay slumbering, and called into existence an entirely new train of thought. It was a new and special revelation, explaining dark and mysterious things, with which my youthful understanding had struggled, but struggled in vain. I now understood what had been to me a most perplexing difficulty—to wit, the white man's power to enslave the black man. It was a grand achievement, and I prized it highly. From that moment, I understood the pathway from slavery to freedom. It was just what I wanted, and I got it at a time when I the least expected it. Whilst I was saddened by the thought of losing the aid of my kind mistress, I was gladdened by the invaluable instruction which, by the merest accident, I had gained from my master. Though conscious of the difficulty of learning without a teacher, I set out with high hope, and a fixed purpose, at whatever cost of trouble, to learn how to read. The very decided manner with which he spoke, and strove to impress his wife with the evil consequences of giving me instruction, served to convince me that he was deeply sensible of the truths he was uttering. It gave me the best assurance that I might rely with the utmost confidence on the results which, he said, would flow from teaching me to read. What he most dreaded, that I most desired. What he most loved, that I most hated. That which to him was a great evil, to be carefully shunned, was to me a great good, to be diligently sought; and the argument which he so warmly urged, against my learning to read, only served to inspire me with a desire and determination to learn. In learning to read, I owe almost as much to the bitter opposition of my master, as to the kindly aid of my mistress. I acknowledge the benefit of both.

I had resided but a short time in Baltimore before I observed a marked difference, in the treatment of slaves, from that which I had witnessed in the country. A city slave is almost a freeman, compared with a slave on the plantation. He is much better fed and clothed, and enjoys privileges altogether unknown to the slave on the plantation. There is a vestige of decency, a sense of shame, that does much to curb and check those outbreaks of atrocious cruelty so commonly enacted upon the plantation. He is a desperate slaveholder, who will shock the humanity of his non-slaveholding neighbors with the cries of his lacerated slave. Few are willing to incur the odium attaching to the reputation of being a cruel master; and above all things, they would not be known as not giving a slave enough to eat. Every city slaveholder is anxious to have it known of him, that he feeds his slaves well; and it is due to them to say, that most of them do give their slaves enough to eat. There are, however, some painful exceptions to this rule. Directly opposite to us, on Philpot Street, lived Mr. Thomas Hamilton. He owned two slaves. Their names were Henrietta and Mary. Henrietta was about twenty-two years of age, Mary was about fourteen; and of all the mangled and emaciated creatures I ever looked upon, these two were the most so. His heart must be harder than stone, that could look upon these unmoved. The head, neck, and shoulders of Mary were literally cut to pieces. I have frequently felt her head, and found it nearly covered with festering sores, caused by the lash of her cruel mistress. I do not know that her master ever whipped her, but I have been an eye-witness to the cruelty of Mrs. Hamilton. I used to be in Mr. Hamilton's house nearly every day. Mrs. Hamilton used to sit in a large chair in the middle of the room, with a heavy cowskin always by her side, and scarce an hour passed during the day but was marked by the blood of one of these slaves. The girls seldom passed her without her saying, "Move faster, you *black gip!*" at the same time giving them a blow with the cowskin over the head or shoulders, often drawing the blood. She would then say, "Take that, you *black gip!*" continuing, "If you don't move faster, I'll move you!" Added to the cruel lashings to which these slaves were subjected, they were kept nearly half-starved. They seldom knew what it was to eat a full meal. I have seen Mary contending with the pigs for the offal thrown into the street. So much was Mary kicked and cut to pieces, that she was oftener called "*pecked*" than by her name.

CHAPTER VII

I lived in Master Hugh's family about seven years. During this time, I succeeded in learning to read and write. In accomplishing this, I was compelled to resort to various stratagems. I had no regular teacher. My mistress, who had kindly commenced to instruct me, had, in compliance with the advice and direction of her husband, not only ceased to instruct, but had set her face against my being instructed by any one else. It is due, however, to my mistress to say of her, that she did not adopt this course of treatment

immediately. She at first lacked the depravity indispensable to shutting me up in mental darkness. It was at least necessary for her to have some training in the exercise of irresponsible power, to make her equal to the task of treating me as though I were a brute.

My mistress was, as I have said, a kind and tender-hearted woman; and in the simplicity of her soul she commenced, when I first went to live with her, to treat me as she supposed one human being ought to treat another. In entering upon the duties of a slaveholder, she did not seem to perceive that I sustained to her the relation of a mere chattel, and that for her to treat me as a human being was not only wrong, but dangerously so. Slavery proved as injurious to her as it did to me. When I went there, she was a pious, warm, and tender-hearted woman. There was no sorrow or suffering for which she had not a tear. She had bread for the hungry, clothes for the naked, and comfort for every mourner that came within her reach. Slavery soon proved its ability to divest her of these heavenly qualities. Under its influence, the tender heart became stone, and the lamblike disposition gave way to one of tiger-like fierceness. The first step in her downward course was in her ceasing to instruct me. She now commenced to practise her husband's precepts. She finally became even more violent in her opposition than her husband himself. She was not satisfied with simply doing as well as he had commanded; she seemed anxious to do better. Nothing seemed to make her more angry than to see me with a newspaper. She seemed to think that here lay the danger. I have had her rush at me with a face made all up of fury, and snatch from me a newspaper, in a manner that fully revealed her apprehension. She was an apt woman; and a little experience soon demonstrated, to her satisfaction, that education and slavery were incompatible with each other.

From this time I was most narrowly watched. If I was in a separate room any considerable length of time, I was sure to be suspected of having a book, and was at once called to give an account of myself. All this, however, was too late. The first step had been taken. Mistress, in teaching me the alphabet, had given me the *inch*, and no precaution could prevent me from taking the *ell*.

The plan which I adopted, and the one by which I was most successful, was that of making friends of all the little white boys whom I met in the street. As many of these as I could, I converted into teachers. With their kindly aid, obtained at different times and in different places, I finally succeeded in learning to read. When I was sent of errands, I always took my book with me, and by going one part of my errand quickly, I found time to get a lesson before my return. I used also to carry bread with me, enough of which was always in the house, and to which I was always welcome; for I was much better off in this regard than many of the poor white children in our neighborhood. This bread I used to bestow upon the hungry little urchins, who, in return, would give me that more valuable bread of knowledge. I am strongly tempted to give the names of two or three of those little boys, as a testimonial of the gratitude and affection I bear them; but prudence forbids;—not that it would injure me, but it might embarrass them; for it is almost an unpardonable offence to teach slaves to read in this Christian country. It is enough to say of the dear little fellows, that they lived on Philpot Street, very near Durgin and Bailey's ship-yard. I used to talk this matter of slavery over with them. I would sometimes say to them, I wished I could be as free as they would be when they got to be men. "You will be free as soon as you are twenty-one, *but I am a slave for life!* Have not I as good a right to be free as you have?" These words used to trouble them; they would express for me the liveliest sympathy, and console me with the hope that something would occur by which I might be free.

I was now about twelve years old, and the thought of being *a slave for life* began to bear heavily upon my heart. Just about this time, I got hold of a book entitled "The Columbian Orator." Every opportunity I got, I used to read this book. Among much of other interesting matter, I found in it a dialogue between a master and his slave. The slave was represented as having run away from his master three times. The dialogue represented the conversation which took place between them, when the slave was retaken the third time. In this dialogue, the whole argument in behalf of slavery was brought forward by the master, all of which was disposed of by the slave. The slave was made to say some very smart as well as impressive things in reply to his master—things which had the desired though unexpected effect; for the conversation resulted in the voluntary emancipation of the slave on the part of the master.

In the same book, I met with one of Sheridan's mighty speeches on and in behalf of Catholic emancipation. These were choice documents to me. I read them over and over again with unabated interest. They gave tongue to interesting thoughts of my own soul, which had frequently flashed through my mind, and died away for want of utterance. The moral which I gained from the dialogue was the power of truth over the conscience of even a slaveholder. What I got from Sheridan was a bold denunciation of slavery, and a powerful vindication of human rights. The reading of these documents enabled me to utter my thoughts, and to meet the arguments brought forward to sustain slavery; but while they relieved me of one difficulty, they brought on another even more painful than the one of which I was relieved. The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest my enslavers. I could regard them in no other light than a band of successful robbers, who had left their homes, and gone to Africa, and stolen us from our homes, and in a strange land reduced us to slavery. I loathed them as being the meanest as well as the most wicked of men. As I read and contemplated the subject, behold! that very discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my learning

to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable anguish. As I writhed under it, I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves for their stupidity. I have often wished myself a beast. I preferred the condition of the meanest reptile to my own. Any thing, no matter what, to get rid of thinking! It was this everlasting thinking of my condition that tormented me. There was no getting rid of it. It was pressed upon me by every object within sight or hearing, animate or inanimate. The silver trump of freedom had roused my soul to eternal wakefulness. Freedom now appeared, to disappear no more forever. It was heard in every sound, and seen in every thing. It was ever present to torment me with a sense of my wretched condition. I saw nothing without seeing it, I heard nothing without hearing it, and felt nothing without feeling it. It looked from every star, it smiled in every calm, breathed in every wind, and moved in every storm.

I often found myself regretting my own existence, and wishing myself dead; and but for the hope of being free, I have no doubt but that I should have killed myself, or done something for which I should have been killed. While in this state of mind, I was eager to hear any one speak of slavery. I was a ready listener. Every little while, I could hear something about the abolitionists. It was some time before I found what the word meant. It was always used in such connections as to make it an interesting word to me. If a slave ran away and succeeded in getting clear, or if a slave killed his master, set fire to a barn, or did any thing very wrong in the mind of a slaveholder, it was spoken of as the fruit of *abolition.* Hearing the word in this connection very often, I set about learning what it meant. The dictionary afforded me little or no help. I found it was “the act of abolishing;” but then I did not know what was to be abolished. Here I was perplexed. I did not dare to ask any one about its meaning, for I was satisfied that it was something they wanted me to know very little about. After a patient waiting, I got one of our city papers, containing an account of the number of petitions from the north, praying for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, and of the slave trade between the States. From this time I understood the words *abolition* and *abolitionist*, and always drew near when that word was spoken, expecting to hear something of importance to myself and fellow-slaves. The light broke in upon me by degrees. I went one day down on the wharf of Mr. Waters; and seeing two Irishmen unloading a scow of stone, I went, unasked, and helped them. When we had finished, one of them came to me and asked me if I were a slave. I told him I was. He asked, “Are ye a slave for life?” I told him that I was. The good Irishman seemed to be deeply affected by the statement. He said to the other that it was a pity so fine a little fellow as myself should be a slave for life. He said it was a shame to hold me. They both advised me to run away to the north; that I should find friends there, and that I should be free. I pretended not to be interested in what they said, and treated them as if I did not understand them; for I feared they might be treacherous. White men have been known to encourage slaves to escape, and then, to get the reward, catch them and return them to their masters. I was afraid that these seemingly good men might use me so; but I nevertheless remembered their advice, and from that time I resolved to run away. I looked forward to a time at which it would be safe for me to escape. I was too young to think of doing so immediately; besides, I wished to learn how to write, as I might have occasion to write my own pass. I consoled myself with the hope that I should one day find a good chance. Meanwhile, I would learn to write.

The idea as to how I might learn to write was suggested to me by being in Durgin and Bailey’s ship-yard, and frequently seeing the ship carpenters, after hewing, and getting a piece of timber ready for use, write on the timber the name of that part of the ship for which it was intended. When a piece of timber was intended for the larboard side, it would be marked thus—“L.” When a piece was for the starboard side, it would be marked thus—“S.” A piece for the larboard side forward, would be marked thus—“L. F.” When a piece was for starboard side forward, it would be marked thus—“S. F.” For larboard aft, it would be marked thus—“L. A.” For starboard aft, it would be marked thus—“S. A.” I soon learned the names of these letters, and for what they were intended when placed upon a piece of timber in the ship-yard. I immediately commenced copying them, and in a short time was able to make the four letters named. After that, when I met with any boy who I knew could write, I would tell him I could write as well as he. The next word would be, “I don’t believe you. Let me see you try it.” I would then make the letters which I had been so fortunate as to learn, and ask him to beat that. In this way I got a good many lessons in writing, which it is quite possible I should never have gotten in any other way. During this time, my copy-book was the board fence, brick wall, and pavement; my pen and ink was a lump of chalk. With these, I learned mainly how to write. I then commenced and continued copying the Italics in Webster’s Spelling Book, until I could make them all without looking on the book. By this time, my little Master Thomas had gone to school, and learned how to write, and had written over a number of copy-books. These had been brought home, and shown to some of our near neighbors, and then laid aside. My mistress used to go to class meeting at the Wilk Street meetinghouse every Monday afternoon, and leave me to take care of the house. When left thus, I used to spend the time in writing in the spaces left in

Master Thomas's copy-book, copying what he had written. I continued to do this until I could write a hand very similar to that of Master Thomas. Thus, after a long, tedious effort for years, I finally succeeded in learning how to write.

CHAPTER VIII

In a very short time after I went to live at Baltimore, my old master's youngest son Richard died; and in about three years and six months after his death, my old master, Captain Anthony, died, leaving only his son, Andrew, and daughter, Lucretia, to share his estate. He died while on a visit to see his daughter at Hillsborough. Cut off thus unexpectedly, he left no will as to the disposal of his property. It was therefore necessary to have a valuation of the property, that it might be equally divided between Mrs. Lucretia and Master Andrew. I was immediately sent for, to be valued with the other property. Here again my feelings rose up in detestation of slavery. I had now a new conception of my degraded condition. Prior to this, I had become, if not insensible to my lot, at least partly so. I left Baltimore with a young heart overborne with sadness, and a soul full of apprehension. I took passage with Captain Rowe, in the schooner Wild Cat, and, after a sail of about twenty-four hours, I found myself near the place of my birth. I had now been absent from it almost, if not quite, five years. I, however, remembered the place very well. I was only about five years old when I left it, to go and live with my old master on Colonel Lloyd's plantation; so that I was now between ten and eleven years old.

We were all ranked together at the valuation. Men and women, old and young, married and single, were ranked with horses, sheep, and swine. There were horses and men, cattle and women, pigs and children, all holding the same rank in the scale of being, and were all subjected to the same narrow examination. Silvery-headed age and sprightly youth, maids and matrons, had to undergo the same indelicate inspection. At this moment, I saw more clearly than ever the brutalizing effects of slavery upon both slave and slaveholder.

After the valuation, then came the division. I have no language to express the high excitement and deep anxiety which were felt among us poor slaves during this time. Our fate for life was now to be decided. We had no more voice in that decision than the brutes among whom we were ranked. A single word from the white men was enough—against all our wishes, prayers, and entreaties—to sunder forever the dearest friends, dearest kindred, and strongest ties known to human beings. In addition to the pain of separation, there was the horrid dread of falling into the hands of Master Andrew. He was known to us all as being a most cruel wretch,—a common drunkard, who had, by his reckless mismanagement and profligate dissipation, already wasted a large portion of his father's property. We all felt that we might as well be sold at once to the Georgia traders, as to pass into his hands; for we knew that that would be our inevitable condition,—a condition held by us all in the utmost horror and dread.

I suffered more anxiety than most of my fellow-slaves. I had known what it was to be kindly treated; they had known nothing of the kind. They had seen little or nothing of the world. They were in very deed men and women of sorrow, and acquainted with grief. Their backs had been made familiar with the bloody lash, so that they had become callous; mine was yet tender; for while at Baltimore I got few whippings, and few slaves could boast of a kinder master and mistress than myself; and the thought of passing out of their hands into those of Master Andrew—a man who, but a few days before, to give me a sample of his bloody disposition, took my little brother by the throat, threw him on the ground, and with the heel of his boot stamped upon his head till the blood gushed from his nose and ears—was well calculated to make me anxious as to my fate. After he had committed this savage outrage upon my brother, he turned to me, and said that was the way he meant to serve me one of these days,—meaning, I suppose, when I came into his possession.

Thanks to a kind Providence, I fell to the portion of Mrs. Lucretia, and was sent immediately back to Baltimore, to live again in the family of Master Hugh. Their joy at my return equalled their sorrow at my departure. It was a glad day to me. I had escaped a worse than lion's jaws. I was absent from Baltimore, for the purpose of valuation and division, just about one month, and it seemed to have been six.

Very soon after my return to Baltimore, my mistress, Lucretia, died, leaving her husband and one child, Amanda; and in a very short time after her death, Master Andrew died. Now all the property of my old master, slaves included, was in the hands of strangers,—strangers who had had nothing to do with accumulating it. Not a slave was left free. All remained slaves, from the youngest to the oldest. If any one thing in my experience, more than another, served to deepen my conviction of the infernal character of slavery, and to fill me with unutterable loathing of slaveholders, it was their base ingratitude to my poor old grandmother. She had served my old master faithfully from youth to old age. She had been the source of all his wealth; she had peopled his plantation with slaves; she had become a great grandmother in his service. She had rocked him in infancy, attended him in childhood, served him through life, and at his death wiped from his icy brow the cold death-sweat, and closed his eyes forever.

She was nevertheless left a slave—a slave for life—a slave in the hands of strangers; and in their hands she saw her children, her grandchildren, and her great-grandchildren, divided, like so many sheep, without being gratified with the small privilege of a single word, as to their or her own destiny. And, to cap the climax of their base ingratitude and fiendish barbarity, my grandmother, who was now very old, having outlived my old master and all his children, having seen the beginning and end of all of them, and her present owners finding she was of but little value, her frame already racked with the pains of old age, and complete helplessness fast stealing over her once active limbs, they took her to the woods, built her a little hut, put up a little mud-chimney, and then made her welcome to the privilege of supporting herself there in perfect loneliness; thus virtually turning her out to die! If my poor old grandmother now lives, she lives to suffer in utter loneliness; she lives to remember and mourn over the loss of children, the loss of grandchildren, and the loss of great-grandchildren. They are, in the language of the slave's poet, Whittier,—

"Gone, gone, sold and gone
To the rice swamp dank and lone,
Where the slave-whip ceaseless swings,
Where the noisome insect stings,
Where the fever-demon strews
Poison with the falling dews,
Where the sickly sunbeams glare
Through the hot and misty air:—
Gone, gone, sold and gone
To the rice swamp dank and lone,
From Virginia hills and waters—
Woe is me, my stolen daughters!"

The hearth is desolate. The children, the unconscious children, who once sang and danced in her presence, are gone. She gropes her way, in the darkness of age, for a drink of water. Instead of the voices of her children, she hears by day the moans of the dove, and by night the screams of the hideous owl. All is gloom. The grave is at the door. And now, when weighed down by the pains and aches of old age, when the head inclines to the feet, when the beginning and ending of human existence meet, and helpless infancy and painful old age combine together—at this time, this most needful time, the time for the exercise of that tenderness and affection which children only can exercise towards a declining parent—my poor old grandmother, the devoted mother of twelve children, is left all alone, in yonder little hut, before a few dim embers. She stands—she sits—she staggers—she falls—she groans—she dies—and there are none of her children or grandchildren present, to wipe from her wrinkled brow the cold sweat of death, or to place beneath the sod her fallen remains. Will not a righteous God visit for these things?

In about two years after the death of Mrs. Lucretia, Master Thomas married his second wife. Her name was Rowena Hamilton. She was the eldest daughter of Mr. William Hamilton. Master now lived in St. Michael's. Not long after his marriage, a misunderstanding took place between himself and Master Hugh; and as a means of punishing his brother, he took me from him to live with himself at St. Michael's. Here I underwent another most painful separation. It, however, was not so severe as the one I dreaded at the division of property; for, during this interval, a great change had taken place in Master Hugh and his once kind and affectionate wife. The influence of brandy upon him, and of slavery upon her, had effected a disastrous change in the characters of both; so that, as far as they were concerned, I thought I had little to lose by the change. But it was not to them that I was attached. It was to those little Baltimore boys that I felt the strongest attachment. I had received many good lessons from them, and was still receiving them, and the thought of leaving them was painful indeed. I was leaving, too, without the hope of ever being allowed to return. Master Thomas had said he would never let me return again. The barrier betwixt himself and brother he considered impassable.

I then had to regret that I did not at least make the attempt to carry out my resolution to run away; for the chances of success are tenfold greater from the city than from the country.

I sailed from Baltimore for St. Michael's in the sloop Amanda, Captain Edward Dodson. On my passage, I paid particular attention to the direction which the steamboats took to go to Philadelphia. I found, instead of going down, on reaching North Point they went up the bay, in a north-easterly direction. I deemed this knowledge of the utmost importance. My determination to run away was again revived. I resolved to wait only so long as the offering of a favorable opportunity. When that came, I was determined to be off.

CHAPTER IX

I have now reached a period of my life when I can give dates. I left Baltimore, and went to live with Master Thomas Auld, at St. Michael's, in March, 1832. It was now more than seven years since I lived with him in the family of my old master, on Colonel Lloyd's plantation. We of course were now almost entire strangers to each other. He was to me a new master, and I to him a new slave. I was ignorant of his temper and disposition; he was equally so of mine. A very short time, however, brought us into full acquaintance with each other. I was made acquainted with his wife not less than with himself. They were well matched, being equally mean and cruel. I was now, for the first time during a space of more than seven years, made to feel the painful gnawings of hunger—a something which I had not experienced before since I left Colonel Lloyd's plantation. It went hard enough with me then, when I could look back to no period at which I had enjoyed a sufficiency. It was tenfold harder after living in Master Hugh's family, where I had always had enough to eat, and of that which was good. I have said Master Thomas was a mean man. He was so. Not to give a slave enough to eat, is regarded as the most aggravated development of meanness even among slaveholders. The rule is, no matter how coarse the food, only let there be enough of it. This is the theory; and in the part of Maryland from which I came, it is the general practice,—though there are many exceptions. Master Thomas gave us enough of neither coarse nor fine food. There were four slaves of us in the kitchen—my sister Eliza, my aunt Priscilla, Henny, and myself; and we were allowed less than a half of a bushel of corn-meal per week, and very little else, either in the shape of meat or vegetables. It was not enough for us to subsist upon. We were therefore reduced to the wretched necessity of living at the expense of our neighbors. This we did by begging and stealing, whichever came handy in the time of need, the one being considered as legitimate as the other. A great many times have we poor creatures been nearly perishing with hunger, when food in abundance lay mouldering in the safe and smoke-house, and our pious mistress was aware of the fact; and yet that mistress and her husband would kneel every morning, and pray that God would bless them in basket and store!

Bad as all slaveholders are, we seldom meet one destitute of every element of character commanding respect. My master was one of this rare sort. I do not know of one single noble act ever performed by him. The leading trait in his character was meanness; and if there were any other element in his nature, it was made subject to this. He was mean; and, like most other mean men, he lacked the ability to conceal his meanness. Captain Auld was not born a slaveholder. He had been a poor man, master only of a Bay craft. He came into possession of all his slaves by marriage; and of all men, adopted slaveholders are the worst. He was cruel, but cowardly. He commanded without firmness. In the enforcement of his rules, he was at times rigid, and at times lax. At times, he spoke to his slaves with the firmness of Napoleon and the fury of a demon; at other times, he might well be mistaken for an inquirer who had lost his way. He did nothing of himself. He might have passed for a lion, but for his ears. In all things noble which he attempted, his own meanness shone most conspicuous. His airs, words, and actions, were the airs, words, and actions of born slaveholders, and, being assumed, were awkward enough. He was not even a good imitator. He possessed all the disposition to deceive, but wanted the power. Having no resources within himself, he was compelled to be the copyist of many, and being such, he was forever the victim of inconsistency; and of consequence he was an object of contempt, and was held as such even by his slaves. The luxury of having slaves of his own to wait upon him was something new and unprepared for. He was a slaveholder without the ability to hold slaves. He found himself incapable of managing his slaves either by force, fear, or fraud. We seldom called him "master;" we generally called him "Captain Auld," and were hardly disposed to title him at all. I doubt not that our conduct had much to do with making him appear awkward, and of consequence fretful. Our want of reverence for him must have perplexed him greatly. He wished to have us call him master, but lacked the firmness necessary to command us to do so. His wife used to insist upon our calling him so, but to no purpose. In August, 1832, my master attended a Methodist camp-meeting held in the Bay-side, Talbot county, and there experienced religion. I indulged a faint hope that his conversion would lead him to emancipate his slaves, and that, if he did not do this, it would, at any rate, make him more kind and humane. I was disappointed in both these respects. It neither made him to be humane to his slaves, nor to emancipate them. If it had any effect on his character, it made him more cruel and hateful in all his ways; for I believe him to have been a much worse man after his conversion than before. Prior to his conversion, he relied upon his own depravity to shield and sustain him in his savage barbarity; but after his conversion, he found religious sanction and support for his slaveholding cruelty. He made the greatest pretensions to piety. His house was the house of prayer. He prayed morning, noon, and night. He very soon distinguished himself among his brethren, and was soon made a class-leader and exhorter. His activity in revivals was great, and he proved himself an instrument in the hands of the church in converting many souls. His house was the preachers' home. They used to take great pleasure in coming there to put up; for while he starved us, he stuffed them. We have had three or four preachers there at a time. The names of those who used to come most frequently while I lived there, were Mr. Storks, Mr. Ewery, Mr. Humphry, and Mr. Hickey. I have also seen Mr. George Cookman at

our house. We slaves loved Mr. Cookman. We believed him to be a good man. We thought him instrumental in getting Mr. Samuel Harrison, a very rich slaveholder, to emancipate his slaves; and by some means got the impression that he was laboring to effect the emancipation of all the slaves. When he was at our house, we were sure to be called in to prayers. When the others were there, we were sometimes called in and sometimes not. Mr. Cookman took more notice of us than either of the other ministers. He could not come among us without betraying his sympathy for us, and, stupid as we were, we had the sagacity to see it.

While I lived with my master in St. Michael's, there was a white young man, a Mr. Wilson, who proposed to keep a Sabbath school for the instruction of such slaves as might be disposed to learn to read the New Testament. We met but three times, when Mr. West and Mr. Fairbanks, both class-leaders, with many others, came upon us with sticks and other missiles, drove us off, and forbade us to meet again. Thus ended our little Sabbath school in the pious town of St. Michael's.

I have said my master found religious sanction for his cruelty. As an example, I will state one of many facts going to prove the charge. I have seen him tie up a lame young woman, and whip her with a heavy cowskin upon her naked shoulders, causing the warm red blood to drip; and, in justification of the bloody deed, he would quote this passage of Scripture—"He that knoweth his master's will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes."

Master would keep this lacerated young woman tied up in this horrid situation four or five hours at a time. I have known him to tie her up early in the morning, and whip her before breakfast; leave her, go to his store, return at dinner, and whip her again, cutting her in the places already made raw with his cruel lash. The secret of master's cruelty toward "Henny" is found in the fact of her being almost helpless. When quite a child, she fell into the fire, and burned herself horribly. Her hands were so burnt that she never got the use of them. She could do very little but bear heavy burdens. She was to master a bill of expense; and as he was a mean man, she was a constant offence to him. He seemed desirous of getting the poor girl out of existence. He gave her away once to his sister; but, being a poor gift, she was not disposed to keep her. Finally, my benevolent master, to use his own words, "set her adrift to take care of herself." Here was a recently-converted man, holding on upon the mother, and at the same time turning out her helpless child, to starve and die! Master Thomas was one of the many pious slaveholders who hold slaves for the very charitable purpose of taking care of them.

My master and myself had quite a number of differences. He found me unsuitable to his purpose. My city life, he said, had had a very pernicious effect upon me. It had almost ruined me for every good purpose, and fitted me for every thing which was bad. One of my greatest faults was that of letting his horse run away, and go down to his father-in-law's farm, which was about five miles from St. Michael's. I would then have to go after it. My reason for this kind of carelessness, or carefulness, was, that I could always get something to eat when I went there. Master William Hamilton, my master's father-in-law, always gave his slaves enough to eat. I never left there hungry, no matter how great the need of my speedy return. Master Thomas at length said he would stand it no longer. I had lived with him nine months, during which time he had given me a number of severe whippings, all to no good purpose. He resolved to put me out, as he said, to be broken; and, for this purpose, he let me for one year to a man named Edward Covey. Mr. Covey was a poor man, a farm-renter. He rented the place upon which he lived, as also the hands with which he tilled it. Mr. Covey had acquired a very high reputation for breaking young slaves, and this reputation was of immense value to him. It enabled him to get his farm tilled with much less expense to himself than he could have had it done without such a reputation. Some slaveholders thought it not much loss to allow Mr. Covey to have their slaves one year, for the sake of the training to which they were subjected, without any other compensation. He could hire young help with great ease, in consequence of this reputation. Added to the natural good qualities of Mr. Covey, he was a professor of religion—a pious soul—a member and a class-leader in the Methodist church. All of this added weight to his reputation as a "nigger-breaker." I was aware of all the facts, having been made acquainted with them by a young man who had lived there. I nevertheless made the change gladly; for I was sure of getting enough to eat, which is not the smallest consideration to a hungry man.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

10: Narative of the Life of a Slave by Frederick Douglass (second half)

10.1: Editor's Introduction
10.2: Narrative of the Life of a Slave by Frederick Douglass (second half)

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10.1: Editor's Introduction

The second half of Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* continues the vivid telling of his experiences in slavery while deepening his exploration of his pursuit of freedom, the role of education in his life, and the corrupting influences of power. This part of the autobiography covers some of the most important moments of Douglass's journey, including his growing awareness of the possibility of freedom, his resistance to oppression, and the internal strength he develops, in order to escape bondage.

A theme that intensifies in the second half is Douglass's growing desire for freedom. Throughout the first half, Douglass describes the foundation of this yearning, but in the second half, his desire begins to take concrete shape.

Douglass's move to work for Edward Covey, a notorious "slave breaker," is the first turning point in his quest for freedom. Initially, Covey's brutal treatment breaks his spirit. However, after months of enduring Covey's cruelty, Douglass reaches a point of physical and emotional resistance, leading to one of the most significant moments in the autobiography, his physical confrontation with Covey. Here, Douglass fights back against Covey, and the fight revives his determination to achieve freedom.

Also explored in this section is the theme of resistance in various forms, including both passive and active resistance to slavery. The fight with Covey is his most direct and dramatic act of resistance, but a broader internal resistance has also been building in Douglass for years. In his recounting of his fight with Covey, Douglass reflects on how important it was for him to assert himself as a human being who would no longer submit to cruel and dehumanizing control.

His resistance is not confined to physical acts. Douglass also engages in subtle forms of intellectual and psychological resistance. At one point, he explains how he would secretly teach other slaves to read and write, though it put him at risk. In addition, he resists by rejecting slaveholders' attempts to control his self-perception. Slaveholders employed various tactics, such as religion and paternalism, to justify slavery and to convince the enslaved that their subjugation was divinely sanctioned. In the second half, Douglass exposes this hypocrisy through his critiques of "Christian" slaveholders who used the Bible to defend their actions. Douglass points out how the version of Christianity, as practiced by slaveholders is fundamentally opposed to the teachings of Christ.

He examines as well how the hierarchical nature of slavery corrupts relationships among slaves themselves. Douglass tells of how some slaves were chosen to serve as overseers or to carry out punishments against other slaves, creating a system in which the oppressed were pitted against each other. By making divisions among the enslaved, slaveholders were able to maintain control more easily, but this strategy also illustrates how power and oppression can breed cruelty even among those who are its victims.

As the second half of the *Narrative* progresses, Douglass's path to freedom grows clearer, though still fraught with difficulties. After enduring years of physical abuse and oppression, his internal transformation lays the groundwork for his eventual escape. He starts to make plans to escape, and while his initial attempts are thwarted, he does not lose hope. Eventually, he escapes from Maryland to the North, though he is deliberately vague about the details of his escape, likely to protect others who might use similar methods to flee slavery.

On reaching freedom, he reflects on the complex emotions of becoming free. Though initially overjoyed, he faces new challenges of prejudice and discrimination in the North. The most significant occurrence in the final stages of the *Narrative* is Douglass's decision to become involved in the abolitionist movement. His commitment to fighting for the freedom of others and his desire to tell his story so that others might join the cause of abolition culminate his personal journey.

-Taz Rosenthal

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CHAPTER X

I had left Master Thomas's house, and went to live with Mr. Covey, on the 1st of January, 1833. I was now, for the first time in my life, a field hand. In my new employment, I found myself even more awkward than a country boy appeared to be in a large city. I had been at my new home but one week before Mr. Covey gave me a very severe whipping, cutting my back, causing the blood to run, and raising ridges on my flesh as large as my little finger. The details of this affair are as follows: Mr. Covey sent me, very early in the morning of one of our coldest days in the month of January, to the woods, to get a load of wood. He gave me a team of unbroken oxen. He told me which was the in-hand ox, and which the off-hand one. He then tied the end of a large rope around the horns of the in-hand ox, and gave me the other end of it, and told me, if the oxen started to run, that I must hold on upon the rope. I had never driven oxen before, and of course I was very awkward. I, however, succeeded in getting to the edge of the woods with little difficulty; but I had got a very few rods into the woods, when the oxen took fright, and started full tilt, carrying the cart against trees, and over stumps, in the most frightful manner. I expected every moment that my brains would be dashed out against the trees. After running thus for a considerable distance, they finally upset the cart, dashing it with great force against a tree, and threw themselves into a dense thicket. How I escaped death, I do not know. There I was, entirely alone, in a thick wood, in a place new to me. My cart was upset and shattered, my oxen were entangled among the young trees, and there was none to help me. After a long spell of effort, I succeeded in getting my cart righted, my oxen disentangled, and again yoked to the cart. I now proceeded with my team to the place where I had, the day before, been chopping wood, and loaded my cart pretty heavily, thinking in this way to tame my oxen. I then proceeded on my way home. I had now consumed one half of the day. I got out of the woods safely, and now felt out of danger. I stopped my oxen to open the woods gate; and just as I did so, before I could get hold of my ox-rope, the oxen again started, rushed through the gate, catching it between the wheel and the body of the cart, tearing it to pieces, and coming within a few inches of crushing me against the gate-post. Thus twice, in one short day, I escaped death by the merest chance. On my return, I told Mr. Covey what had happened, and how it happened. He ordered me to return to the woods again immediately. I did so, and he followed on after me. Just as I got into the woods, he came up and told me to stop my cart, and that he would teach me how to trifle away my time, and break gates. He then went to a large gum-tree, and with his axe cut three large switches, and, after trimming them up neatly with his pocketknife, he ordered me to take off my clothes. I made him no answer, but stood with my clothes on. He repeated his order. I still made him no answer, nor did I move to strip myself. Upon this he rushed at me with the fierceness of a tiger, tore off my clothes, and lashed me till he had worn out his switches, cutting me so savagely as to leave the marks visible for a long time after. This whipping was the first of a number just like it, and for similar offences.

I lived with Mr. Covey one year. During the first six months, of that year, scarce a week passed without his whipping me. I was seldom free from a sore back. My awkwardness was almost always his excuse for whipping me. We were worked fully up to the point of endurance. Long before day we were up, our horses fed, and by the first approach of day we were off to the field with our hoes and ploughing teams. Mr. Covey gave us enough to eat, but scarce time to eat it. We were often less than five minutes taking our meals. We were often in the field from the first approach of day till its last lingering ray had left us; and at saving-fodder time, midnight often caught us in the field binding blades.

Covey would be out with us. The way he used to stand it, was this. He would spend the most of his afternoons in bed. He would then come out fresh in the evening, ready to urge us on with his words, example, and frequently with the whip. Mr. Covey was one of the few slaveholders who could and did work with his hands. He was a hard-working man. He knew by himself just what a man or a boy could do. There was no deceiving him. His work went on in his absence almost as well as in his presence; and he had the faculty of making us feel that he was ever present with us. This he did by surprising us. He seldom approached the spot where we were at work openly, if he could do it secretly. He always aimed at taking us by surprise. Such was his cunning, that we used to call him, among ourselves, "the snake." When we were at work in the cornfield, he would sometimes crawl on his hands and knees to avoid detection, and all at once he would rise nearly in our midst, and scream out, "Ha, ha! Come, come! Dash on, dash on!" This

being his mode of attack, it was never safe to stop a single minute. His comings were like a thief in the night. He appeared to us as being ever at hand. He was under every tree, behind every stump, in every bush, and at every window, on the plantation. He would sometimes mount his horse, as if bound to St. Michael's, a distance of seven miles, and in half an hour afterwards you would see him coiled up in the corner of the wood-fence, watching every motion of the slaves. He would, for this purpose, leave his horse tied up in the woods. Again, he would sometimes walk up to us, and give us orders as though he was upon the point of starting on a long journey, turn his back upon us, and make as though he was going to the house to get ready; and, before he would get half way thither, he would turn short and crawl into a fence-corner, or behind some tree, and there watch us till the going down of the sun.

Mr. Covey's *forte* consisted in his power to deceive. His life was devoted to planning and perpetrating the grossest deceptions. Every thing he possessed in the shape of learning or religion, he made conform to his disposition to deceive. He seemed to think himself equal to deceiving the Almighty. He would make a short prayer in the morning, and a long prayer at night; and, strange as it may seem, few men would at times appear more devotional than he. The exercises of his family devotions were always commenced with singing; and, as he was a very poor singer himself, the duty of raising the hymn generally came upon me. He would read his hymn, and nod at me to commence. I would at times do so; at others, I would not. My non-compliance would almost always produce much confusion. To show himself independent of me, he would start and stagger through with his hymn in the most discordant manner. In this state of mind, he prayed with more than ordinary spirit. Poor man! such was his disposition, and success at deceiving, I do verily believe that he sometimes deceived himself into the solemn belief, that he was a sincere worshipper of the most high God; and this, too, at a time when he may be said to have been guilty of compelling his woman slave to commit the sin of adultery. The facts in the case are these: Mr. Covey was a poor man; he was just commencing in life; he was only able to buy one slave; and, shocking as is the fact, he bought her, as he said, for *a breeder*. This woman was named Caroline. Mr. Covey bought her from Mr. Thomas Lowe, about six miles from St. Michael's. She was a large, able-bodied woman, about twenty years old. She had already given birth to one child, which proved her to be just what he wanted. After buying her, he hired a married man of Mr. Samuel Harrison, to live with him one year; and him he used to fasten up with her every night! The result was, that, at the end of the year, the miserable woman gave birth to twins. At this result Mr. Covey seemed to be highly pleased, both with the man and the wretched woman. Such was his joy, and that of his wife, that nothing they could do for Caroline during her confinement was too good, or too hard, to be done. The children were regarded as being quite an addition to his wealth.

If at any one time of my life more than another, I was made to drink the bitterest dregs of slavery, that time was during the first six months of my stay with Mr. Covey. We were worked in all weathers. It was never too hot or too cold; it could never rain, blow, hail, or snow, too hard for us to work in the field. Work, work, work, was scarcely more the order of the day than of the night. The longest days were too short for him, and the shortest nights too long for him. I was somewhat unmanageable when I first went there, but a few months of this discipline tamed me. Mr. Covey succeeded in breaking me. I was broken in body, soul, and spirit. My natural elasticity was crushed, my intellect languished, the disposition to read departed, the cheerful spark that lingered about my eye died; the dark night of slavery closed in upon me; and behold a man transformed into a brute!

Sunday was my only leisure time. I spent this in a sort of beast-like stupor, between sleep and wake, under some large tree. At times I would rise up, a flash of energetic freedom would dart through my soul, accompanied with a faint beam of hope, that flickered for a moment, and then vanished. I sank down again, mourning over my wretched condition. I was sometimes prompted to take my life, and that of Covey, but was prevented by a combination of hope and fear. My sufferings on this plantation seem now like a dream rather than a stern reality.

Our house stood within a few rods of the Chesapeake Bay, whose broad bosom was ever white with sails from every quarter of the habitable globe. Those beautiful vessels, robed in purest white, so delightful to the eye of freemen, were to me so many shrouded ghosts, to terrify and torment me with thoughts of my wretched condition. I have often, in the deep stillness of a summer's Sabbath, stood all alone upon the lofty banks of that noble bay, and traced, with saddened heart and tearful eye, the countless number of sails moving off to the mighty ocean. The sight of these always affected me powerfully. My thoughts would compel utterance; and there, with no audience but the Almighty, I would pour out my soul's complaint, in my rude way, with an apostrophe to the moving multitude of ships:—

"You are loosed from your moorings, and are free; I am fast in my chains, and am a slave! You move merrily before the gentle gale, and I sadly before the bloody whip! You are freedom's swift-winged angels, that fly round the world; I am confined in bands of iron! O that I were free! O, that I were on one of your gallant decks, and under your protecting wing! Alas! betwixt me and you, the turbid waters roll. Go on, go on. O that I could also go! Could I but swim! If I could fly! O, why was I born a man, of whom to

make a brute! The glad ship is gone; she hides in the dim distance. I am left in the hottest hell of unending slavery. O God, save me! God, deliver me! Let me be free! Is there any God? Why am I a slave? I will run away. I will not stand it. Get caught, or get clear, I'll try it. I had as well die with ague as the fever. I have only one life to lose. I had as well be killed running as die standing. Only think of it; one hundred miles straight north, and I am free! Try it? Yes! God helping me, I will. It cannot be that I shall live and die a slave. I will take to the water. This very bay shall yet bear me into freedom. The steamboats steered in a north-east course from North Point. I will do the same; and when I get to the head of the bay, I will turn my canoe adrift, and walk straight through Delaware into Pennsylvania. When I get there, I shall not be required to have a pass; I can travel without being disturbed. Let but the first opportunity offer, and, come what will, I am off. Meanwhile, I will try to bear up under the yoke. I am not the only slave in the world. Why should I fret? I can bear as much as any of them. Besides, I am but a boy, and all boys are bound to some one. It may be that my misery in slavery will only increase my happiness when I get free. There is a better day coming."

Thus I used to think, and thus I used to speak to myself; goaded almost to madness at one moment, and at the next reconciling myself to my wretched lot.

I have already intimated that my condition was much worse, during the first six months of my stay at Mr. Covey's, than in the last six. The circumstances leading to the change in Mr. Covey's course toward me form an epoch in my humble history. You have seen how a man was made a slave; you shall see how a slave was made a man. On one of the hottest days of the month of August, 1833, Bill Smith, William Hughes, a slave named Eli, and myself, were engaged in fanning wheat. Hughes was clearing the fanned wheat from before the fan. Eli was turning, Smith was feeding, and I was carrying wheat to the fan. The work was simple, requiring strength rather than intellect; yet, to one entirely unused to such work, it came very hard. About three o'clock of that day, I broke down; my strength failed me; I was seized with a violent aching of the head, attended with extreme dizziness; I trembled in every limb. Finding what was coming, I nerved myself up, feeling it would never do to stop work. I stood as long as I could stagger to the hopper with grain. When I could stand no longer, I fell, and felt as if held down by an immense weight. The fan of course stopped; every one had his own work to do; and no one could do the work of the other, and have his own go on at the same time.

Mr. Covey was at the house, about one hundred yards from the treading-yard where we were fanning. On hearing the fan stop, he left immediately, and came to the spot where we were. He hastily inquired what the matter was. Bill answered that I was sick, and there was no one to bring wheat to the fan. I had by this time crawled away under the side of the post and rail-fence by which the yard was enclosed, hoping to find relief by getting out of the sun. He then asked where I was. He was told by one of the hands. He came to the spot, and, after looking at me awhile, asked me what was the matter. I told him as well as I could, for I scarce had strength to speak. He then gave me a savage kick in the side, and told me to get up. I tried to do so, but fell back in the attempt. He gave me another kick, and again told me to rise. I again tried, and succeeded in gaining my feet; but, stooping to get the tub with which I was feeding the fan, I again staggered and fell. While down in this situation, Mr. Covey took up the hickory slat with which Hughes had been striking off the half-bushel measure, and with it gave me a heavy blow upon the head, making a large wound, and the blood ran freely; and with this again told me to get up. I made no effort to comply, having now made up my mind to let him do his worst. In a short time after receiving this blow, my head grew better. Mr. Covey had now left me to my fate. At this moment I resolved, for the first time, to go to my master, enter a complaint, and ask his protection. In order to do this, I must that afternoon walk seven miles; and this, under the circumstances, was truly a severe undertaking. I was exceedingly feeble; made so as much by the kicks and blows which I received, as by the severe fit of sickness to which I had been subjected. I, however, watched my chance, while Covey was looking in an opposite direction, and started for St. Michael's. I succeeded in getting a considerable distance on my way to the woods, when Covey discovered me, and called after me to come back, threatening what he would do if I did not come. I disregarded both his calls and his threats, and made my way to the woods as fast as my feeble state would allow; and thinking I might be overhauled by him if I kept the road, I walked through the woods, keeping far enough from the road to avoid detection, and near enough to prevent losing my way. I had not gone far before my little strength again failed me. I could go no farther. I fell down, and lay for a considerable time. The blood was yet oozing from the wound on my head. For a time I thought I should bleed to death; and think now that I should have done so, but that the blood so matted my hair as to stop the wound. After lying there about three quarters of an hour, I nerved myself up again, and started on my way, through bogs and briers, barefooted and bareheaded, tearing my feet sometimes at nearly every step; and after a journey of about seven miles, occupying some five hours to perform it, I arrived at master's store. I then presented an appearance enough to affect any but a heart of iron. From the crown of my head to my feet, I was covered with blood. My hair was all clotted with dust and blood; my shirt was stiff with blood. I suppose I looked like a man who had escaped a den of wild beasts, and barely escaped them. In this state I appeared before my master, humbly entreating him to interpose his authority for my protection. I told him all the circumstances as well as I could, and it

seemed, as I spoke, at times to affect him. He would then walk the floor, and seek to justify Covey by saying he expected I deserved it. He asked me what I wanted. I told him, to let me get a new home; that as sure as I lived with Mr. Covey again, I should live with but to die with him; that Covey would surely kill me; he was in a fair way for it. Master Thomas ridiculed the idea that there was any danger of Mr. Covey's killing me, and said that he knew Mr. Covey; that he was a good man, and that he could not think of taking me from him; that, should he do so, he would lose the whole year's wages; that I belonged to Mr. Covey for one year, and that I must go back to him, come what might; and that I must not trouble him with any more stories, or that he would himself *get hold of me*. After threatening me thus, he gave me a very large dose of salts, telling me that I might remain in St. Michael's that night, (it being quite late,) but that I must be off back to Mr. Covey's early in the morning; and that if I did not, he would *get hold of me*, which meant that he would whip me. I remained all night, and, according to his orders, I started off to Covey's in the morning, (Saturday morning,) wearied in body and broken in spirit. I got no supper that night, or breakfast that morning. I reached Covey's about nine o'clock; and just as I was getting over the fence that divided Mrs. Kemp's fields from ours, out ran Covey with his cowskin, to give me another whipping. Before he could reach me, I succeeded in getting to the cornfield; and as the corn was very high, it afforded me the means of hiding. He seemed very angry, and searched for me a long time. My behavior was altogether unaccountable. He finally gave up the chase, thinking, I suppose, that I must come home for something to eat; he would give himself no further trouble in looking for me. I spent that day mostly in the woods, having the alternative before me,—to go home and be whipped to death, or stay in the woods and be starved to death. That night, I fell in with Sandy Jenkins, a slave with whom I was somewhat acquainted. Sandy had a free wife who lived about four miles from Mr. Covey's; and it being Saturday, he was on his way to see her. I told him my circumstances, and he very kindly invited me to go home with him. I went home with him, and talked this whole matter over, and got his advice as to what course it was best for me to pursue. I found Sandy an old adviser. He told me, with great solemnity, I must go back to Covey; but that before I went, I must go with him into another part of the woods, where there was a certain *root*, which, if I would take some of it with me, carrying it *always on my right side*, would render it impossible for Mr. Covey, or any other white man, to whip me. He said he had carried it for years; and since he had done so, he had never received a blow, and never expected to while he carried it. I at first rejected the idea, that the simple carrying of a root in my pocket would have any such effect as he had said, and was not disposed to take it; but Sandy impressed the necessity with much earnestness, telling me it could do no harm, if it did no good. To please him, I at length took the root, and, according to his direction, carried it upon my right side. This was Sunday morning. I immediately started for home; and upon entering the yard gate, out came Mr. Covey on his way to meeting. He spoke to me very kindly, bade me drive the pigs from a lot near by, and passed on towards the church. Now, this singular conduct of Mr. Covey really made me begin to think that there was something in the *root* which Sandy had given me; and had it been on any other day than Sunday, I could have attributed the conduct to no other cause than the influence of that root; and as it was, I was half inclined to think the *root* to be something more than I at first had taken it to be. All went well till Monday morning. On this morning, the virtue of the *root* was fully tested. Long before daylight, I was called to go and rub, curry, and feed, the horses. I obeyed, and was glad to obey. But whilst thus engaged, whilst in the act of throwing down some blades from the loft, Mr. Covey entered the stable with a long rope; and just as I was half out of the loft, he caught hold of my legs, and was about tying me. As soon as I found what he was up to, I gave a sudden spring, and as I did so, he holding to my legs, I was brought sprawling on the stable floor. Mr. Covey seemed now to think he had me, and could do what he pleased; but at this moment—from whence came the spirit I don't know—I resolved to fight; and, suiting my action to the resolution, I seized Covey hard by the throat; and as I did so, I rose. He held on to me, and I to him. My resistance was so entirely unexpected that Covey seemed taken all aback. He trembled like a leaf. This gave me assurance, and I held him uneasy, causing the blood to run where I touched him with the ends of my fingers. Mr. Covey soon called out to Hughes for help. Hughes came, and, while Covey held me, attempted to tie my right hand. While he was in the act of doing so, I watched my chance, and gave him a heavy kick close under the ribs. This kick fairly sickened Hughes, so that he left me in the hands of Mr. Covey. This kick had the effect of not only weakening Hughes, but Covey also. When he saw Hughes bending over with pain, his courage quailed. He asked me if I meant to persist in my resistance. I told him I did, come what might; that he had used me like a brute for six months, and that I was determined to be used so no longer. With that, he strove to drag me to a stick that was lying just out of the stable door. He meant to knock me down. But just as he was leaning over to get the stick, I seized him with both hands by his collar, and brought him by a sudden snatch to the ground. By this time, Bill came. Covey called upon him for assistance. Bill wanted to know what he could do. Covey said, "Take hold of him, take hold of him!" Bill said his master hired him out to work, and not to help to whip me; so he left Covey and myself to fight our own battle out. We were at it for nearly two hours. Covey at length let me go, puffing and blowing at a great rate, saying that if I had not resisted, he would not have whipped me half so much. The truth was, that he had not whipped me at all. I considered him as getting entirely the worst end of the bargain; for he had drawn no blood from me, but I had

from him. The whole six months afterwards, that I spent with Mr. Covey, he never laid the weight of his finger upon me in anger. He would occasionally say, he didn't want to get hold of me again. "No," thought I, "you need not; for you will come off worse than you did before."

This battle with Mr. Covey was the turning-point in my career as a slave. It rekindled the few expiring embers of freedom, and revived within me a sense of my own manhood. It recalled the departed self-confidence, and inspired me again with a determination to be free. The gratification afforded by the triumph was a full compensation for whatever else might follow, even death itself. He only can understand the deep satisfaction which I experienced, who has himself repelled by force the bloody arm of slavery. I felt as I never felt before. It was a glorious resurrection, from the tomb of slavery, to the heaven of freedom. My long-crushed spirit rose, cowardice departed, bold defiance took its place; and I now resolved that, however long I might remain a slave in form, the day had passed forever when I could be a slave in fact. I did not hesitate to let it be known of me, that the white man who expected to succeed in whipping, must also succeed in killing me.

From this time I was never again what might be called fairly whipped, though I remained a slave four years afterwards. I had several fights, but was never whipped.

It was for a long time a matter of surprise to me why Mr. Covey did not immediately have me taken by the constable to the whipping-post, and there regularly whipped for the crime of raising my hand against a white man in defence of myself. And the only explanation I can now think of does not entirely satisfy me; but such as it is, I will give it. Mr. Covey enjoyed the most unbounded reputation for being a first-rate overseer and negro-breaker. It was of considerable importance to him. That reputation was at stake; and had he sent me—a boy about sixteen years old—to the public whipping-post, his reputation would have been lost; so, to save his reputation, he suffered me to go unpunished.

My term of actual service to Mr. Edward Covey ended on Christmas day, 1833. The days between Christmas and New Year's day are allowed as holidays; and, accordingly, we were not required to perform any labor, more than to feed and take care of the stock. This time we regarded as our own, by the grace of our masters; and we therefore used or abused it nearly as we pleased. Those of us who had families at a distance, were generally allowed to spend the whole six days in their society. This time, however, was spent in various ways. The staid, sober, thinking and industrious ones of our number would employ themselves in making corn-brooms, mats, horse-collars, and baskets; and another class of us would spend the time in hunting opossums, hares, and coons. But by far the larger part engaged in such sports and merriments as playing ball, wrestling, running foot-races, fiddling, dancing, and drinking whisky; and this latter mode of spending the time was by far the most agreeable to the feelings of our masters. A slave who would work during the holidays was considered by our masters as scarcely deserving them. He was regarded as one who rejected the favor of his master. It was deemed a disgrace not to get drunk at Christmas; and he was regarded as lazy indeed, who had not provided himself with the necessary means, during the year, to get whisky enough to last him through Christmas.

From what I know of the effect of these holidays upon the slave, I believe them to be among the most effective means in the hands of the slaveholder in keeping down the spirit of insurrection. Were the slaveholders at once to abandon this practice, I have not the slightest doubt it would lead to an immediate insurrection among the slaves. These holidays serve as conductors, or safety-valves, to carry off the rebellious spirit of enslaved humanity. But for these, the slave would be forced up to the wildest desperation; and woe betide the slaveholder, the day he ventures to remove or hinder the operation of those conductors! I warn him that, in such an event, a spirit will go forth in their midst, more to be dreaded than the most appalling earthquake.

The holidays are part and parcel of the gross fraud, wrong, and inhumanity of slavery. They are professedly a custom established by the benevolence of the slaveholders; but I undertake to say, it is the result of selfishness, and one of the grossest frauds committed upon the down-trodden slave. They do not give the slaves this time because they would not like to have their work during its continuance, but because they know it would be unsafe to deprive them of it. This will be seen by the fact, that the slaveholders like to have their slaves spend those days just in such a manner as to make them as glad of their ending as of their beginning. Their object seems to be, to disgust their slaves with freedom, by plunging them into the lowest depths of dissipation. For instance, the slaveholders not only like to see the slave drink of his own accord, but will adopt various plans to make him drunk. One plan is, to make bets on their slaves, as to who can drink the most whisky without getting drunk; and in this way they succeed in getting whole multitudes to drink to excess. Thus, when the slave asks for virtuous freedom, the cunning slaveholder, knowing his ignorance, cheats him with a dose of vicious dissipation, artfully labelled with the name of liberty. The most of us used to drink it down, and the result was just what might be supposed; many of us were led to think that there was little to choose between liberty and slavery. We felt, and very properly too, that we had almost as well be slaves to man as to rum. So, when the holidays ended, we

staggered up from the filth of our wallowing, took a long breath, and marched to the field,—feeling, upon the whole, rather glad to go, from what our master had deceived us into a belief was freedom, back to the arms of slavery.

I have said that this mode of treatment is a part of the whole system of fraud and inhumanity of slavery. It is so. The mode here adopted to disgust the slave with freedom, by allowing him to see only the abuse of it, is carried out in other things. For instance, a slave loves molasses; he steals some. His master, in many cases, goes off to town, and buys a large quantity; he returns, takes his whip, and commands the slave to eat the molasses, until the poor fellow is made sick at the very mention of it. The same mode is sometimes adopted to make the slaves refrain from asking for more food than their regular allowance. A slave runs through his allowance, and applies for more. His master is enraged at him; but, not willing to send him off without food, gives him more than is necessary, and compels him to eat it within a given time. Then, if he complains that he cannot eat it, he is said to be satisfied neither full nor fasting, and is whipped for being hard to please! I have an abundance of such illustrations of the same principle, drawn from my own observation, but think the cases I have cited sufficient. The practice is a very common one.

On the first of January, 1834, I left Mr. Covey, and went to live with Mr. William Freeland, who lived about three miles from St. Michael's. I soon found Mr. Freeland a very different man from Mr. Covey. Though not rich, he was what would be called an educated southern gentleman. Mr. Covey, as I have shown, was a well-trained negro-breaker and slave-driver. The former (slaveholder though he was) seemed to possess some regard for honor, some reverence for justice, and some respect for humanity. The latter seemed totally insensible to all such sentiments. Mr. Freeland had many of the faults peculiar to slaveholders, such as being very passionate and fretful; but I must do him the justice to say, that he was exceedingly free from those degrading vices to which Mr. Covey was constantly addicted. The one was open and frank, and we always knew where to find him. The other was a most artful deceiver, and could be understood only by such as were skilful enough to detect his cunningly-devised frauds. Another advantage I gained in my new master was, he made no pretensions to, or profession of, religion; and this, in my opinion, was truly a great advantage. I assert most unhesitatingly, that the religion of the south is a mere covering for the most horrid crimes,—a justifier of the most appalling barbarity,—a sanctifier of the most hateful frauds,—and a dark shelter under, which the darkest, foulest, grossest, and most infernal deeds of slaveholders find the strongest protection. Were I to be again reduced to the chains of slavery, next to that enslavement, I should regard being the slave of a religious master the greatest calamity that could befall me. For of all slaveholders with whom I have ever met, religious slaveholders are the worst. I have ever found them the meanest and basest, the most cruel and cowardly, of all others. It was my unhappy lot not only to belong to a religious slaveholder, but to live in a community of such religionists. Very near Mr. Freeland lived the Rev. Daniel Weeden, and in the same neighborhood lived the Rev. Rigby Hopkins. These were members and ministers in the Reformed Methodist Church. Mr. Weeden owned, among others, a woman slave, whose name I have forgotten. This woman's back, for weeks, was kept literally raw, made so by the lash of this merciless, *religious* wretch. He used to hire hands. His maxim was, Behave well or behave ill, it is the duty of a master occasionally to whip a slave, to remind him of his master's authority. Such was his theory, and such his practice.

Mr. Hopkins was even worse than Mr. Weeden. His chief boast was his ability to manage slaves. The peculiar feature of his government was that of whipping slaves in advance of deserving it. He always managed to have one or more of his slaves to whip every Monday morning. He did this to alarm their fears, and strike terror into those who escaped. His plan was to whip for the smallest offences, to prevent the commission of large ones. Mr. Hopkins could always find some excuse for whipping a slave. It would astonish one, unaccustomed to a slaveholding life, to see with what wonderful ease a slaveholder can find things, of which to make occasion to whip a slave. A mere look, word, or motion,—a mistake, accident, or want of power,—are all matters for which a slave may be whipped at any time. Does a slave look dissatisfied? It is said, he has the devil in him, and it must be whipped out. Does he speak loudly when spoken to by his master? Then he is getting high-minded, and should be taken down a button-hole lower. Does he forget to pull off his hat at the approach of a white person? Then he is wanting in reverence, and should be whipped for it. Does he ever venture to vindicate his conduct, when censured for it? Then he is guilty of impudence,—one of the greatest crimes of which a slave can be guilty. Does he ever venture to suggest a different mode of doing things from that pointed out by his master? He is indeed presumptuous, and getting above himself; and nothing less than a flogging will do for him. Does he, while ploughing, break a plough,—or, while hoeing, break a hoe? It is owing to his carelessness, and for it a slave must always be whipped. Mr. Hopkins could always find something of this sort to justify the use of the lash, and he seldom failed to embrace such opportunities. There was not a man in the whole county, with whom the slaves who had the getting their own home, would not prefer to live, rather than with this Rev. Mr. Hopkins. And yet there was not a man any where round, who made higher professions of religion, or was more active in revivals,—more attentive to the class, love-feast, prayer and preaching meetings, or more devotional in his family,—that prayed earlier, later, louder, and longer,—than this same reverend slave-driver, Rigby Hopkins.

But to return to Mr. Freeland, and to my experience while in his employment. He, like Mr. Covey, gave us enough to eat; but, unlike Mr. Covey, he also gave us sufficient time to take our meals. He worked us hard, but always between sunrise and sunset. He required a good deal of work to be done, but gave us good tools with which to work. His farm was large, but he employed hands enough to work it, and with ease, compared with many of his neighbors. My treatment, while in his employment, was heavenly, compared with what I experienced at the hands of Mr. Edward Covey.

Mr. Freeland was himself the owner of but two slaves. Their names were Henry Harris and John Harris. The rest of his hands he hired. These consisted of myself, Sandy Jenkins,[1]Links to an external site.(opens in new window) and Handy Caldwell.

[1]Links to an external site.(opens in new window) This is the same man who gave me the roots to prevent my being whipped by Mr. Covey. He was "a clever soul." We used frequently to talk about the fight with Covey, and as often as we did so, he would claim my success as the result of the roots which he gave me. This superstition is very common among the more ignorant slaves. A slave seldom dies but that his death is attributed to trickery.

Henry and John were quite intelligent, and in a very little while after I went there, I succeeded in creating in them a strong desire to learn how to read. This desire soon sprang up in the others also. They very soon mustered up some old spelling-books, and nothing would do but that I must keep a Sabbath school. I agreed to do so, and accordingly devoted my Sundays to teaching these my loved fellow-slaves how to read. Neither of them knew his letters when I went there. Some of the slaves of the neighboring farms found what was going on, and also availed themselves of this little opportunity to learn to read. It was understood, among all who came, that there must be as little display about it as possible. It was necessary to keep our religious masters at St. Michael's unacquainted with the fact, that, instead of spending the Sabbath in wrestling, boxing, and drinking whisky, we were trying to learn how to read the will of God; for they had much rather see us engaged in those degrading sports, than to see us behaving like intellectual, moral, and accountable beings. My blood boils as I think of the bloody manner in which Messrs. Wright Fairbanks and Garrison West, both class-leaders, in connection with many others, rushed in upon us with sticks and stones, and broke up our virtuous little Sabbath school, at St. Michael's—all calling themselves Christians! humble followers of the Lord Jesus Christ! But I am again digressing.

I held my Sabbath school at the house of a free colored man, whose name I deem it imprudent to mention; for should it be known, it might embarrass him greatly, though the crime of holding the school was committed ten years ago. I had at one time over forty scholars, and those of the right sort, ardently desiring to learn. They were of all ages, though mostly men and women. I look back to those Sundays with an amount of pleasure not to be expressed. They were great days to my soul. The work of instructing my dear fellow-slaves was the sweetest engagement with which I was ever blessed. We loved each other, and to leave them at the close of the Sabbath was a severe cross indeed. When I think that these precious souls are to-day shut up in the prison-house of slavery, my feelings overcome me, and I am almost ready to ask, "Does a righteous God govern the universe? and for what does he hold the thunders in his right hand, if not to smite the oppressor, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the spoiler?" These dear souls came not to Sabbath school because it was popular to do so, nor did I teach them because it was reputable to be thus engaged. Every moment they spent in that school, they were liable to be taken up, and given thirty-nine lashes. They came because they wished to learn. Their minds had been starved by their cruel masters. They had been shut up in mental darkness. I taught them, because it was the delight of my soul to be doing something that looked like bettering the condition of my race. I kept up my school nearly the whole year I lived with Mr. Freeland; and, beside my Sabbath school, I devoted three evenings in the week, during the winter, to teaching the slaves at home. And I have the happiness to know, that several of those who came to Sabbath school learned how to read; and that one, at least, is now free through my agency.

The year passed off smoothly. It seemed only about half as long as the year which preceded it. I went through it without receiving a single blow. I will give Mr. Freeland the credit of being the best master I ever had, *till I became my own master.* For the ease with which I passed the year, I was, however, somewhat indebted to the society of my fellow-slaves. They were noble souls; they not only possessed loving hearts, but brave ones. We were linked and interlinked with each other. I loved them with a love stronger than any thing I have experienced since. It is sometimes said that we slaves do not love and confide in each other. In answer to this assertion, I can say, I never loved any or confided in any people more than my fellow-slaves, and especially those with whom I lived at Mr. Freeland's. I believe we would have died for each other. We never undertook to do any thing, of any importance, without a mutual consultation. We never moved separately. We were one; and as much so by our tempers and dispositions, as by the mutual hardships to which we were necessarily subjected by our condition as slaves.

At the close of the year 1834, Mr. Freeland again hired me of my master, for the year 1835. But, by this time, I began to want to live *upon free land* as well as *with Freeland;* and I was no longer content, therefore, to live with him or any other slaveholder. I began, with the commencement of the year, to prepare myself for a final struggle, which should decide my fate one way or the other. My tendency was upward. I was fast approaching manhood, and year after year had passed, and I was still a slave. These thoughts roused me—I must do something. I therefore resolved that 1835 should not pass without witnessing an attempt, on my part, to secure my liberty. But I was not willing to cherish this determination alone. My fellow-slaves were dear to me. I was anxious to have them participate with me in this, my life-giving determination. I therefore, though with great prudence, commenced early to ascertain their views and feelings in regard to their condition, and to imbue their minds with thoughts of freedom. I bent myself to devising ways and means for our escape, and meanwhile strove, on all fitting occasions, to impress them with the gross fraud and inhumanity of slavery. I went first to Henry, next to John, then to the others. I found, in them all, warm hearts and noble spirits. They were ready to hear, and ready to act when a feasible plan should be proposed. This was what I wanted. I talked to them of our want of manhood, if we submitted to our enslavement without at least one noble effort to be free. We met often, and consulted frequently, and told our hopes and fears, recounted the difficulties, real and imagined, which we should be called on to meet. At times we were almost disposed to give up, and try to content ourselves with our wretched lot; at others, we were firm and unbending in our determination to go. Whenever we suggested any plan, there was shrinking—the odds were fearful. Our path was beset with the greatest obstacles; and if we succeeded in gaining the end of it, our right to be free was yet questionable—we were yet liable to be returned to bondage. We could see no spot, this side of the ocean, where we could be free. We knew nothing about Canada. Our knowledge of the north did not extend farther than New York; and to go there, and be forever harassed with the frightful liability of being returned to slavery—with the certainty of being treated tenfold worse than before—the thought was truly a horrible one, and one which it was not easy to overcome. The case sometimes stood thus: At every gate through which we were to pass, we saw a watchman—at every ferry a guard—on every bridge a sentinel—and in every wood a patrol. We were hemmed in upon every side. Here were the difficulties, real or imagined—the good to be sought, and the evil to be shunned. On the one hand, there stood slavery, a stern reality, glaring frightfully upon us,—its robes already crimsoned with the blood of millions, and even now feasting itself greedily upon our own flesh. On the other hand, away back in the dim distance, under the flickering light of the north star, behind some craggy hill or snow-covered mountain, stood a doubtful freedom—half frozen—beckoning us to come and share its hospitality. This in itself was sometimes enough to stagger us; but when we permitted ourselves to survey the road, we were frequently appalled. Upon either side we saw grim death, assuming the most horrid shapes. Now it was starvation, causing us to eat our own flesh;—now we were contending with the waves, and were drowned;—now we were overtaken, and torn to pieces by the fangs of the terrible bloodhound. We were stung by scorpions, chased by wild beasts, bitten by snakes, and finally, after having nearly reached the desired spot,—after swimming rivers, encountering wild beasts, sleeping in the woods, suffering hunger and nakedness,—we were overtaken by our pursuers, and, in our resistance, we were shot dead upon the spot! I say, this picture sometimes appalled us, and made us

“rather bear those ills we had,
Than fly to others, that we knew not of.”

In coming to a fixed determination to run away, we did more than Patrick Henry, when he resolved upon liberty or death. With us it was a doubtful liberty at most, and almost certain death if we failed. For my part, I should prefer death to hopeless bondage.

Sandy, one of our number, gave up the notion, but still encouraged us. Our company then consisted of Henry Harris, John Harris, Henry Bailey, Charles Roberts, and myself. Henry Bailey was my uncle, and belonged to my master. Charles married my aunt: he belonged to my master’s father-in-law, Mr. William Hamilton.

The plan we finally concluded upon was, to get a large canoe belonging to Mr. Hamilton, and upon the Saturday night previous to Easter holidays, paddle directly up the Chesapeake Bay. On our arrival at the head of the bay, a distance of seventy or eighty miles from where we lived, it was our purpose to turn our canoe adrift, and follow the guidance of the north star till we got beyond the limits of Maryland. Our reason for taking the water route was, that we were less liable to be suspected as runaways; we hoped to be regarded as fishermen; whereas, if we should take the land route, we should be subjected to interruptions of almost every kind. Any one having a white face, and being so disposed, could stop us, and subject us to examination.

The week before our intended start, I wrote several protections, one for each of us. As well as I can remember, they were in the following words, to wit:—

"This is to certify that I, the undersigned, have given the bearer, my servant, full liberty to go to Baltimore, and spend the Easter holidays. Written with mine own hand, &c., 1835.

"WILLIAM HAMILTON,
"Near St. Michael's, in Talbot county, Maryland."

We were not going to Baltimore; but, in going up the bay, we went toward Baltimore, and these protections were only intended to protect us while on the bay.

As the time drew near for our departure, our anxiety became more and more intense. It was truly a matter of life and death with us. The strength of our determination was about to be fully tested. At this time, I was very active in explaining every difficulty, removing every doubt, dispelling every fear, and inspiring all with the firmness indispensable to success in our undertaking; assuring them that half was gained the instant we made the move; we had talked long enough; we were now ready to move; if not now, we never should be; and if we did not intend to move now, we had as well fold our arms, sit down, and acknowledge ourselves fit only to be slaves. This, none of us were prepared to acknowledge. Every man stood firm; and at our last meeting, we pledged ourselves afresh, in the most solemn manner, that, at the time appointed, we would certainly start in pursuit of freedom. This was in the middle of the week, at the end of which we were to be off. We went, as usual, to our several fields of labor, but with bosoms highly agitated with thoughts of our truly hazardous undertaking. We tried to conceal our feelings as much as possible; and I think we succeeded very well.

After a painful waiting, the Saturday morning, whose night was to witness our departure, came. I hailed it with joy, bring what of sadness it might. Friday night was a sleepless one for me. I probably felt more anxious than the rest, because I was, by common consent, at the head of the whole affair. The responsibility of success or failure lay heavily upon me. The glory of the one, and the confusion of the other, were alike mine. The first two hours of that morning were such as I never experienced before, and hope never to again. Early in the morning, we went, as usual, to the field. We were spreading manure; and all at once, while thus engaged, I was overwhelmed with an indescribable feeling, in the fulness of which I turned to Sandy, who was near by, and said, "We are betrayed!" "Well," said he, "that thought has this moment struck me." We said no more. I was never more certain of any thing.

The horn was blown as usual, and we went up from the field to the house for breakfast. I went for the form, more than for want of any thing to eat that morning. Just as I got to the house, in looking out at the lane gate, I saw four white men, with two colored men. The white men were on horseback, and the colored ones were walking behind, as if tied. I watched them a few moments till they got up to our lane gate. Here they halted, and tied the colored men to the gate-post. I was not yet certain as to what the matter was. In a few moments, in rode Mr. Hamilton, with a speed betokening great excitement. He came to the door, and inquired if Master William was in. He was told he was at the barn. Mr. Hamilton, without dismounting, rode up to the barn with extraordinary speed. In a few moments, he and Mr. Freeland returned to the house. By this time, the three constables rode up, and in great haste dismounted, tied their horses, and met Master William and Mr. Hamilton returning from the barn; and after talking awhile, they all walked up to the kitchen door. There was no one in the kitchen but myself and John. Henry and Sandy were up at the barn. Mr. Freeland put his head in at the door, and called me by name, saying, there were some gentlemen at the door who wished to see me. I stepped to the door, and inquired what they wanted. They at once seized me, and, without giving me any satisfaction, tied me—lashing my hands closely together. I insisted upon knowing what the matter was. They at length said, that they had learned I had been in a "scrape," and that I was to be examined before my master; and if their information proved false, I should not be hurt.

In a few moments, they succeeded in tying John. They then turned to Henry, who had by this time returned, and commanded him to cross his hands. "I won't!" said Henry, in a firm tone, indicating his readiness to meet the consequences of his refusal. "Won't you?" said Tom Graham, the constable. "No, I won't!" said Henry, in a still stronger tone. With this, two of the constables pulled out their shining pistols, and swore, by their Creator, that they would make him cross his hands or kill him. Each cocked his pistol, and, with fingers on the trigger, walked up to Henry, saying, at the same time, if he did not cross his hands, they would blow his damned heart out. "Shoot me, shoot me!" said Henry; "you can't kill me but once. Shoot, shoot,—and be damned! *I won't be tied!*" This he said in a tone of loud defiance; and at the same time, with a motion as quick as lightning, he with one single stroke dashed the pistols from the hand of each constable. As he did this, all hands fell upon him, and, after beating him some time, they finally overpowered him, and got him tied.

During the scuffle, I managed, I know not how, to get my pass out, and, without being discovered, put it into the fire. We were all now tied; and just as we were to leave for Easton jail, Betsy Freeland, mother of William Freeland, came to the door with her hands full of biscuits, and divided them between Henry and John. She then delivered herself of a speech, to the following effect:—addressing herself to me, she said, "*You devil! You yellow devil!* it was you that put it into the heads of Henry and John to run away. But for you, you long-legged mulatto devil! Henry nor John would never have thought of such a thing." I made no reply, and was immediately hurried off towards St. Michael's. Just a moment previous to the scuffle with Henry, Mr. Hamilton suggested the propriety of making a search for the protections which he had understood Frederick had written for himself and the rest. But, just at the moment he was about carrying his proposal into effect, his aid was needed in helping to tie Henry; and the excitement attending the scuffle caused them either to forget, or to deem it unsafe, under the circumstances, to search. So we were not yet convicted of the intention to run away.

When we got about half way to St. Michael's, while the constables having us in charge were looking ahead, Henry inquired of me what he should do with his pass. I told him to eat it with his biscuit, and own nothing; and we passed the word around, "*Own nothing;*" and "*Own nothing!*" said we all. Our confidence in each other was unshaken. We were resolved to succeed or fail together, after the calamity had befallen us as much as before. We were now prepared for any thing. We were to be dragged that morning fifteen miles behind horses, and then to be placed in the Easton jail. When we reached St. Michael's, we underwent a sort of examination. We all denied that we ever intended to run away. We did this more to bring out the evidence against us, than from any hope of getting clear of being sold; for, as I have said, we were ready for that. The fact was, we cared but little where we went, so we went together. Our greatest concern was about separation. We dreaded that more than any thing this side of death. We found the evidence against us to be the testimony of one person; our master would not tell who it was; but we came to a unanimous decision among ourselves as to who their informant was. We were sent off to the jail at Easton. When we got there, we were delivered up to the sheriff, Mr. Joseph Graham, and by him placed in jail. Henry, John, and myself, were placed in one room together—Charles, and Henry Bailey, in another. Their object in separating us was to hinder concert.

We had been in jail scarcely twenty minutes, when a swarm of slave traders, and agents for slave traders, flocked into jail to look at us, and to ascertain if we were for sale. Such a set of beings I never saw before! I felt myself surrounded by so many fiends from perdition. A band of pirates never looked more like their father, the devil. They laughed and grinned over us, saying, "Ah, my boys! we have got you, haven't we?" And after taunting us in various ways, they one by one went into an examination of us, with intent to ascertain our value. They would impudently ask us if we would not like to have them for our masters. We would make them no answer, and leave them to find out as best they could. Then they would curse and swear at us, telling us that they could take the devil out of us in a very little while, if we were only in their hands.

While in jail, we found ourselves in much more comfortable quarters than we expected when we went there. We did not get much to eat, nor that which was very good; but we had a good clean room, from the windows of which we could see what was going on in the street, which was very much better than though we had been placed in one of the dark, damp cells. Upon the whole, we got along very well, so far as the jail and its keeper were concerned. Immediately after the holidays were over, contrary to all our expectations, Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Freeland came up to Easton, and took Charles, the two Henrys, and John, out of jail, and carried them home, leaving me alone. I regarded this separation as a final one. It caused me more pain than any thing else in the whole transaction. I was ready for any thing rather than separation. I supposed that they had consulted together, and had decided that, as I was the whole cause of the intention of the others to run away, it was hard to make the innocent suffer with the guilty; and that they had, therefore, concluded to take the others home, and sell me, as a warning to the others that remained. It is due to the noble Henry to say, he seemed almost as reluctant at leaving the prison as at leaving home to come to the prison. But we knew we should, in all probability, be separated, if we were sold; and since he was in their hands, he concluded to go peaceably home.

I was now left to my fate. I was all alone, and within the walls of a stone prison. But a few days before, and I was full of hope. I expected to have been safe in a land of freedom; but now I was covered with gloom, sunk down to the utmost despair. I thought the possibility of freedom was gone. I was kept in this way about one week, at the end of which, Captain Auld, my master, to my surprise and utter astonishment, came up, and took me out, with the intention of sending me, with a gentleman of his acquaintance, into Alabama. But, from some cause or other, he did not send me to Alabama, but concluded to send me back to Baltimore, to live again with his brother Hugh, and to learn a trade.

Thus, after an absence of three years and one month, I was once more permitted to return to my old home at Baltimore. My master sent me away, because there existed against me a very great prejudice in the community, and he feared I might be killed.

In a few weeks after I went to Baltimore, Master Hugh hired me to Mr. William Gardner, an extensive ship-builder, on Fell's Point. I was put there to learn how to calk. It, however, proved a very unfavorable place for the accomplishment of this object. Mr. Gardner was engaged that spring in building two large man-of-war brigs, professedly for the Mexican government. The vessels were to be launched in the July of that year, and in failure thereof, Mr. Gardner was to lose a considerable sum; so that when I entered, all was hurry. There was no time to learn any thing. Every man had to do that which he knew how to do. In entering the shipyard, my orders from Mr. Gardner were, to do whatever the carpenters commanded me to do. This was placing me at the beck and call of about seventy-five men. I was to regard all these as masters. Their word was to be my law. My situation was a most trying one. At times I needed a dozen pair of hands. I was called a dozen ways in the space of a single minute. Three or four voices would strike my ear at the same moment. It was—"Fred., come help me to cant this timber here."—"Fred., come carry this timber yonder."—"Fred., bring that roller here."—"Fred., go get a fresh can of water."—"Fred., come help saw off the end of this timber."—"Fred., go quick, and get the crowbar."—"Fred., hold on the end of this fall."—"Fred., go to the blacksmith's shop, and get a new punch."—"Hurra, Fred! run and bring me a cold chisel."—"I say, Fred., bear a hand, and get up a fire as quick as lightning under that steam-box."—"Halloo, nigger! come, turn this grindstone."—"Come, come! move, move! and *bowse* this timber forward."—"I say, darky, blast your eyes, why don't you heat up some pitch?"—"Halloo! halloo! halloo!" (Three voices at the same time.) "Come here!—Go there!—Hold on where you are! Damn you, if you move, I'll knock your brains out!"

This was my school for eight months; and I might have remained there longer, but for a most horrid fight I had with four of the white apprentices, in which my left eye was nearly knocked out, and I was horribly mangled in other respects. The facts in the case were these: Until a very little while after I went there, white and black ship-carpenters worked side by side, and no one seemed to see any impropriety in it. All hands seemed to be very well satisfied. Many of the black carpenters were freemen. Things seemed to be going on very well. All at once, the white carpenters knocked off, and said they would not work with free colored workmen. Their reason for this, as alleged, was, that if free colored carpenters were encouraged, they would soon take the trade into their own hands, and poor white men would be thrown out of employment. They therefore felt called upon at once to put a stop to it. And, taking advantage of Mr. Gardner's necessities, they broke off, swearing they would work no longer, unless he would discharge his black carpenters. Now, though this did not extend to me in form, it did reach me in fact. My fellow-apprentices very soon began to feel it degrading to them to work with me. They began to put on airs, and talk about the "niggers" taking the country, saying we all ought to be killed; and, being encouraged by the journeymen, they commenced making my condition as hard as they could, by hectoring me around, and sometimes striking me. I, of course, kept the vow I made after the fight with Mr. Covey, and struck back again, regardless of consequences; and while I kept them from combining, I succeeded very well; for I could whip the whole of them, taking them separately. They, however, at length combined, and came upon me, armed with sticks, stones, and heavy handspikes. One came in front with a half brick. There was one at each side of me, and one behind me. While I was attending to those in front, and on either side, the one behind ran up with the handspike, and struck me a heavy blow upon the head. It stunned me. I fell, and with this they all ran upon me, and fell to beating me with their fists. I let them lay on for a while, gathering strength. In an instant, I gave a sudden surge, and rose to my hands and knees. Just as I did that, one of their number gave me, with his heavy boot, a powerful kick in the left eye. My eyeball seemed to have burst. When they saw my eye closed, and badly swollen, they left me. With this I seized the handspike, and for a time pursued them. But here the carpenters interfered, and I thought I might as well give it up. It was impossible to stand my hand against so many. All this took place in sight of not less than fifty white ship-carpenters, and not one interposed a friendly word; but some cried, "Kill the damned nigger! Kill him! kill him! He struck a white person." I found my only chance for life was in flight. I succeeded in getting away without an additional blow, and barely so; for to strike a white man is death by Lynch law,—and that was the law in Mr. Gardner's ship-yard; nor is there much of any other out of Mr. Gardner's ship-yard.

I went directly home, and told the story of my wrongs to Master Hugh; and I am happy to say of him, irreligious as he was, his conduct was heavenly, compared with that of his brother Thomas under similar circumstances. He listened attentively to my narration of the circumstances leading to the savage outrage, and gave many proofs of his strong indignation at it. The heart of my once overkind mistress was again melted into pity. My puffed-out eye and blood-covered face moved her to tears. She took a chair by me, washed the blood from my face, and, with a mother's tenderness, bound up my head, covering the wounded eye with a lean piece of fresh beef. It was almost compensation for my suffering to witness, once more, a manifestation of kindness from this, my once affectionate old mistress. Master Hugh was very much enraged. He gave expression to his feelings by pouring out curses upon the heads of those who did the deed. As soon as I got a little the better of my bruises, he took me with him to Esquire Watson's, on Bond Street, to see what could be done about the matter. Mr. Watson inquired who saw the assault committed. Master Hugh told

him it was done in Mr. Gardner's ship-yard at midday, where there were a large company of men at work. "As to that," he said, "the deed was done, and there was no question as to who did it." His answer was, he could do nothing in the case, unless some white man would come forward and testify. He could issue no warrant on my word. If I had been killed in the presence of a thousand colored people, their testimony combined would have been insufficient to have arrested one of the murderers. Master Hugh, for once, was compelled to say this state of things was too bad. Of course, it was impossible to get any white man to volunteer his testimony in my behalf, and against the white young men. Even those who may have sympathized with me were not prepared to do this. It required a degree of courage unknown to them to do so; for just at that time, the slightest manifestation of humanity toward a colored person was denounced as abolitionism, and that name subjected its bearer to frightful liabilities. The watchwords of the bloody-minded in that region, and in those days, were, "Damn the abolitionists!" and "Damn the niggers!" There was nothing done, and probably nothing would have been done if I had been killed. Such was, and such remains, the state of things in the Christian city of Baltimore.

Master Hugh, finding he could get no redress, refused to let me go back again to Mr. Gardner. He kept me himself, and his wife dressed my wound till I was again restored to health. He then took me into the ship-yard of which he was foreman, in the employment of Mr. Walter Price. There I was immediately set to calking, and very soon learned the art of using my mallet and irons. In the course of one year from the time I left Mr. Gardner's, I was able to command the highest wages given to the most experienced calkers. I was now of some importance to my master. I was bringing him from six to seven dollars per week. I sometimes brought him nine dollars per week: my wages were a dollar and a half a day. After learning how to calk, I sought my own employment, made my own contracts, and collected the money which I earned. My pathway became much more smooth than before; my condition was now much more comfortable. When I could get no calking to do, I did nothing. During these leisure times, those old notions about freedom would steal over me again. When in Mr. Gardner's employment, I was kept in such a perpetual whirl of excitement, I could think of nothing, scarcely, but my life; and in thinking of my life, I almost forgot my liberty. I have observed this in my experience of slavery,—that whenever my condition was improved, instead of its increasing my contentment, it only increased my desire to be free, and set me to thinking of plans to gain my freedom. I have found that, to make a contented slave, it is necessary to make a thoughtless one. It is necessary to darken his moral and mental vision, and, as far as possible, to annihilate the power of reason. He must be able to detect no inconsistencies in slavery; he must be made to feel that slavery is right; and he can be brought to that only when he ceases to be a man.

I was now getting, as I have said, one dollar and fifty cents per day. I contracted for it; I earned it; it was paid to me; it was rightfully my own; yet, upon each returning Saturday night, I was compelled to deliver every cent of that money to Master Hugh. And why? Not because he earned it,—not because he had any hand in earning it,—not because I owed it to him,—nor because he possessed the slightest shadow of a right to it; but solely because he had the power to compel me to give it up. The right of the grim-visaged pirate upon the high seas is exactly the same.

CHAPTER XI

I now come to that part of my life during which I planned, and finally succeeded in making, my escape from slavery. But before narrating any of the peculiar circumstances, I deem it proper to make known my intention not to state all the facts connected with the transaction. My reasons for pursuing this course may be understood from the following: First, were I to give a minute statement of all the facts, it is not only possible, but quite probable, that others would thereby be involved in the most embarrassing difficulties. Secondly, such a statement would most undoubtedly induce greater vigilance on the part of slaveholders than has existed heretofore among them; which would, of course, be the means of guarding a door whereby some dear brother bondman might escape his galling chains. I deeply regret the necessity that impels me to suppress any thing of importance connected with my experience in slavery. It would afford me great pleasure indeed, as well as materially add to the interest of my narrative, were I at liberty to gratify a curiosity, which I know exists in the minds of many, by an accurate statement of all the facts pertaining to my most fortunate escape. But I must deprive myself of this pleasure, and the curious of the gratification which such a statement would afford. I would allow myself to suffer under the greatest imputations which evil-minded men might suggest, rather than exculpate myself, and thereby run the hazard of closing the slightest avenue by which a brother slave might clear himself of the chains and fetters of slavery.

I have never approved of the very public manner in which some of our western friends have conducted what they call the *underground railroad*, but which I think, by their open declarations, has been made most emphatically the *upperground railroad*. I honor those good men and women for their noble daring, and applaud them for willingly subjecting themselves to bloody

persecution, by openly avowing their participation in the escape of slaves. I, however, can see very little good resulting from such a course, either to themselves or the slaves escaping; while, upon the other hand, I see and feel assured that those open declarations are a positive evil to the slaves remaining, who are seeking to escape. They do nothing towards enlightening the slave, whilst they do much towards enlightening the master. They stimulate him to greater watchfulness, and enhance his power to capture his slave. We owe something to the slave south of the line as well as to those north of it; and in aiding the latter on their way to freedom, we should be careful to do nothing which would be likely to hinder the former from escaping from slavery. I would keep the merciless slaveholder profoundly ignorant of the means of flight adopted by the slave. I would leave him to imagine himself surrounded by myriads of invisible tormentors, ever ready to snatch from his infernal grasp his trembling prey. Let him be left to feel his way in the dark; let darkness commensurate with his crime hover over him; and let him feel that at every step he takes, in pursuit of the flying bondman, he is running the frightful risk of having his hot brains dashed out by an invisible agency. Let us render the tyrant no aid; let us not hold the light by which he can trace the footprints of our flying brother. But enough of this. I will now proceed to the statement of those facts, connected with my escape, for which I am alone responsible, and for which no one can be made to suffer but myself.

In the early part of the year 1838, I became quite restless. I could see no reason why I should, at the end of each week, pour the reward of my toil into the purse of my master. When I carried to him my weekly wages, he would, after counting the money, look me in the face with a robber-like fierceness, and ask, “Is this all?” He was satisfied with nothing less than the last cent. He would, however, when I made him six dollars, sometimes give me six cents, to encourage me. It had the opposite effect. I regarded it as a sort of admission of my right to the whole. The fact that he gave me any part of my wages was proof, to my mind, that he believed me entitled to the whole of them. I always felt worse for having received any thing; for I feared that the giving me a few cents would ease his conscience, and make him feel himself to be a pretty honorable sort of robber. My discontent grew upon me. I was ever on the look-out for means of escape; and, finding no direct means, I determined to try to hire my time, with a view of getting money with which to make my escape. In the spring of 1838, when Master Thomas came to Baltimore to purchase his spring goods, I got an opportunity, and applied to him to allow me to hire my time. He unhesitatingly refused my request, and told me this was another stratagem by which to escape. He told me I could go nowhere but that he could get me; and that, in the event of my running away, he should spare no pains in his efforts to catch me. He exhorted me to content myself, and be obedient. He told me, if I would be happy, I must lay out no plans for the future. He said, if I behaved myself properly, he would take care of me. Indeed, he advised me to complete thoughtlessness of the future, and taught me to depend solely upon him for happiness. He seemed to see fully the pressing necessity of setting aside my intellectual nature, in order to contentment in slavery. But in spite of him, and even in spite of myself, I continued to think, and to think about the injustice of my enslavement, and the means of escape.

About two months after this, I applied to Master Hugh for the privilege of hiring my time. He was not acquainted with the fact that I had applied to Master Thomas, and had been refused. He too, at first, seemed disposed to refuse; but, after some reflection, he granted me the privilege, and proposed the following terms: I was to be allowed all my time, make all contracts with those for whom I worked, and find my own employment; and, in return for this liberty, I was to pay him three dollars at the end of each week; find myself in calking tools, and in board and clothing. My board was two dollars and a half per week. This, with the wear and tear of clothing and calking tools, made my regular expenses about six dollars per week. This amount I was compelled to make up, or relinquish the privilege of hiring my time. Rain or shine, work or no work, at the end of each week the money must be forthcoming, or I must give up my privilege. This arrangement, it will be perceived, was decidedly in my master’s favor. It relieved him of all need of looking after me. His money was sure. He received all the benefits of slaveholding without its evils; while I endured all the evils of a slave, and suffered all the care and anxiety of a freeman. I found it a hard bargain. But, hard as it was, I thought it better than the old mode of getting along. It was a step towards freedom to be allowed to bear the responsibilities of a freeman, and I was determined to hold on upon it. I bent myself to the work of making money. I was ready to work at night as well as day, and by the most untiring perseverance and industry, I made enough to meet my expenses, and lay up a little money every week. I went on thus from May till August. Master Hugh then refused to allow me to hire my time longer. The ground for his refusal was a failure on my part, one Saturday night, to pay him for my week’s time. This failure was occasioned by my attending a camp meeting about ten miles from Baltimore. During the week, I had entered into an engagement with a number of young friends to start from Baltimore to the camp ground early Saturday evening; and being detained by my employer, I was unable to get down to Master Hugh’s without disappointing the company. I knew that Master Hugh was in no special need of the money that night. I therefore decided to go to camp meeting, and upon my return pay him the three dollars. I staid at the camp meeting one day longer than I intended when I left. But as soon as I returned, I called upon him to pay him what he considered his due. I found him very

angry; he could scarce restrain his wrath. He said he had a great mind to give me a severe whipping. He wished to know how I dared go out of the city without asking his permission. I told him I hired my time and while I paid him the price which he asked for it, I did not know that I was bound to ask him when and where I should go. This reply troubled him; and, after reflecting a few moments, he turned to me, and said I should hire my time no longer; that the next thing he should know of, I would be running away. Upon the same plea, he told me to bring my tools and clothing home forthwith. I did so; but instead of seeking work, as I had been accustomed to do previously to hiring my time, I spent the whole week without the performance of a single stroke of work. I did this in retaliation. Saturday night, he called upon me as usual for my week's wages. I told him I had no wages; I had done no work that week. Here we were upon the point of coming to blows. He raved, and swore his determination to get hold of me. I did not allow myself a single word; but was resolved, if he laid the weight of his hand upon me, it should be blow for blow. He did not strike me, but told me that he would find me in constant employment in future. I thought the matter over during the next day, Sunday, and finally resolved upon the third day of September, as the day upon which I would make a second attempt to secure my freedom. I now had three weeks during which to prepare for my journey. Early on Monday morning, before Master Hugh had time to make any engagement for me, I went out and got employment of Mr. Butler, at his ship-yard near the drawbridge, upon what is called the City Block, thus making it unnecessary for him to seek employment for me. At the end of the week, I brought him between eight and nine dollars. He seemed very well pleased, and asked why I did not do the same the week before. He little knew what my plans were. My object in working steadily was to remove any suspicion he might entertain of my intent to run away; and in this I succeeded admirably. I suppose he thought I was never better satisfied with my condition than at the very time during which I was planning my escape. The second week passed, and again I carried him my full wages; and so well pleased was he, that he gave me twenty-five cents, (quite a large sum for a slaveholder to give a slave,) and bade me to make a good use of it. I told him I would.

Things went on without very smoothly indeed, but within there was trouble. It is impossible for me to describe my feelings as the time of my contemplated start drew near. I had a number of warmhearted friends in Baltimore,—friends that I loved almost as I did my life,—and the thought of being separated from them forever was painful beyond expression. It is my opinion that thousands would escape from slavery, who now remain, but for the strong cords of affection that bind them to their friends. The thought of leaving my friends was decidedly the most painful thought with which I had to contend. The love of them was my tender point, and shook my decision more than all things else. Besides the pain of separation, the dread and apprehension of a failure exceeded what I had experienced at my first attempt. The appalling defeat I then sustained returned to torment me. I felt assured that, if I failed in this attempt, my case would be a hopeless one—it would seal my fate as a slave forever. I could not hope to get off with any thing less than the severest punishment, and being placed beyond the means of escape. It required no very vivid imagination to depict the most frightful scenes through which I should have to pass, in case I failed. The wretchedness of slavery, and the blessedness of freedom, were perpetually before me. It was life and death with me. But I remained firm, and, according to my resolution, on the third day of September, 1838, I left my chains, and succeeded in reaching New York without the slightest interruption of any kind. How I did so,—what means I adopted,—what direction I travelled, and by what mode of conveyance,—I must leave unexplained, for the reasons before mentioned.

I have been frequently asked how I felt when I found myself in a free State. I have never been able to answer the question with any satisfaction to myself. It was a moment of the highest excitement I ever experienced. I suppose I felt as one may imagine the unarmed mariner to feel when he is rescued by a friendly man-of-war from the pursuit of a pirate. In writing to a dear friend, immediately after my arrival at New York, I said I felt like one who had escaped a den of hungry lions. This state of mind, however, very soon subsided; and I was again seized with a feeling of great insecurity and loneliness. I was yet liable to be taken back, and subjected to all the tortures of slavery. This in itself was enough to damp the ardor of my enthusiasm. But the loneliness overcame me. There I was in the midst of thousands, and yet a perfect stranger; without home and without friends, in the midst of thousands of my own brethren—children of a common Father, and yet I dared not to unfold to any one of them my sad condition. I was afraid to speak to any one for fear of speaking to the wrong one, and thereby falling into the hands of money-loving kidnappers, whose business it was to lie in wait for the panting fugitive, as the ferocious beasts of the forest lie in wait for their prey. The motto which I adopted when I started from slavery was this—"Trust no man!" I saw in every white man an enemy, and in almost every colored man cause for distrust. It was a most painful situation; and, to understand it, one must needs experience it, or imagine himself in similar circumstances. Let him be a fugitive slave in a strange land—a land given up to be the hunting-ground for slaveholders—whose inhabitants are legalized kidnappers—where he is every moment subjected to the terrible liability of being seized upon by his fellowmen, as the hideous crocodile seizes upon his prey!—I say, let him place himself in my situation—without home or

friends—without money or credit—wanting shelter, and no one to give it—wanting bread, and no money to buy it,—and at the same time let him feel that he is pursued by merciless men-hunters, and in total darkness as to what to do, where to go, or where to stay,—perfectly helpless both as to the means of defence and means of escape,—in the midst of plenty, yet suffering the terrible gnawings of hunger,—in the midst of houses, yet having no home,—among fellow-men, yet feeling as if in the midst of wild beasts, whose greediness to swallow up the trembling and half-famished fugitive is only equalled by that with which the monsters of the deep swallow up the helpless fish upon which they subsist,—I say, let him be placed in this most trying situation,—the situation in which I was placed,—then, and not till then, will he fully appreciate the hardships of, and know how to sympathize with, the toil-worn and whip-scarred fugitive slave.

Thank Heaven, I remained but a short time in this distressed situation. I was relieved from it by the humane hand of *Mr. David Ruggles*, whose vigilance, kindness, and perseverance, I shall never forget. I am glad of an opportunity to express, as far as words can, the love and gratitude I bear him. Mr. Ruggles is now afflicted with blindness, and is himself in need of the same kind offices which he was once so forward in the performance of toward others. I had been in New York but a few days, when Mr. Ruggles sought me out, and very kindly took me to his boarding-house at the corner of Church and Lespenard Streets. Mr. Ruggles was then very deeply engaged in the memorable *Darg* case, as well as attending to a number of other fugitive slaves, devising ways and means for their successful escape; and, though watched and hemmed in on almost every side, he seemed to be more than a match for his enemies.

Very soon after I went to Mr. Ruggles, he wished to know of me where I wanted to go; as he deemed it unsafe for me to remain in New York. I told him I was a calker, and should like to go where I could get work. I thought of going to Canada; but he decided against it, and in favor of my going to New Bedford, thinking I should be able to get work there at my trade. At this time, Anna, [2]Links to an external site.(opens in new window) my intended wife, came on; for I wrote to her immediately after my arrival at New York, (notwithstanding my homeless, houseless, and helpless condition,) informing her of my successful flight, and wishing her to come on forthwith. In a few days after her arrival, Mr. Ruggles called in the Rev. J. W. C. Pennington, who, in the presence of Mr. Ruggles, Mrs. Michaels, and two or three others, performed the marriage ceremony, and gave us a certificate, of which the following is an exact copy:—

"This may certify, that I joined together in holy matrimony Frederick Johnson[3]Links to an external site.(opens in new window) and Anna Murray, as man and wife, in the presence of Mr. David Ruggles and Mrs. Michaels.

"JAMES W. C. PENNINGTON
"*New York, Sept.* 15, 1838"

[2]Links to an external site.(opens in new window) She was free.

[3]Links to an external site.(opens in new window) I had changed my name from Frederick *Bailey* to that of *Johnson*.

Upon receiving this certificate, and a five-dollar bill from Mr. Ruggles, I shouldered one part of our baggage, and Anna took up the other, and we set out forthwith to take passage on board of the steamboat John W. Richmond for Newport, on our way to New Bedford. Mr. Ruggles gave me a letter to a Mr. Shaw in Newport, and told me, in case my money did not serve me to New Bedford, to stop in Newport and obtain further assistance; but upon our arrival at Newport, we were so anxious to get to a place of safety, that, notwithstanding we lacked the necessary money to pay our fare, we decided to take seats in the stage, and promise to pay when we got to New Bedford. We were encouraged to do this by two excellent gentlemen, residents of New Bedford, whose names I afterward ascertained to be Joseph Ricketson and William C. Taber. They seemed at once to understand our circumstances, and gave us such assurance of their friendliness as put us fully at ease in their presence.

It was good indeed to meet with such friends, at such a time. Upon reaching New Bedford, we were directed to the house of Mr. Nathan Johnson, by whom we were kindly received, and hospitably provided for. Both Mr. and Mrs. Johnson took a deep and lively interest in our welfare. They proved themselves quite worthy of the name of abolitionists. When the stage-driver found us unable to pay our fare, he held on upon our baggage as security for the debt. I had but to mention the fact to Mr. Johnson, and he forthwith advanced the money.

We now began to feel a degree of safety, and to prepare ourselves for the duties and responsibilities of a life of freedom. On the morning after our arrival at New Bedford, while at the breakfast-table, the question arose as to what name I should be called by. The name given me by my mother was, "Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey." I, however, had dispensed with the two middle

names long before I left Maryland so that I was generally known by the name of “Frederick Bailey.” I started from Baltimore bearing the name of “Stanley.” When I got to New York, I again changed my name to “Frederick Johnson,” and thought that would be the last change. But when I got to New Bedford, I found it necessary again to change my name. The reason of this necessity was, that there were so many Johnsons in New Bedford, it was already quite difficult to distinguish between them. I gave Mr. Johnson the privilege of choosing me a name, but told him he must not take from me the name of “Frederick.” I must hold on to that, to preserve a sense of my identity. Mr. Johnson had just been reading the “Lady of the Lake,” and at once suggested that my name be “Douglass.” From that time until now I have been called “Frederick Douglass;” and as I am more widely known by that name than by either of the others, I shall continue to use it as my own.

I was quite disappointed at the general appearance of things in New Bedford. The impression which I had received respecting the character and condition of the people of the north, I found to be singularly erroneous. I had very strangely supposed, while in slavery, that few of the comforts, and scarcely any of the luxuries, of life were enjoyed at the north, compared with what were enjoyed by the slaveholders of the south. I probably came to this conclusion from the fact that northern people owned no slaves. I supposed that they were about upon a level with the non-slaveholding population of the south. I knew *they* were exceedingly poor, and I had been accustomed to regard their poverty as the necessary consequence of their being non-slaveholders. I had somehow imbibed the opinion that, in the absence of slaves, there could be no wealth, and very little refinement. And upon coming to the north, I expected to meet with a rough, hard-handed, and uncultivated population, living in the most Spartan-like simplicity, knowing nothing of the ease, luxury, pomp, and grandeur of southern slaveholders. Such being my conjectures, any one acquainted with the appearance of New Bedford may very readily infer how palpably I must have seen my mistake.

In the afternoon of the day when I reached New Bedford, I visited the wharves, to take a view of the shipping. Here I found myself surrounded with the strongest proofs of wealth. Lying at the wharves, and riding in the stream, I saw many ships of the finest model, in the best order, and of the largest size. Upon the right and left, I was walled in by granite warehouses of the widest dimensions, stowed to their utmost capacity with the necessaries and comforts of life. Added to this, almost every body seemed to be at work, but noiselessly so, compared with what I had been accustomed to in Baltimore. There were no loud songs heard from those engaged in loading and unloading ships. I heard no deep oaths or horrid curses on the laborer. I saw no whipping of men; but all seemed to go smoothly on. Every man appeared to understand his work, and went at it with a sober, yet cheerful earnestness, which betokened the deep interest which he felt in what he was doing, as well as a sense of his own dignity as a man. To me this looked exceedingly strange. From the wharves I strolled around and over the town, gazing with wonder and admiration at the splendid churches, beautiful dwellings, and finely-cultivated gardens; evincing an amount of wealth, comfort, taste, and refinement, such as I had never seen in any part of slaveholding Maryland.

Every thing looked clean, new, and beautiful. I saw few or no dilapidated houses, with poverty-stricken inmates; no half-naked children and barefooted women, such as I had been accustomed to see in Hillsborough, Easton, St. Michael’s, and Baltimore. The people looked more able, stronger, healthier, and happier, than those of Maryland. I was for once made glad by a view of extreme wealth, without being saddened by seeing extreme poverty. But the most astonishing as well as the most interesting thing to me was the condition of the colored people, a great many of whom, like myself, had escaped thither as a refuge from the hunters of men. I found many, who had not been seven years out of their chains, living in finer houses, and evidently enjoying more of the comforts of life, than the average of slaveholders in Maryland. I will venture to assert, that my friend Mr. Nathan Johnson (of whom I can say with a grateful heart, “I was hungry, and he gave me meat; I was thirsty, and he gave me drink; I was a stranger, and he took me in”) lived in a neater house; dined at a better table; took, paid for, and read, more newspapers; better understood the moral, religious, and political character of the nation,—than nine tenths of the slaveholders in Talbot county Maryland. Yet Mr. Johnson was a working man. His hands were hardened by toil, and not his alone, but those also of Mrs. Johnson. I found the colored people much more spirited than I had supposed they would be. I found among them a determination to protect each other from the blood-thirsty kidnapper, at all hazards. Soon after my arrival, I was told of a circumstance which illustrated their spirit. A colored man and a fugitive slave were on unfriendly terms. The former was heard to threaten the latter with informing his master of his whereabouts. Straightway a meeting was called among the colored people, under the stereotyped notice, “Business of importance!” The betrayer was invited to attend. The people came at the appointed hour, and organized the meeting by appointing a very religious old gentleman as president, who, I believe, made a prayer, after which he addressed the meeting as follows: “*Friends, we have got him here, and I would recommend that you young men just take him outside the door, and kill him!*” With this, a number of them bolted at him; but they were intercepted by some more timid than themselves, and the betrayer escaped their vengeance, and has not been

seen in New Bedford since. I believe there have been no more such threats, and should there be hereafter, I doubt not that death would be the consequence.

I found employment, the third day after my arrival, in stowing a sloop with a load of oil. It was new, dirty, and hard work for me; but I went at it with a glad heart and a willing hand. I was now my own master. It was a happy moment, the rapture of which can be understood only by those who have been slaves. It was the first work, the reward of which was to be entirely my own. There was no Master Hugh standing ready, the moment I earned the money, to rob me of it. I worked that day with a pleasure I had never before experienced. I was at work for myself and newly-married wife. It was to me the starting-point of a new existence. When I got through with that job, I went in pursuit of a job of calking; but such was the strength of prejudice against color, among the white calkers, that they refused to work with me, and of course I could get no employment.[4]Links to an external site.(opens in new window) Finding my trade of no immediate benefit, I threw off my calking habiliments, and prepared myself to do any kind of work I could get to do. Mr. Johnson kindly let me have his wood-horse and saw, and I very soon found myself a plenty of work. There was no work too hard—none too dirty. I was ready to saw wood, shovel coal, carry wood, sweep the chimney, or roll oil casks,—all of which I did for nearly three years in New Bedford, before I became known to the anti-slavery world.

[4]Links to an external site.(opens in new window) I am told that colored persons can now get employment at calking in New Bedford—a result of anti-slavery effort.

In about four months after I went to New Bedford, there came a young man to me, and inquired if I did not wish to take the "Liberator." I told him I did; but, just having made my escape from slavery, I remarked that I was unable to pay for it then. I, however, finally became a subscriber to it. The paper came, and I read it from week to week with such feelings as it would be quite idle for me to attempt to describe. The paper became my meat and my drink. My soul was set all on fire. Its sympathy for my brethren in bonds—its scathing denunciations of slaveholders—its faithful exposures of slavery—and its powerful attacks upon the upholders of the institution—sent a thrill of joy through my soul, such as I had never felt before!

I had not long been a reader of the "Liberator," before I got a pretty correct idea of the principles, measures and spirit of the anti-slavery reform. I took right hold of the cause. I could do but little; but what I could, I did with a joyful heart, and never felt happier than when in an anti-slavery meeting. I seldom had much to say at the meetings, because what I wanted to say was said so much better by others. But, while attending an anti-slavery convention at Nantucket, on the 11th of August, 1841, I felt strongly moved to speak, and was at the same time much urged to do so by Mr. William C. Coffin, a gentleman who had heard me speak in the colored people's meeting at New Bedford. It was a severe cross, and I took it up reluctantly. The truth was, I felt myself a slave, and the idea of speaking to white people weighed me down. I spoke but a few moments, when I felt a degree of freedom, and said what I desired with considerable ease. From that time until now, I have been engaged in pleading the cause of my brethren—with what success, and with what devotion, I leave those acquainted with my labors to decide.

APPENDIX

I find, since reading over the foregoing Narrative, that I have, in several instances, spoken in such a tone and manner, respecting religion, as may possibly lead those unacquainted with my religious views to suppose me an opponent of all religion. To remove the liability of such misapprehension, I deem it proper to append the following brief explanation. What I have said respecting and against religion, I mean strictly to apply to the *slaveholding religion* of this land, and with no possible reference to Christianity proper; for, between the Christianity of this land, and the Christianity of Christ, I recognize the widest possible difference—so wide, that to receive the one as good, pure, and holy, is of necessity to reject the other as bad, corrupt, and wicked. To be the friend of the one, is of necessity to be the enemy of the other. I love the pure, peaceable, and impartial Christianity of Christ: I therefore hate the corrupt, slaveholding, women-whipping, cradle-plundering, partial and hypocritical Christianity of this land. Indeed, I can see no reason, but the most deceitful one, for calling the religion of this land Christianity. I look upon it as the climax of all misnomers, the boldest of all frauds, and the grossest of all libels. Never was there a clearer case of "stealing the livery of the court of heaven to serve the devil in." I am filled with unutterable loathing when I contemplate the religious pomp and show, together with the horrible inconsistencies, which every where surround me. We have men-stealers for ministers, women-whippers for missionaries, and cradle-plunderers for church members. The man who wields the blood-clotted cowskin during the week fills the pulpit on Sunday, and claims to be a minister of the meek and lowly Jesus. The man who robs me of my earnings at the end of each week meets me as a class-leader on Sunday morning, to show me the way of life, and the path of salvation. He who sells my sister, for purposes of prostitution, stands forth as the pious advocate of purity. He who proclaims it a religious duty to read the Bible

denies me the right of learning to read the name of the God who made me. He who is the religious advocate of marriage robs whole millions of its sacred influence, and leaves them to the ravages of wholesale pollution. The warm defender of the sacredness of the family relation is the same that scatters whole families,—sundering husbands and wives, parents and children, sisters and brothers, —leaving the hut vacant, and the hearth desolate. We see the thief preaching against theft, and the adulterer against adultery. We have men sold to build churches, women sold to support the gospel, and babes sold to purchase Bibles for the *Poor Heathen! All For The Glory Of God And The Good Of Souls!* The slave auctioneer's bell and the church-going bell chime in with each other, and the bitter cries of the heart-broken slave are drowned in the religious shouts of his pious master. Revivals of religion and revivals in the slave-trade go hand in hand together. The slave prison and the church stand near each other. The clanking of fetters and the rattling of chains in the prison, and the pious psalm and solemn prayer in the church, may be heard at the same time. The dealers in the bodies and souls of men erect their stand in the presence of the pulpit, and they mutually help each other. The dealer gives his blood-stained gold to support the pulpit, and the pulpit, in return, covers his infernal business with the garb of Christianity. Here we have religion and robbery the allies of each other—devils dressed in angels' robes, and hell presenting the semblance of paradise.

"Just God! and these are they,v Who minister at thine altar, God of right!
Men who their hands, with prayer and blessing, lay
On Israel's ark of light.

"What! preach, and kidnap men?
Give thanks, and rob thy own afflicted poor?
Talk of thy glorious liberty, and then
Bolt hard the captive's door?

"What! servants of thy own
Merciful Son, who came to seek and save
The homeless and the outcast, fettering down
The tasked and plundered slave!

"Pilate and Herod friends!
Chief priests and rulers, as of old, combine!
Just God and holy! is that church which lends
Strength to the spoiler thine?"

The Christianity of America is a Christianity, of whose votaries it may be as truly said, as it was of the ancient scribes and Pharisees, "They bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. All their works they do for to be seen of men.—They love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, ... and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.—But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.—Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides! which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter; but within, they are full of extortion and excess.—Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

Dark and terrible as is this picture, I hold it to be strictly true of the overwhelming mass of professed Christians in America. They strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Could any thing be more true of our churches? They would be shocked at the proposition of fellowshipping a *sheep*-stealer; and at the same time they hug to their communion a *man*-stealer, and brand me with being an infidel, if I find fault with them for it. They attend with Pharisaical strictness to the outward forms of religion, and at the same time neglect the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith. They are always ready to sacrifice, but seldom to show mercy. They are they who are represented as professing to love God whom they have not seen, whilst they hate their brother whom they

have seen. They love the heathen on the other side of the globe. They can pray for him, pay money to have the Bible put into his hand, and missionaries to instruct him; while they despise and totally neglect the heathen at their own doors.

Such is, very briefly, my view of the religion of this land; and to avoid any misunderstanding, growing out of the use of general terms, I mean by the religion of this land, that which is revealed in the words, deeds, and actions, of those bodies, north and south, calling themselves Christian churches, and yet in union with slaveholders. It is against religion, as presented by these bodies, that I have felt it my duty to testify.

I conclude these remarks by copying the following portrait of the religion of the south, (which is, by communion and fellowship, the religion of the north,) which I soberly affirm is "true to the life," and without caricature or the slightest exaggeration. It is said to have been drawn, several years before the present anti-slavery agitation began, by a northern Methodist preacher, who, while residing at the south, had an opportunity to see slaveholding morals, manners, and piety, with his own eyes. "Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord. Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

A PARODY

"Come, saints and sinners, hear me tell
How pious priests whip Jack and Nell,
And women buy and children sell,
And preach all sinners down to hell,
And sing of heavenly union.

"They'll bleat and baa, dona like goats,
Gorge down black sheep, and strain at motes,
Array their backs in fine black coats,
Then seize their negroes by their throats,
And choke, for heavenly union.

"They'll church you if you sip a dram,
And damn you if you steal a lamb;
Yet rob old Tony, Doll, and Sam,
Of human rights, and bread and ham;
Kidnapper's heavenly union.

"They'll loudly talk of Christ's reward,
And bind his image with a cord,
And scold, and swing the lash abhorred,
And sell their brother in the Lord
To handcuffed heavenly union.

"They'll read and sing a sacred song,
And make a prayer both loud and long,
And teach the right and do the wrong,
Hailing the brother, sister throng,
With words of heavenly union.

"We wonder how such saints can sing,
Or praise the Lord upon the wing,
Who roar, and scold, and whip, and sting,
And to their slaves and mammon cling,
In guilty conscience union.

"They'll raise tobacco, corn, and rye,
And drive, and thieve, and cheat, and lie,
And lay up treasures in the sky,
By making switch and cowskin fly,
In hope of heavenly union.

"They'll crack old Tony on the skull,
And preach and roar like Bashan bull,
Or braying ass, of mischief full,
Then seize old Jacob by the wool,
And pull for heavenly union.

"A roaring, ranting, sleek man-thief,
Who lived on mutton, veal, and beef,
Yet never would afford relief
To needy, sable sons of grief,
Was big with heavenly union.

"'Love not the world,' the preacher said,
And winked his eye, and shook his head;
He seized on Tom, and Dick, and Ned,
Cut short their meat, and clothes, and bread,
Yet still loved heavenly union.

"Another preacher whining spoke
Of One whose heart for sinners broke:
He tied old Nanny to an oak,
And drew the blood at every stroke,
And prayed for heavenly union.

"Two others oped their iron jaws,
And waved their children-stealing paws;
There sat their children in gewgaws;
By stinting negroes' backs and maws,
They kept up heavenly union.

"All good from Jack another takes,
And entertains their flirts and rakes,
Who dress as sleek as glossy snakes,
And cram their mouths with sweetened cakes;
And this goes down for union."

Sincerely and earnestly hoping that this little book may do something toward throwing light on the American slave system, and hastening the glad day of deliverance to the millions of my brethren in bonds—faithfully relying upon the power of truth, love, and justice, for success in my humble efforts—and solemnly pledging my self anew to the sacred cause,—I subscribe myself,

FREDERICK DOUGLASS.

LYNN, *Mass.*, *April* 28, 1845.

THE END

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS, AN AMERICAN SLAVE ***

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

11: Death of Ivan Ilych (first half)

11.1: Editor's Introduction

11.2: Death of Ivan Ilych (first half)

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11.1: Editor's Introduction

Leo Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilych* is a profound exploration of existential themes, including the nature of life, death, and the search for meaning. The novella, written in 1886, tells the story of Ivan Ilych, a high-ranking court official in 19th-century Russia, whose life is upended by a terminal illness. As Ivan confronts his mortality, he reflects on his superficial existence and comes to a deeper understanding of life's true value. The story addresses themes such as the inevitability of death, the emptiness of a life lived according to social expectations, and the possibility of spiritual redemption through authentic self-awareness. Through these themes, Tolstoy critiques hollow materialism and argues instead for a life rooted in genuine human connection and moral truth.

The central theme of *The Death of Ivan Ilych* is the inevitability of death and the universal human reluctance to face one's own mortality. Tolstoy begins the story with Ivan Ilych's death, immediately revealing the inescapable endpoint of his life. From the start, death looms large, not only for Ivan but also for his colleagues and family, who react with indifference and self-interest. This initial scene sets the tone for Tolstoy's exploration of how people live their lives in denial of their mortality, avoiding deep reflection on the fact that death comes for everyone.

Ivan's illness gradually forces him to confront the reality of death. His initial refusal to accept the seriousness of his condition reflects the broader human tendency to avoid thinking about death. Ivan tries to find solace in the assurances of doctors and in the routines of his professional life, but as his condition worsens, the facade of control crumbles. He can no longer ignore that his life is slipping away, and he experiences terror and anguish. Tolstoy captures the psychological torment of a man grappling with the finality of death and the collapse of his illusions.

The inevitability of death also leads Ivan to ask profound questions about the meaning of life. As he reflects on his past, he begins to see that much of his life was wasted on social status, career advancement, and material comfort. Death becomes a lens through which Ivan scrutinizes his life choices he has made, and for the reader, a broader philosophical critique of the emptiness of conventional values.

Another key theme is the emptiness of a life lived according to societal expectations rather than authentic values. Ivan's life, in many ways, mirrors the middle class. He receives a good education, secures a respectable position in the legal profession, marries a woman socially appropriate, and achieves material comfort. On the surface, Ivan's life is successful and enviable. However, Tolstoy reveals the underlying hollowness of this existence as Ivan's illness forces him to reconsider everything he once thought important.

Ivan's career and social ambitions, which seemed so meaningful during his healthy years, are exposed as shallow and disconnected from true happiness or fulfillment. He spent his life chasing promotions and social status, but as death approaches, he realizes that these achievements have brought him no lasting satisfaction. His relationship with his family, particularly his wife, is also revealed to be superficial. His marriage was based on societal conventions rather than love or mutual understanding, and as he lies dying, he finds no comfort in his family's presence. They are either indifferent or resentful, further underscoring the emotional emptiness of his life.

Tolstoy critiques materialism and self-interest, showing how a life focused on external success and conformity can leave someone spiritually empty. Ivan's illness exposes the fragility of the structures on which he built his sense of self. His comfortable life, his status, and his possessions all are meaningless in the face of death. In this way, Tolstoy challenges readers to consider what truly matters in life and whether it is possible to find deeper, more authentic meaning.

As Ivan grapples with the approach of death, the novella turns to the theme of spiritual redemption. Ivan's initial reaction to his illness is one of denial, followed by anger, fear, and despair. He feels trapped in a senseless universe, where death seems like a cruel and arbitrary punishment. However, as Ivan's physical condition worsens and he becomes more isolated from the distractions of his former life, he begins to reflect more deeply on his existence. This process of introspection leads to a gradual transformation in his understanding of life and death.

A turning point in Ivan's spiritual journey occurs when he finally acknowledges the truth of his condition and lets go of his denial. This moment of clarity allows him to see his past life for what it was—a series of shallow, self-serving choices that led him away from genuine human connection and moral truth. His interactions with his servant, Gerasim, provide a stark contrast to the false relationships he has maintained throughout his life. Gerasim's simple, honest care for Ivan shows him that compassion, humility, and love are the true sources of meaning. Gerasim's acceptance of death as a natural part of life also helps Ivan confront his own mortality with greater courage.

In the novella's final moments, Ivan undergoes a profound inner transformation. As he faces the inevitability of his death, he experiences a moment of spiritual enlightenment. He realizes that the fear and pain he has been experiencing are rooted in his attachment to his false, ego-driven self. By letting go of this attachment, Ivan is able to transcend his suffering and achieve a sense of peace. He comes to understand that true life is found not in worldly success but in selfless love and the recognition of a higher moral purpose. His death, rather than being a meaningless end, becomes a moment of spiritual liberation.

In *The Death of Ivan Ilych*, Tolstoy offers a profound meditation on the nature of life, death, and the human search for meaning. Through Ivan's story, Tolstoy critiques the shallow values of materialism and societal conformity, showing how these can lead to spiritual emptiness. The novella's exploration of death serves as a catalyst for Ivan's awakening, forcing him to confront the truths he has long avoided and guiding him toward a deeper understanding of life's purpose.

Tolstoy ultimately suggests that true meaning is found not in the pursuit of status or wealth but in living authentically, cultivating compassion, and accepting the inevitability of death. Ivan's spiritual transformation at the end of the novella offers a hopeful vision of redemption, even in the face of mortality. By confronting the reality of death and rejecting the superficial values of society, Ivan is able to achieve a sense of inner peace and fulfillment. Tolstoy's message is both a critique of modern life and a call for a more genuine, morally grounded way of being.

-Taz Rosenthal

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11.2: Death of Ivan Ilych (first half)

Source:

"The Death of Ivan Ilich"(opens in new window) [open.lib.umn.edu]

Leo Tolstoy
1886

The text offered here is that prepared by Louise and Aylmer Maude. It provides a contemporary translation of the text by persons who were closely acquainted with Tolstoy and who had the benefit of his advice with respect to the translation of difficult passages (Tolstoy had a passable knowledge of English). The Maudes were also the translators and editors of the 21 volume “The Works of Tolstoy” (the so-called Centenary Editon), published by Oxford University Press 1928-37. The translation is in the Public Domain and has No Copyright under United States law.

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I

During an interval in the Melvinski trial in the large building of the Law Courts the members and public prosecutor met in Ivan Egorovich Shebek’s private room, where the conversation turned on the celebrated Krasovski case. Fedor Vasilievich warmly maintained that it was not subject to their jurisdiction, Ivan Egorovich maintained the contrary, while Peter Ivanovich, not having entered into the discussion at the start, took no part in it but looked through the *Gazette* which had just been handed in.

“Gentlemen,” he said, “Ivan Ilych has died!”

“You don’t say so!”

“Here, read it yourself,” replied Peter Ivanovich, handing Fedor Vasilievich the paper still damp from the press. Surrounded by a black border were the words: “Praskovya Fedorovna Golovina, with profound sorrow, informs relatives and friends of the demise of her beloved husband Ivan Ilych Golovin, Member of the Court of Justice, which occurred on February the 4th of this year 1882. the funeral will take place on Friday at one o’clock in the afternoon.”

Ivan Ilych had been a colleague of the gentlemen present and was liked by them all. He had been ill for some weeks with an illness said to be incurable. His post had been kept open for him, but there had been conjectures that in case of his death Alexeev might receive his appointment, and that either Vinnikov or Shtabel would succeed Alexeev. So on receiving the news of Ivan Ilych’s death the first thought of each of the gentlemen in that private room was of the changes and promotions it might occasion among themselves or their acquaintances.

“I shall be sure to get Shtabel’s place or Vinnikov’s,” thought Fedor Vasilievich. “I was promised that long ago, and the promotion means an extra eight hundred rubles a year for me besides the allowance.”

“Now I must apply for my brother-in-law’s transfer from Kaluga,” thought Peter Ivanovich. “My wife will be very glad, and then she won’t be able to say that I never do anything for her relations.”

“I thought he would never leave his bed again,” said Peter Ivanovich aloud. “It’s very sad.”

“But what really was the matter with him?”

“The doctors couldn’t say — at least they could, but each of them said something different. When last I saw him I thought he was getting better.”

“And I haven’t been to see him since the holidays. I always meant to go.”

“Had he any property?”

“I think his wife had a little — but something quiet trifling.”

“We shall have to go to see her, but they live so terribly far away.”

“Far away from you, you mean. Everything’s far away from your place.”

“You see, he never can forgive my living on the other side of the river,” said Peter Ivanovich, smiling at Shebek. Then, still talking of the distances between different parts of the city, they returned to the Court.

Besides considerations as to the possible transfers and promotions likely to result from Ivan Ilych’s death, the mere fact of the death of a near acquaintance aroused, as usual, in all who heard of it the complacent feeling that, “it is he who is dead and not I.”

Each one thought or felt, “Well, he’s dead but I’m alive!” But the more intimate of Ivan Ilych’s acquaintances, his so-called friends, could not help thinking also that they would now have to fulfil the very tiresome demands of propriety by attending the funeral service and paying a visit of condolence to the widow.

Fedor Vasilievich and Peter Ivanovich had been his nearest acquaintances. Peter Ivanovich had studied law with Ivan Ilych and had considered himself to be under obligations to him.

Having told his wife at dinner-time of Ivan Ilych’s death, and of his conjecture that it might be possible to get her brother transferred to their circuit, Peter Ivanovich sacrificed his usual nap, put on his evening clothes and drove to Ivan Ilych’s house.

At the entrance stood a carriage and two cabs. Leaning against the wall in the hall downstairs near the cloakstand was a coffin-lid covered with cloth of gold, ornamented with gold cord and tassels, that had been polished up with metal powder. Two ladies in black were taking off their fur cloaks. Peter Ivanovich recognized one of them as Ivan Ilych’s sister, but the other was a stranger to him. His colleague Schwartz was just coming downstairs, but on seeing Peter Ivanovich enter he stopped and winked at him, as if to say: “Ivan Ilych has made a mess of things — not like you and me.”

Schwartz’s face with his Piccadilly whiskers, and his slim figure in evening dress, had as usual an air of elegant solemnity which contrasted with the playfulness of his character and had a special piquancy here, or so it seemed to Peter Ivanovich.

Peter Ivanovich allowed the ladies to precede him and slowly followed them upstairs. Schwartz did not come down but remained where he was, and Peter Ivanovich understood that he wanted to arrange where they should play bridge that evening. The ladies went upstairs to the widow’s room, and Schwartz with seriously compressed lips but a playful look in his eyes, indicated by a twist of his eyebrows the room to the right where the body lay.

Peter Ivanovich, like everyone else on such occasions, entered feeling uncertain what he would have to do. All he knew was that at such times it is always safe to cross oneself. But he was not quite sure whether one should make obseisances while doing so. He therefore adopted a middle course. On entering the room he began crossing himself and made a slight movement resembling a bow. At the same time, as far as the motion of his head and arm allowed, he surveyed the room. Two young men — apparently nephews, one of whom was a high-school pupil — were leaving the room, crossing themselves as they did so. An old woman was standing motionless, and a lady with strangely arched eyebrows was saying something to her in a whisper. A vigorous, resolute Church Reader, in a frock- coat, was reading something in a loud voice with an expression that precluded any contradiction. The butler’s assistant, Gerasim, stepping lightly in front of Peter Ivanovich, was strewing something on the floor. Noticing this, Peter Ivanovich was immediately aware of a faint odour of a decomposing body.

The last time he had called on Ivan Ilych, Peter Ivanovich had seen Gerasim in the study. Ivan Ilych had been particularly fond of him and he was performing the duty of a sick nurse.

Peter Ivanovich continued to make the sign of the cross slightly inclining his head in an intermediate direction between the coffin, the Reader, and the icons on the table in a corner of the room. Afterwards, when it seemed to him that this movement of his arm in crossing himself had gone on too long, he stopped and began to look at the corpse.

The dead man lay, as dead men always lie, in a specially heavy way, his rigid limbs sunk in the soft cushions of the coffin, with the head forever bowed on the pillow. His yellow waxen brow with bald patches over his sunken temples was thrust up in the way peculiar to the dead, the protruding nose seeming to press on the upper lip. He was much changed and grown even thinner since Peter Ivanovich had last seen him, but, as is always the case with the dead, his face was handsomer and above all more dignified than when he was alive. The expression on the face said that what was necessary had been accomplished, and accomplished rightly. Besides this there was in that expression a reproach and a warning to the living. This warning seemed to Peter Ivanovich out of place, or at least not applicable to him. He felt a certain discomfort and so he hurriedly crossed himself once more and turned and went out of the door — too hurriedly and too regardless of propriety, as he himself was aware.

Schwartz was waiting for him in the adjoining room with legs spread wide apart and both hands toying with his top-hat behind his back. The mere sight of that playful, well-groomed, and elegant figure refreshed Peter Ivanovich. He felt that Schwartz was above all these happenings and would not surrender to any depressing influences. His very look said that this incident of a church service for Ivan Ilych could not be a sufficient reason for infringing the order of the session — in other words, that it would certainly not prevent his unwrapping a new pack of cards and shuffling them that evening while a footman placed fresh candles on the table: in fact, that there was no reason for supposing that this incident would hinder their spending the evening agreeably. Indeed he said this in a whisper as Peter Ivanovich passed him, proposing that they should meet for a game at Fedor Vasilievich's. But apparently Peter Ivanovich was not destined to play bridge that evening. Praskovya Fedorovna (a short, fat woman who despite all efforts to the contrary had continued to broaden steadily from her shoulders downwards and who had the same extraordinarily arched eyebrows as the lady who had been standing by the coffin), dressed all in black, her head covered with lace, came out of her own room with some other ladies, conducted them to the room where the dead body lay, and said: "The service will begin immediately. Please go in."

Schwartz, making an indefinite bow, stood still, evidently neither accepting nor declining this invitation. Praskovya Fedorovna recognizing Peter Ivanovich, sighed, went close up to him, took his hand, and said: "I know you were a true friend to Ivan Ilych…" and looked at him awaiting some suitable response. And Peter Ivanovich knew that, just as it had been the right thing to cross himself in that room, so what he had to do here was to press her hand, sigh, and say, "Believe me…" So he did all this and as he did it felt that the desired result had been achieved: that both he and she were touched.

"Come with me. I want to speak to you before it begins," said the widow. "Give me your arm."

Peter Ivanovich gave her his arm and they went to the inner rooms, passing Schwartz who winked at Peter Ivanovich compassionately.

"That does for our bridge! Don't object if we find another player. Perhaps you can cut in when you do escape," said his playful look.

Peter Ivanovich sighed still more deeply and despondently, and Praskovya Fedorovna pressed his arm gratefully. When they reached the drawing-room, upholstered in pink cretonne and lighted by a dim lamp, they sat down at the table — she on a sofa and Peter Ivanovich on a low pouffe, the springs of which yielded spasmodically under his weight. Praskovya Fedorovna had been on the point of warning him to take another seat, but felt that such a warning was out of keeping with her present condition and so changed her mind. As he sat down on the pouffe Peter Ivanovich recalled how Ivan Ilych had arranged this room and had consulted him regarding this pink cretonne with green leaves. The whole room was full of furniture and knick-knacks, and on her way to the sofa the lace of the widow's black shawl caught on the edge of the table. Peter Ivanovich rose to detach it, and the springs of the pouffe, relieved of his weight, rose also and gave him a push. The widow began detaching her shawl herself, and Peter Ivanovich again sat down, suppressing the rebellious springs of the pouffe under him. But the widow had not quite freed herself and Peter Ivanovich got up again, and again the pouffe rebelled and even creaked. When this was all over she took out a clean cambric handkerchief and began to weep. The episode with the shawl and the struggle with the pouffe had cooled Peter Ivanovich's emotions and he sat there with a sullen look on his face. This awkward situation was interrupted by Sokolov, Ivan Ilych's butler, who came to report that the plot in the cemetery that Praskovya Fedorovna had chosen would cost two hundred rubles. She stopped weeping and, looking at Peter Ivanovich with the air of a victim, remarked in French that it was very hard for her. Peter Ivanovich made a silent gesture signifying his full conviction that it must indeed be so.

"Please smoke," she said in a magnanimous yet crushed voice, and turned to discuss with Sokolov the price of the plot for the grave.

Peter Ivanovich while lighting his cigarette heard her inquiring very circumstantially into the prices of different plots in the cemetery and finally decide which she would take. when that was done she gave instructions about engaging the choir. Sokolov then left the room.

"I look after everything myself," she told Peter Ivanovich, shifting the albums that lay on the table; and noticing that the table was endangered by his cigarette-ash, she immediately passed him an ash-tray, saying as she did so: "I consider it an affectation to say that my grief prevents my attending to practical affairs. On the contrary, if anything can — I won't say console me, but — distract me, it is seeing to everything concerning him." She again took out her handkerchief as if preparing to cry, but suddenly, as if mastering her feeling, she shook herself and began to speak calmly. "But there is something I want to talk to you about."

Peter Ivanovich bowed, keeping control of the springs of the pouffe, which immediately began quivering under him.

“He suffered terribly the last few days.”

“Did he?” said Peter Ivanovich.

“Oh, terribly! He screamed unceasingly, not for minutes but for hours. for the last three days he screamed incessantly. It was unendurable. I cannot understand how I bore it; you could hear him three rooms off. Oh, what I have suffered!”

“Is it possible that he was conscious all that time?” asked Peter Ivanovich.

“Yes,” she whispered. “To the last moment. He took leave of us a quarter of an hour before he died, and asked us to take Volodya away.”

The thought of the suffering of this man he had known so intimately, first as a merry little boy, then as a schoolmate, and later as a grown-up colleague, suddenly struck Peter Ivanovich with horror, despite an unpleasant consciousness of his own and this woman’s dissimulation. He again saw that brow, and that nose pressing down on the lip, and felt afraid for himself.

“Three days of frightful suffering and the death! Why, that might suddenly, at any time, happen to me,” he thought, and for a moment felt terrified. But — he did not himself know how — the customary reflection at once occurred to him that this had happened to Ivan Ilych and not to him, and that it should not and could not happen to him, and that to think that it could would be yielding to depression which he ought not to do, as Schwartz’s expression plainly showed. After which reflection Peter Ivanovich felt reassured, and began to ask with interest about the details of Ivan Ilych’s death, as though death was an accident natural to Ivan Ilych but certainly not to himself.

After many details of the really dreadful physical sufferings Ivan Ilych had endured (which details he learnt only from the effect those sufferings had produced on Praskovya Fedorovna’s nerves) the widow apparently found it necessary to get to business.

“Oh, Peter Ivanovich, how hard it is! How terribly, terribly hard!” and she again began to weep.

Peter Ivanovich sighed and waited for her to finish blowing her nose. When she had don so he said, “Believe me…” and she again began talking and brought out what was evidently her chief concern with him — namely, to question him as to how she could obtain a grant of money from the government on the occasion of her husband’s death. She made it appear that she was asking Peter Ivanovich’s advice about her pension, but he soon saw that she already knew about that to the minutest detail, more even than he did himself. She knew how much could be got out of the government in consequence of her husband’s death, but wanted to find out whether she could not possibly extract something more. Peter Ivanovich tried to think of some means of doing so, but after reflecting for a while and, out of propriety, condemning the government for its niggardliness, he said he thought that nothing more could be got. Then she sighed and evidently began to devise means of getting rid of her visitor. Noticing this, he put out his cigarette, rose, pressed her hand, and went out into the anteroom.

In the dining-room where the clock stood that Ivan Ilych had liked so much and had bought at an antique shop, Peter Ivanovich met a priest and a few acquaintances who had come to attend the service, and he recognized Ivan Ilych’s daughter, a handsome young woman. She was in black and her slim figure appeared slimmer than ever. She had a gloomy, determined, almost angry expression, and bowed to Peter Ivanovich as though he were in some way to blame. Behind her, with the same offended look, stood a wealthy young man, and examining magistrate, whom Peter Ivanovich also knew and who was her fiance, as he had heard. He bowed mournfully to them and was about to pass into the death-chamber, when from under the stairs appeared the figure of Ivan Ilych’s schoolboy son, who was extremely like his father. He seemed a little Ivan Ilych, such as Peter Ivanovich remembered when they studied law together. His tear-stained eyes had in them the look that is seen in the eyes of boys of thirteen or fourteen who are not pure-minded. When he saw Peter Ivanovich he scowled morosely and shamefacedly. Peter Ivanovich nodded to him and entered the death-chamber. The service began: candles, groans, incense, tears, and sobs. Peter Ivanovich stood looking gloomily down at his feet. He did not look once at the dead man, did not yield to any depressing influence, and was one of the first to leave the room. There was no one in the anteroom, but Gerasim darted out of the dead man’s room, rummaged with his strong hands among the fur coats to find Peter Ivanovich’s and helped him on with it.

“Well, friend Gerasim,” said Peter Ivanovich, so as to say something. “It’s a sad affair, isn’t it?”

“It’s God will. We shall all come to it some day,” said Gerasim, displaying his teeth — the even white teeth of a healthy peasant — and, like a man in the thick of urgent work, he briskly opened the front door, called the coachman, helped Peter Ivanovich into the

sledge, and sprang back to the porch as if in readiness for what he had to do next.

Peter Ivanovich found the fresh air particularly pleasant after the smell of incense, the dead body, and carbolic acid.

“Where to sir?” asked the coachman.

“It’s not too late even now….I’ll call round on Fedor Vasilievich.”

He accordingly drove there and found them just finishing the first rubber, so that it was quite convenient for him to cut in.

II

Ivan Ilych’s life had been most simple and most ordinary and therefore most terrible.

He had been a member of the Court of Justice, and died at the age of forty-five. His father had been an official who after serving in various ministries and departments in Petersburg had made the sort of career which brings men to positions from which by reason of their long service they cannot be dismissed, though they are obviously unfit to hold any responsible position, and for whom therefore posts are specially created, which though fictitious carry salaries of from six to ten thousand rubles that are not fictitious, and in receipt of which they live on to a great age.

Such was the Privy Councillor and superfluous member of various superfluous institutions, Ilya Epimovich Golovin.

He had three sons, of whom Ivan Ilych was the second. The eldest son was following in his father’s footsteps only in another department, and was already approaching that stage in the service at which a similar sinecure would be reached. The third son was a failure. He had ruined his prospects in a number of positions and was now serving in the railway department. His father and brothers, and still more their wives, not merely disliked meeting him, but avoided remembering his existence unless compelled to do so. His sister had married Baron Greff, a Petersburg official of her father’s type. Ivan Ilych was *le phénix de la famille* as people said. He was neither as cold and formal as his elder brother nor as wild as the younger, but was a happy mean between them — an intelligent polished, lively and agreeable man. He had studied with his younger brother at the School of Law, but the latter had failed to complete the course and was expelled when he was in the fifth class. Ivan Ilych finished the course well. Even when he was at the School of Law he was just what he remained for the rest of his life: a capable, cheerful, good-natured, and sociable man, though strict in the fulfillment of what he considered to be his duty: and he considered his duty to be what was so considered by those in authority. Neither as a boy nor as a man was he a toady, but from early youth was by nature attracted to people of high station as a fly is drawn to the light, assimilating their ways and views of life and establishing friendly relations with them. All the enthusiasms of childhood and youth passed without leaving much trace on him; he succumbed to sensuality, to vanity, and finally, in the upper classes, to liberalism, but always within limits which his instinct unfailingly indicated to him as correct.

At school he had done things which had formerly seemed to him very horrid and made him feel disgusted with himself when he did them; but when later on he saw that such actions were done by people of good position and that they did not regard them as wrong, he was able not exactly to regard them as right, but to forget about them entirely or not be at all troubled at remembering them.

Having graduated from the School of Law and qualified for the tenth rank of the civil service, and having received money from his father for his equipment, Ivan Ilych ordered himself clothes at Scharmer’s, the fashionable tailor, hung a medallion inscribed *respice finem* on his watch-chain, took leave of his professor and the prince who was patron of the school, had a farewell dinner with his comrades at Donon’s first-class restaurant, and with his new and fashionable portmanteau, linen, clothes, shaving and other toilet appliances, and a travelling rug, all purchased at the best shops, he set off for one of the provinces where through his father’s influence, he had been attached to the governor as an official for special service.

In the province Ivan Ilych soon arranged as easy and agreeable a position for himself as he had had at the School of Law. He performed his official task, made his career, and at the same time amused himself pleasantly and decorously. Occasionally he paid official visits to country districts where he behaved with dignity both to his superiors and inferiors, and performed the duties entrusted to him, which related chiefly to the sectarians, with an exactness and incorruptible honesty of which he could not but feel proud.

In official matters, despite his youth and taste for frivolous gaiety, he was exceedingly reserved, punctilious, and even severe; but in society he was often amusing and witty, and always good- natured, correct in his manner, and *bon enfant*, as the governor and his wife — with whom he was like one of the family — used to say of him.

In the province he had an affair with a lady who made advances to the elegant young lawyer, and there was also a milliner; and there were carousals with aides-de-camp who visited the district, and after-supper visits to a certain outlying street of doubtful reputation; and there was too some obsequiousness to his chief and even to his chief's wife, but all this was done with such a tone of good breeding that no hard names could be applied to it. It all came under the heading of the French saying: *Il faut que jeunesse se passe*. It was all done with clean hands, in clean linen, with French phrases, and above all among people of the best society and consequently with the approval of people of rank.

So Ivan Ilych served for five years and then came a change in his official life. The new and reformed judicial institutions were introduced, and new men were needed. Ivan Ilych became such a new man. He was offered the post of examining magistrate, and he accepted it though the post was in another province and obliged him to give up the connexions he had formed and to make new ones. His friends met to give him a send-off; they had a group photograph taken and presented him with a silver cigarette-case, and he set off to his new post.

As examining magistrate Ivan Ilych was just as *comme il faut* and decorous a man, inspiring general respect and capable of separating his official duties from his private life, as he had been when acting as an official on special service. His duties now as examining magistrate were far more interesting and attractive than before. In his former position it had been pleasant to wear an undress uniform made by Scharmer, and to pass through the crowd of petitioners and officials who were timorously awaiting an audience with the governor, and who envied him as with free and easy gait he went straight into his chief's private room to have a cup of tea and a cigarette with him. But not many people had then been directly dependent on him — only police officials and the sectarians when he went on special missions — and he liked to treat them politely, almost as comrades, as if he were letting them feel that he who had the power to crush them was treating them in this simple, friendly way. There were then but few such people. But now, as an examining magistrate, Ivan Ilych felt that everyone without exception, even the most important and self-satisfied, was in his power, and that he need only write a few words on a sheet of paper with a certain heading, and this or that important, self-satisfied person would be brought before him in the role of an accused person or a witness, and if he did not choose to allow him to sit down, would have to stand before him and answer his questions. Ivan Ilych never abused his power; he tried on the contrary to soften its expression, but the consciousness of it and the possibility of softening its effect, supplied the chief interest and attraction of his office. In his work itself, especially in his examinations, he very soon acquired a method of eliminating all considerations irrelevant to the legal aspect of the case, and reducing even the most complicated case to a form in which it would be presented on paper only in its externals, completely excluding his personal opinion of the matter, while above all observing every prescribed formality. The work was new and Ivan Ilych was one of the first men to apply the new Code of 1864.

On taking up the post of examining magistrate in a new town, he made new acquaintances and connexions, placed himself on a new footing and assumed a somewhat different tone. He took up an attitude of rather dignified aloofness towards the provincial authorities, but picked out the best circle of legal gentlemen and wealthy gentry living in the town and assumed a tone of slight dissatisfaction with the government, of moderate liberalism, and of enlightened citizenship. At the same time, without at all altering the elegance of his toilet, he ceased shaving his chin and allowed his beard to grow as it pleased.

Ivan Ilych settled down very pleasantly in this new town. The society there, which inclined towards opposition to the governor was friendly, his salary was larger, and he began to play whist, which he found added not a little to the pleasure of life, for he had a capacity for cards, played good-humouredly, and calculated rapidly and astutely, so that he usually won.

After living there for two years he met his future wife, Praskovya Fedorovna Mikhel, who was the most attractive, clever, and brilliant girl of the set in which he moved, and among other amusements and relaxations from his labours as examining magistrate, Ivan Ilych established light and playful relations with her.

While he had been an official on special service he had been accustomed to dance, but now as an examining magistrate it was exceptional for him to do so. If he danced now, he did it as if to show that though he served under the reformed order of things, and had reached the fifth official rank, yet when it came to dancing he could do it better than most people. So at the end of an evening he sometimes danced with Praskovya Fedorovna, and it was chiefly during these dances that he captivated her. She fell in love with him. Ivan Ilych had at first no definite intention of marrying, but when the girl fell in love with him he said to himself: "Really, why shouldn't I marry?"

Praskovya Fedorovna came of a good family, was not bad looking, and had some little property. Ivan Ilych might have aspired to a more brilliant match, but even this was good. He had his salary, and she, he hoped, would have an equal income. She was well

connected, and was a sweet, pretty, and thoroughly correct young woman. To say that Ivan Ilych married because he fell in love with Praskovya Fedorovna and found that she sympathized with his views of life would be as incorrect as to say that he married because his social circle approved of the match. He was swayed by both these considerations: the marriage gave him personal satisfaction, and at the same time it was considered the right thing by the most highly placed of his associates.

So Ivan Ilych got married.

The preparations for marriage and the beginning of married life, with its conjugal caresses, the new furniture, new crockery, and new linen, were very pleasant until his wife became pregnant — so that Ivan Ilych had begun to think that marriage would not impair the easy, agreeable, gay and always decorous character of his life, approved of by society and regarded by himself as natural, but would even improve it. But from the first months of his wife's pregnancy, something new, unpleasant, depressing, and unseemly, and from which there was no way of escape, unexpectedly showed itself.

His wife, without any reason — *de gaieté de coeur* as Ivan Ilych expressed it to himself — began to disturb the pleasure and propriety of their life. She began to be jealous without any cause, expected him to devote his whole attention to her, found fault with everything, and made coarse and ill-mannered scenes.

At first Ivan Ilych hoped to escape from the unpleasantness of this state of affairs by the same easy and decorous relation to life that had served him heretofore: he tried to ignore his wife's disagreeable moods, continued to live in his usual easy and pleasant way, invited friends to his house for a game of cards, and also tried going out to his club or spending his evenings with friends. But one day his wife began upbraiding him so vigorously, using such coarse words, and continued to abuse him every time he did not fulfil her demands, so resolutely and with such evident determination not to give way till he submitted — that is, till he stayed at home and was bored just as she was — that he became alarmed. He now realized that matrimony — at any rate with Praskovya Fedorovna — was not always conducive to the pleasures and amenities of life, but on the contrary often infringed both comfort and propriety, and that he must therefore entrench himself against such infringement. And Ivan Ilych began to seek for means of doing so. His official duties were the one thing that imposed upon Praskovya Fedorovna, and by means of his official work and the duties attached to it he began struggling with his wife to secure his own independence.

With the birth of their child, the attempts to feed it and the various failures in doing so, and with the real and imaginary illnesses of mother and child, in which Ivan Ilych's sympathy was demanded but about which he understood nothing, the need of securing for himself an existence outside his family life became still more imperative.

As his wife grew more irritable and exacting and Ivan Ilych transferred the center of gravity of his life more and more to his official work, so did he grow to like his work better and became more ambitious than before.

Very soon, within a year of his wedding, Ivan Ilych had realized that marriage, though it may add some comforts to life, is in fact a very intricate and difficult affair towards which in order to perform one's duty, that is, to lead a decorous life approved of by society, one must adopt a definite attitude just as towards one's official duties.

And Ivan Ilych evolved such an attitude towards married life. He only required of it those conveniences — dinner at home, housewife, and bed — which it could give him, and above all that propriety of external forms required by public opinion. For the rest he looked for lighthearted pleasure and propriety, and was very thankful when he found them, but if he met with antagonism and querulousness he at once retired into his separate fenced-off world of official duties, where he found satisfaction.

Ivan Ilych was esteemed a good official, and after three years was made Assistant Public Prosecutor. His new duties, their importance, the possibility of indicting and imprisoning anyone he chose, the publicity his speeches received, and the success he had in all these things, made his work still more attractive.

More children came. His wife became more and more querulous and ill-tempered, but the attitude Ivan Ilych had adopted towards his home life rendered him almost impervious to her grumbling.

After seven years' service in that town he was transferred to another province as Public Prosecutor. They moved, but were short of money and his wife did not like the place they moved to. Though the salary was higher the cost of living was greater, besides which two of their children died and family life became still more unpleasant for him.

Praskovya Fedorovna blamed her husband for every inconvenience they encountered in their new home. Most of the conversations between husband and wife, especially as to the children's education, led to topics which recalled former disputes, and these

disputes were apt to flare up again at any moment. There remained only those rare periods of amorousness which still came to them at times but did not last long. These were islets at which they anchored for a while and then again set out upon that ocean of veiled hostility which showed itself in their aloofness from one another. This aloofness might have grieved Ivan Ilych had he considered that it ought not to exist, but he now regarded the position as normal, and even made it the goal at which he aimed in family life. His aim was to free himself more and more from those unpleasantnesses and to give them a semblance of harmlessness and propriety. He attained this by spending less and less time with his family, and when obliged to be at home he tried to safeguard his position by the presence of outsiders. The chief thing however was that he had his official duties. The whole interest of his life now centered in the official world and that interest absorbed him. The consciousness of his power, being able to ruin anybody he wished to ruin, the importance, even the external dignity of his entry into court, or meetings with his subordinates, his success with superiors and inferiors, and above all his masterly handling of cases, of which he was conscious — all this gave him pleasure and filled his life, together with chats with his colleagues, dinners, and bridge. So that on the whole Ivan Ilych's life continued to flow as he considered it should do — pleasantly and properly.

So things continued for another seven years. His eldest daughter was already sixteen, another child had died, and only one son was left, a schoolboy and a subject of dissension. Ivan Ilych wanted to put him in the School of Law, but to spite him Praskovya Fedorovna entered him at the High School. The daughter had been educated at home and had turned out well: the boy did not learn badly either.

III

So Ivan Ilych lived for seventeen years after his marriage. He was already a Public Prosecutor of long standing, and had declined several proposed transfers while awaiting a more desirable post, when an unanticipated and unpleasant occurrence quite upset the peaceful course of his life. He was expecting to be offered the post of presiding judge in a University town, but Hoppe somehow came to the front and obtained the appointment instead. Ivan Ilych became irritable, reproached Hoppe, and quarrelled both with him and with his immediate superiors — who became colder to him and again passed him over when other appointments were made.

This was in 1880, the hardest year of Ivan Ilych's life. It was then that it became evident on the one hand that his salary was insufficient for them to live on, and on the other that he had been forgotten, and not only this, but that what was for him the greatest and most cruel injustice appeared to others a quite ordinary occurrence. Even his father did not consider it his duty to help him. Ivan Ilych felt himself abandoned by everyone, and that they regarded his position with a salary of 3,500 rubles as quite normal and even fortunate. He alone knew that with the consciousness of the injustices done him, with his wife's incessant nagging, and with the debts he had contracted by living beyond his means, his position was far from normal.

In order to save money that summer he obtained leave of absence and went with his wife to live in the country at her brother's place.

In the country, without his work, he experienced *ennui* for the first time in his life, and not only *ennui* but intolerable depression, and he decided that it was impossible to go on living like that, and that it was necessary to take energetic measures.

Having passed a sleepless night pacing up and down the veranda, he decided to go to Petersburg and bestir himself, in order to punish those who had failed to appreciate him and to get transferred to another ministry.

Next day, despite many protests from his wife and her brother, he started for Petersburg with the sole object of obtaining a post with a salary of five thousand rubles a year. He was no longer bent on any particular department, or tendency, or kind of activity. All he now wanted was an appointment to another post with a salary of five thousand rubles, either in the administration, in the banks, with the railways, in one of the Empress Marya's Institutions, or even in the customs — but it had to carry with it a salary of five thousand rubles and be in a ministry other than that in which they had failed to appreciate him.

And this quest of Ivan Ilych's was crowned with remarkable and unexpected success. At Kursk an acquaintance of his, F. I. Ilyin, got into the first-class carriage, sat down beside Ivan Ilych, and told him of a telegram just received by the governor of Kursk announcing that a change was about to take place in the ministry: Peter Ivanovich was to be superseded by Ivan Semyonovich.

The proposed change, apart from its significance for Russia, had a special significance for Ivan Ilych, because by bringing forward a new man, Peter Petrovich, and consequently his friend Zakhar Ivanovich, it was highly favourable for Ivan Ilych, since Zakhar Ivanovich was a friend and colleague of his.

In Moscow this news was confirmed, and on reaching Petersburg Ivan Ilych found Zakhar Ivanovich and received a definite promise of an appointment in his former Department of Justice.

A week later he telegraphed to his wife: “Zakhar in Miller’s place. I shall receive appointment on presentation of report.”

Thanks to this change of personnel, Ivan Ilych had unexpectedly obtained an appointment in his former ministry which placed him two states above his former colleagues besides giving him five thousand rubles salary and three thousand five hundred rubles for expenses connected with his removal. All his ill humour towards his former enemies and the whole department vanished, and Ivan Ilych was completely happy.

He returned to the country more cheerful and contented than he had been for a long time. Praskovya Fedorovna also cheered up and a truce was arranged between them. Ivan Ilych told of how he had been feted by everybody in Petersburg, how all those who had been his enemies were put to shame and now fawned on him, how envious they were of his appointment, and how much everybody in Petersburg had liked him.

Praskovya Fedorovna listened to all this and appeared to believe it. She did not contradict anything, but only made plans for their life in the town to which they were going. Ivan Ilych saw with delight that these plans were his plans, that he and his wife agreed, and that, after a stumble, his life was regaining its due and natural character of pleasant lightheartedness and decorum.

Ivan Ilych had come back for a short time only, for he had to take up his new duties on the 10th of September. Moreover, he needed time to settle into the new place, to move all his belongings from the province, and to buy and order many additional things: in a word, to make such arrangements as he had resolved on, which were almost exactly what Praskovya Fedorovna too had decided on.

Now that everything had happened so fortunately, and that he and his wife were at one in their aims and moreover saw so little of one another, they got on together better than they had done since the first years of marriage. Ivan Ilych had thought of taking his family away with him at once, but the insistence of his wife’s brother and her sister-in-law, who had suddenly become particularly amiable and friendly to him and his family, induced him to depart alone.

So he departed, and the cheerful state of mind induced by his success and by the harmony between his wife and himself, the one intensifying the other, did not leave him. He found a delightful house, just the thing both he and his wife had dreamt of. Spacious, lofty reception rooms in the old style, a convenient and dignified study, rooms for his wife and daughter, a study for his son — it might have been specially built for them. Ivan Ilych himself superintended the arrangements, chose the wallpapers, supplemented the furniture (preferably with antiques which he considered particularly *comme il faut*), and supervised the upholstering. Everything progressed and progressed and approached the ideal he had set himself: even when things were only half completed they exceeded his expectations. He saw what a refined and elegant character, free from vulgarity, it would all have when it was ready. On falling asleep he pictured to himself how the reception room would look. Looking at the yet unfinished drawing room he could see the fireplace, the screen, the what-not cabinet, the little chairs dotted here and there, the dishes and plates on the walls, and the bronzes, as they would be when everything was in place. He was pleased by the thought of how his wife and daughter, who shared his taste n this matter, would be impressed by it. They were certainly not expecting as much. He had been particularly successful in finding, and buying cheaply, antiques which gave a particularly aristocratic character to the whole place. But in his letters he intentionally understated everything in order to be able to surprise them. All this so absorbed him that his new duties — though he liked his official work — interested him less than he had expected. Sometimes he even had moments of absent-mindedness during the court sessions and would consider whether he should have straight or curved cornices for his curtains. He was so interested in it all that he often did things himself, rearranging the furniture, or rehanging the curtains. Once when mounting a step-ladder to show the upholsterer, who did not understand, how he wanted the hangings draped, he mad a false step and slipped, but being a strong and agile man he clung on and only knocked his side against the knob of the window frame. The bruised place was painful but the pain soon passed, and he felt particularly bright and well just then. He wrote: “I feel fifteen years younger.” He thought he would have everything ready by September, but it dragged on till mid-October. But the result was charming not only in his eyes but to everyone who saw it.

In reality it was just what is usually seen in the houses of people of moderate means who want to appear rich, and therefore succeed only in resembling others like themselves: there are damasks, dark wood, plants, rugs, and dull and polished bronzes — all the things people of a certain class have in order to resemble other people of that class. His house was so like the others that it would never have been noticed, but to him it all seemed to be quite exceptional. He was very happy when he met his family at the station and brought them to the newly furnished house all lit up, where a footman in a white tie opened the door into the hall decorated

with plants, and when they went on into the drawing-room and the study uttering exclamations of delight. He conducted them everywhere, drank in their praises eagerly, and beamed with pleasure. At tea that evening, when Praskovya Fedorovna among others things asked him about his fall, he laughed, and showed them how he had gone flying and had frightened the upholsterer.

“It’s a good thing I’m a bit of an athlete. Another man might have been killed, but I merely knocked myself, just here; it hurts when it’s touched, but it’s passing off already — it’s only a bruise.”

So they began living in their new home — in which, as always happens, when they got thoroughly settled in they found they were just one room short — and with the increased income, which as always was just a little (some five hundred rubles) too little, but it was all very nice.

Things went particularly well at first, before everything was finally arranged and while something had still to be done: this thing bought, that thing ordered, another thing moved, and something else adjusted. Though there were some disputes between husband and wife, they were both so well satisfied and had so much to do that it all passed off without any serious quarrels. When nothing was left to arrange it became rather dull and something seemed to be lacking, but they were then making acquaintances, forming habits, and life was growing fuller.

Ivan Ilych spent his mornings at the law court and came home to diner, and at first he was generally in a good humour, though he occasionally became irritable just on account of his house. (Every spot on the tablecloth or the upholstery, and every broken window- blind string, irritated him. He had devoted so much trouble to arranging it all that every disturbance of it distressed him.) But on the whole his life ran its course as he believed life should do: easily, pleasantly, and decorously.

He got up at nine, drank his coffee, read the paper, and then put on his undress uniform and went to the law courts. There the harness in which he worked had already been stretched to fit him and he donned it without a hitch: petitioners, inquiries at the chancery, the chancery itself, and the sittings public and administrative. In all this the thing was to exclude everything fresh and vital, which always disturbs the regular course of official business, and to admit only official relations with people, and then only on official grounds. A man would come, for instance, wanting some information. Ivan Ilych, as one in whose sphere the matter did not lie, would have nothing to do with him: but if the man had some business with him in his official capacity, something that could be expressed on officially stamped paper, he would do everything, positively everything he could within the limits of such relations, and in doing so would maintain the semblance of friendly human relations, that is, would observe the courtesies of life. As soon as the official relations ended, so did everything else. Ivan Ilych possessed this capacity to separate his real life from the official side of affairs and not mix the two, in the highest degree, and by long practice and natural aptitude had brought it to such a pitch that sometimes, in the manner of a virtuoso, he would even allow himself to let the human and official relations mingle. He let himself do this just because he felt that he could at any time he chose resume the strictly official attitude again and drop the human relation. and he did it all easily, pleasantly, correctly, and even artistically. In the intervals between the sessions he smoked, drank tea, chatted a little about politics, a little about general topics, a little about cards, but most of all about official appointments. Tired, but with the feelings of a virtuoso — one of the first violins who has played his part in an orchestra with precision — he would return home to find that his wife and daughter had been out paying calls, or had a visitor, and that his son had been to school, had done his homework with his tutor, and was surely learning what is taught at High Schools. Everything was as it should be. After dinner, if they had no visitors, Ivan Ilych sometimes read a book that was being much discussed at the time, and in the evening settled down to work, that is, read official papers, compared the depositions of witnesses, and noted paragraphs of the Code applying to them. This was neither dull nor amusing. It was dull when he might have been playing bridge, but if no bridge was available it was at any rate better than doing nothing or sitting with his wife. Ivan Ilych’s chief pleasure was giving little dinners to which he invited men and women of good social position, and just as his drawing-room resembled all other drawing-rooms so did his enjoyable little parties resemble all other such parties.

Once they even gave a dance. Ivan Ilych enjoyed it and everything went off well, except that it led to a violent quarrel with his wife about the cakes and sweets. Praskovya Fedorovna had made her own plans, but Ivan Ilych insisted on getting everything from an expensive confectioner and ordered too many cakes, and the quarrel occurred because some of those cakes were left over and the confectioner’s bill came to forty-five rubles. It was a great and disagreeable quarrel. Praskovya Fedorovna called him “a fool and an imbecile,” and he clutched at his head and made angry allusions to divorce.

But the dance itself had been enjoyable. The best people were there, and Ivan Ilych had danced with Princess Trufonova, a sister of the distinguished founder of the Society “Bear My Burden”.

The pleasures connected with his work were pleasures of ambition; his social pleasures were those of vanity; but Ivan Ilych's greatest pleasure was playing bridge. He acknowledged that whatever disagreeable incident happened in his life, the pleasure that beamed like a ray of light above everything else was to sit down to bridge with good players, not noisy partners, and of course to four-handed bridge (with five players it was annoying to have to stand out, though one pretended not to mind), to play a clever and serious game (when the cards allowed it) and then to have supper and drink a glass of wine. after a game of bridge, especially if he had won a little (to win a large sum was unpleasant), Ivan Ilych went to bed in a specially good humour.

So they lived. They formed a circle of acquaintances among the best people and were visited by people of importance and by young folk. In their views as to their acquaintances, husband, wife and daughter were entirely agreed, and tacitly and unanimously kept at arm's length and shook off the various shabby friends and relations who, with much show of affection, gushed into the drawing-room with its Japanese plates on the walls. Soon these shabby friends ceased to obtrude themselves and only the best people remained in the Golovins' set.

Young men made up to Lisa, and Petrishchev, an examining magistrate and Dmitri Ivanovich Petrishchev's son and sole heir, began to be so attentive to her that Ivan Ilych had already spoken to Praskovya Fedorovna about it, and considered whether they should not arrange a party for them, or get up some private theatricals.

So they lived, and all went well, without change, and life flowed pleasantly.

IV

They were all in good health. It could not be called ill health if Ivan Ilych sometimes said that he had a queer taste in his mouth and felt some discomfort in his left side.

But this discomfort increased and, though not exactly painful, grew into a sense of pressure in his side accompanied by ill humour. And his irritability became worse and worse and began to mar the agreeable, easy, and correct life that had established itself in the Golovin family. Quarrels between husband and wife became more and more frequent, and soon the ease and amenity disappeared and even the decorum was barely maintained. Scenes again became frequent, and very few of those islets remained on which husband and wife could meet without an explosion. Praskovya Fedorovna now had good reason to say that her husband's temper was trying. With characteristic exaggeration she said he had always had a dreadful temper, and that it had needed all her good nature to put up with it for twenty years. It was true that now the quarrels were started by him. His bursts of temper always came just before dinner, often just as he began to eat his soup. Sometimes he noticed that a plate or dish was chipped, or the food was not right, or his son put his elbow on the table, or his daughter's hair was not done as he liked it, and for all this he blamed Praskovya Fedorovna. At first she retorted and said disagreeable things to him, but once or twice he fell into such a rage at the beginning of dinner that she realized it was due to some physical derangement brought on by taking food, and so she restrained herself and did not answer, but only hurried to get the dinner over. She regarded this self-restraint as highly praiseworthy. Having come to the conclusion that her husband had a dreadful temper and made her life miserable, she began to feel sorry for herself, and the more she pitied herself the more she hated her husband. She began to wish he would die; yet she did not want him to die because then his salary would cease. And this irritated her against him still more. She considered herself dreadfully unhappy just because not even his death could save her, and though she concealed her exasperation, that hidden exasperation of hers increased his irritation also.

After one scene in which Ivan Ilych had been particularly unfair and after which he had said in explanation that he certainly was irritable but that it was due to his not being well, she said that if he was ill it should be attended to, and insisted on his going to see a celebrated doctor.

He went. Everything took place as he had expected and as it always does. There was the usual waiting and the important air assumed by the doctor, with which he was so familiar (resembling that which he himself assumed in court), and the sounding and listening, and the questions which called for answers that were foregone conclusions and were evidently unnecessary, and the look of importance which implied that "if only you put yourself in our hands we will arrange everything — we know indubitably how it has to be done, always in the same way for everybody alike." It was all just as it was in the law courts. The doctor put on just the same air towards him as he himself put on towards an accused person.

The doctor said that so-and-so indicated that there was so- and-so inside the patient, but if the investigation of so-and-so did not confirm this, then he must assume that and that. If he assumed that and that, then…and so on. To Ivan Ilych only one question was important: was his case serious or not? But the doctor ignored that inappropriate question. From his point of view it was not the one

under consideration, the real question was to decide between a floating kidney, chronic catarrh, or appendicitis. It was not a question of the life of Ivan Ilych, but rather a dispute between the floating kidney and the appendix which the doctor solved brilliantly, as it seemed to Ivan Ilych, in favour of the appendix, with the reservation that should an examination of the urine give fresh indications the matter would be reconsidered. All this was just what Ivan Ilych had himself brilliantly accomplished a thousand times in dealing with men on trial. The doctor summed up just as brilliantly, looking over his spectacles triumphantly and even gaily at the accused. From the doctor's summing up Ivan Ilych concluded that things were bad, but that for the doctor, and perhaps for everybody else, it was a matter of indifference, though for him it was bad. And this conclusion struck him painfully, arousing in him a great feeling of pity for himself and of bitterness towards the doctor's indifference to a matter of such importance.

He said nothing of this, but rose, placed the doctor's fee on the table, and remarked with a sigh: "We sick people probably often put inappropriate questions. But tell me, in general, is this complaint dangerous, or not?…"

The doctor looked at him sternly over his spectacles with one eye, as if to say: "Prisoner, if you will not keep to the questions put to you, I shall be obliged to have you removed from the court."

"I have already told you what I consider necessary and proper. The analysis may show something more." And the doctor bowed.

Ivan Ilych went out slowly, seated himself disconsolately in his sledge, and drove home. All the way home he was going over what the doctor had said, trying to translate those complicated, obscure, scientific phrases into plain language and find in them an answer to the question: "Is my condition bad? Is it very bad? Or is there as yet nothing much wrong?" And it seemed to him that the meaning of what the doctor had said was that it was very bad. Everything in the streets seemed depressing. The cabmen, the houses, the passers-by, and the shops, were dismal. His ache, this dull gnawing ache that never ceased for a moment, seemed to have acquired a new and more serious significance from the doctor's dubious remarks. Ivan Ilych now watched it with a new and oppressive feeling.

He reached home and began to tell his wife about it. She listened, but in the middle of his account his daughter came in with her hat on, ready to go out with her mother. She sat down reluctantly to listen to this tedious story, but could not stand it long, and her mother too did not hear him to the end.

"Well, I am very glad," she said. "Mind now to take your medicine regularly. Give me the prescription and I'll send Gerasim to the chemist's." And she went to get ready to go out.

While she was in the room Ivan Ilych had hardly taken time to breathe, but he sighed deeply when she left it.

"Well," he thought, "perhaps it isn't so bad after all."

He began taking his medicine and following the doctor's directions, which had been altered after the examination of the urine. but then it happened that there was a contradiction between the indications drawn from the examination of the urine and the symptoms that showed themselves. It turned out that what was happening differed from what the doctor had told him, and that he had either forgotten or blundered, or hidden something from him. He could not, however, be blamed for that, and Ivan Ilych still obeyed his orders implicitly and at first derived some comfort from doing so.

From the time of his visit to the doctor, Ivan Ilych's chief occupation was the exact fulfillment of the doctor's instructions regarding hygiene and the taking of medicine, and the observation of his pain and his excretions. His chief interest came to be people's ailments and people's health. When sickness, deaths, or recoveries were mentioned in his presence, especially when the illness resembled his own, he listened with agitation which he tried to hide, asked questions, and applied what he heard to his own case.

The pain did not grow less, but Ivan Ilych made efforts to force himself to think that he was better. And he could do this so long as nothing agitated him. But as soon as he had any unpleasantness with his wife, any lack of success in his official work, or held bad cards at bridge, he was at once acutely sensible of his disease. He had formerly borne such mischances, hoping soon to adjust what was wrong, to master it and attain success, or make a grand slam. But now every mischance upset him and plunged him into despair. He would say to himself: "there now, just as I was beginning to get better and the medicine had begun to take effect, comes this accursed misfortune, or unpleasantness…" And he was furious with the mishap, or with the people who were causing the unpleasantness and killing him, for he felt that this fury was killing him but he could not restrain it. One would have thought that it should have been clear to him that this exasperation with circumstances and people aggravated his illness, and that he ought therefore to ignore unpleasant occurrences. But he drew the very opposite conclusion: he said that he needed peace, and he watched

for everything that might disturb it and became irritable at the slightest infringement of it. His condition was rendered worse by the fact that he read medical books and consulted doctors. The progress of his disease was so gradual that he could deceive himself when comparing one day with another — the difference was so slight. But when he consulted the doctors it seemed to him that he was getting worse, and even very rapidly. Yet despite this he was continually consulting them.

That month he went to see another celebrity, who told him almost the same as the first had done but put his questions rather differently, and the interview with this celebrity only increased Ivan Ilych's doubts and fears. A friend of a friend of his, a very good doctor, diagnosed his illness again quite differently from the others, and though he predicted recovery, his questions and suppositions bewildered Ivan Ilych still more and increased his doubts. A homeopathist diagnosed the disease in yet another way, and prescribed medicine which Ivan Ilych took secretly for a week. But after a week, not feeling any improvement and having lost confidence both in the former doctor's treatment and in this one's, he became still more despondent. One day a lady acquaintance mentioned a cure effected by a wonder-working icon. Ivan Ilych caught himself listening attentively and beginning to believe that it had occurred. This incident alarmed him. "Has my mind really weakened to such an extent?" he asked himself. "Nonsense! It's all rubbish. I mustn't give way to nervous fears but having chosen a doctor must keep strictly to his treatment. That is what I will do. Now it's all settled. I won't think about it, but will follow the treatment seriously till summer, and then we shall see. From now there must be no more of this wavering!" This was easy to say but impossible to carry out. The pain in his side oppressed him and seemed to grow worse and more incessant, while the taste in his mouth grew stranger and stranger. It seemed to him that his breath had a disgusting smell, and he was conscious of a loss of appetite and strength. There was no deceiving himself: something terrible, new, and more important than anything before in his life, was taking place within him of which he alone was aware. Those about him did not understand or would not understand it, but thought everything in the world was going on as usual. That tormented Ivan Ilych more than anything. He saw that his household, especially his wife and daughter who were in a perfect whirl of visiting, did not understand anything of it and were annoyed that he was so depressed and so exacting, as if he were to blame for it. Though they tried to disguise it he saw that he was an obstacle in their path, and that his wife had adopted a definite line in regard to his illness and kept to it regardless of anything he said or did. Her attitude was this: "You know," she would say to her friends, "Ivan Ilych can't do as other people do, and keep to the treatment prescribed for him. One day he'll take his drops and keep strictly to his diet and go to bed in good time, but the next day unless I watch him he'll suddenly forget his medicine, eat sturgeon — which is forbidden — and sit up playing cards till one o'clock in the morning."

"Oh, come, when was that?" Ivan Ilych would ask in vexation. "Only once at Peter Ivanovich's."

"And yesterday with Shebek."

"Well, even if I hadn't stayed up, this pain would have kept me awake."

"Be that as it may you'll never get well like that, but will always make us wretched."

Praskovya Fedorovna's attitude to Ivan Ilych's illness, as she expressed it both to others and to him, was that it was his own fault and was another of the annoyances he caused her. Ivan Ilych felt that this opinion escaped her involuntarily — but that did not make it easier for him.

At the law courts too, Ivan Ilych noticed, or thought he noticed, a strange attitude towards himself. It sometimes seemed to him that people were watching him inquisitively as a man whose place might soon be vacant. Then again, his friends would suddenly begin to chaff him in a friendly way about his low spirits, as if the awful, horrible, and unheard-of thing that was going on within him, incessantly gnawing at him and irresistibly drawing him away, was a very agreeable subject for jests. Schwartz in particular irritated him by his jocularity, vivacity, and *savoir-faire*, which reminded him of what he himself had been ten years ago.

Friends came to make up a set and they sat down to cards. They dealt, bending the new cards to soften them, and he sorted the diamonds in his hand and found he had seven. His partner said "No trumps" and supported him with two diamonds. What more could be wished for? It ought to be jolly and lively. They would make a grand slam. But suddenly Ivan Ilych was conscious of that gnawing pain, that taste in his mouth, and it seemed ridiculous that in such circumstances he should be pleased to make a grand slam.

He looked at his partner Mikhail Mikhaylovich, who rapped the table with his strong hand and instead of snatching up the tricks pushed the cards courteously and indulgently towards Ivan Ilych that he might have the pleasure of gathering them up without the trouble of stretching out his hand for them. "Does he think I am too weak to stretch out my arm?" thought Ivan Ilych, and

forgetting what he was doing he over-trumped his partner, missing the grand slam by three tricks. And what was most awful of all was that he saw how upset Mikhail Mikhaylovich was about it but did not himself care. And it was dreadful to realize why he did not care.

They all saw that he was suffering, and said: “We can stop if you are tired. Take a rest.” Lie down? No, he was not at all tired, and he finished the rubber. All were gloomy and silent. Ivan Ilych felt that he had diffused this gloom over them and could not dispel it. They had supper and went away, and Ivan Ilych was left alone with the consciousness that his life was poisoned and was poisoning the lives of others, and that this poison did not weaken but penetrated more and more deeply into his whole being.

With this consciousness, and with physical pain besides the terror, he must go to bed, often to lie awake the greater part of the night. Next morning he had to get up again, dress, go to the law courts, speak, and write; or if he did not go out, spend at home those twenty-four hours a day each of which was a torture. And he had to live thus all alone on the brink of an abyss, with no one who understood or pitied him.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

12: Death of Ivan Ilych (second half)

12.1: Editor's Introduction
12.2: Death of Ivan Ilych (second half)

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12.1: Editor's Introduction

In the second half of *The Death of Ivan Ilych*, as Ivan grapples with the approach of death, the story turns to the theme of spiritual redemption. Ivan's initial reaction to his illness is denial, followed by anger, fear, and despair. He feels trapped in a senseless universe. Death seems like a cruel and arbitrary punishment. However, as Ivan's physical condition worsens and he grows more isolated from the distractions of his former life, he begins to reflect, more deeply, on his own existence. This process of introspection leads to a gradual transformation in his understanding of life and death.

A turning point in Ivan's spiritual journey occurs when he finally acknowledges the truth of his condition and releases his denial. This moment of clarity allows him to see his past life for what it was—a series of shallow, self-serving choices that led him away from genuine human connection and moral truth. His interactions with his servant, Gerasim, provide a stark contrast to the false relationships he has maintained throughout his life. Gerasim's simple, honest care for Ivan shows him that compassion, humility, and love are the true sources of meaning. Gerasim's acceptance of death as a natural part of life also helps Ivan confront his own mortality with greater courage.

In his final moments, Ivan undergoes a profound inner transformation. As he faces the inevitability of his death, he experiences spiritual enlightenment. He realizes that the fear and pain he has been experiencing are rooted in his attachment to his false, ego-driven self. By letting go of this attachment, Ivan is able to transcend his suffering and achieve a sense of peace. He comes to understand that true meaning is found not in worldly success but in selfless love and the recognition of a higher purpose. His death, rather than being a meaningless end, becomes a moment of spiritual liberation.

In this way, Tolstoy offers a profound meditation on the nature of life, death, and the human search for meaning. Through Ivan's story, he critiques the shallow values of materialism and conformity, showing how both can lead to spiritual emptiness. The story's exploration of death serves as a catalyst for Ivan's awakening, forcing him to confront the truths he has long avoided and guiding him toward a deeper understanding of life's purpose.

Tolstoy ultimately suggests that true meaning is found not in the pursuit of status or wealth but in living authentically, cultivating compassion, and accepting the inevitability of death. Ivan's spiritual transformation at the end offers a hopeful vision of redemption, even in the face of mortality. By confronting the reality of death and rejecting the superficial values of society, Ivan is able to achieve a sense of inner peace and fulfillment. Tolstoy's message is both a critique of modern life and a call for a more genuine, morally grounded way of being.

-Taz Rosenthal

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12.2: Death of Ivan Ilych (second half)

Source:

"The Death of Ivan Ilich"(opens in new window) [open.lib.umn.edu]

Leo Tolstoy
1886

The text offered here is that prepared by Louise and Aylmer Maude. It provides a contemporary translation of the text by persons who were closely acquainted with Tolstoy and who had the benefit of his advice with respect to the translation of difficult passages (Tolstoy had a passable knowledge of English). The Maudes were also the translators and editors of the 21 volume "The Works of Tolstoy" (the so-called Centenary Editon), published by Oxford University Press 1928-37. The translation is in the Public Domain and has No Copyright under United States law.

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V

So one month passed and then another. Just before the New Year his brother-in-law came to town and stayed at their house. Ivan Ilych was at the law courts and Praskovya Fedorovna had gone shopping. When Ivan Ilych came home and entered his study he found his brother-in-law there — a healthy, florid man — unpacking his portmanteau himself. He raised his head on hearing Ivan Ilych's footsteps and looked up at him for a moment without a word. That stare told Ivan Ilych everything. His brother-in-law opened his mouth to utter an exclamation of surprise but checked himself, and that action confirmed it all.

"I have changed, eh?"

"Yes, there is a change."

And after that, try as he would to get his brother-in-law to return to the subject of his looks, the latter would say nothing about it. Praskovya Fedorovna came home and her brother went out to her. Ivan Ilych locked the door and began to examine himself in the glass, first full face, then in profile. He took up a portrait of himself taken with his wife, and compared it with what he saw in the glass. The change in him was immense. Then he bared his arms to the elbow, looked at them, drew the sleeves down again, sat down on an ottoman, and grew blacker than night.

"No, no, this won't do!" he said to himself, and jumped up, went to the table, took up some law papers and began to read them, but could not continue. He unlocked the door and went into the reception-room. The door leading to the drawing-room was shut. He approached it on tiptoe and listened.

"No, you are exaggerating!" Praskovya Fedorovna was saying.

"Exaggerating! Don't you see it? Why, he's a dead man! Look at his eyes — there's no life in them. But what is it that is wrong with him?"

"No one knows. Nikolaevich [that was another doctor] said something, but I don't know what. And Leshchetitsky [this was the celebrated specialist] said quite the contrary…"

Ivan Ilych walked away, went to his own room, lay down, and began musing; "The kidney, a floating kidney." He recalled all the doctors had told him of how it detached itself and swayed about. And by an effort of imagination he tried to catch that kidney and arrest it and support it. So little was needed for this, it seemed to him. "No, I'll go to see Peter Ivanovich again." [That was the friend whose friend was a doctor.] He rang, ordered the carriage, and got ready to go.

"Where are you going, Jean?" asked his wife with a specially sad and exceptionally kind look.

This exceptionally kind look irritated him. He looked morosely at her.

"I must go to see Peter Ivanovich."

He went to see Peter Ivanovich, and together they went to see his friend, the doctor. He was in, and Ivan Ilych had a long talk with him.

Reviewing the anatomical and physiological details of what in the doctor's opinion was going on inside him, he understood it all.

There was something, a small thing, in the vermiform appendix. It might all come right. Only stimulate the energy of one organ and check the activity of another, then absorption would take place and everything would come right. He got home rather late for dinner, ate his dinner, and conversed cheerfully, but could not for a long time bring himself to go back to work in his room. At last, however, he went to his study and did what was necessary, but the consciousness that he had put something aside — an important, intimate matter which he would revert to when his work was done — never left him. When he had finished his work he remembered that this intimate matter was the thought of his vermiform appendix. But he did not give himself up to it, and went to the drawing-room for tea. There were callers there, including the examining magistrate who was a desirable match for his daughter, and they were conversing, playing the piano, and singing. Ivan Ilych, as Praskovya Fedorovna remarked, spent that evening more cheerfully than usual, but he never for a moment forgot that he had postponed the important matter of the appendix. At eleven o'clock he said goodnight and went to his bedroom. Since his illness he had slept alone in a small room next to his study. He undressed and took up a novel by Zola, but instead of reading it he fell into thought, and in his imagination that desired improvement in the vermiform appendix occurred. There was the absorption and evacuation and the re-establishment of normal activity. "Yes, that's it!" he said to himself. "One need only assist nature, that's all." He remembered his medicine, rose, took it, and lay down on his back watching for the beneficent action of the medicine and for it to lessen the pain. "I need only take it regularly and avoid all injurious influences. I am already feeling better, much better." He began touching his side: it was not painful to the touch. "There, I really don't feel it. It's much better already." He put out the light and turned on his side … "The appendix is getting better, absorption is occurring." Suddenly he felt the old, familiar, dull, gnawing pain, stubborn and serious. There was the same familiar loathsome taste in his mouth. His heart sank and he felt dazed. "My God! My God!" he muttered. "Again, again! And it will never cease." And suddenly the matter presented itself in a quite different aspect. "Vermiform appendix! Kidney!" he said to himself. "It's not a question of appendix or kidney, but of life and…death. Yes, life was there and now it is going, going and I cannot stop it. Yes. Why deceive myself? Isn't it obvious to everyone but me that I'm dying, and that it's only a question of weeks, days…it may happen this moment. There was light and now there is darkness. I was here and now I'm going there! Where?" A chill came over him, his breathing ceased, and he felt only the throbbing of his heart.

"When I am not, what will there be? There will be nothing. Then where shall I be when I am no more? Can this be dying? No, I don't want to!" He jumped up and tried to light the candle, felt for it with trembling hands, dropped candle and candlestick on the floor, and fell back on his pillow.

"What's the use? It makes no difference," he said to himself, staring with wide-open eyes into the darkness. "Death. Yes, death. And none of them knows or wishes to know it, and they have no pity for me. Now they are playing." (He heard through the door the distant sound of a song and its accompaniment.) "It's all the same to them, but they will die too! Fools! I first, and they later, but it will be the same for them. And now they are merry…the beasts!"

Anger choked him and he was agonizingly, unbearably miserable. "It is impossible that all men have been doomed to suffer this awful horror!" He raised himself.

"Something must be wrong. I must calm myself — must think it all over from the beginning." And he again began thinking. "Yes, the beginning of my illness: I knocked my side, but I was still quite well that day and the next. It hurt a little, then rather more. I saw the doctors, then followed despondency and anguish, more doctors, and I drew nearer to the abyss. My strength grew less and I kept coming nearer and nearer, and now I have wasted away and there is no light in my eyes. I think of the appendix — but this is death! I think of mending the appendix, and all the while here is death! Can it really be death?" Again terror seized him and he gasped for breath. He leant down and began feeling for the matches, pressing with his elbow on the stand beside the bed. It was in his way and hurt him, he grew furious with it, pressed on it still harder, and upset it. Breathless and in despair he fell on his back, expecting death to come immediately.

Meanwhile the visitors were leaving. Praskovya Fedorovna was seeing them off. She heard something fall and came in.

"What has happened?"

"Nothing. I knocked it over accidentally."

She went out and returned with a candle. He lay there panting heavily, like a man who has run a thousand yards, and stared upwards at her with a fixed look.

“What is it, Jean?”

“No…o…thing. I upset it.” (“Why speak of it? She won’t understand,” he thought.)

And in truth she did not understand. She picked up the stand, lit his candle, and hurried away to see another visitor off. When she came back he still lay on his back, looking upwards.

“What is it? Do you feel worse?”

“Yes.”

She shook her head and sat down.

“Do you know, Jean, I think we must ask Leshchetitsky to come and see you here.”

This meant calling in the famous specialist, regardless of expense. He smiled malignantly and said “No.” She remained a little longer and then went up to him and kissed his forehead.

While she was kissing him he hated her from the bottom of his soul and with difficulty refrained from pushing her away.

“Good night. Please God you’ll sleep.”

“Yes.”

VI

Ivan Ilych saw that he was dying, and he was in continual despair.

In the depth of his heart he knew he was dying, but not only was he not accustomed to the thought, he simply did not and could not grasp it.

The syllogism he had learnt from Kiesewetter’s Logic: “Caius is a man, men are mortal, therefore Caius is mortal,” had always seemed to him correct as applied to Caius, but certainly not as applied to himself. That Caius — man in the abstract — was mortal, was perfectly correct, but he was not Caius, not an abstract man, but a creature quite, quite separate from all others. He had been little Vanya, with a mamma and a papa, with Mitya and Volodya, with the toys, a coachman and a nurse, afterwards with Katenka and with all the joys, griefs, and delights of childhood, boyhood, and youth. What did Caius know of the smell of that striped leather ball Vanya had been so fond of? Had Caius kissed his mother’s hand like that, and did the silk of her dress rustle so for Caius? Had he rioted like that at school when the pastry was bad? Had Caius been in love like that? Could Caius preside at a session as he did? “Caius really was mortal, and it was right for him to die; but for me, little Vanya, Ivan Ilych, with all my thoughts and emotions, it’s altogether a different matter. It cannot be that I ought to die. That would be too terrible.”

Such was his feeling.

“If I had to die like Caius I would have known it was so. An inner voice would have told me so, but there was nothing of the sort in me and I and all my friends felt that our case was quite different from that of Caius. And now here it is!” he said to himself. “It can’t be. It’s impossible! But here it is. How is this? How is one to understand it?”

He could not understand it, and tried to drive this false, incorrect, morbid thought away and to replace it by other proper and healthy thoughts. But that thought, and not the thought only but the reality itself, seemed to come and confront him.

And to replace that thought he called up a succession of others, hoping to find in them some support. He tried to get back into the former current of thoughts that had once screened the thought of death from him. But strange to say, all that had formerly shut off, hidden, and destroyed his consciousness of death, no longer had that effect. Ivan Ilych now spent most of his time in attempting to re-establish that old current. He would say to himself: “I will take up my duties again — after all I used to live by them.” And banishing all doubts he would go to the law courts, enter into conversation with his colleagues, and sit carelessly as was his wont, scanning the crowd with a thoughtful look and leaning both his emaciated arms on the arms of his oak chair; bending over as usual to a colleague and drawing his papers nearer he would interchange whispers with him, and then suddenly raising his eyes and sitting erect would pronounce certain words and open the proceedings. But suddenly in the midst of those proceedings the pain in his side, regardless of the stage the proceedings had reached, would begin its own gnawing work. Ivan Ilych would turn his attention to it and try to drive the thought of it away, but without success. *It* would come and stand before him and look at him, and he would be petrified and the light would die out of his eyes, and he would again begin asking himself whether *It* alone was true.

And his colleagues and subordinates would see with surprise and distress that he, the brilliant and subtle judge, was becoming confused and making mistakes. He would shake himself, try to pull himself together, manage somehow to bring the sitting to a close, and return home with the sorrowful consciousness that his judicial labours could not as formerly hide from him what he wanted them to hide, and could not deliver him from *It*. And what was worst of all was that *It* drew his attention to itself not in order to make him take some action but only that he should look at *It*, look it straight in the face: look at it and without doing anything, suffer inexpressibly.

And to save himself from this condition Ivan Ilych looked for consolations — new screens — and new screens were found and for a while seemed to save him, but then they immediately fell to pieces or rather became transparent, as if *It* penetrated them and nothing could veil *It*.

In these latter days he would go into the drawing-room he had arranged — that drawing-room where he had fallen and for the sake of which (how bitterly ridiculous it seemed) he had sacrificed his life — for he knew that his illness originated with that knock. He would enter and see that something had scratched the polished table. He would look for the cause of this and find that it was the bronze ornamentation of an album, that had got bent. He would take up the expensive album which he had lovingly arranged, and feel vexed with his daughter and her friends for their untidiness — for the album was torn here and there and some of the photographs turned upside down. He would put it carefully in order and bend the ornamentation back into position. Then it would occur to him to place all those things in another corner of the room, near the plants. He would call the footman, but his daughter or wife would come to help him. They would not agree, and his wife would contradict him, and he would dispute and grow angry. But that was all right, for then he did not think about *It*. *It* was invisible.

But then, when he was moving something himself, his wife would say: “Let the servants do it. You will hurt yourself again.” And suddenly *It* would flash through the screen and he would see it. It was just a flash, and he hoped it would disappear, but he would involuntarily pay attention to his side. “It sits there as before, gnawing just the same!” And he could no longer forget *It*, but could distinctly see it looking at him from behind the flowers. “What is it all for?”

“It really is so! I lost my life over that curtain as I might have done when storming a fort. Is that possible? How terrible and how stupid. It can’t be true! It can’t, but it is.”

He would go to his study, lie down, and again be alone with *It*: face to face with *It*. And nothing could be done with *It* except to look at it and shudder.

VII

How it happened it is impossible to say because it came about step by step, unnoticed, but in the third month of Ivan Ilych’s illness, his wife, his daughter, his son, his acquaintances, the doctors, the servants, and above all he himself, were aware that the whole interest he had for other people was whether he would soon vacate his place, and at last release the living from the discomfort caused by his presence and be himself released from his sufferings.

He slept less and less. He was given opium and hypodermic injections of morphine, but this did not relieve him. The dull depression he experienced in a somnolent condition at first gave him a little relief, but only as something new, afterwards it became as distressing as the pain itself or even more so.

Special foods were prepared for him by the doctors’ orders, but all those foods became increasingly distasteful and disgusting to him.

For his excretions also special arrangements had to be made, and this was a torment to him every time — a torment from the uncleanliness, the unseemliness, and the smell, and from knowing that another person had to take part in it.

But just through this most unpleasant matter, Ivan Ilych obtained comfort. Gerasim, the butler’s young assistant, always came in to carry the things out. Gerasim was a clean, fresh peasant lad, grown stout on town food and always cheerful and bright. At first the sight of him, in his clean Russian peasant costume, engaged on that disgusting task embarrassed Ivan Ilych.

Once when he got up from the commode too weak to draw up his trousers, he dropped into a soft armchair and looked with horror at his bare, enfeebled thighs with the muscles so sharply marked on them.

Gerasim with a firm light tread, his heavy boots emitting a pleasant smell of tar and fresh winter air, came in wearing a clean Hessian apron, the sleeves of his print shirt tucked up over his strong bare young arms; and refraining from looking at his sick

master out of consideration for his feelings, and restraining the joy of life that beamed from his face, he went up to the commode.

“Gerasim!” said Ivan Ilych in a weak voice.

“Gerasim started, evidently afraid he might have committed some blunder, and with a rapid movement turned his fresh, kind, simple young face which just showed the first downy signs of a beard.

“Yes, sir?”

“That must be very unpleasant for you. You must forgive me. I am helpless.”

“Oh, why, sir,” and Gerasim’s eyes beamed and he showed his glistening white teeth, “what’s a little trouble? It’s a case of illness with you, sir.”

And his deft strong hands did their accustomed task, and he went out of the room stepping lightly. Five minutes later he as lightly returned.

Ivan Ilych was still sitting in the same position in the armchair.

“Gerasim,” he said when the latter had replaced the freshly- washed utensil. “Please come here and help me.” Gerasim went up to him. “Lift me up. It is hard for me to get up, and I have sent Dmitri away.”

Gerasim went up to him, grasped his master with his strong arms deftly but gently, in the same way that he stepped — lifted him, supported him with one hand, and with the other drew up his trousers and would have set him down again, but Ivan Ilych asked to be led to the sofa. Gerasim, without an effort and without apparent pressure, led him, almost lifting him, to the sofa and placed him on it.

“Thank you. How easily and well you do it all!”

Gerasim smiled again and turned to leave the room. But Ivan Ilych felt his presence such a comfort that he did not want to let him go.

“One thing more, please move up that chair. No, the other one — under my feet. It is easier for me when my feet are raised.”

Gerasim brought the chair, set it down gently in place, and raised Ivan Ilych’s legs on it. It seemed to Ivan Ilych that he felt better while Gerasim was holding up his legs.

“It’s better when my legs are higher,” he said. “Place that cushion under them.”

Gerasim did so. He again lifted the legs and placed them, and again Ivan Ilych felt better while Gerasim held his legs. When he set them down Ivan Ilych fancied he felt worse.

“Gerasim,” he said. “Are you busy now?”

“Not at all, sir,” said Gerasim, who had learnt from the townsfolk how to speak to gentlefolk.

“What have you still to do?”

“What have I to do? I’ve done everything except chopping the logs for tomorrow.”

“Then hold my legs up a bit higher, can you?”

“Of course I can. Why not?” and Gerasim raised his master’s legs higher and Ivan Ilych thought that in that position he did not feel any pain at all.

“And how about the logs?”

“Don’t trouble about that, sir. There’s plenty of time.”

Ivan Ilych told Gerasim to sit down and hold his legs, and began to talk to him. And strange to say it seemed to him that he felt better while Gerasim held his legs up.

After that Ivan Ilych would sometimes call Gerasim and get him to hold his legs on his shoulders, and he liked talking to him. Gerasim did it all easily, willingly, simply, and with a good nature that touched Ivan Ilych. Health, strength, and vitality in other people were offensive to him, but Gerasim’s strength and vitality did not mortify but soothed him.

What tormented Ivan Ilych most was the deception, the lie, which for some reason they all accepted, that he was not dying but was simply ill, and he only need keep quiet and undergo a treatment and then something very good would result. He however knew that do what they would nothing would come of it, only still more agonizing suffering and death. This deception tortured him — their not wishing to admit what they all knew and what he knew, but wanting to lie to him concerning his terrible condition, and wishing and forcing him to participate in that lie. Those lies — lies enacted over him on the eve of his death and destined to degrade this awful, solemn act to the level of their visitings, their curtains, their sturgeon for dinner — were a terrible agony for Ivan Ilych. And strangely enough, many times when they were going through their antics over him he had been within a hairbreadth of calling out to them: “Stop lying! You know and I know that I am dying. Then at least stop lying about it!” But he had never had the spirit to do it. The awful, terrible act of his dying was, he could see, reduced by those about him to the level of a casual, unpleasant, and almost indecorous incident (as if someone entered a drawing room diffusing an unpleasant odour) and this was done by that very decorum which he had served all his life long. He saw that no one felt for him, because no one even wished to grasp his position. Only Gerasim recognized it and pitied him. And so Ivan Ilych felt at ease only with him. He felt comforted when Gerasim supported his legs (sometimes all night long) and refused to go to bed, saying: “Don’t you worry, Ivan Ilych. I’ll get sleep enough later on,” or when he suddenly became familiar and exclaimed: “If you weren’t sick it would be another matter, but as it is, why should I grudge a little trouble?” Gerasim alone did not lie; everything showed that he alone understood the facts of the case and did not consider it necessary to disguise them, but simply felt sorry for his emaciated and enfeebled master. Once when Ivan Ilych was sending him away he even said straight out: “We shall all of us die, so why should I grudge a little trouble?” — expressing the fact that he did not think his work burdensome, because he was doing it for a dying man and hoped someone would do the same for him when his time came.

Apart from this lying, or because of it, what most tormented Ivan Ilych was that no one pitied him as he wished to be pitied. At certain moments after prolonged suffering he wished most of all (though he would have been ashamed to confess it) for someone to pity him as a sick child is pitied. He longed to be petted and comforted. he knew he was an important functionary, that he had a beard turning grey, and that therefore what he longed for was impossible, but still he longed for it. And in Gerasim’s attitude towards him there was something akin to what he wished for, and so that attitude comforted him. Ivan Ilych wanted to weep, wanted to be petted and cried over, and then his colleague Shebek would come, and instead of weeping and being petted, Ivan Ilych would assume a serious, severe, and profound air, and by force of habit would express his opinion on a decision of the Court of Cassation and would stubbornly insist on that view. This falsity around him and within him did more than anything else to poison his last days.

VIII

It was morning. He knew it was morning because Gerasim had gone, and Peter the footman had come and put out the candles, drawn back one of the curtains, and begun quietly to tidy up. Whether it was morning or evening, Friday or Sunday, made no difference, it was all just the same: the gnawing, unmitigated, agonizing pain, never ceasing for an instant, the consciousness of life inexorably waning but not yet extinguished, the approach of that ever dreaded and hateful Death which was the only reality, and always the same falsity. What were days, weeks, hours, in such a case?

“Will you have some tea, sir?”

“He wants things to be regular, and wishes the gentlefolk to drink tea in the morning,” thought ivan Ilych, and only said “No.”

“Wouldn’t you like to move onto the sofa, sir?”

“He wants to tidy up the room, and I’m in the way. I am uncleanliness and disorder,” he thought, and said only:

“No, leave me alone.”

The man went on bustling about. Ivan Ilych stretched out his hand. Peter came up, ready to help.

“What is it, sir?”

“My watch.”

Peter took the watch which was close at hand and gave it to his master.

“Half-past eight. Are they up?”

“No sir, except Vladimir Ivanovich” (the son) “who has gone to school. Praskovya Fedorovna ordered me to wake her if you asked for her. Shall I do so?”

“No, there’s no need to.” “Perhaps I’d better have some tea,” he thought, and added aloud: “Yes, bring me some tea.”

Peter went to the door, but Ivan Ilych dreaded being left alone. “How can I keep him here? Oh yes, my medicine.” –Peter, give me my medicine.– “Why not? Perhaps it may still do some good.” He took a spoonful and swallowed it. “No, it won’t help. It’s all tomfoolery, all deception,” he decided as soon as he became aware of the familiar, sickly, hopeless taste. “No, I can’t believe in it any longer. But the pain, why this pain? If it would only cease just for a moment!” And he moaned. Peter turned towards him. “It’s all right. Go and fetch me some tea.”

Peter went out. Left alone Ivan Ilych groaned not so much with pain, terrible though that was, as from mental anguish. Always and for ever the same, always these endless days and nights. If only it would come quicker! If only *what* would come quicker? Death, darkness?…No, no! anything rather than death!

When Peter returned with the tea on a tray, Ivan Ilych stared at him for a time in perplexity, not realizing who and what he was. Peter was disconcerted by that look and his embarrassment brought Ivan Ilych to himself.

“Oh, tea! All right, put it down. Only help me to wash and put on a clean shirt.”

And Ivan Ilych began to wash. With pauses for rest, he washed his hands and then his face, cleaned his teeth, brushed his hair, looked in the glass. He was terrified by what he saw, especially by the limp way in which his hair clung to his pallid forehead.

While his shirt was being changed he knew that he would be still more frightened at the sight of his body, so he avoided looking at it. Finally he was ready. He drew on a dressing-gown, wrapped himself in a plaid, and sat down in the armchair to take his tea. For a moment he felt refreshed, but as soon as he began to drink the tea he was again aware of the same taste, and the pain also returned. He finished it with an effort, and then lay down stretching out his legs, and dismissed Peter.

Always the same. Now a spark of hope flashes up, then a sea of despair rages, and always pain; always pain, always despair, and always the same. When alone he had a dreadful and distressing desire to call someone, but he knew beforehand that with others present it would be still worse. “Another dose of morphine–to lose consciousness. I will tell him, the doctor, that he must think of something else. It’s impossible, impossible, to go on like this.”

An hour and another pass like that. But now there is a ring at the door bell. Perhaps it’s the doctor? It is. He comes in fresh, hearty, plump, and cheerful, with that look on his face that seems to say: “There now, you’re in a panic about something, but we’ll arrange it all for you directly!” The doctor knows this expression is out of place here, but he has put it on once for all and can’t take it off — like a man who has put on a frock-coat in the morning to pay a round of calls.

The doctor rubs his hands vigorously and reassuringly.

“Brr! How cold it is! There’s such a sharp frost; just let me warm myself!” he says, as if it were only a matter of waiting till he was warm, and then he would put everything right.

“Well now, how are you?”

Ivan Ilych feels that the doctor would like to say: “Well, how are our affairs?” but that even he feels that this would not do, and says instead: “What sort of a night have you had?”

Ivan Ilych looks at him as much as to say: “Are you really never ashamed of lying?” But the doctor does not wish to understand this question, and Ivan Ilych says: “Just as terrible as ever. The pain never leaves me and never subsides. If only something … ”

“Yes, you sick people are always like that…. There, now I think I am warm enough. Even Praskovya Fedorovna, who is so particular, could find no fault with my temperature. Well, now I can say good-morning,” and the doctor presses his patient’s hand.

Then dropping his former playfulness, he begins with a most serious face to examine the patient, feeling his pulse and taking his temperature, and then begins the sounding and auscultation.

Ivan Ilych knows quite well and definitely that all this is nonsense and pure deception, but when the doctor, getting down on his knee, leans over him, putting his ear first higher then lower, and performs various gymnastic movements over him with a significant expression on his face, Ivan Ilych submits to it all as he used to submit to the speeches of the lawyers, though he knew very well that they were all lying and why they were lying.

The doctor, kneeling on the sofa, is still sounding him when Praskovya Fedorovna's silk dress rustles at the door and she is heard scolding Peter for not having let her know of the doctor's arrival.

She comes in, kisses her husband, and at once proceeds to prove that she has been up a long time already, and only owing to a misunderstanding failed to be there when the doctor arrived.

Ivan Ilych looks at her, scans her all over, sets against her the whiteness and plumpness and cleanness of her hands and neck, the gloss of her hair, and the sparkle of her vivacious eyes. He hates her with his whole soul. And the thrill of hatred he feels for her makes him suffer from her touch.

Her attitude towards him and his disease is still the same. Just as the doctor had adopted a certain relation to his patient which he could not abandon, so had she formed one towards him — that he was not doing something he ought to do and was himself to blame, and that she reproached him lovingly for this — and she could not now change that attitude.

"You see he doesn't listen to me and doesn't take his medicine at the proper time. And above all he lies in a position that is no doubt bad for him — with his legs up."

She described how he made Gerasim hold his legs up.

The doctor smiled with a contemptuous affability that said: "What's to be done? These sick people do have foolish fancies of that kind, but we must forgive them."

When the examination was over the doctor looked at his watch, and then Praskovya Fedorovna announced to Ivan Ilych that it was of course as he pleased, but she had sent today for a celebrated specialist who would examine him and have a consultation with Michael Danilovich (their regular doctor).

"Please don't raise any objections. I am doing this for my own sake," she said ironically, letting it be felt that she was doing it all for his sake and only said this to leave him no right to refuse. He remained silent, knitting his brows. He felt that he was surrounded and involved in such a mesh of falsity that it was hard to unravel anything.

Everything she did for him was entirely for her own sake, and she told him she was doing for herself what she actually was doing for herself, as if that was so incredible that he must understand the opposite.

At half-past eleven the celebrated specialist arrived. Again the sounding began and the significant conversations in his presence and in another room, about the kidney and the appendix, and the questions and answers, with such an air of importance that again, instead of the real question of life and death which now alone confronted him, the question arose of the kidney and appendix which were not behaving as they ought to and would now be attacked by Michael Danilovich and the specialist and forced to amend their ways.

The celebrated specialist took leave of him with a serious though not hopeless look, and in reply to the timid question Ivan Ilych, with eyes glistening with fear and hope, put to him as to whether there was a chance of recovery, said that he could not vouch for it but there was a possibility. The look of hope with which Ivan Ilych watched the doctor out was so pathetic that Praskovya Fedorovna, seeing it, even wept as she left the room to hand the doctor his fee.

The gleam of hope kindled by the doctor's encouragement did not last long. The same room, the same pictures, curtains, wall-paper, medicine bottles, were all there, and the same aching suffering body, and Ivan Ilych began to moan. They gave him a subcutaneous injection and he sank into oblivion.

It was twilight when he came to. They brought him his dinner and he swallowed some beef tea with difficulty, and then everything was the same again and night was coming on.

After dinner, at seven o'clock, Praskovya Fedorovna came into the room in evening dress, her full bosom pushed up by her corset, and with traces of powder on her face. She had reminded him in the morning that they were going to the theatre. Sarah Bernhardt was visiting the town and they had a box, which he had insisted on their taking. Now he had forgotten about it and her toilet offended him, but he concealed his vexation when he remembered that he had himself insisted on their securing a box and going because it would be an instructive and aesthetic pleasure for the children.

Praskovya Fedorovna came in, self-satisfied but yet with a rather guilty air. She sat down and asked how he was, but, as he saw, only for the sake of asking and not in order to learn about it, knowing that there was nothing to learn — and then went on to what

she really wanted to say: that she would not on any account have gone but that the box had been taken and Helen and their daughter were going, as well as Petrishchev (the examining magistrate, their daughter's fiance) and that it was out of the question to let them go alone; but that she would have much preferred to sit with him for a while; and he must be sure to follow the doctor's orders while she was away.

"Oh, and Fedor Petrovich" (the fiance) "would like to come in. May he? And Lisa?"

"All right."

Their daughter came in in full evening dress, her fresh young flesh exposed (making a show of that very flesh which in his own case caused so much suffering), strong, healthy, evidently in love, and impatient with illness, suffering, and death, because they interfered with her happiness.

Fedor Petrovich came in too, in evening dress, his hair curled *à la Capoul*, a tight stiff collar round his long sinewy neck, an enormous white shirt-front and narrow black trousers tightly stretched over his strong thighs. He had one white glove tightly drawn on, and was holding his opera hat in his hand.

Following him the schoolboy crept in unnoticed, in a new uniform, poor little fellow, and wearing gloves. Terribly dark shadows showed under his eyes, the meaning of which Ivan Ilych knew well.

His son had always seemed pathetic to him, and now it was dreadful to see the boy's frightened look of pity. It seemed to Ivan Ilych that Vasya was the only one besides Gerasim who understood and pitied him.

They all sat down and again asked how he was. A silence followed. Lisa asked her mother about the opera glasses, and there was an altercation between mother and daughter as to who had taken them and where they had been put. This occasioned some unpleasantness.

Fedor Petrovich inquired of Ivan Ilych whether he had ever seen Sarah Bernhardt. Ivan Ilych did not at first catch the question, but then replied: "No, have you seen her before?"

"Yes, in *Adrienne Lecouvreur*."

Praskovya Fedorovna mentioned some roles in which Sarah Bernhardt was particularly good. Her daughter disagreed. Conversation sprang up as to the elegance and realism of her acting — the sort of conversation that is always repeated and is always the same.

In the midst of the conversation Fedor Petrovich glanced at Ivan Ilych and became silent. The others also looked at him and grew silent. Ivan Ilych was staring with glittering eyes straight before him, evidently indignant with them. This had to be rectified, but it was impossible to do so. The silence had to be broken, but for a time no one dared to break it and they all became afraid that the conventional deception would suddenly become obvious and the truth become plain to all. Lisa was the first to pluck up courage and break that silence, but by trying to hide what everybody was feeling, she betrayed it.

"Well, if we are going it's time to start," she said, looking at her watch, a present from her father, and with a faint and significant smile at Fedor Petrovich relating to something known only to them. She got up with a rustle of her dress.

They all rose, said good-night, and went away.

When they had gone it seemed to Ivan Ilych that he felt better; the falsity had gone with them. But the pain remained — that same pain and that same fear that made everything monotonously alike, nothing harder and nothing easier. Everything was worse.

Again minute followed minute and hour followed hour. Everything remained the same and there was no cessation. And the inevitable end of it all became more and more terrible.

"Yes, send Gerasim here," he replied to a question Peter asked.

IX

His wife returned late at night. She came in on tiptoe, but he heard her, opened his eyes, and made haste to close them again. She wished to send Gerasim away and to sit with him herself, but he opened his eyes and said: "No, go away."

"Are you in great pain?"

“Always the same.”

“Take some opium.”

He agreed and took some. She went away.

Till about three in the morning he was in a state of stupefied misery. It seemed to him that he and his pain were being thrust into a narrow, deep black sack, but though they were pushed further and further in they could not be pushed to the bottom. And this, terrible enough in itself, was accompanied by suffering. He was frightened yet wanted to fall through the sack, he struggled but yet co-operated. And suddenly he broke through, fell, and regained consciousness. Gerasim was sitting at the foot of the bed dozing quietly and patiently, while he himself lay with his emaciated stockinged legs resting on Gerasim’s shoulders; the same shaded candle was there and the same unceasing pain.

“Go away, Gerasim,” he whispered.

“It’s all right, sir. I’ll stay a while.”

“No. Go away.”

He removed his legs from Gerasim’s shoulders, turned sideways onto his arm, and felt sorry for himself. He only waited till Gerasim had gone into the next room and then restrained himself no longer but wept like a child. He wept on account of his helplessness, his terrible loneliness, the cruelty of man, the cruelty of God, and the absence of God.

“Why hast Thou done all this? Why hast Thou brought me here? Why, why dost Thou torment me so terribly?”

He did not expect an answer and yet wept because there was no answer and could be none. The pain again grew more acute, but he did not stir and did not call. He said to himself: “Go on! Strike me! But what is it for? What have I done to Thee? What is it for?”

Then he grew quiet and not only ceased weeping but even held his breath and became all attention. It was as though he were listening not to an audible voice but to the voice of his soul, to the current of thoughts arising within him.

“What is it you want?” was the first clear conception capable of expression in words, that he heard.

“What do you want? What do you want?” he repeated to himself.

“What do I want? To live and not to suffer,” he answered.

And again he listened with such concentrated attention that even his pain did not distract him.

“To live? How?” asked his inner voice.

“Why, to live as I used to — well and pleasantly.”

“As you lived before, well and pleasantly?” the voice repeated.

And in imagination he began to recall the best moments of his pleasant life. But strange to say none of those best moments of his pleasant life now seemed at all what they had then seemed — none of them except the first recollections of childhood. There, in childhood, there had been something really pleasant with which it would be possible to live if it could return. But the child who had experienced that happiness existed no longer, it was like a reminiscence of somebody else.

As soon as the period began which had produced the present Ivan Ilych, all that had then seemed joys now melted before his sight and turned into something trivial and often nasty.

And the further he departed from childhood and the nearer he came to the present the more worthless and doubtful were the joys. This began with the School of Law. A little that was really good was still found there — there was light-heartedness, friendship, and hope. But in the upper classes there had already been fewer of such good moments. Then during the first years of his official career, when he was in the service of the governor, some pleasant moments again occurred: they were the memories of love for a woman. Then all became confused and there was still less of what was good; later on again there was still less that was good, and the further he went the less there was. His marriage, a mere accident, then the disenchantment that followed it, his wife’s bad breath and the sensuality and hypocrisy: then that deadly official life and those preoccupations about money, a year of it, and two, and ten, and twenty, and always the same thing. And the longer it lasted the more deadly it became. “It is as if I had been going downhill while I imagined I was going up. And that is really what it was. I was going up in public opinion, but to the same extent life was ebbing away from me. And now it is all done and there is only death.

“Then what does it mean? Why? It can’t be that life is so senseless and horrible. But if it really has been so horrible and senseless, why must I die and die in agony? There is something wrong!

“Maybe I did not live as I ought to have done,” it suddenly occurred to him. “But how could that be, when I did everything properly?” he replied, and immediately dismissed from his mind this, the sole solution of all the riddles of life and death, as something quite impossible.

“Then what do you want now? To live? Live how? Live as you lived in the law courts when the usher proclaimed ‘The judge is coming!’ The judge is coming, the judge!” he repeated to himself. “Here he is, the judge. But I am not guilty!” he exclaimed angrily. “What is it for?” And he ceased crying, but turning his face to the wall continued to ponder on the same question: Why, and for what purpose, is there all this horror? But however much he pondered he found no answer. And whenever the thought occurred to him, as it often did, that it all resulted from his not having lived as he ought to have done, he at once recalled the correctness of his whole life and dismissed so strange an idea.

X

Another fortnight passed. Ivan Ilych now no longer left his sofa. He would not lie in bed but lay on the sofa, facing the wall nearly all the time. He suffered ever the same unceasing agonies and in his loneliness pondered always on the same insoluble question: “What is this? Can it be that it is Death?” And the inner voice answered: “Yes, it is Death.”

“Why these sufferings?” And the voice answered, “For no reason — they just are so.” Beyond and besides this there was nothing.

From the very beginning of his illness, ever since he had first been to see the doctor, Ivan Ilych’s life had been divided between two contrary and alternating moods: now it was despair and the expectation of this uncomprehended and terrible death, and now hope and an intently interested observation of the functioning of his organs. Now before his eyes there was only a kidney or an intestine that temporarily evaded its duty, and now only that incomprehensible and dreadful death from which it was impossible to escape.

These two states of mind had alternated from the very beginning of his illness, but the further it progressed the more doubtful and fantastic became the conception of the kidney, and the more real the sense of impending death.

He had but to call to mind what he had been three months before and what he was now, to call to mind with what regularity he had been going downhill, for every possibility of hope to be shattered.

Latterly during the loneliness in which he found himself as he lay facing the back of the sofa, a loneliness in the midst of a populous town and surrounded by numerous acquaintances and relations but that yet could not have been more complete anywhere — either at the bottom of the sea or under the earth — during that terrible loneliness Ivan ilych had lived only in memories of the past. Pictures of his past rose before him one after another. They always began with what was nearest in time and then went back to what was most remote — to his childhood — and rested there. If he thought of the stewed prunes that had been offered him that day, his mind went back to the raw shrivelled French plums of his childhood, their peculiar flavour and the flow of saliva when he sucked their stones, and along with the memory of that taste came a whole series of memories of those days: his nurse, his brother, and their toys. “No, I mustn’t thing of that….It is too painful,” Ivan Ilych said to himself, and brought himself back to the present — to the button on the back of the sofa and the creases in its morocco. “Morocco is expensive, but it does not wear well: there had been a quarrel about it. It was a different kind of quarrel and a different kind of morocco that time when we tore father’s portfolio and were punished, and mamma brought us some tarts….” And again his thoughts dwelt on his childhood, and again it was painful and he tried to banish them and fix his mind on something else.

Then again together with that chain of memories another series passed through his mind — of how his illness had progressed and grown worse. There also the further back he looked the more life there had been. There had been more of what was good in life and more of life itself. The two merged together. “Just as the pain went on getting worse and worse, so my life grew worse and worse,” he thought. “There is one bright spot there at the back, at the beginning of life, and afterwards all becomes blacker and blacker and proceeds more and more rapidly — in inverse ration to the square of the distance from death,” thought Ivan Ilych. And the example of a stone falling downwards with increasing velocity entered his mind. Life, a series of increasing sufferings, flies further and further towards its end — the most terrible suffering. “I am flying….” He shuddered, shifted himself, and tried to resist, but was already aware that resistance was impossible, and again with eyes weary of gazing but unable to cease seeing what was before them, he stared at the back of the sofa and waited — awaiting that dreadful fall and shock and destruction.

“Resistance is impossible!” he said to himself. “If I could only understand what it is all for! But that too is impossible. An explanation would be possible if it could be said that I have not lived as I ought to. But it is impossible to say that,” and he remembered all the legality, correctitude, and propriety of his life. “That at any rate can certainly not be admitted,” he thought, and his lips smiled ironically as if someone could see that smile and be taken in by it. “There is no explanation! Agony, death….What for?”

XI

Another two weeks went by in this way and during that fortnight an even occurred that Ivan Ilych and his wife had desired. Petrishchev formally proposed. It happened in the evening. The next day Praskovya Fedorovna came into her husband’s room considering how best to inform him of it, but that very night there had been a fresh change for the worse in his condition. She found him still lying on the sofa but in a different position. He lay on his back, groaning and staring fixedly straight in front of him.

She began to remind him of his medicines, but he turned his eyes towards her with such a look that she did not finish what she was saying; so great an animosity, to her in particular, did that look express.

“For Christ’s sake let me die in peace!” he said.

She would have gone away, but just then their daughter came in and went up to say good morning. He looked at her as he had done at his wife, and in reply to her inquiry about his health said dryly that he would soon free them all of himself. They were both silent and after sitting with him for a while went away.

“Is it our fault?” Lisa said to her mother. “It’s as if we were to blame! I am sorry for papa, but why should we be tortured?”

The doctor came at his usual time. Ivan Ilych answered “Yes” and “No,” never taking his angry eyes from him, and at last said: “You know you can do nothing for me, so leave me alone.”

“We can ease your sufferings.”

“You can’t even do that. Let me be.”

The doctor went into the drawing room and told Praskovya Fedorovna that the case was very serious and that the only resource left was opium to allay her husband’s sufferings, which must be terrible.

It was true, as the doctor said, that Ivan Ilych’s physical sufferings were terrible, but worse than the physical sufferings were his mental sufferings which were his chief torture.

His mental sufferings were due to the fact that that night, as he looked at Gerasim’s sleepy, good-natured face with its prominent cheek-bones, the question suddenly occurred to him: “What if my whole life has been wrong?”

It occurred to him that what had appeared perfectly impossible before, namely that he had not spent his life as he should have done, might after all be true. It occurred to him that his scarcely perceptible attempts to struggle against what was considered good by the most highly placed people, those scarcely noticeable impulses which he had immediately suppressed, might have been the real thing, and all the rest false. And his professional duties and the whole arrangement of his life and of his family, and all his social and official interests, might all have been false. He tried to defend all those things to himself and suddenly felt the weakness of what he was defending. There was nothing to defend.

“But if that is so,” he said to himself, “and I am leaving this life with the consciousness that I have lost all that was given me and it is impossible to rectify it — what then?”

He lay on his back and began to pass his life in review in quite a new way. In the morning when he saw first his footman, then his wife, then his daughter, and then the doctor, their every word and movement confirmed to him the awful truth that had been revealed to him during the night. In them he saw himself — all that for which he had lived — and saw clearly that it was not real at all, but a terrible and huge deception which had hidden both life and death. This consciousness intensified his physical suffering tenfold. He groaned and tossed about, and pulled at his clothing which choked and stifled him. And he hated them on that account.

He was given a large dose of opium and became unconscious, but at noon his sufferings began again. He drove everybody away and tossed from side to side.

His wife came to him and said:

“Jean, my dear, do this for me. It can’t do any harm and often helps. Healthy people often do it.”

He opened his eyes wide.

“What? Take communion? Why? It’s unnecessary! However…”

She began to cry.

“Yes, do, my dear. I’ll send for our priest. He is such a nice man.”

“All right. Very well,” he muttered.

When the priest came and heard his confession, Ivan Ilych was softened and seemed to feel a relief from his doubts and consequently from his sufferings, and for a moment there came a ray of hope. He again began to think of the vermiform appendix and the possibility of correcting it. He received the sacrament with tears in his eyes.

When they laid him down again afterwards he felt a moment’s ease, and the hope that he might live awoke in him again. He began to think of the operation that had been suggested to him. “To live! I want to live!” he said to himself.

His wife came in to congratulate him after his communion, and when uttering the usual conventional words she added:

“You feel better, don’t you?”

Without looking at her he said “Yes.”

Her dress, her figure, the expression of her face, the tone of her voice, all revealed the same thing. “This is wrong, it is not as it should be. All you have lived for and still live for is falsehood and deception, hiding life and death from you.” And as soon as he admitted that thought, his hatred and his agonizing physical suffering again sprang up, and with that suffering a consciousness of the unavoidable, approaching end. And to this was added a new sensation of grinding shooting pain and a feeling of suffocation.

The expression of his face when he uttered that “Yes” was dreadful. Having uttered it, he looked her straight in the eyes, turned on his face with a rapidity extraordinary in his weak state and shouted:

“Go away! Go away and leave me alone!”

XII

From that moment the screaming began that continued for three days, and was so terrible that one could not hear it through two closed doors without horror. At the moment he answered his wife realized that he was lost, that there was no return, that the end had come, the very end, and his doubts were still unsolved and remained doubts.

“Oh! Oh! Oh!” he cried in various intonations. He had begun by screaming “I won’t!” and continued screaming on the letter “O”.

For three whole days, during which time did not exist for him, he struggled in that black sack into which he was being thrust by an invisible, resistless force. He struggled as a man condemned to death struggles in the hands of the executioner, knowing that he cannot save himself. And every moment he felt that despite all his efforts he was drawing nearer and nearer to what terrified him. He felt that his agony was due to his being thrust into that black hole and still more to his not being able to get right into it. He was hindered from getting into it by his conviction that his life had been a good one. That very justification of his life held him fast and prevented his moving forward, and it caused him the most torment of all.

Suddenly some force struck him in the chest and side, making it still harder to breathe, and he fell through the hole and there at the bottom was a light. What had happened to him was like the sensation one sometimes experiences in a railway carriage when one thinks one is going backwards while one is really going forwards and suddenly becomes aware of the real direction.

“Yes, it was not the right thing,” he said to himself, “but that’s no matter. It can be done. But what *is* the right thing? he asked himself, and suddenly grew quiet.

This occurred at the end of the third day, two hours before his death. Just then his schoolboy son had crept softly in and gone up to the bedside. The dying man was still screaming desperately and waving his arms. His hand fell on the boy’s head, and the boy caught it, pressed it to his lips, and began to cry.

At that very moment Ivan Ilych fell through and caught sight of the light, and it was revealed to him that though his life had not been what it should have been, this could still be rectified. He asked himself, “What *is* the right thing?” and grew still, listening.

Then he felt that someone was kissing his hand. He opened his eyes, looked at his son, and felt sorry for him. His wife camp up to him and he glanced at her. She was gazing at him open-mouthed, with undried tears on her nose and cheek and a despairing look on her face. He felt sorry for her too.

“Yes, I am making them wretched,” he thought. “They are sorry, but it will be better for them when I die.” He wished to say this but had not the strength to utter it. “Besides, why speak? I must act,” he thought. with a look at his wife he indicated his son and said: “Take him away…sorry for him…sorry for you too….” He tried to add, “Forgive me,” but said “Forego” and waved his hand, knowing that He whose understanding mattered would understand.

And suddenly it grew clear to him that what had been oppressing him and would not leave him was all dropping away at once from two sides, from ten sides, and from all sides. He was sorry for them, he must act so as not to hurt them: release them and free himself from these sufferings. “How good and how simple!” he thought. “And the pain?” he asked himself. “What has become of it? Where are you, pain?”

He turned his attention to it.

“Yes, here it is. Well, what of it? Let the pain be.”

“And death…where is it?”

He sought his former accustomed fear of death and did not find it. “Where is it? What death?” There was no fear because there was no death.

In place of death there was light.

“So that’s what it is!” he suddenly exclaimed aloud. “What joy!”

To him all this happened in a single instant, and the meaning of that instant did not change. For those present his agony continued for another two hours. Something rattled in his throat, his emaciated body twitched, then the gasping and rattle became less and less frequent.

“It is finished!” said someone near him.

He heard these words and repeated them in his soul.

“Death is finished,” he said to himself. “It is no more!”

He drew in a breath, stopped in the midst of a sigh, stretched out, and died.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

13: The Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka (first half)

13.2: Editor's Introduction
13.3: The Metamorphosis, first half

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13.2: Editor's Introduction

Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* features themes of alienation, identity, and the absurdity of human existence. In the first half, all these are intricately woven into a narrative fabric, along with rich characterizations and conflicts that illustrate the main character Gregor Samsa's inner turmoil and the outer pressures he faces. Through Gregor's sudden, inexplicable transformation into a giant beetle, Kafka creates a story that is both surreal and deeply psychological, examining both the nature of humanity and the complexities of family and social relationships.

A central theme is alienation, personal and social. For example, Gregor wakes up to find himself transformed into a huge bug, and immediately experiences physical alienation from his human body, which also symbolizes a deeper disconnection from his family, his job, and perhaps society at large. Even before this, though, Gregor is alienated. He works as a traveling salesman, a job he dislikes but puts up with in order to support his family. However, his work, combined with a strong sense of family duty, leave him with little personal fulfillment. His sudden transformation into a helpless bug intensifies this alienation as it renders him incapable of fulfilling even this role in the family or engaging in normal human activities. His family, initially horrified by his appearance, then begins to distance themselves emotionally as well, increasing Gregor's alienation, and adding in isolation as well.

Identity is another theme that strongly emerges, since Gregor's transformation calls into question the nature of identity itself. After all, he still possesses human thoughts and emotions after his metamorphosis. But his body is no longer human. This raises philosophical questions about identity, for instance, is one's identity as a human being based on physical form, consciousness, social roles, or all three?

Kafka continues exploring these questions as Gregor struggles to reconcile his human consciousness with his insect body. His inability to communicate with his family after the transformation deepens his crisis of identity. He is, in essence, stripped of his humanity, even though he retains human thoughts. This odd juxtaposition of a human consciousness inside an insect body adds a layer of tragicomic absurdity to his new and inexplicable condition.

Gregor's transformation is never explained, perhaps suggesting a world that is indifferent to logic or human understanding. To add to the tragicomedy, his first response to his predicament is neither horror nor panic, but concern about missing work and disappointing his employer. His life before now has been defined by monotonous labor and a lack of control, combined with a heavy sense of duty. All this is suspended after his body no longer lets him to function as usual.

Before the morning of his metamorphosis, Gregor had been a dutiful if oppressed man, living a life devoted to self-sacrifice for his family's sake, as he works tirelessly to pay off their debts. Even after his transformation, his first thoughts are of how he will get to work and how his boss will react to his absence.

This preoccupation shows Gregor's internalization of social and family expectations. In fact, he has come to value himself only in terms of his ability to provide for others. His value to his family is tied solely to his role as a breadwinner, underscoring how his existence, even before his metamorphosis, has limited and dehumanized him.

However, the family's reaction to Gregor's transformation reveals their own limitations. Gregor's father is authoritarian and domineering, and his initial response is aggression, throwing his son back into his room and later pelting him with apples. This reflects the father's frustration and anger at Gregor's failure to continue supporting the family, as well as his own inability to control a new and astounding situation. Gregor's mother, on the other hand, expresses sympathy for her son but is ultimately too emotionally fragile to offer meaningful support. She displays only helplessness in the face of change. Grete, Gregor's sister, at first shows compassion by feeding him and cleaning his room, but even her care is perfunctory and motivated by a sense of duty. As time passes, her sympathy also wanes.

Thus, the story contains both internal and external conflicts. Gregor's internal conflict is his struggle to adjust to his new condition. His body no longer obeys his will, and his desires and instincts even become more insect-like. For instance, he experiences comfort when crawling along the walls or hiding beneath the couch. As Gregor grows more alienated from both his family and society, the internal battle between human mind and insect body continues.

Externally, he also faces real conflict with his family. Their initial shock and horror at his transformation gradually turns into resentment as they come to see him as a burden. This perhaps also underscores broader societal conflict, since Gregor's inability to work renders him useless to both his family and the outside world. The tension between Gregor and his father is especially intense,

as Mr. Samsa had previously been financially dependent on Gregor, but now their roles are reversed. Eventually this sparks violence on the father's part, illustrating the fickleness and unpredictability of human relationships in the face of unexpected change.

In all of these ways, the first half of *The Metamorphosis* sets up a narrative rich in thematic depth, complex characterizations, and a mounting sense of internal and external conflict. Kafka's exploration of these themes, characterizations, and conflicts lays the groundwork for a tragic and unsettling second half, about a man who has been dehumanized, both by his physical transformation and by a society that no longer values him. Gregor's internal struggles and his growing family estrangement paint a bleak picture of the human condition, in which identity is fragile and existence itself may lack purpose or meaning.

-Taz Rosenthal

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13.3: The Metamorphosis, first half

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK METAMORPHOSIS ***

Metamorphosis

by Franz Kafka

Translated by David Wyllie

One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a horrible vermin. He lay on his armour-like back, and if he lifted his head a little he could see his brown belly, slightly domed and divided by arches into stiff sections. The bedding was hardly able to cover it and seemed ready to slide off any moment. His many legs, pitifully thin compared with the size of the rest of him, waved about helplessly as he looked.

“What’s happened to me?” he thought. It wasn’t a dream. His room, a proper human room although a little too small, lay peacefully between its four familiar walls. A collection of textile samples lay spread out on the table—Samsa was a travelling salesman—and above it there hung a picture that he had recently cut out of an illustrated magazine and housed in a nice, gilded frame. It showed a lady fitted out with a fur hat and fur boa who sat upright, raising a heavy fur muff that covered the whole of her lower arm towards the viewer.

Gregor then turned to look out the window at the dull weather. Drops of rain could be heard hitting the pane, which made him feel quite sad. “How about if I sleep a little bit longer and forget all this nonsense”, he thought, but that was something he was unable to do because he was used to sleeping on his right, and in his present state couldn’t get into that position. However hard he threw himself onto his right, he always rolled back to where he was. He must have tried it a hundred times, shut his eyes so that he wouldn’t have to look at the floundering legs, and only stopped when he began to feel a mild, dull pain there that he had never felt before.

“Oh, God”, he thought, “what a strenuous career it is that I’ve chosen! Travelling day in and day out. Doing business like this takes much more effort than doing your own business at home, and on top of that there’s the curse of travelling, worries about making train connections, bad and irregular food, contact with different people all the time so that you can never get to know anyone or become friendly with them. It can all go to Hell!” He felt a slight itch up on his belly; pushed himself slowly up on his back towards the headboard so that he could lift his head better; found where the itch was, and saw that it was covered with lots of little

white spots which he didn't know what to make of; and when he tried to feel the place with one of his legs he drew it quickly back because as soon as he touched it he was overcome by a cold shudder.

He slid back into his former position. "Getting up early all the time", he thought, "it makes you stupid. You've got to get enough sleep. Other travelling salesmen live a life of luxury. For instance, whenever I go back to the guest house during the morning to copy out the contract, these gentlemen are always still sitting there eating their breakfasts. I ought to just try that with my boss; I'd get kicked out on the spot. But who knows, maybe that would be the best thing for me. If I didn't have my parents to think about I'd have given in my notice a long time ago, I'd have gone up to the boss and told him just what I think, tell him everything I would, let him know just what I feel. He'd fall right off his desk! And it's a funny sort of business to be sitting up there at your desk, talking down at your subordinates from up there, especially when you have to go right up close because the boss is hard of hearing. Well, there's still some hope; once I've got the money together to pay off my parents' debt to him—another five or six years I suppose—that's definitely what I'll do. That's when I'll make the big change. First of all though, I've got to get up, my train leaves at five."

And he looked over at the alarm clock, ticking on the chest of drawers. "God in Heaven!" he thought. It was half past six and the hands were quietly moving forwards, it was even later than half past, more like quarter to seven. Had the alarm clock not rung? He could see from the bed that it had been set for four o'clock as it should have been; it certainly must have rung. Yes, but was it possible to quietly sleep through that furniture-rattling noise? True, he had not slept peacefully, but probably all the more deeply because of that. What should he do now? The next train went at seven; if he were to catch that he would have to rush like mad and the collection of samples was still not packed, and he did not at all feel particularly fresh and lively. And even if he did catch the train he would not avoid his boss's anger as the office assistant would have been there to see the five o'clock train go, he would have put in his report about Gregor's not being there a long time ago. The office assistant was the boss's man, spineless, and with no understanding. What about if he reported sick? But that would be extremely strained and suspicious as in five years of service Gregor had never once yet been ill. His boss would certainly come round with the doctor from the medical insurance company, accuse his parents of having a lazy son, and accept the doctor's recommendation not to make any claim as the doctor believed that no-one was ever ill but that many were workshy. And what's more, would he have been entirely wrong in this case? Gregor did in fact, apart from excessive sleepiness after sleeping for so long, feel completely well and even felt much hungrier than usual.

He was still hurriedly thinking all this through, unable to decide to get out of the bed, when the clock struck quarter to seven. There was a cautious knock at the door near his head. "Gregor", somebody called—it was his mother—"it's quarter to seven. Didn't you want to go somewhere?" That gentle voice! Gregor was shocked when he heard his own voice answering, it could hardly be recognised as the voice he had had before. As if from deep inside him, there was a painful and uncontrollable squeaking mixed in with it, the words could be made out at first but then there was a sort of echo which made them unclear, leaving the hearer unsure whether he had heard properly or not. Gregor had wanted to give a full answer and explain everything, but in the circumstances contented himself with saying: "Yes, mother, yes, thank-you, I'm getting up now." The change in Gregor's voice probably could not be noticed outside through the wooden door, as his mother was satisfied with this explanation and shuffled away. But this short conversation made the other members of the family aware that Gregor, against their expectations was still at home, and soon his father came knocking at one of the side doors, gently, but with his fist. "Gregor, Gregor", he called, "what's wrong?" And after a short while he called again with a warning deepness in his voice: "Gregor! Gregor!" At the other side door his sister came plaintively: "Gregor? Aren't you well? Do you need anything?" Gregor answered to both sides: "I'm ready, now", making an effort to remove all the strangeness from his voice by enunciating very carefully and putting long pauses between each, individual word. His father went back to his breakfast, but his sister whispered: "Gregor, open the door, I beg of you." Gregor, however, had no thought of opening the door, and instead congratulated himself for his cautious habit, acquired from his travelling, of locking all doors at night even when he was at home.

The first thing he wanted to do was to get up in peace without being disturbed, to get dressed, and most of all to have his breakfast. Only then would he consider what to do next, as he was well aware that he would not bring his thoughts to any sensible conclusions by lying in bed. He remembered that he had often felt a slight pain in bed, perhaps caused by lying awkwardly, but that had always turned out to be pure imagination and he wondered how his imaginings would slowly resolve themselves today. He did not have the slightest doubt that the change in his voice was nothing more than the first sign of a serious cold, which was an occupational hazard for travelling salesmen.

It was a simple matter to throw off the covers; he only had to blow himself up a little and they fell off by themselves. But it became difficult after that, especially as he was so exceptionally broad. He would have used his arms and his hands to push himself up; but instead of them he only had all those little legs continuously moving in different directions, and which he was moreover unable to control. If he wanted to bend one of them, then that was the first one that would stretch itself out; and if he finally managed to do what he wanted with that leg, all the others seemed to be set free and would move about painfully. “This is something that can’t be done in bed”, Gregor said to himself, “so don’t keep trying to do it”.

The first thing he wanted to do was get the lower part of his body out of the bed, but he had never seen this lower part, and could not imagine what it looked like; it turned out to be too hard to move; it went so slowly; and finally, almost in a frenzy, when he carelessly shoved himself forwards with all the force he could gather, he chose the wrong direction, hit hard against the lower bedpost, and learned from the burning pain he felt that the lower part of his body might well, at present, be the most sensitive.

So then he tried to get the top part of his body out of the bed first, carefully turning his head to the side. This he managed quite easily, and despite its breadth and its weight, the bulk of his body eventually followed slowly in the direction of the head. But when he had at last got his head out of the bed and into the fresh air it occurred to him that if he let himself fall it would be a miracle if his head were not injured, so he became afraid to carry on pushing himself forward the same way. And he could not knock himself out now at any price; better to stay in bed than lose consciousness.

It took just as much effort to get back to where he had been earlier, but when he lay there sighing, and was once more watching his legs as they struggled against each other even harder than before, if that was possible, he could think of no way of bringing peace and order to this chaos. He told himself once more that it was not possible for him to stay in bed and that the most sensible thing to do would be to get free of it in whatever way he could at whatever sacrifice. At the same time, though, he did not forget to remind himself that calm consideration was much better than rushing to desperate conclusions. At times like this he would direct his eyes to the window and look out as clearly as he could, but unfortunately, even the other side of the narrow street was enveloped in morning fog and the view had little confidence or cheer to offer him. “Seven o’clock, already”, he said to himself when the clock struck again, “seven o’clock, and there’s still a fog like this.” And he lay there quietly a while longer, breathing lightly as if he perhaps expected the total stillness to bring things back to their real and natural state.

But then he said to himself: “Before it strikes quarter past seven I’ll definitely have to have got properly out of bed. And by then somebody will have come round from work to ask what’s happened to me as well, as they open up at work before seven o’clock.” And so he set himself to the task of swinging the entire length of his body out of the bed all at the same time. If he succeeded in falling out of bed in this way and kept his head raised as he did so he could probably avoid injuring it. His back seemed to be quite hard, and probably nothing would happen to it falling onto the carpet. His main concern was for the loud noise he was bound to make, and which even through all the doors would probably raise concern if not alarm. But it was something that had to be risked.

When Gregor was already sticking half way out of the bed—the new method was more of a game than an effort, all he had to do was rock back and forth—it occurred to him how simple everything would be if somebody came to help him. Two strong people—he had his father and the maid in mind—would have been more than enough; they would only have to push their arms under the dome of his back, peel him away from the bed, bend down with the load and then be patient and careful as he swang over onto the floor, where, hopefully, the little legs would find a use. Should he really call for help though, even apart from the fact that all the doors were locked? Despite all the difficulty he was in, he could not suppress a smile at this thought.

After a while he had already moved so far across that it would have been hard for him to keep his balance if he rocked too hard. The time was now ten past seven and he would have to make a final decision very soon. Then there was a ring at the door of the flat. “That’ll be someone from work”, he said to himself, and froze very still, although his little legs only became all the more lively as they danced around. For a moment everything remained quiet. “They’re not opening the door”, Gregor said to himself, caught in some nonsensical hope. But then of course, the maid’s firm steps went to the door as ever and opened it. Gregor only needed to hear the visitor’s first words of greeting and he knew who it was—the chief clerk himself. Why did Gregor have to be the only one condemned to work for a company where they immediately became highly suspicious at the slightest shortcoming? Were all employees, every one of them, louts, was there not one of them who was faithful and devoted who would go so mad with pangs of conscience that he couldn’t get out of bed if he didn’t spend at least a couple of hours in the morning on company business? Was it really not enough to let one of the trainees make enquiries—assuming enquiries were even necessary—did the chief clerk have to come himself, and did they have to show the whole, innocent family that this was so suspicious that only the chief clerk could be trusted to have the wisdom to investigate it? And more because these thoughts had made him upset than through any proper

decision, he swang himself with all his force out of the bed. There was a loud thump, but it wasn't really a loud noise. His fall was softened a little by the carpet, and Gregor's back was also more elastic than he had thought, which made the sound muffled and not too noticeable. He had not held his head carefully enough, though, and hit it as he fell; annoyed and in pain, he turned it and rubbed it against the carpet.

"Something's fallen down in there", said the chief clerk in the room on the left. Gregor tried to imagine whether something of the sort that had happened to him today could ever happen to the chief clerk too; you had to concede that it was possible. But as if in gruff reply to this question, the chief clerk's firm footsteps in his highly polished boots could now be heard in the adjoining room. From the room on his right, Gregor's sister whispered to him to let him know: "Gregor, the chief clerk is here." "Yes, I know", said Gregor to himself; but without daring to raise his voice loud enough for his sister to hear him.

"Gregor", said his father now from the room to his left, "the chief clerk has come round and wants to know why you didn't leave on the early train. We don't know what to say to him. And anyway, he wants to speak to you personally. So please open up this door. I'm sure he'll be good enough to forgive the untidiness of your room." Then the chief clerk called "Good morning, Mr. Samsa". "He isn't well", said his mother to the chief clerk, while his father continued to speak through the door. "He isn't well, please believe me. Why else would Gregor have missed a train! The lad only ever thinks about the business. It nearly makes me cross the way he never goes out in the evenings; he's been in town for a week now but stayed home every evening. He sits with us in the kitchen and just reads the paper or studies train timetables. His idea of relaxation is working with his fretsaw. He's made a little frame, for instance, it only took him two or three evenings, you'll be amazed how nice it is; it's hanging up in his room; you'll see it as soon as Gregor opens the door. Anyway, I'm glad you're here; we wouldn't have been able to get Gregor to open the door by ourselves; he's so stubborn; and I'm sure he isn't well, he said this morning that he is, but he isn't." "I'll be there in a moment", said Gregor slowly and thoughtfully, but without moving so that he would not miss any word of the conversation. "Well I can't think of any other way of explaining it, Mrs. Samsa", said the chief clerk, "I hope it's nothing serious. But on the other hand, I must say that if we people in commerce ever become slightly unwell then, fortunately or unfortunately as you like, we simply have to overcome it because of business considerations." "Can the chief clerk come in to see you now then?", asked his father impatiently, knocking at the door again. "No", said Gregor. In the room on his right there followed a painful silence; in the room on his left his sister began to cry.

So why did his sister not go and join the others? She had probably only just got up and had not even begun to get dressed. And why was she crying? Was it because he had not got up, and had not let the chief clerk in, because he was in danger of losing his job and if that happened his boss would once more pursue their parents with the same demands as before? There was no need to worry about things like that yet. Gregor was still there and had not the slightest intention of abandoning his family. For the time being he just lay there on the carpet, and no-one who knew the condition he was in would seriously have expected him to let the chief clerk in. It was only a minor discourtesy, and a suitable excuse could easily be found for it later on, it was not something for which Gregor could be sacked on the spot. And it seemed to Gregor much more sensible to leave him now in peace instead of disturbing him with talking at him and crying. But the others didn't know what was happening, they were worried, that would excuse their behaviour.

The chief clerk now raised his voice, "Mr. Samsa", he called to him, "what is wrong? You barricade yourself in your room, give us no more than yes or no for an answer, you are causing serious and unnecessary concern to your parents and you fail—and I mention this just by the way—you fail to carry out your business duties in a way that is quite unheard of. I'm speaking here on behalf of your parents and of your employer, and really must request a clear and immediate explanation. I am astonished, quite astonished. I thought I knew you as a calm and sensible person, and now you suddenly seem to be showing off with peculiar whims. This morning, your employer did suggest a possible reason for your failure to appear, it's true—it had to do with the money that was recently entrusted to you—but I came near to giving him my word of honour that that could not be the right explanation. But now that I see your incomprehensible stubbornness I no longer feel any wish whatsoever to intercede on your behalf. And nor is your position all that secure. I had originally intended to say all this to you in private, but since you cause me to waste my time here for no good reason I don't see why your parents should not also learn of it. Your turnover has been very unsatisfactory of late; I grant you that it's not the time of year to do especially good business, we recognise that; but there simply is no time of year to do no business at all, Mr. Samsa, we cannot allow there to be."

"But Sir", called Gregor, beside himself and forgetting all else in the excitement, "I'll open up immediately, just a moment. I'm slightly unwell, an attack of dizziness, I haven't been able to get up. I'm still in bed now. I'm quite fresh again now, though. I'm

just getting out of bed. Just a moment. Be patient! It's not quite as easy as I'd thought. I'm quite alright now, though. It's shocking, what can suddenly happen to a person! I was quite alright last night, my parents know about it, perhaps better than me, I had a small symptom of it last night already. They must have noticed it. I don't know why I didn't let you know at work! But you always think you can get over an illness without staying at home. Please, don't make my parents suffer! There's no basis for any of the accusations you're making; nobody's ever said a word to me about any of these things. Maybe you haven't read the latest contracts I sent in. I'll set off with the eight o'clock train, as well, these few hours of rest have given me strength. You don't need to wait, sir; I'll be in the office soon after you, and please be so good as to tell that to the boss and recommend me to him!"

And while Gregor gushed out these words, hardly knowing what he was saying, he made his way over to the chest of drawers—this was easily done, probably because of the practise he had already had in bed—where he now tried to get himself upright. He really did want to open the door, really did want to let them see him and to speak with the chief clerk; the others were being so insistent, and he was curious to learn what they would say when they caught sight of him. If they were shocked then it would no longer be Gregor's responsibility and he could rest. If, however, they took everything calmly he would still have no reason to be upset, and if he hurried he really could be at the station for eight o'clock. The first few times he tried to climb up on the smooth chest of drawers he just slid down again, but he finally gave himself one last swing and stood there upright; the lower part of his body was in serious pain but he no longer gave any attention to it. Now he let himself fall against the back of a nearby chair and held tightly to the edges of it with his little legs. By now he had also calmed down, and kept quiet so that he could listen to what the chief clerk was saying.

"Did you understand a word of all that?" the chief clerk asked his parents, "surely he's not trying to make fools of us". "Oh, God!" called his mother, who was already in tears, "he could be seriously ill and we're making him suffer. Grete! Grete!" she then cried. "Mother?" his sister called from the other side. They communicated across Gregor's room. "You'll have to go for the doctor straight away. Gregor is ill. Quick, get the doctor. Did you hear the way Gregor spoke just now?" "That was the voice of an animal", said the chief clerk, with a calmness that was in contrast with his mother's screams. "Anna! Anna!" his father called into the kitchen through the entrance hall, clapping his hands, "get a locksmith here, now!" And the two girls, their skirts swishing, immediately ran out through the hall, wrenching open the front door of the flat as they went. How had his sister managed to get dressed so quickly? There was no sound of the door banging shut again; they must have left it open; people often do in homes where something awful has happened.

Gregor, in contrast, had become much calmer. So they couldn't understand his words any more, although they seemed clear enough to him, clearer than before—perhaps his ears had become used to the sound. They had realised, though, that there was something wrong with him, and were ready to help. The first response to his situation had been confident and wise, and that made him feel better. He felt that he had been drawn back in among people, and from the doctor and the locksmith he expected great and surprising achievements—although he did not really distinguish one from the other. Whatever was said next would be crucial, so, in order to make his voice as clear as possible, he coughed a little, but taking care to do this not too loudly as even this might well sound different from the way that a human coughs and he was no longer sure he could judge this for himself. Meanwhile, it had become very quiet in the next room. Perhaps his parents were sat at the table whispering with the chief clerk, or perhaps they were all pressed against the door and listening.

Gregor slowly pushed his way over to the door with the chair. Once there he let go of it and threw himself onto the door, holding himself upright against it using the adhesive on the tips of his legs. He rested there a little while to recover from the effort involved and then set himself to the task of turning the key in the lock with his mouth. He seemed, unfortunately, to have no proper teeth—how was he, then, to grasp the key?—but the lack of teeth was, of course, made up for with a very strong jaw; using the jaw, he really was able to start the key turning, ignoring the fact that he must have been causing some kind of damage as a brown fluid came from his mouth, flowed over the key and dripped onto the floor. "Listen", said the chief clerk in the next room, "he's turning the key." Gregor was greatly encouraged by this; but they all should have been calling to him, his father and his mother too: "Well done, Gregor", they should have cried, "keep at it, keep hold of the lock!" And with the idea that they were all excitedly following his efforts, he bit on the key with all his strength, paying no attention to the pain he was causing himself. As the key turned round he turned around the lock with it, only holding himself upright with his mouth, and hung onto the key or pushed it down again with the whole weight of his body as needed. The clear sound of the lock as it snapped back was Gregor's sign that he could break his concentration, and as he regained his breath he said to himself: "So, I didn't need the locksmith after all". Then he lay his head on the handle of the door to open it completely.

Because he had to open the door in this way, it was already wide open before he could be seen. He had first to slowly turn himself around one of the double doors, and he had to do it very carefully if he did not want to fall flat on his back before entering the room. He was still occupied with this difficult movement, unable to pay attention to anything else, when he heard the chief clerk exclaim a loud “Oh!”, which sounded like the soughing of the wind. Now he also saw him—he was the nearest to the door—his hand pressed against his open mouth and slowly retreating as if driven by a steady and invisible force. Gregor’s mother, her hair still dishevelled from bed despite the chief clerk’s being there, looked at his father. Then she unfolded her arms, took two steps forward towards Gregor and sank down onto the floor into her skirts that spread themselves out around her as her head disappeared down onto her breast. His father looked hostile, and clenched his fists as if wanting to knock Gregor back into his room. Then he looked uncertainly round the living room, covered his eyes with his hands and wept so that his powerful chest shook.

So Gregor did not go into the room, but leant against the inside of the other door which was still held bolted in place. In this way only half of his body could be seen, along with his head above it which he leant over to one side as he peered out at the others. Meanwhile the day had become much lighter; part of the endless, grey-black building on the other side of the street—which was a hospital—could be seen quite clearly with the austere and regular line of windows piercing its façade; the rain was still falling, now throwing down large, individual droplets which hit the ground one at a time. The washing up from breakfast lay on the table; there was so much of it because, for Gregor’s father, breakfast was the most important meal of the day and he would stretch it out for several hours as he sat reading a number of different newspapers. On the wall exactly opposite there was photograph of Gregor when he was a lieutenant in the army, his sword in his hand and a carefree smile on his face as he called forth respect for his uniform and bearing. The door to the entrance hall was open and as the front door of the flat was also open he could see onto the landing and the stairs where they began their way down below.

“Now, then”, said Gregor, well aware that he was the only one to have kept calm, “I’ll get dressed straight away now, pack up my samples and set off. Will you please just let me leave? You can see”, he said to the chief clerk, “that I’m not stubborn and I like to do my job; being a commercial traveller is arduous but without travelling I couldn’t earn my living. So where are you going, in to the office? Yes? Will you report everything accurately, then? It’s quite possible for someone to be temporarily unable to work, but that’s just the right time to remember what’s been achieved in the past and consider that later on, once the difficulty has been removed, he will certainly work with all the more diligence and concentration. You’re well aware that I’m seriously in debt to our employer as well as having to look after my parents and my sister, so that I’m trapped in a difficult situation, but I will work my way out of it again. Please don’t make things any harder for me than they are already, and don’t take sides against me at the office. I know that nobody likes the travellers. They think we earn an enormous wage as well as having a soft time of it. That’s just prejudice but they have no particular reason to think better of it. But you, sir, you have a better overview than the rest of the staff, in fact, if I can say this in confidence, a better overview than the boss himself—it’s very easy for a businessman like him to make mistakes about his employees and judge them more harshly than he should. And you’re also well aware that we travellers spend almost the whole year away from the office, so that we can very easily fall victim to gossip and chance and groundless complaints, and it’s almost impossible to defend yourself from that sort of thing, we don’t usually even hear about them, or if at all it’s when we arrive back home exhausted from a trip, and that’s when we feel the harmful effects of what’s been going on without even knowing what caused them. Please, don’t go away, at least first say something to show that you grant that I’m at least partly right!”

But the chief clerk had turned away as soon as Gregor had started to speak, and, with protruding lips, only stared back at him over his trembling shoulders as he left. He did not keep still for a moment while Gregor was speaking, but moved steadily towards the door without taking his eyes off him. He moved very gradually, as if there had been some secret prohibition on leaving the room. It was only when he had reached the entrance hall that he made a sudden movement, drew his foot from the living room, and rushed forward in a panic. In the hall, he stretched his right hand far out towards the stairway as if out there, there were some supernatural force waiting to save him.

Gregor realised that it was out of the question to let the chief clerk go away in this mood if his position in the firm was not to be put into extreme danger. That was something his parents did not understand very well; over the years, they had become convinced that this job would provide for Gregor for his entire life, and besides, they had so much to worry about at present that they had lost sight of any thought for the future. Gregor, though, did think about the future. The chief clerk had to be held back, calmed down, convinced and finally won over; the future of Gregor and his family depended on it! If only his sister were here! She was clever; she was already in tears while Gregor was still lying peacefully on his back. And the chief clerk was a lover of women, surely she could persuade him; she would close the front door in the entrance hall and talk him out of his shocked state. But his sister was not

there, Gregor would have to do the job himself. And without considering that he still was not familiar with how well he could move about in his present state, or that his speech still might not—or probably would not—be understood, he let go of the door; pushed himself through the opening; tried to reach the chief clerk on the landing who, ridiculously, was holding on to the banister with both hands; but Gregor fell immediately over and, with a little scream as he sought something to hold onto, landed on his numerous little legs. Hardly had that happened than, for the first time that day, he began to feel alright with his body; the little legs had the solid ground under them; to his pleasure, they did exactly as he told them; they were even making the effort to carry him where he wanted to go; and he was soon believing that all his sorrows would soon be finally at an end. He held back the urge to move but swayed from side to side as he crouched there on the floor. His mother was not far away in front of him and seemed, at first, quite engrossed in herself, but then she suddenly jumped up with her arms outstretched and her fingers spread shouting: “Help, for pity’s sake, Help!” The way she held her head suggested she wanted to see Gregor better, but the unthinking way she was hurrying backwards showed that she did not; she had forgotten that the table was behind her with all the breakfast things on it; when she reached the table she sat quickly down on it without knowing what she was doing; without even seeming to notice that the coffee pot had been knocked over and a gush of coffee was pouring down onto the carpet.

“Mother, mother”, said Gregor gently, looking up at her. He had completely forgotten the chief clerk for the moment, but could not help himself snapping in the air with his jaws at the sight of the flow of coffee. That set his mother screaming anew, she fled from the table and into the arms of his father as he rushed towards her. Gregor, though, had no time to spare for his parents now; the chief clerk had already reached the stairs; with his chin on the banister, he looked back for the last time. Gregor made a run for him; he wanted to be sure of reaching him; the chief clerk must have expected something, as he leapt down several steps at once and disappeared; his shouts resounding all around the staircase. The flight of the chief clerk seemed, unfortunately, to put Gregor’s father into a panic as well. Until then he had been relatively self controlled, but now, instead of running after the chief clerk himself, or at least not impeding Gregor as he ran after him, Gregor’s father seized the chief clerk’s stick in his right hand (the chief clerk had left it behind on a chair, along with his hat and overcoat), picked up a large newspaper from the table with his left, and used them to drive Gregor back into his room, stamping his foot at him as he went. Gregor’s appeals to his father were of no help, his appeals were simply not understood, however much he humbly turned his head his father merely stamped his foot all the harder. Across the room, despite the chilly weather, Gregor’s mother had pulled open a window, leant far out of it and pressed her hands to her face. A strong draught of air flew in from the street towards the stairway, the curtains flew up, the newspapers on the table fluttered and some of them were blown onto the floor. Nothing would stop Gregor’s father as he drove him back, making hissing noises at him like a wild man. Gregor had never had any practice in moving backwards and was only able to go very slowly. If Gregor had only been allowed to turn round he would have been back in his room straight away, but he was afraid that if he took the time to do that his father would become impatient, and there was the threat of a lethal blow to his back or head from the stick in his father’s hand any moment. Eventually, though, Gregor realised that he had no choice as he saw, to his disgust, that he was quite incapable of going backwards in a straight line; so he began, as quickly as possible and with frequent anxious glances at his father, to turn himself round. It went very slowly, but perhaps his father was able to see his good intentions as he did nothing to hinder him, in fact now and then he used the tip of his stick to give directions from a distance as to which way to turn. If only his father would stop that unbearable hissing! It was making Gregor quite confused. When he had nearly finished turning round, still listening to that hissing, he made a mistake and turned himself back a little the way he had just come. He was pleased when he finally had his head in front of the doorway, but then saw that it was too narrow, and his body was too broad to get through it without further difficulty. In his present mood, it obviously did not occur to his father to open the other of the double doors so that Gregor would have enough space to get through. He was merely fixed on the idea that Gregor should be got back into his room as quickly as possible. Nor would he ever have allowed Gregor the time to get himself upright as preparation for getting through the doorway. What he did, making more noise than ever, was to drive Gregor forwards all the harder as if there had been nothing in the way; it sounded to Gregor as if there was now more than one father behind him; it was not a pleasant experience, and Gregor pushed himself into the doorway without regard for what might happen. One side of his body lifted itself, he lay at an angle in the doorway, one flank scraped on the white door and was painfully injured, leaving vile brown flecks on it, soon he was stuck fast and would not have been able to move at all by himself, the little legs along one side hung quivering in the air while those on the other side were pressed painfully against the ground. Then his father gave him a hefty shove from behind which released him from where he was held and sent him flying, and heavily bleeding, deep into his room. The door was slammed shut with the stick, then, finally, all was quiet.

II

It was not until it was getting dark that evening that Gregor awoke from his deep and coma-like sleep. He would have woken soon afterwards anyway even if he hadn't been disturbed, as he had had enough sleep and felt fully rested. But he had the impression that some hurried steps and the sound of the door leading into the front room being carefully shut had woken him. The light from the electric street lamps shone palely here and there onto the ceiling and tops of the furniture, but down below, where Gregor was, it was dark. He pushed himself over to the door, feeling his way clumsily with his antennae—of which he was now beginning to learn the value—in order to see what had been happening there. The whole of his left side seemed like one, painfully stretched scar, and he limped badly on his two rows of legs. One of the legs had been badly injured in the events of that morning—it was nearly a miracle that only one of them had been—and dragged along lifelessly.

It was only when he had reached the door that he realised what it actually was that had drawn him over to it; it was the smell of something to eat. By the door there was a dish filled with sweetened milk with little pieces of white bread floating in it. He was so pleased he almost laughed, as he was even hungrier than he had been that morning, and immediately dipped his head into the milk, nearly covering his eyes with it. But he soon drew his head back again in disappointment; not only did the pain in his tender left side make it difficult to eat the food—he was only able to eat if his whole body worked together as a snuffling whole—but the milk did not taste at all nice. Milk like this was normally his favourite drink, and his sister had certainly left it there for him because of that, but he turned, almost against his own will, away from the dish and crawled back into the centre of the room.

Through the crack in the door, Gregor could see that the gas had been lit in the living room. His father at this time would normally be sat with his evening paper, reading it out in a loud voice to Gregor's mother, and sometimes to his sister, but there was now not a sound to be heard. Gregor's sister would often write and tell him about this reading, but maybe his father had lost the habit in recent times. It was so quiet all around too, even though there must have been somebody in the flat. "What a quiet life it is the family lead", said Gregor to himself, and, gazing into the darkness, felt a great pride that he was able to provide a life like that in such a nice home for his sister and parents. But what now, if all this peace and wealth and comfort should come to a horrible and frightening end? That was something that Gregor did not want to think about too much, so he started to move about, crawling up and down the room.

Once during that long evening, the door on one side of the room was opened very slightly and hurriedly closed again; later on the door on the other side did the same; it seemed that someone needed to enter the room but thought better of it. Gregor went and waited immediately by the door, resolved either to bring the timorous visitor into the room in some way or at least to find out who it was; but the door was opened no more that night and Gregor waited in vain. The previous morning while the doors were locked everyone had wanted to get in there to him, but now, now that he had opened up one of the doors and the other had clearly been unlocked some time during the day, no-one came, and the keys were in the other sides.

It was not until late at night that the gaslight in the living room was put out, and now it was easy to see that his parents and sister had stayed awake all that time, as they all could be distinctly heard as they went away together on tip-toe. It was clear that no-one would come into Gregor's room any more until morning; that gave him plenty of time to think undisturbed about how he would have to re-arrange his life. For some reason, the tall, empty room where he was forced to remain made him feel uneasy as he lay there flat on the floor, even though he had been living in it for five years. Hardly aware of what he was doing other than a slight feeling of shame, he hurried under the couch. It pressed down on his back a little, and he was no longer able to lift his head, but he nonetheless felt immediately at ease and his only regret was that his body was too broad to get it all underneath.

He spent the whole night there. Some of the time he passed in a light sleep, although he frequently woke from it in alarm because of his hunger, and some of the time was spent in worries and vague hopes which, however, always led to the same conclusion: for the time being he must remain calm, he must show patience and the greatest consideration so that his family could bear the unpleasantness that he, in his present condition, was forced to impose on them.

Gregor soon had the opportunity to test the strength of his decisions, as early the next morning, almost before the night had ended, his sister, nearly fully dressed, opened the door from the front room and looked anxiously in. She did not see him straight away, but when she did notice him under the couch—he had to be somewhere, for God's sake, he couldn't have flown away—she was so shocked that she lost control of herself and slammed the door shut again from outside. But she seemed to regret her behaviour, as she opened the door again straight away and came in on tip-toe as if entering the room of someone seriously ill or even of a stranger. Gregor had pushed his head forward, right to the edge of the couch, and watched her. Would she notice that he had left the milk as it was, realise that it was not from any lack of hunger and bring him in some other food that was more suitable? If she didn't do it herself he would rather go hungry than draw her attention to it, although he did feel a terrible urge to rush forward from

under the couch, throw himself at his sister's feet and beg her for something good to eat. However, his sister noticed the full dish immediately and looked at it and the few drops of milk splashed around it with some surprise. She immediately picked it up—using a rag, not her bare hands—and carried it out. Gregor was extremely curious as to what she would bring in its place, imagining the wildest possibilities, but he never could have guessed what his sister, in her goodness, actually did bring. In order to test his taste, she brought him a whole selection of things, all spread out on an old newspaper. There were old, half-rotten vegetables; bones from the evening meal, covered in white sauce that had gone hard; a few raisins and almonds; some cheese that Gregor had declared inedible two days before; a dry roll and some bread spread with butter and salt. As well as all that she had poured some water into the dish, which had probably been permanently set aside for Gregor's use, and placed it beside them. Then, out of consideration for Gregor's feelings, as she knew that he would not eat in front of her, she hurried out again and even turned the key in the lock so that Gregor would know he could make things as comfortable for himself as he liked. Gregor's little legs whirred, at last he could eat. What's more, his injuries must already have completely healed as he found no difficulty in moving. This amazed him, as more than a month earlier he had cut his finger slightly with a knife, he thought of how his finger had still hurt the day before yesterday. "Am I less sensitive than I used to be, then?", he thought, and was already sucking greedily at the cheese which had immediately, almost compellingly, attracted him much more than the other foods on the newspaper. Quickly one after another, his eyes watering with pleasure, he consumed the cheese, the vegetables and the sauce; the fresh foods, on the other hand, he didn't like at all, and even dragged the things he did want to eat a little way away from them because he couldn't stand the smell. Long after he had finished eating and lay lethargic in the same place, his sister slowly turned the key in the lock as a sign to him that he should withdraw. He was immediately startled, although he had been half asleep, and he hurried back under the couch. But he needed great self-control to stay there even for the short time that his sister was in the room, as eating so much food had rounded out his body a little and he could hardly breathe in that narrow space. Half suffocating, he watched with bulging eyes as his sister unselfconsciously took a broom and swept up the left-overs, mixing them in with the food he had not even touched at all as if it could not be used any more. She quickly dropped it all into a bin, closed it with its wooden lid, and carried everything out. She had hardly turned her back before Gregor came out again from under the couch and stretched himself.

This was how Gregor received his food each day now, once in the morning while his parents and the maid were still asleep, and the second time after everyone had eaten their meal at midday as his parents would sleep for a little while then as well, and Gregor's sister would send the maid away on some errand. Gregor's father and mother certainly did not want him to starve either, but perhaps it would have been more than they could stand to have any more experience of his feeding than being told about it, and perhaps his sister wanted to spare them what distress she could as they were indeed suffering enough.

It was impossible for Gregor to find out what they had told the doctor and the locksmith that first morning to get them out of the flat. As nobody could understand him, nobody, not even his sister, thought that he could understand them, so he had to be content to hear his sister's sighs and appeals to the saints as she moved about his room. It was only later, when she had become a little more used to everything—there was, of course, no question of her ever becoming fully used to the situation—that Gregor would sometimes catch a friendly comment, or at least a comment that could be construed as friendly. "He's enjoyed his dinner today", she might say when he had diligently cleared away all the food left for him, or if he left most of it, which slowly became more and more frequent, she would often say, sadly, "now everything's just been left there again".

Although Gregor wasn't able to hear any news directly he did listen to much of what was said in the next rooms, and whenever he heard anyone speaking he would scurry straight to the appropriate door and press his whole body against it. There was seldom any conversation, especially at first, that was not about him in some way, even if only in secret. For two whole days, all the talk at every mealtime was about what they should do now; but even between meals they spoke about the same subject as there were always at least two members of the family at home—nobody wanted to be at home by themselves and it was out of the question to leave the flat entirely empty. And on the very first day the maid had fallen to her knees and begged Gregor's mother to let her go without delay. It was not very clear how much she knew of what had happened but she left within a quarter of an hour, tearfully thanking Gregor's mother for her dismissal as if she had done her an enormous service. She even swore emphatically not to tell anyone the slightest about what had happened, even though no-one had asked that of her.

Now Gregor's sister also had to help his mother with the cooking; although that was not so much bother as no-one ate very much. Gregor often heard how one of them would unsuccessfully urge another to eat, and receive no more answer than "no thanks, I've had enough" or something similar. No-one drank very much either. His sister would sometimes ask his father whether he would like a beer, hoping for the chance to go and fetch it herself. When his father then said nothing she would add, so that he would not

feel selfish, that she could send the housekeeper for it, but then his father would close the matter with a big, loud “No”, and no more would be said.

Even before the first day had come to an end, his father had explained to Gregor’s mother and sister what their finances and prospects were. Now and then he stood up from the table and took some receipt or document from the little cash box he had saved from his business when it had collapsed five years earlier. Gregor heard how he opened the complicated lock and then closed it again after he had taken the item he wanted. What he heard his father say was some of the first good news that Gregor heard since he had first been incarcerated in his room. He had thought that nothing at all remained from his father’s business, at least he had never told him anything different, and Gregor had never asked him about it anyway. Their business misfortune had reduced the family to a state of total despair, and Gregor’s only concern at that time had been to arrange things so that they could all forget about it as quickly as possible. So then he started working especially hard, with a fiery vigour that raised him from a junior salesman to a travelling representative almost overnight, bringing with it the chance to earn money in quite different ways. Gregor converted his success at work straight into cash that he could lay on the table at home for the benefit of his astonished and delighted family. They had been good times and they had never come again, at least not with the same splendour, even though Gregor had later earned so much that he was in a position to bear the costs of the whole family, and did bear them. They had even got used to it, both Gregor and the family, they took the money with gratitude and he was glad to provide it, although there was no longer much warm affection given in return. Gregor only remained close to his sister now. Unlike him, she was very fond of music and a gifted and expressive violinist, it was his secret plan to send her to the conservatory next year even though it would cause great expense that would have to be made up for in some other way. During Gregor’s short periods in town, conversation with his sister would often turn to the conservatory but it was only ever mentioned as a lovely dream that could never be realised. Their parents did not like to hear this innocent talk, but Gregor thought about it quite hard and decided he would let them know what he planned with a grand announcement of it on Christmas day.

That was the sort of totally pointless thing that went through his mind in his present state, pressed upright against the door and listening. There were times when he simply became too tired to continue listening, when his head would fall wearily against the door and he would pull it up again with a start, as even the slightest noise he caused would be heard next door and they would all go silent. “What’s that he’s doing now”, his father would say after a while, clearly having gone over to the door, and only then would the interrupted conversation slowly be taken up again.

When explaining things, his father repeated himself several times, partly because it was a long time since he had been occupied with these matters himself and partly because Gregor’s mother did not understand everything the first time. From these repeated explanations Gregor learned, to his pleasure, that despite all their misfortunes there was still some money available from the old days. It was not a lot, but it had not been touched in the meantime and some interest had accumulated. Besides that, they had not been using up all the money that Gregor had been bringing home every month, keeping only a little for himself, so that that, too, had been accumulating. Behind the door, Gregor nodded with enthusiasm in his pleasure at this unexpected thrift and caution. He could actually have used this surplus money to reduce his father’s debt to his boss, and the day when he could have freed himself from that job would have come much closer, but now it was certainly better the way his father had done things.

This money, however, was certainly not enough to enable the family to live off the interest; it was enough to maintain them for, perhaps, one or two years, no more. That’s to say, it was money that should not really be touched but set aside for emergencies; money to live on had to be earned. His father was healthy but old, and lacking in self confidence. During the five years that he had not been working—the first holiday in a life that had been full of strain and no success—he had put on a lot of weight and become very slow and clumsy. Would Gregor’s elderly mother now have to go and earn money? She suffered from asthma and it was a strain for her just to move about the home, every other day would be spent struggling for breath on the sofa by the open window. Would his sister have to go and earn money? She was still a child of seventeen, her life up till then had been very enviable, consisting of wearing nice clothes, sleeping late, helping out in the business, joining in with a few modest pleasures and most of all playing the violin. Whenever they began to talk of the need to earn money, Gregor would always first let go of the door and then throw himself onto the cool, leather sofa next to it, as he became quite hot with shame and regret.

He would often lie there the whole night through, not sleeping a wink but scratching at the leather for hours on end. Or he might go to all the effort of pushing a chair to the window, climbing up onto the sill and, propped up in the chair, leaning on the window to stare out of it. He had used to feel a great sense of freedom from doing this, but doing it now was obviously something more remembered than experienced, as what he actually saw in this way was becoming less distinct every day, even things that were

quite near; he had used to curse the ever-present view of the hospital across the street, but now he could not see it at all, and if he had not known that he lived in Charlottenstrasse, which was a quiet street despite being in the middle of the city, he could have thought that he was looking out the window at a barren waste where the grey sky and the grey earth mingled inseparably. His observant sister only needed to notice the chair twice before she would always push it back to its exact position by the window after she had tidied up the room, and even left the inner pane of the window open from then on.

If Gregor had only been able to speak to his sister and thank her for all that she had to do for him it would have been easier for him to bear it; but as it was it caused him pain. His sister, naturally, tried as far as possible to pretend there was nothing burdensome about it, and the longer it went on, of course, the better she was able to do so, but as time went by Gregor was also able to see through it all so much better. It had even become very unpleasant for him, now, whenever she entered the room. No sooner had she come in than she would quickly close the door as a precaution so that no-one would have to suffer the view into Gregor's room, then she would go straight to the window and pull it hurriedly open almost as if she were suffocating. Even if it was cold, she would stay at the window breathing deeply for a little while. She would alarm Gregor twice a day with this running about and noise making; he would stay under the couch shivering the whole while, knowing full well that she would certainly have liked to spare him this ordeal, but it was impossible for her to be in the same room with him with the windows closed.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

14: The Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka (second half)

14.1: Editor's Introduction

14.2: The Metamorphosis, second half

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14.1: Editor's Introduction

In the second half of *The Metamorphosis*, Franz Kafka masterfully brings his exploration of alienation, identity, and existential absurdity to a tragic resolution. These major themes, along with the complex characterizations and conflicts, reach their culmination as the story progresses toward a bleak but significant conclusion. In this half, the protagonist Gregor Samsa's transformation from man to insect not only leads to his physical and emotional downfall but also forces the characters around him, especially his family, into a series of uncomfortable but transformative confrontations with their own identities, roles, and relationships. Kafka's resolution is not one of triumph or redemption but of inevitable decline and estrangement, reflecting a cold, indifferent universe.

In this part of the story, Gregor, once the family's provider, has grown completely isolated, physically and emotionally. His family once showed initial hints of sympathy and concern, has now fully distances itself from him. Gregor's room, once a space within the family home, is a prison. His family stops caring for him, and even his sister Grete, who initially showed kindness, begins to neglect him, ultimately declaring that they must get rid of him.

This marks the final severing of Gregor's connection to the human world, completing his descent into total alienation. Gregor's death, caused by the injuries inflicted by his father and exacerbated by his family's neglect, symbolizes the ultimate resolution of his alienation: he is not only cut off from his family but is no longer able to exist within the world at all.

Therefore, the theme of identity resolves in a tragic manner. As Gregor's physical condition deteriorates, so does his sense of self. He becomes less human not only in appearance but also in thought and behavior. Throughout the story, Gregor struggles to hold onto his human identity, but by the end, he is fully resigned to his insect-like instincts. For instance, as he hides under the couch and recoils from his family, Gregor's thoughts become more detached from his former concerns about work, duty, and social belonging. His final act, where he retreats into his room and succumbs to death, represents the complete dissolution of his human identity. Therefore, Gregor's death is a symbolic erasure of the person he once was, and his family's relief upon his passing further underscores the fact that Gregor's identity had ceased to matter to them.

Kafka's theme of absurdity**,** the notion that life is often irrational and incomprehensible, finds its final expression in the story's sad conclusion. After all, Gregor's transformation was never explained, and no logical cause is ever given. This lack of explanation reflects the absurdity of existence in Kafka's universe, where characters are subject to random, uncontrollable forces. The family's reaction to Gregor's condition is similarly irrational. Rather than seeking to understand or help him, they grow increasingly hostile and detached. The story's conclusion, where the family quickly moves on from Gregor's death and begins planning a more hopeful future, highlights the absurdity of life's cycles of suffering and renewal. Gregor's existence is rendered meaningless, as even his death is treated as a minor inconvenience, not a tragedy.

The characterizations of the Samsa family, particularly Gregor's father, mother, and sister, are also resolved by the end, with each family member undergoing significant changes in response to Gregor's transformation and eventual demise.

Mr. Samsa regains his authority once Gregor is no longer able to provide for the family. He returns to work. In the final scene, he seems a confident, even hopeful, man who looks forward to a future without Gregor's burden.

Mrs. Samsa, on the other hand, remains largely passive. Her love for Gregor has been overshadowed by her fear and repulsion at his transformation. While she occasionally shows concern for her son, her inability to confront his condition ultimately contributes to her emotional withdrawal from him. By the end, Mrs. Samsa is no longer actively involved in Gregor's life, and her grief over his death is superficial. Her character is emblematic of denial and avoidance, as she chooses to retreat from the horror of Gregor's condition rather than engage with the reality of it.

Grete, Gregor's sister, undergoes the most significant transformation. At the beginning of the story, she seems a caring but somewhat immature young woman. However, as Gregor's condition worsens, Grete grows increasingly resentful and detached. By the end, she has assumed a more adult role within the family, taking on responsibilities and even suggesting that Gregor must be removed from their lives. Grete's final rejection of Gregor marks the resolution of her character arc, as she shifts from a position of sympathy to one of complete rejection. In the final scene, Grete is described as blossoming into a young woman, and her parents begin to envision a hopeful future for her. This suggests that, for Grete, Gregor's death is a necessary step toward her own personal growth and independence.

The external and internal conflicts that drive the narrative also find resolution, albeit in tragic terms. The external conflict between Gregor and his family is resolved when they decide that Gregor must be eliminated. This decision is both literal and symbolic, since Gregor, who has become a burden to them, is no longer seen as part of the family. His death marks the resolution of this conflict, as the family is finally free from the responsibility and shame associated with Gregor's condition. The family's subsequent relief and sense of renewal suggest that Gregor's existence had been the primary source of tension within the household, and his absence allows them to envision a more promising future.

Gregor's internal conflict, which centers on his struggle to reconcile his human consciousness with his insect body, is also resolved through his death. Over the course of the novella, Gregor gradually loses his sense of self, and by the time of his death, he no longer feels the same attachment to his family or his former life. His death is, in a way, a release from the internal torment of living as a human trapped in an insect's body. The internal conflict between his human identity and his insect form is resolved as he becomes resigned to his own death, marking the end of his suffering and his futile attempts to cling to his humanity.

By the end of *The Metamorphosis*, Kafka resolves major themes, characterizations, and conflicts in a way that is both tragic and revealing. The alienation Gregor experiences is fully realized in his complete disconnection from his family and society, while his struggle with identity culminates in the erasure of his humanity. The absurdity of Gregor's fate, and his family's indifferent response to it, underscores Kafka's exploration of the irrational and meaningless aspects of existence. The family's transformation, particularly that of Grete, suggests that Gregor's demise, while tragic, is also necessary for their survival and growth. Ultimately, the resolution of *The Metamorphosis* leaves readers with a profound sense of existential despair, as Gregor's life and death are rendered insignificant in the face of the family's return to normalcy.

-Taz Rosenthal

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14.2: The Metamorphosis, second half

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THE METAMORPHOSIS (second half) by Franz Kafka(opens in new window) [www.gutenberg.org]

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One day, about a month after Gregor's transformation when his sister no longer had any particular reason to be shocked at his appearance, she came into the room a little earlier than usual and found him still staring out the window, motionless, and just where he would be most horrible. In itself, his sister's not coming into the room would have been no surprise for Gregor as it would have been difficult for her to immediately open the window while he was still there, but not only did she not come in, she went straight back and closed the door behind her, a stranger would have thought he had threatened her and tried to bite her. Gregor went straight to hide himself under the couch, of course, but he had to wait until midday before his sister came back and she seemed much more uneasy than usual. It made him realise that she still found his appearance unbearable and would continue to do so, she probably even had to overcome the urge to flee when she saw the little bit of him that protruded from under the couch. One day, in order to spare her even this sight, he spent four hours carrying the bedsheet over to the couch on his back and arranged it so that he was completely covered and his sister would not be able to see him even if she bent down. If she did not think this sheet was necessary then all she had to do was take it off again, as it was clear enough that it was no pleasure for Gregor to cut himself off so completely. She left the sheet where it was. Gregor even thought he glimpsed a look of gratitude one time when he carefully looked out from under the sheet to see how his sister liked the new arrangement.

For the first fourteen days, Gregor's parents could not bring themselves to come into the room to see him. He would often hear them say how they appreciated all the new work his sister was doing even though, before, they had seen her as a girl who was somewhat useless and frequently been annoyed with her. But now the two of them, father and mother, would often both wait outside the door of Gregor's room while his sister tidied up in there, and as soon as she went out again she would have to tell them exactly how everything looked, what Gregor had eaten, how he had behaved this time and whether, perhaps, any slight improvement could be seen. His mother also wanted to go in and visit Gregor relatively soon but his father and sister at first persuaded her against it. Gregor listened very closely to all this, and approved fully. Later, though, she had to be held back by force, which made her call out: "Let me go and see Gregor, he is my unfortunate son! Can't you understand I have to see him?", and Gregor would think to himself that maybe it would be better if his mother came in, not every day of course, but one day a week, perhaps; she could understand everything much better than his sister who, for all her courage, was still just a child after all, and really might not have had an adult's appreciation of the burdensome job she had taken on.

Gregor's wish to see his mother was soon realised. Out of consideration for his parents, Gregor wanted to avoid being seen at the window during the day, the few square meters of the floor did not give him much room to crawl about, it was hard to just lie quietly through the night, his food soon stopped giving him any pleasure at all, and so, to entertain himself, he got into the habit of crawling up and down the walls and ceiling. He was especially fond of hanging from the ceiling; it was quite different from lying on the floor; he could breathe more freely; his body had a light swing to it; and up there, relaxed and almost happy, it might happen that he would surprise even himself by letting go of the ceiling and landing on the floor with a crash. But now, of course, he had far better control of his body than before and, even with a fall as great as that, caused himself no damage. Very soon his sister noticed Gregor's new way of entertaining himself—he had, after all, left traces of the adhesive from his feet as he crawled about—and got it into her head to make it as easy as possible for him by removing the furniture that got in his way, especially the chest of drawers and the desk. Now, this was not something that she would be able to do by herself; she did not dare to ask for help from her father; the sixteen year old maid had carried on bravely since the cook had left but she certainly would not have helped in this, she had even asked to be allowed to keep the kitchen locked at all times and never to have to open the door unless it was especially important; so his sister had no choice but to choose some time when Gregor's father was not there and fetch his mother to help her. As she approached the room, Gregor could hear his mother express her joy, but once at the door she went silent. First, of course, his sister came in and looked round to see that everything in the room was alright; and only then did she let her mother enter. Gregor had hurriedly pulled the sheet down lower over the couch and put more folds into it so that everything really looked as if it had just been thrown down by chance. Gregor also refrained, this time, from spying out from under the sheet; he gave up the chance to see

his mother until later and was simply glad that she had come. “You can come in, he can’t be seen”, said his sister, obviously leading her in by the hand. The old chest of drawers was too heavy for a pair of feeble women to be heaving about, but Gregor listened as they pushed it from its place, his sister always taking on the heaviest part of the work for herself and ignoring her mother’s warnings that she would strain herself. This lasted a very long time. After labouring at it for fifteen minutes or more his mother said it would be better to leave the chest where it was, for one thing it was too heavy for them to get the job finished before Gregor’s father got home and leaving it in the middle of the room it would be in his way even more, and for another thing it wasn’t even sure that taking the furniture away would really be any help to him. She thought just the opposite; the sight of the bare walls saddened her right to her heart; and why wouldn’t Gregor feel the same way about it, he’d been used to this furniture in his room for a long time and it would make him feel abandoned to be in an empty room like that. Then, quietly, almost whispering as if wanting Gregor (whose whereabouts she did not know) to hear not even the tone of her voice, as she was convinced that he did not understand her words, she added “and by taking the furniture away, won’t it seem like we’re showing that we’ve given up all hope of improvement and we’re abandoning him to cope for himself? I think it’d be best to leave the room exactly the way it was before so that when Gregor comes back to us again he’ll find everything unchanged and he’ll be able to forget the time in between all the easier”.

Hearing these words from his mother made Gregor realise that the lack of any direct human communication, along with the monotonous life led by the family during these two months, must have made him confused—he could think of no other way of explaining to himself why he had seriously wanted his room emptied out. Had he really wanted to transform his room into a cave, a warm room fitted out with the nice furniture he had inherited? That would have let him crawl around unimpeded in any direction, but it would also have let him quickly forget his past when he had still been human. He had come very close to forgetting, and it had only been the voice of his mother, unheard for so long, that had shaken him out of it. Nothing should be removed; everything had to stay; he could not do without the good influence the furniture had on his condition; and if the furniture made it difficult for him to crawl about mindlessly that was not a loss but a great advantage.

His sister, unfortunately, did not agree; she had become used to the idea, not without reason, that she was Gregor’s spokesman to his parents about the things that concerned him. This meant that his mother’s advice now was sufficient reason for her to insist on removing not only the chest of drawers and the desk, as she had thought at first, but all the furniture apart from the all-important couch. It was more than childish perversity, of course, or the unexpected confidence she had recently acquired, that made her insist; she had indeed noticed that Gregor needed a lot of room to crawl about in, whereas the furniture, as far as anyone could see, was of no use to him at all. Girls of that age, though, do become enthusiastic about things and feel they must get their way whenever they can. Perhaps this was what tempted Grete to make Gregor’s situation seem even more shocking than it was so that she could do even more for him. Grete would probably be the only one who would dare enter a room dominated by Gregor crawling about the bare walls by himself.

So she refused to let her mother dissuade her. Gregor’s mother already looked uneasy in his room, she soon stopped speaking and helped Gregor’s sister to get the chest of drawers out with what strength she had. The chest of drawers was something that Gregor could do without if he had to, but the writing desk had to stay. Hardly had the two women pushed the chest of drawers, groaning, out of the room than Gregor poked his head out from under the couch to see what he could do about it. He meant to be as careful and considerate as he could, but, unfortunately, it was his mother who came back first while Grete in the next room had her arms round the chest, pushing and pulling at it from side to side by herself without, of course, moving it an inch. His mother was not used to the sight of Gregor, he might have made her ill, so Gregor hurried backwards to the far end of the couch. In his startlement, though, he was not able to prevent the sheet at its front from moving a little. It was enough to attract his mother’s attention. She stood very still, remained there a moment, and then went back out to Grete.

Gregor kept trying to assure himself that nothing unusual was happening, it was just a few pieces of furniture being moved after all, but he soon had to admit that the women going to and fro, their little calls to each other, the scraping of the furniture on the floor, all these things made him feel as if he were being assailed from all sides. With his head and legs pulled in against him and his body pressed to the floor, he was forced to admit to himself that he could not stand all of this much longer. They were emptying his room out; taking away everything that was dear to him; they had already taken out the chest containing his fretsaw and other tools; now they threatened to remove the writing desk with its place clearly worn into the floor, the desk where he had done his homework as a business trainee, at high school, even while he had been at infant school—he really could not wait any longer to see whether the two women’s intentions were good. He had nearly forgotten they were there anyway, as they were now too tired to say anything while they worked and he could only hear their feet as they stepped heavily on the floor.

So, while the women were leant against the desk in the other room catching their breath, he sallied out, changed direction four times not knowing what he should save first before his attention was suddenly caught by the picture on the wall—which was already denuded of everything else that had been on it—of the lady dressed in copious fur. He hurried up onto the picture and pressed himself against its glass, it held him firmly and felt good on his hot belly. This picture at least, now totally covered by Gregor, would certainly be taken away by no-one. He turned his head to face the door into the living room so that he could watch the women when they came back.

They had not allowed themselves a long rest and came back quite soon; Grete had put her arm around her mother and was nearly carrying her. “What shall we take now, then?”, said Grete and looked around. Her eyes met those of Gregor on the wall. Perhaps only because her mother was there, she remained calm, bent her face to her so that she would not look round and said, albeit hurriedly and with a tremor in her voice: “Come on, let’s go back in the living room for a while?” Gregor could see what Grete had in mind, she wanted to take her mother somewhere safe and then chase him down from the wall. Well, she could certainly try it! He sat unyielding on his picture. He would rather jump at Grete’s face.

But Grete’s words had made her mother quite worried, she stepped to one side, saw the enormous brown patch against the flowers of the wallpaper, and before she even realised it was Gregor that she saw screamed: “Oh God, oh God!” Arms outstretched, she fell onto the couch as if she had given up everything and stayed there immobile. “Gregor!” shouted his sister, glowering at him and shaking her fist. That was the first word she had spoken to him directly since his transformation. She ran into the other room to fetch some kind of smelling salts to bring her mother out of her faint; Gregor wanted to help too—he could save his picture later, although he stuck fast to the glass and had to pull himself off by force; then he, too, ran into the next room as if he could advise his sister like in the old days; but he had to just stand behind her doing nothing; she was looking into various bottles, he startled her when she turned round; a bottle fell to the ground and broke; a splinter cut Gregor’s face, some kind of caustic medicine splashed all over him; now, without delaying any longer, Grete took hold of all the bottles she could and ran with them in to her mother; she slammed the door shut with her foot. So now Gregor was shut out from his mother, who, because of him, might be near to death; he could not open the door if he did not want to chase his sister away, and she had to stay with his mother; there was nothing for him to do but wait; and, oppressed with anxiety and self-reproach, he began to crawl about, he crawled over everything, walls, furniture, ceiling, and finally in his confusion as the whole room began to spin around him he fell down into the middle of the dinner table.

He lay there for a while, numb and immobile, all around him it was quiet, maybe that was a good sign. Then there was someone at the door. The maid, of course, had locked herself in her kitchen so that Grete would have to go and answer it. His father had arrived home. “What’s happened?” were his first words; Grete’s appearance must have made everything clear to him. She answered him with subdued voice, and openly pressed her face into his chest: “Mother’s fainted, but she’s better now. Gregor got out.” “Just as I expected”, said his father, “just as I always said, but you women wouldn’t listen, would you.” It was clear to Gregor that Grete had not said enough and that his father took it to mean that something bad had happened, that he was responsible for some act of violence. That meant Gregor would now have to try to calm his father, as he did not have the time to explain things to him even if that had been possible. So he fled to the door of his room and pressed himself against it so that his father, when he came in from the hall, could see straight away that Gregor had the best intentions and would go back into his room without delay, that it would not be necessary to drive him back but that they had only to open the door and he would disappear.

His father, though, was not in the mood to notice subtleties like that; “Ah!”, he shouted as he came in, sounding as if he were both angry and glad at the same time. Gregor drew his head back from the door and lifted it towards his father. He really had not imagined his father the way he stood there now; of late, with his new habit of crawling about, he had neglected to pay attention to what was going on the rest of the flat the way he had done before. He really ought to have expected things to have changed, but still, still, was that really his father? The same tired man as used to be laying there entombed in his bed when Gregor came back from his business trips, who would receive him sitting in the armchair in his nightgown when he came back in the evenings; who was hardly even able to stand up but, as a sign of his pleasure, would just raise his arms and who, on the couple of times a year when they went for a walk together on a Sunday or public holiday wrapped up tightly in his overcoat between Gregor and his mother, would always labour his way forward a little more slowly than them, who were already walking slowly for his sake; who would place his stick down carefully and, if he wanted to say something would invariably stop and gather his companions around him. He was standing up straight enough now; dressed in a smart blue uniform with gold buttons, the sort worn by the employees at the banking institute; above the high, stiff collar of the coat his strong double-chin emerged; under the bushy eyebrows, his piercing, dark eyes looked out fresh and alert; his normally unkempt white hair was combed down painfully close to his scalp. He

took his cap, with its gold monogram from, probably, some bank, and threw it in an arc right across the room onto the sofa, put his hands in his trouser pockets, pushing back the bottom of his long uniform coat, and, with look of determination, walked towards Gregor. He probably did not even know himself what he had in mind, but nonetheless lifted his feet unusually high. Gregor was amazed at the enormous size of the soles of his boots, but wasted no time with that—he knew full well, right from the first day of his new life, that his father thought it necessary to always be extremely strict with him. And so he ran up to his father, stopped when his father stopped, scurried forwards again when he moved, even slightly. In this way they went round the room several times without anything decisive happening, without even giving the impression of a chase as everything went so slowly. Gregor remained all this time on the floor, largely because he feared his father might see it as especially provoking if he fled onto the wall or ceiling. Whatever he did, Gregor had to admit that he certainly would not be able to keep up this running about for long, as for each step his father took he had to carry out countless movements. He became noticeably short of breath, even in his earlier life his lungs had not been very reliable. Now, as he lurched about in his efforts to muster all the strength he could for running he could hardly keep his eyes open; his thoughts became too slow for him to think of any other way of saving himself than running; he almost forgot that the walls were there for him to use although, here, they were concealed behind carefully carved furniture full of notches and protrusions—then, right beside him, lightly tossed, something flew down and rolled in front of him. It was an apple; then another one immediately flew at him; Gregor froze in shock; there was no longer any point in running as his father had decided to bombard him. He had filled his pockets with fruit from the bowl on the sideboard and now, without even taking the time for careful aim, threw one apple after another. These little, red apples rolled about on the floor, knocking into each other as if they had electric motors. An apple thrown without much force glanced against Gregor's back and slid off without doing any harm. Another one however, immediately following it, hit squarely and lodged in his back; Gregor wanted to drag himself away, as if he could remove the surprising, the incredible pain by changing his position; but he felt as if nailed to the spot and spread himself out, all his senses in confusion. The last thing he saw was the door of his room being pulled open, his sister was screaming, his mother ran out in front of her in her blouse (as his sister had taken off some of her clothes after she had fainted to make it easier for her to breathe), she ran to his father, her skirts unfastened and sliding one after another to the ground, stumbling over the skirts she pushed herself to his father, her arms around him, uniting herself with him totally—now Gregor lost his ability to see anything—her hands behind his father's head begging him to spare Gregor's life.

III

No-one dared to remove the apple lodged in Gregor's flesh, so it remained there as a visible reminder of his injury. He had suffered it there for more than a month, and his condition seemed serious enough to remind even his father that Gregor, despite his current sad and revolting form, was a family member who could not be treated as an enemy. On the contrary, as a family there was a duty to swallow any revulsion for him and to be patient, just to be patient.

Because of his injuries, Gregor had lost much of his mobility—probably permanently. He had been reduced to the condition of an ancient invalid and it took him long, long minutes to crawl across his room—crawling over the ceiling was out of the question—but this deterioration in his condition was fully (in his opinion) made up for by the door to the living room being left open every evening. He got into the habit of closely watching it for one or two hours before it was opened and then, lying in the darkness of his room where he could not be seen from the living room, he could watch the family in the light of the dinner table and listen to their conversation—with everyone's permission, in a way, and thus quite differently from before.

They no longer held the lively conversations of earlier times, of course, the ones that Gregor always thought about with longing when he was tired and getting into the damp bed in some small hotel room. All of them were usually very quiet nowadays. Soon after dinner, his father would go to sleep in his chair; his mother and sister would urge each other to be quiet; his mother, bent deeply under the lamp, would sew fancy underwear for a fashion shop; his sister, who had taken a sales job, learned shorthand and French in the evenings so that she might be able to get a better position later on. Sometimes his father would wake up and say to Gregor's mother "you're doing so much sewing again today!", as if he did not know that he had been dozing—and then he would go back to sleep again while mother and sister would exchange a tired grin.

With a kind of stubbornness, Gregor's father refused to take his uniform off even at home; while his nightgown hung unused on its peg Gregor's father would slumber where he was, fully dressed, as if always ready to serve and expecting to hear the voice of his superior even here. The uniform had not been new to start with, but as a result of this it slowly became even shabbier despite the efforts of Gregor's mother and sister to look after it. Gregor would often spend the whole evening looking at all the stains on this coat, with its gold buttons always kept polished and shiny, while the old man in it would sleep, highly uncomfortable but peaceful.

As soon as it struck ten, Gregor's mother would speak gently to his father to wake him and try to persuade him to go to bed, as he couldn't sleep properly where he was and he really had to get his sleep if he was to be up at six to get to work. But since he had been in work he had become more obstinate and would always insist on staying longer at the table, even though he regularly fell asleep and it was then harder than ever to persuade him to exchange the chair for his bed. Then, however much mother and sister would importune him with little reproaches and warnings he would keep slowly shaking his head for a quarter of an hour with his eyes closed and refusing to get up. Gregor's mother would tug at his sleeve, whisper endearments into his ear, Gregor's sister would leave her work to help her mother, but nothing would have any effect on him. He would just sink deeper into his chair. Only when the two women took him under the arms he would abruptly open his eyes, look at them one after the other and say: "What a life! This is what peace I get in my old age!" And supported by the two women he would lift himself up carefully as if he were carrying the greatest load himself, let the women take him to the door, send them off and carry on by himself while Gregor's mother would throw down her needle and his sister her pen so that they could run after his father and continue being of help to him.

Who, in this tired and overworked family, would have had time to give more attention to Gregor than was absolutely necessary? The household budget became even smaller; so now the maid was dismissed; an enormous, thick-boned charwoman with white hair that flapped around her head came every morning and evening to do the heaviest work; everything else was looked after by Gregor's mother on top of the large amount of sewing work she did. Gregor even learned, listening to the evening conversation about what price they had hoped for, that several items of jewellery belonging to the family had been sold, even though both mother and sister had been very fond of wearing them at functions and celebrations. But the loudest complaint was that although the flat was much too big for their present circumstances, they could not move out of it, there was no imaginable way of transferring Gregor to the new address. He could see quite well, though, that there were more reasons than consideration for him that made it difficult for them to move, it would have been quite easy to transport him in any suitable crate with a few air holes in it; the main thing holding the family back from their decision to move was much more to do with their total despair, and the thought that they had been struck with a misfortune unlike anything experienced by anyone else they knew or were related to. They carried out absolutely everything that the world expects from poor people, Gregor's father brought bank employees their breakfast, his mother sacrificed herself by washing clothes for strangers, his sister ran back and forth behind her desk at the behest of the customers, but they just did not have the strength to do any more. And the injury in Gregor's back began to hurt as much as when it was new. After they had come back from taking his father to bed Gregor's mother and sister would now leave their work where it was and sit close together, cheek to cheek; his mother would point to Gregor's room and say "Close that door, Grete", and then, when he was in the dark again, they would sit in the next room and their tears would mingle, or they would simply sit there staring dry-eyed at the table.

Gregor hardly slept at all, either night or day. Sometimes he would think of taking over the family's affairs, just like before, the next time the door was opened; he had long forgotten about his boss and the chief clerk, but they would appear again in his thoughts, the salesmen and the apprentices, that stupid teaboy, two or three friends from other businesses, one of the chambermaids from a provincial hotel, a tender memory that appeared and disappeared again, a cashier from a hat shop for whom his attention had been serious but too slow,—all of them appeared to him, mixed together with strangers and others he had forgotten, but instead of helping him and his family they were all of them inaccessible, and he was glad when they disappeared. Other times he was not at all in the mood to look after his family, he was filled with simple rage about the lack of attention he was shown, and although he could think of nothing he would have wanted, he made plans of how he could get into the pantry where he could take all the things he was entitled to, even if he was not hungry. Gregor's sister no longer thought about how she could please him but would hurriedly push some food or other into his room with her foot before she rushed out to work in the morning and at midday, and in the evening she would sweep it away again with the broom, indifferent as to whether it had been eaten or—more often than not—had been left totally untouched. She still cleared up the room in the evening, but now she could not have been any quicker about it. Smears of dirt were left on the walls, here and there were little balls of dust and filth. At first, Gregor went into one of the worst of these places when his sister arrived as a reproach to her, but he could have stayed there for weeks without his sister doing anything about it; she could see the dirt as well as he could but she had simply decided to leave him to it. At the same time she became touchy in a way that was quite new for her and which everyone in the family understood—cleaning up Gregor's room was for her and her alone. Gregor's mother did once thoroughly clean his room, and needed to use several bucketfuls of water to do it—although that much dampness also made Gregor ill and he lay flat on the couch, bitter and immobile. But his mother was to be punished still more for what she had done, as hardly had his sister arrived home in the evening than she noticed the change in Gregor's room and, highly aggrieved, ran back into the living room where, despite her mothers raised and imploring hands, she

broke into convulsive tears. Her father, of course, was startled out of his chair and the two parents looked on astonished and helpless; then they, too, became agitated; Gregor's father, standing to the right of his mother, accused her of not leaving the cleaning of Gregor's room to his sister; from her left, Gregor's sister screamed at her that she was never to clean Gregor's room again; while his mother tried to draw his father, who was beside himself with anger, into the bedroom; his sister, quaking with tears, thumped on the table with her small fists; and Gregor hissed in anger that no-one had even thought of closing the door to save him the sight of this and all its noise.

Gregor's sister was exhausted from going out to work, and looking after Gregor as she had done before was even more work for her, but even so his mother ought certainly not to have taken her place. Gregor, on the other hand, ought not to be neglected. Now, though, the charwoman was here. This elderly widow, with a robust bone structure that made her able to withstand the hardest of things in her long life, wasn't really repelled by Gregor. Just by chance one day, rather than any real curiosity, she opened the door to Gregor's room and found herself face to face with him. He was taken totally by surprise, no-one was chasing him but he began to rush to and fro while she just stood there in amazement with her hands crossed in front of her. From then on she never failed to open the door slightly every evening and morning and look briefly in on him. At first she would call to him as she did so with words that she probably considered friendly, such as "come on then, you old dung-beetle!", or "look at the old dung-beetle there!" Gregor never responded to being spoken to in that way, but just remained where he was without moving as if the door had never even been opened. If only they had told this charwoman to clean up his room every day instead of letting her disturb him for no reason whenever she felt like it! One day, early in the morning while a heavy rain struck the windowpanes, perhaps indicating that spring was coming, she began to speak to him in that way once again. Gregor was so resentful of it that he started to move toward her, he was slow and infirm, but it was like a kind of attack. Instead of being afraid, the charwoman just lifted up one of the chairs from near the door and stood there with her mouth open, clearly intending not to close her mouth until the chair in her hand had been slammed down into Gregor's back. "Aren't you coming any closer, then?", she asked when Gregor turned round again, and she calmly put the chair back in the corner.

Gregor had almost entirely stopped eating. Only if he happened to find himself next to the food that had been prepared for him he might take some of it into his mouth to play with it, leave it there a few hours and then, more often than not, spit it out again. At first he thought it was distress at the state of his room that stopped him eating, but he had soon got used to the changes made there. They had got into the habit of putting things into this room that they had no room for anywhere else, and there were now many such things as one of the rooms in the flat had been rented out to three gentlemen. These earnest gentlemen—all three of them had full beards, as Gregor learned peering through the crack in the door one day—were painfully insistent on things' being tidy. This meant not only in their own room but, since they had taken a room in this establishment, in the entire flat and especially in the kitchen. Unnecessary clutter was something they could not tolerate, especially if it was dirty. They had moreover brought most of their own furnishings and equipment with them. For this reason, many things had become superfluous which, although they could not be sold, the family did not wish to discard. All these things found their way into Gregor's room. The dustbins from the kitchen found their way in there too. The charwoman was always in a hurry, and anything she couldn't use for the time being she would just chuck in there. He, fortunately, would usually see no more than the object and the hand that held it. The woman most likely meant to fetch the things back out again when she had time and the opportunity, or to throw everything out in one go, but what actually happened was that they were left where they landed when they had first been thrown unless Gregor made his way through the junk and moved it somewhere else. At first he moved it because, with no other room free where he could crawl about, he was forced to, but later on he came to enjoy it although moving about in that way left him sad and tired to death, and he would remain immobile for hours afterwards.

The gentlemen who rented the room would sometimes take their evening meal at home in the living room that was used by everyone, and so the door to this room was often kept closed in the evening. But Gregor found it easy to give up having the door open, he had, after all, often failed to make use of it when it was open and, without the family having noticed it, lain in his room in its darkest corner. One time, though, the charwoman left the door to the living room slightly open, and it remained open when the gentlemen who rented the room came in in the evening and the light was put on. They sat up at the table where, formerly, Gregor had taken his meals with his father and mother, they unfolded the serviettes and picked up their knives and forks. Gregor's mother immediately appeared in the doorway with a dish of meat and soon behind her came his sister with a dish piled high with potatoes. The food was steaming, and filled the room with its smell. The gentlemen bent over the dishes set in front of them as if they wanted to test the food before eating it, and the gentleman in the middle, who seemed to count as an authority for the other two, did indeed cut off a piece of meat while it was still in its dish, clearly wishing to establish whether it was sufficiently cooked or whether it

should be sent back to the kitchen. It was to his satisfaction, and Gregor's mother and sister, who had been looking on anxiously, began to breathe again and smiled.

The family themselves ate in the kitchen. Nonetheless, Gregor's father came into the living room before he went into the kitchen, bowed once with his cap in his hand and did his round of the table. The gentlemen stood as one, and mumbled something into their beards. Then, once they were alone, they ate in near perfect silence. It seemed remarkable to Gregor that above all the various noises of eating their chewing teeth could still be heard, as if they had wanted to show Gregor that you need teeth in order to eat and it was not possible to perform anything with jaws that are toothless however nice they might be. "I'd like to eat something", said Gregor anxiously, "but not anything like they're eating. They do feed themselves. And here I am, dying!"

Throughout all this time, Gregor could not remember having heard the violin being played, but this evening it began to be heard from the kitchen. The three gentlemen had already finished their meal, the one in the middle had produced a newspaper, given a page to each of the others, and now they leant back in their chairs reading them and smoking. When the violin began playing they became attentive, stood up and went on tip-toe over to the door of the hallway where they stood pressed against each other. Someone must have heard them in the kitchen, as Gregor's father called out: "Is the playing perhaps unpleasant for the gentlemen? We can stop it straight away." "On the contrary", said the middle gentleman, "would the young lady not like to come in and play for us here in the room, where it is, after all, much more cosy and comfortable?" "Oh yes, we'd love to", called back Gregor's father as if he had been the violin player himself. The gentlemen stepped back into the room and waited. Gregor's father soon appeared with the music stand, his mother with the music and his sister with the violin. She calmly prepared everything for her to begin playing; his parents, who had never rented a room out before and therefore showed an exaggerated courtesy towards the three gentlemen, did not even dare to sit on their own chairs; his father leant against the door with his right hand pushed in between two buttons on his uniform coat; his mother, though, was offered a seat by one of the gentlemen and sat—leaving the chair where the gentleman happened to have placed it—out of the way in a corner.

His sister began to play; father and mother paid close attention, one on each side, to the movements of her hands. Drawn in by the playing, Gregor had dared to come forward a little and already had his head in the living room. Before, he had taken great pride in how considerate he was but now it hardly occurred to him that he had become so thoughtless about the others. What's more, there was now all the more reason to keep himself hidden as he was covered in the dust that lay everywhere in his room and flew up at the slightest movement; he carried threads, hairs, and remains of food about on his back and sides; he was much too indifferent to everything now to lay on his back and wipe himself on the carpet like he had used to do several times a day. And despite this condition, he was not too shy to move forward a little onto the immaculate floor of the living room.

No-one noticed him, though. The family was totally preoccupied with the violin playing; at first, the three gentlemen had put their hands in their pockets and come up far too close behind the music stand to look at all the notes being played, and they must have disturbed Gregor's sister, but soon, in contrast with the family, they withdrew back to the window with their heads sunk and talking to each other at half volume, and they stayed by the window while Gregor's father observed them anxiously. It really now seemed very obvious that they had expected to hear some beautiful or entertaining violin playing but had been disappointed, that they had had enough of the whole performance and it was only now out of politeness that they allowed their peace to be disturbed. It was especially unnerving, the way they all blew the smoke from their cigarettes upwards from their mouth and noses. Yet Gregor's sister was playing so beautifully. Her face was leant to one side, following the lines of music with a careful and melancholy expression. Gregor crawled a little further forward, keeping his head close to the ground so that he could meet her eyes if the chance came. Was he an animal if music could captivate him so? It seemed to him that he was being shown the way to the unknown nourishment he had been yearning for. He was determined to make his way forward to his sister and tug at her skirt to show her she might come into his room with her violin, as no-one appreciated her playing here as much as he would. He never wanted to let her out of his room, not while he lived, anyway; his shocking appearance should, for once, be of some use to him; he wanted to be at every door of his room at once to hiss and spit at the attackers; his sister should not be forced to stay with him, though, but stay of her own free will; she would sit beside him on the couch with her ear bent down to him while he told her how he had always intended to send her to the conservatory, how he would have told everyone about it last Christmas—had Christmas really come and gone already?—if this misfortune hadn't got in the way, and refuse to let anyone dissuade him from it. On hearing all this, his sister would break out in tears of emotion, and Gregor would climb up to her shoulder and kiss her neck, which, since she had been going out to work, she had kept free without any necklace or collar.

“Mr. Samsa!”, shouted the middle gentleman to Gregor’s father, pointing, without wasting any more words, with his forefinger at Gregor as he slowly moved forward. The violin went silent, the middle of the three gentlemen first smiled at his two friends, shaking his head, and then looked back at Gregor. His father seemed to think it more important to calm the three gentlemen before driving Gregor out, even though they were not at all upset and seemed to think Gregor was more entertaining than the violin playing had been. He rushed up to them with his arms spread out and attempted to drive them back into their room at the same time as trying to block their view of Gregor with his body. Now they did become a little annoyed, and it was not clear whether it was his father’s behaviour that annoyed them or the dawning realisation that they had had a neighbour like Gregor in the next room without knowing it. They asked Gregor’s father for explanations, raised their arms like he had, tugged excitedly at their beards and moved back towards their room only very slowly. Meanwhile Gregor’s sister had overcome the despair she had fallen into when her playing was suddenly interrupted. She had let her hands drop and let violin and bow hang limply for a while but continued to look at the music as if still playing, but then she suddenly pulled herself together, lay the instrument on her mother’s lap who still sat laboriously struggling for breath where she was, and ran into the next room which, under pressure from her father, the three gentlemen were more quickly moving toward. Under his sister’s experienced hand, the pillows and covers on the beds flew up and were put into order and she had already finished making the beds and slipped out again before the three gentlemen had reached the room. Gregor’s father seemed so obsessed with what he was doing that he forgot all the respect he owed to his tenants. He urged them and pressed them until, when he was already at the door of the room, the middle of the three gentlemen shouted like thunder and stamped his foot and thereby brought Gregor’s father to a halt. “I declare here and now”, he said, raising his hand and glancing at Gregor’s mother and sister to gain their attention too, “that with regard to the repugnant conditions that prevail in this flat and with this family”—here he looked briefly but decisively at the floor—“I give immediate notice on my room. For the days that I have been living here I will, of course, pay nothing at all, on the contrary I will consider whether to proceed with some kind of action for damages from you, and believe me it would be very easy to set out the grounds for such an action.” He was silent and looked straight ahead as if waiting for something. And indeed, his two friends joined in with the words: “And we also give immediate notice.” With that, he took hold of the door handle and slammed the door.

Gregor’s father staggered back to his seat, feeling his way with his hands, and fell into it; it looked as if he was stretching himself out for his usual evening nap but from the uncontrolled way his head kept nodding it could be seen that he was not sleeping at all. Throughout all this, Gregor had lain still where the three gentlemen had first seen him. His disappointment at the failure of his plan, and perhaps also because he was weak from hunger, made it impossible for him to move. He was sure that everyone would turn on him any moment, and he waited. He was not even startled out of this state when the violin on his mother’s lap fell from her trembling fingers and landed loudly on the floor.

“Father, Mother”, said his sister, hitting the table with her hand as introduction, “we can’t carry on like this. Maybe you can’t see it, but I can. I don’t want to call this monster my brother, all I can say is: we have to try and get rid of it. We’ve done all that’s humanly possible to look after it and be patient, I don’t think anyone could accuse us of doing anything wrong.”

“She’s absolutely right”, said Gregor’s father to himself. His mother, who still had not had time to catch her breath, began to cough dully, her hand held out in front of her and a deranged expression in her eyes.

Gregor’s sister rushed to his mother and put her hand on her forehead. Her words seemed to give Gregor’s father some more definite ideas. He sat upright, played with his uniform cap between the plates left by the three gentlemen after their meal, and occasionally looked down at Gregor as he lay there immobile.

“We have to try and get rid of it”, said Gregor’s sister, now speaking only to her father, as her mother was too occupied with coughing to listen, “it’ll be the death of both of you, I can see it coming. We can’t all work as hard as we have to and then come home to be tortured like this, we can’t endure it. I can’t endure it any more.” And she broke out so heavily in tears that they flowed down the face of her mother, and she wiped them away with mechanical hand movements.

“My child”, said her father with sympathy and obvious understanding, “what are we to do?”

His sister just shrugged her shoulders as a sign of the helplessness and tears that had taken hold of her, displacing her earlier certainty.

“If he could just understand us”, said his father almost as a question; his sister shook her hand vigorously through her tears as a sign that of that there was no question.

“If he could just understand us”, repeated Gregor’s father, closing his eyes in acceptance of his sister’s certainty that that was quite impossible, “then perhaps we could come to some kind of arrangement with him. But as it is ...”

“It’s got to go”, shouted his sister, “that’s the only way, Father. You’ve got to get rid of the idea that that’s Gregor. We’ve only harmed ourselves by believing it for so long. How can that be Gregor? If it were Gregor he would have seen long ago that it’s not possible for human beings to live with an animal like that and he would have gone of his own free will. We wouldn’t have a brother any more, then, but we could carry on with our lives and remember him with respect. As it is this animal is persecuting us, it’s driven out our tenants, it obviously wants to take over the whole flat and force us to sleep on the streets. Father, look, just look”, she suddenly screamed, “he’s starting again!” In her alarm, which was totally beyond Gregor’s comprehension, his sister even abandoned his mother as she pushed herself vigorously out of her chair as if more willing to sacrifice her own mother than stay anywhere near Gregor. She rushed over to behind her father, who had become excited merely because she was and stood up half raising his hands in front of Gregor’s sister as if to protect her.

But Gregor had had no intention of frightening anyone, least of all his sister. All he had done was begin to turn round so that he could go back into his room, although that was in itself quite startling as his pain-wracked condition meant that turning round required a great deal of effort and he was using his head to help himself do it, repeatedly raising it and striking it against the floor. He stopped and looked round. They seemed to have realised his good intention and had only been alarmed briefly. Now they all looked at him in unhappy silence. His mother lay in her chair with her legs stretched out and pressed against each other, her eyes nearly closed with exhaustion; his sister sat next to his father with her arms around his neck.

“Maybe now they’ll let me turn round”, thought Gregor and went back to work. He could not help panting loudly with the effort and had sometimes to stop and take a rest. No-one was making him rush any more, everything was left up to him. As soon as he had finally finished turning round he began to move straight ahead. He was amazed at the great distance that separated him from his room, and could not understand how he had covered that distance in his weak state a little while before and almost without noticing it. He concentrated on crawling as fast as he could and hardly noticed that there was not a word, not any cry, from his family to distract him. He did not turn his head until he had reached the doorway. He did not turn it all the way round as he felt his neck becoming stiff, but it was nonetheless enough to see that nothing behind him had changed, only his sister had stood up. With his last glance he saw that his mother had now fallen completely asleep.

He was hardly inside his room before the door was hurriedly shut, bolted and locked. The sudden noise behind Gregor so startled him that his little legs collapsed under him. It was his sister who had been in so much of a rush. She had been standing there waiting and sprung forward lightly, Gregor had not heard her coming at all, and as she turned the key in the lock she said loudly to her parents “At last!”.

“What now, then?”, Gregor asked himself as he looked round in the darkness. He soon made the discovery that he could no longer move at all. This was no surprise to him, it seemed rather that being able to actually move around on those spindly little legs until then was unnatural. He also felt relatively comfortable. It is true that his entire body was aching, but the pain seemed to be slowly getting weaker and weaker and would finally disappear altogether. He could already hardly feel the decayed apple in his back or the inflamed area around it, which was entirely covered in white dust. He thought back of his family with emotion and love. If it was possible, he felt that he must go away even more strongly than his sister. He remained in this state of empty and peaceful rumination until he heard the clock tower strike three in the morning. He watched as it slowly began to get light everywhere outside the window too. Then, without his willing it, his head sank down completely, and his last breath flowed weakly from his nostrils.

When the cleaner came in early in the morning—they’d often asked her not to keep slamming the doors but with her strength and in her hurry she still did, so that everyone in the flat knew when she’d arrived and from then on it was impossible to sleep in peace—she made her usual brief look in on Gregor and at first found nothing special. She thought he was laying there so still on purpose, playing the martyr; she attributed all possible understanding to him. She happened to be holding the long broom in her hand, so she tried to tickle Gregor with it from the doorway. When she had no success with that she tried to make a nuisance of herself and poked at him a little, and only when she found she could shove him across the floor with no resistance at all did she start to pay attention. She soon realised what had really happened, opened her eyes wide, whistled to herself, but did not waste time to yank open the bedroom doors and shout loudly into the darkness of the bedrooms: “Come and ’ave a look at this, it’s dead, just lying there, stone dead!”

Mr. and Mrs. Samsa sat upright there in their marriage bed and had to make an effort to get over the shock caused by the cleaner before they could grasp what she was saying. But then, each from his own side, they hurried out of bed. Mr. Samsa threw the blanket over his shoulders, Mrs. Samsa just came out in her nightdress; and that is how they went into Gregor's room. On the way they opened the door to the living room where Grete had been sleeping since the three gentlemen had moved in; she was fully dressed as if she had never been asleep, and the paleness of her face seemed to confirm this. "Dead?", asked Mrs. Samsa, looking at the charwoman enquiringly, even though she could have checked for herself and could have known it even without checking. "That's what I said", replied the cleaner, and to prove it she gave Gregor's body another shove with the broom, sending it sideways across the floor. Mrs. Samsa made a movement as if she wanted to hold back the broom, but did not complete it. "Now then", said Mr. Samsa, "let's give thanks to God for that". He crossed himself, and the three women followed his example. Grete, who had not taken her eyes from the corpse, said: "Just look how thin he was. He didn't eat anything for so long. The food came out again just the same as when it went in". Gregor's body was indeed completely dried up and flat, they had not seen it until then, but now he was not lifted up on his little legs, nor did he do anything to make them look away.

"Grete, come with us in here for a little while", said Mrs. Samsa with a pained smile, and Grete followed her parents into the bedroom but not without looking back at the body. The cleaner shut the door and opened the window wide. Although it was still early in the morning the fresh air had something of warmth mixed in with it. It was already the end of March, after all.

The three gentlemen stepped out of their room and looked round in amazement for their breakfasts; they had been forgotten about. "Where is our breakfast?", the middle gentleman asked the cleaner irritably. She just put her finger on her lips and made a quick and silent sign to the men that they might like to come into Gregor's room. They did so, and stood around Gregor's corpse with their hands in the pockets of their well-worn coats. It was now quite light in the room.

Then the door of the bedroom opened and Mr. Samsa appeared in his uniform with his wife on one arm and his daughter on the other. All of them had been crying a little; Grete now and then pressed her face against her father's arm.

"Leave my home. Now!", said Mr. Samsa, indicating the door and without letting the women from him. "What do you mean?", asked the middle of the three gentlemen somewhat disconcerted, and he smiled sweetly. The other two held their hands behind their backs and continually rubbed them together in gleeful anticipation of a loud quarrel which could only end in their favour. "I mean just what I said", answered Mr. Samsa, and, with his two companions, went in a straight line towards the man. At first, he stood there still, looking at the ground as if the contents of his head were rearranging themselves into new positions. "Alright, we'll go then", he said, and looked up at Mr. Samsa as if he had been suddenly overcome with humility and wanted permission again from Mr. Samsa for his decision. Mr. Samsa merely opened his eyes wide and briefly nodded to him several times. At that, and without delay, the man actually did take long strides into the front hallway; his two friends had stopped rubbing their hands some time before and had been listening to what was being said. Now they jumped off after their friend as if taken with a sudden fear that Mr. Samsa might go into the hallway in front of them and break the connection with their leader. Once there, all three took their hats from the stand, took their sticks from the holder, bowed without a word and left the premises. Mr. Samsa and the two women followed them out onto the landing; but they had had no reason to mistrust the men's intentions and as they leaned over the landing they saw how the three gentlemen made slow but steady progress down the many steps. As they turned the corner on each floor they disappeared and would reappear a few moments later; the further down they went, the more that the Samsa family lost interest in them; when a butcher's boy, proud of posture with his tray on his head, passed them on his way up and came nearer than they were, Mr. Samsa and the women came away from the landing and went, as if relieved, back into the flat.

They decided the best way to make use of that day was for relaxation and to go for a walk; not only had they earned a break from work but they were in serious need of it. So they sat at the table and wrote three letters of excusal, Mr. Samsa to his employers, Mrs. Samsa to her contractor and Grete to her principal. The cleaner came in while they were writing to tell them she was going, she'd finished her work for that morning. The three of them at first just nodded without looking up from what they were writing, and it was only when the cleaner still did not seem to want to leave that they looked up in irritation. "Well?", asked Mr. Samsa. The charwoman stood in the doorway with a smile on her face as if she had some tremendous good news to report, but would only do it if she was clearly asked to. The almost vertical little ostrich feather on her hat, which had been a source of irritation to Mr. Samsa all the time she had been working for them, swayed gently in all directions. "What is it you want then?", asked Mrs. Samsa, whom the cleaner had the most respect for. "Yes", she answered, and broke into a friendly laugh that made her unable to speak straight away, "well then, that thing in there, you needn't worry about how you're going to get rid of it. That's all been sorted out." Mrs. Samsa and Grete bent down over their letters as if intent on continuing with what they were writing; Mr. Samsa saw that the cleaner

wanted to start describing everything in detail but, with outstretched hand, he made it quite clear that she was not to. So, as she was prevented from telling them all about it, she suddenly remembered what a hurry she was in and, clearly peeved, called out “Cheerio then, everyone”, turned round sharply and left, slamming the door terribly as she went.

“Tonight she gets sacked”, said Mr. Samsa, but he received no reply from either his wife or his daughter as the charwoman seemed to have destroyed the peace they had only just gained. They got up and went over to the window where they remained with their arms around each other. Mr. Samsa twisted round in his chair to look at them and sat there watching for a while. Then he called out: “Come here, then. Let’s forget about all that old stuff, shall we. Come and give me a bit of attention”. The two women immediately did as he said, hurrying over to him where they kissed him and hugged him and then they quickly finished their letters.

After that, the three of them left the flat together, which was something they had not done for months, and took the tram out to the open country outside the town. They had the tram, filled with warm sunshine, all to themselves. Leant back comfortably on their seats, they discussed their prospects and found that on closer examination they were not at all bad—until then they had never asked each other about their work but all three had jobs which were very good and held particularly good promise for the future. The greatest improvement for the time being, of course, would be achieved quite easily by moving house; what they needed now was a flat that was smaller and cheaper than the current one which had been chosen by Gregor, one that was in a better location and, most of all, more practical. All the time, Grete was becoming livelier. With all the worry they had been having of late her cheeks had become pale, but, while they were talking, Mr. and Mrs. Samsa were struck, almost simultaneously, with the thought of how their daughter was blossoming into a well built and beautiful young lady. They became quieter. Just from each other’s glance and almost without knowing it they agreed that it would soon be time to find a good man for her. And, as if in confirmation of their new dreams and good intentions, as soon as they reached their destination Grete was the first to get up and stretch out her young body.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK METAMORPHOSIS ***

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

15: "If Shakespeare had a Sister"[From A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN] by Virginia Woolf

15.1: Editor's Introduction
15.2: "If Shakespeare Had a Sister"

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15.1: Editor's Introduction

In her essay "If Shakespeare Had a Sister," Virginia Woolf explores why there is not much recorded information on the lives of women of Shakespeare's time. She then imagines what life might have been like for a hypothetical sister of Shakespeare's, "Judith," who possesses artistic desires and a creative genius equal to her brother's, but who lacks both the freedom and opportunities to express her genius and attempt to earn a living through her art.

Woolf argues that unlike Shakespeare himself, Shakespeare's sister would have been constrained, due to her gender, to a life of subservience and non-creativity instead of enjoying the same artistic freedom and employment opportunities as her brother. As Woolf observes, for example, systemic limitations placed on women in Elizabethan England hindered their ability to become artists or achieve the kind of creative success of a William Shakespeare. Woolf's essay further explores how the gendered social structures of Shakespeare's time obstructed, beginning in early childhood, women's intellectual and artistic potential. In this way, Woolf illustrates the profound affects of societal norms, education, and economic restrictions.

Woolf's core argument is that the social expectations for women during the Elizabethan period sharply limited their opportunities for creative and intellectual pursuits. While William Shakespeare is allowed to pursue his education and career in London, his sister Judith, though equally talented, is confined to domestic life. Women in Shakespeare's time were expected to marry, bear children, and manage households, with little opportunity for education or intellectual development. Woolf uses this hypothetical scenario to highlight how the traditional roles assigned to women left them with little time or freedom to engage in artistic creation, and therefore why so few women writers of this period leave any records of their work or come down to us through history.

Also critiqued by Woolf is the deeply entrenched belief that a woman's place was in the home. She notes that even if a woman showed great talent, she would be discouraged from pursuing it because of her obligations as a wife and mother. This societal framework not only constrained women physically, by keeping them in the domestic sphere, but also psychologically, by instilling in them the belief that their primary value lay in their ability to serve others rather than to express themselves.

Woolf also points out the lack of formal education available to women as a significant barrier to their artistic development. In Shakespeare's time, education for women was not seen as necessary or appropriate. While boys like Shakespeare were educated in grammar schools and exposed to literature, women were largely excluded from those opportunities. Without access to education, women were deprived of the tools necessary to develop their talents or to express themselves in the ways that men could.

For instance, Woolf's Judith is denied education and it is pointed out that even if she had written something remarkable, she would have had no chance to publish it or gain recognition. Women of Shakespeare's time lacked the economic independence and institutional support needed to pursue a career in the arts. In contrast to William, who could leave home and seek his fortune in London's vibrant theatrical world, Judith would be financially dependent on her family or husband, unable to carve out a space of her own to nurture her talents.

The essay also explores the idea that the system actively worked to deny the existence of female genius. Judith, even if as naturally gifted as her brother, would be met with hostility and disbelief if she attempted to assert herself as a writer or artist. Women were often perceived as intellectually inferior, and any signs of brilliance were either ignored or belittled. The male-dominated world of literature, theater, and the arts would not have welcomed a woman, no matter how talented.

Woolf emphasizes that society not only denied women the material resources to create but also invalidated the very idea that women could be artists. In doing so, she critiques the patriarchal structures that enforce the idea that creativity and intellect are inherently male qualities. If a woman like Judith had attempted to break into the literary world, Woolf suggests, she would have been ridiculed, isolated, and ultimately silenced.

Also, Woolf calls attention to the absence of women's history in the artistic and literary tradition. She notes that there are no records of female playwrights or poets from Shakespeare's era because women were systematically excluded from the literary canon. Woolf's Judith serves as a metaphor for the countless women throughout history who might have been artists or writers but were never given the chance to develop their talents. Their absence from history is not due to a lack of ability, but a result of the societal constraints that held them back.

Woolf's essay argues as well for the importance of recognizing and recovering the lost history of women's contributions to the arts. She suggests that the absence of female writers in Shakespeare's time is not because women were incapable of genius, but because

they were denied any opportunity to demonstrate it. In this sense, Woolf calls for greater representation of women in literature and history, advocating for the conditions necessary for women to thrive creatively.

-Taz Rosenthal

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15.2: "If Shakespeare Had a Sister"

Source:

"If Shakespeare Had a Sister" from A Room of One's Own (1929)(opens in new window) [www.d.umn.edu]

by **Virginia Woolf** (1882-1941)

Accessed 29 September 2024

It was disappointing not to have brought back in the evening some important statement, some authentic fact. Women are poorer than men because--this or that. Perhaps now it would be better to give up seeking for the truth, and receiving on one's head an avalanche of opinion hot as lava, discoloured as dish-water. It would be better to draw the curtains; to shut out distractions; to light the lamp; to narrow the enquiry and to ask the historian, who records not opinions but facts, to describe under what conditions women lived, not throughout the ages, but in England, say in the time of Elizabeth.

For it is a perennial puzzle why no woman wrote a word of that extraordinary literature when every other man, it seemed, was capable of song or sonnet. What were the conditions in which women lived, I asked myself; for fiction, imaginative work that is, is not dropped like a pebble upon the ground, as science may be; fiction is like a spider's web, attached ever so lightly perhaps, but still attached to life at all four corners. Often the attachment is scarcely perceptible; Shakespeare's plays, for instance, seem to hang there complete by themselves. But when the web is pulled askew, hooked up at the edge, torn in the middle, one remembers that these webs are not spun in midair by incorporeal creatures, but are the work of suffering human beings, and are attached to grossly material things, like health and money and the houses we live in.

I went, therefore, to the shelf where the histories stand and took down one of the latest, Professor Trevelyan's *History of England*. Once more I looked up Women, found "position of," and turned to the pages indicated. "Wife-beating," I read, "was a recognised right of man, and was practised without shame by high as well as low. . . . Similarly," the historian goes on, "the daughter who refused to marry the gentleman of her parents' choice was liable to be locked up, beaten and flung about the room, without any shock being inflicted on public opinion. Marriage was not an affair of personal affection, but of family avarice, particularly in the 'chivalrous' upper classes. . . . Betrothal often took place while one or both of the parties was in the cradle, and marriage when they were scarcely out of the nurses' charge." That was about 1470, soon after Chaucer's time. The next reference to the position of women is some two hundred years later, in the time of the Stuarts. "It was still the exception for women of the upper and middle class to choose their own husbands, and when the husband had been assigned, he was lord and master, so far at least as law and custom could make him. Yet even so," Professor Trevelyan concludes, "neither Shakespeare's women nor those of authentic seventeenth-century memoirs, like the Verneys and the Hutchinsons, seem wanting in personality and character." Certainly, if we consider it, Cleopatra must have had a way with her; Lady Macbeth, one would suppose, had a will of her own; Rosalind, one might conclude, was an attractive girl. Professor Trevelyan is speaking no more than the truth when he remarks that Shakespeare's women do not seem wanting in personality and character. Not being a historian, one might go even further and say that women have burnt like beacons in all the works of all the poets from the beginning of time-Clytemnestra, Antigone, Cleopatra, Lady Macbeth, Phèdre, Cressida, Rosalind, Desdemona, the Duchess of Malfi, among the dramatists; then among the prose writers: Millamant, Clarissa, Becky Sharp, Anna Karenina, Emma Bovary, Madame de Guermantes--the names flock to mind, nor do they recall women "lacking in personality and character." Indeed, if woman had no existence save in the fiction written by men, one would imagine her a person of the utmost importance; very various; heroic and mean; splendid and sordid; infinitely beautiful and hideous in the extreme; as great as a man, some think even greater. But this is woman in fiction. In fact, as Professor Trevelyan points out, she was locked up, beaten and flung about the room.

A very queer, composite being thus emerges. Imaginatively she is of the highest importance; practically she is completely insignificant. She pervades poetry from cover to cover; she is all but absent from history. She dominates the lives of kings and conquerors in fiction; in fact she was the slave of any boy whose parents forced a ring upon her finger. Some of the most inspired words, some of the most profound thoughts in literature fall from her lips; in real life she could hardly read, could scarcely spell, and was the property of her husband.

It was certainly an odd monster that one made up by reading the historians first and the poets afterwards--a worm winged like an eagle; the spirit of life and beauty in a kitchen chopping up suet. But these monsters, however amusing to the imagination, have no existence in fact. What one must do to bring her to life was to think poetically and prosaically at one and the same moment, thus keeping in touch with fact--that she is Mrs. Martin, aged thirty-six, dressed in blue, wearing a black hat and brown shoes; but not losing sight of fiction either--that she is a vessel in which all sorts of spirits and forces are coursing and flashing perpetually. The moment, however, that one tries this method with the Elizabethan woman, one branch of illumination fails; one is held up by the scarcity of facts. One knows nothing detailed, nothing perfectly true and substantial about her. History scarcely mentions her. And I turned to Professor Trevelyan again to see what history meant to him. I found by looking at his chapter headings that it meant--

"The Manor Court and the Methods of Open-Field Agriculture . . . The Cistercians and Sheep-farming . . . The Crusades . . . The University . . . The House of Commons . . . The Hundred Years' War . . . The Wars of the Roses . . . The Renaissance Scholars . . . The Dissolution of the Monasteries . . . Agrarian and Religious Strife . . . The Origin of English Sea-power . . . The Armada . . ." and so on. Occasionally an individual woman is mentioned, an Elizabeth, or a Mary; a queen or a great lady. But by no possible means could middle-class women with nothing but brains and character at their command have taken part in any one of the great movements which, brought together, constitute the historian's view of the past. Nor shall we find her in any collection of anecdotes. Aubrey hardly mentions her. She never writes her own life and scarcely keeps a diary; there are only a handful of her letters in existence. She left no plays or poems by which we can judge her. What one wants, I thought--and why does not some brilliant student at Newnham or Girton supply it?--is a mass of information; at what age did she marry; how many children had she as a rule; what was her house like; had she a room to herself; did she do the cooking; would she be likely to have a servant? All these facts lie somewhere, presumably, in parish registers and account books; the life of the average Elizabethan woman must be scattered about somewhere, could one collect it and make a book of it. It would be ambitious beyond my daring, I thought, looking about the shelves for books that were not there, to suggest to the students of those famous colleges that they should re-write history, though I own that it often seems a little queer as it is, unreal, lop-sided; but why

should they not add a supplement to history? calling it, of course, by some inconspicuous name so that women might figure there without impropriety? For one often catches a glimpse of them in the lives of the great, whisking away into the background, concealing, I sometimes think, a wink, a laugh, perhaps a tear. And, after all, we have lives enough of Jane Austen; it scarcely seems necessary to consider again the influence of the tragedies of Joanna Baillie upon the poetry of Edgar Allan Poe; as for myself, I should not mind if the homes and haunts of Mary Russell Mitford were closed to the public for a century at least. But what I find deplorable, I continued, looking about the bookshelves again, is that nothing is known about women before the eighteenth century. I have no model in my mind to turn about this way and that. Here am I asking why women did not write poetry in the Elizabethan age, and I am not sure how they were educated; whether they were taught to write; whether they had sitting-rooms to themselves; how many women had children before they were twenty-one; what, in short, they did from eight in the morning till eight at night. They had no money evidently; according to Professor Trevelyan they were married whether they liked it or not before they were out of the nursery, at fifteen or sixteen very likely. It would have been extremely odd, even upon this showing, had one of them suddenly written the plays of Shakespeare, I concluded, and I thought of that old gentleman, who is dead now, but was a bishop, I think, who declared that it was impossible for any woman, past, present, or to come, to have the genius of Shakespeare. He wrote to the papers about it. He also told a lady who applied to him for information that cats do not as a matter of fact go to heaven, though they have, he added, souls of a sort. How much thinking those old gentlemen used to save one! How the borders of ignorance shrank back at their approach! Cats do not go to heaven. Women cannot write the plays of Shakespeare.

Be that as it may, I could not help thinking, as I looked at the works of Shakespeare on the shelf, that the bishop was right at least in this; it would have been impossible, completely and entirely, for any woman to have written the plays of Shakespeare in the age of Shakespeare. Let me imagine, since facts are so hard to come by, what would have happened had Shakespeare had a wonderfully gifted sister, called Judith, let us say. Shakespeare himself went, very probably--his mother was an heiress--to the grammar school, where he may have learnt Latin--Ovid, Virgil and Horace--and the elements of grammar and logic. He was, it is well known, a wild boy who poached rabbits, perhaps shot a deer, and had, rather sooner than he should have done, to marry a woman in the neighbourhood, who bore him a child rather quicker than was right. That escapade sent him to seek his fortune in London. He had, it seemed, a taste for the theatre; he began by holding horses at the stage door. Very soon he got work in the theatre, became a successful actor, and lived at the hub of the universe, meeting everybody, knowing everybody, practising his art on the boards, exercising his wits in the streets, and even getting access to the palace of the queen. Meanwhile his extraordinarily gifted sister, let us suppose, remained at home. She was as adventurous, as imaginative, as agog to see the world as he was. But she was not sent to

school. She had no chance of learning grammar and logic, let alone of reading Horace and Virgil. She picked up a book now and then, one of her brother's perhaps, and read a few pages. But then her parents came in and told her to mend the stockings or mind the stew and not moon about with books and papers. They would have spoken sharply but kindly, for they were substantial people who knew the conditions of life for a woman and loved their daughter--indeed, more likely than not she was the apple of her father's eye. Perhaps she scribbled some pages up in an apple loft on the sly, but was careful to hide them or set fire to them. Soon, however, before she was out of her teens, she was to be betrothed to the son of a neighbouring wool-stapler. She cried out that marriage was hateful to her, and for that she was severely beaten by her father. Then he ceased to scold her. He begged her instead not to hurt him, not to shame him in this matter of her marriage. He would give her a chain of beads or a fine petticoat, he said; and there were tears in his eyes. How could she disobey him? How could she break his heart? The force of her own gift alone drove her to it. She made up a small parcel of her belongings, let herself down by a rope one summer's night and took the road to London. She was not seventeen. The birds that sang in the hedge were not more musical than she was. She had the quickest fancy, a gift like her brother's, for the tune of words. Like him, she had a taste for theatre. She stood at the stage door; she wanted to act, she said. Men laughed in her face. The manager--a fat, loose-lipped man--guffawed. He bellowed something about poodles dancing and women acting--no woman, he said, could possibly be an actress. He hinted--you can imagine what. She could get no training in her craft. Could she even seek her dinner in a tavern or roam the streets at midnight? Yet her genius was for fiction and lusted to feed abundantly upon the lives of men and women and the study of their ways. At last--for she was very young, oddly like Shakespeare the poet in her face, with the same grey eyes and rounded brows--at last Nick Greene the actor-manager took pity on her; she found herself with child by that gentleman and so--who shall measure the heat and violence of the poet's heart when caught and tangled in a woman's body?--killed herself one winter's night and lies buried at some cross-roads where the omnibuses now stop outside the Elephant and Castle.

That, more or less, is how the story would run, I think, if a woman in Shakespeare's day had had Shakespeare's genius. But for my part, I agree with the deceased bishop, if such he was--it is unthinkable that any woman in Shakespeare's day should have had Shakespeare's genius. For genius like Shakespeare's is not born among labouring, uneducated, servile people. It was not born in England among the Saxons and the Britons. It is not born today among the working classes. How, then, could it have been born among women whose work began, according to Professor Trevelyan, almost before they were out of the nursery, who were forced to it by their parents and held to it by all the power of law and custom? Yet genius of a sort must have existed among women as it must have existed among the working classes. Now and again an Emily Brontë or a Robert Burns blazes out and proves its presence. But certainly it never got itself on to paper. When, however, one read of a witch being ducked, of a woman possessed by devils, of a wise woman selling herbs, or even of a very remarkable man who had a mother, then I think we are on the track of a lost novelist, a suppressed poet, of some mute and inglorious Jane Austen, some Emily Brontë who dashed her brains out on the moor or mopped and mowed about the highways crazed with the torture that her gift had put her to. Indeed, I would venture to guess that Anon, who wrote so many poems without signing them, was often a woman. It was a woman Edward Fitzgerald, I think, suggested who made the ballads and the folk-songs, crooning them to her children, beguiling her spinning with them, or the length of the winter's night.

This may be true or it may be false--who can say?--but what is true in it, so it seemed to me, reviewing the story of Shakespeare's sister as I had made it, is that any woman born with a great gift in the sixteenth century would certainly have gone crazed, shot herself, or ended her days in some lonely cottage outside the village, half witch, half wizard, feared and mocked at. For it needs little skill in psychology to be sure that a highly gifted girl who had tried to use her gift for poetry would have been so thwarted and hindered by other people, so tortured and pulled asunder by her own contrary instincts, that she must have lost her health and sanity to a certainty. No girl could have walked to London and stood at a stage door and forced her way into the presence of actor-managers without doing herself a violence and suffering an anguish which may have been irrational--for chastity may be a fetish invented by certain societies for unknown reasons--but were none the less inevitable. Chastity had then, it has even now, a religious importance in a woman's life, and has so wrapped itself round with nerves and instincts that to cut it free and bring it to the light of day demands courage of the rarest. To have lived a free life in London in the sixteenth century would have meant for a woman who was poet and playwright a nervous stress and dilemma which might well have killed her. Had she survived, whatever she had written would have been twisted and deformed, issuing from a strained and morbid imagination. And undoubtedly, I thought, looking at the shelf where there are no plays by women, her work would have gone unsigned. That refuge she would have sought certainly. It was the relic of the sense of chastity that dictated anonymity to women even so late as the nineteenth century. Currer Bell, George Eliot, George Sand, all the victims of inner strife as their writings prove, sought ineffectively to veil themselves by

using the name of a man. Thus they did homage to the convention, which if not implanted by the other sex was liberally encouraged by them (the chief glory of a woman is not to be talked of, said Pericles, himself a much-talked-of man), that publicity in women is detestable. Anonymity runs in their blood. The desire to be veiled still possesses them. They are not even now as concerned about the health of their fame as men are, and, speaking generally, will pass a tombstone or a signpost without feeling an irresistible desire to cut their names on it, as Alf, Bert or Chas. must do in obedience to their instinct, which murmurs if it sees a fine woman go by, or even a dog, Ce chien est à moi. And, of course, it may not be a dog, I thought, remembering Parliament Square, the Sieges Allee and other avenues; it may be a piece of land or a man with curly black hair. It is one of the great advantages of being a woman that one can pass even a very fine negress without wishing to make an Englishwoman of her.

That woman, then, who was born with a gift of poetry in the sixteenth century, was an unhappy woman, a woman at strife against herself. All the conditions of her life, all her own instincts, were hostile to the state of mind which is needed to set free whatever is in the brain. But what is the state of mind that is most propitious to the act of creation, I asked. Can one come by any notion of the state that furthers and makes possible that strange activity? Here I opened the volume containing the Tragedies of Shakespeare. What was Shakespeare's state of mind, for instance, when he wrote *Lear* and *Antony and Cleopatra*? It was certainly the state of mind most favourable to poetry that there has ever existed. But Shakespeare himself said nothing about it. We only know casually and by chance that he "never blotted a line." Nothing indeed was ever said by the artist himself about his state of mind until the eighteenth century perhaps. Rousseau perhaps began it. At any rate, by the nineteenth century self-consciousness had developed so far that it was the habit for men of letters to describe their minds in confessions and autobiographies. Their lives also were written, and their letters were printed after their deaths. Thus, though we do not know what Shakespeare went through when he wrote *Lear*, we do know what Carlyle went through when he wrote the *French Revolution*; what Flaubert went through when he wrote *Madame Bovary*; what Keats was going through when he tried to write poetry against the coming of death and the indifference of the world.

And one gathers from this enormous modern literature of confession and self-analysis that to write a work of genius is almost always a feat of prodigious difficulty. Everything is against the likelihood that it will come from the writer's mind whole and entire. Generally material circumstances are against it. Dogs will bark; people will interrupt; money must be made; health will break down. Further, accentuating all these difficulties and making them harder to bear is the world's notorious indifference. It does not ask people to write poems and novels and histories; it does not need them. It does not care whether Flaubert finds the right word or whether Carlyle scrupulously verifies this or that fact. Naturally, it will not pay for what it does not want. And so the writer, Keats, Flaubert, Carlyle, suffers, especially in the creative years of youth, every form of distraction and discouragement. A curse, a cry of agony, rises from those books of analysis and confession. "Mighty poets in their misery dead"--that is the burden of their song. If anything comes through in spite of all this, it is a miracle, and probably no book is born entire and uncrippled as it was conceived.

But for women, I thought, looking at the empty shelves, these difficulties were infinitely more formidable. In the first place, to have a room of her own, let alone a quiet room or a sound-proof room, was out of the question, unless her parents were exceptionally rich or very noble, even up to the beginning of the nineteenth century. Since her pin money, which depended on the good will of her father, as only enough to keep her clothed, she was debarred from such alleviations as came even to Keats or Tennyson or Carlyle, all poor men, from a walking tour, a little journey to France, from the separate lodging which, even if it were miserable enough, sheltered them from the claims and tyrannies of their families. Such material difficulties were formidable; but much worse were the immaterial. The indifference of the world which Keats and Flaubert and other men of genius have found so hard to bear was in her case not indifference but hostility. The world did not say to her as it said to them, Write if you choose; it makes no difference to me. The world said with a guffaw; Write? What's the good of your writing? Here the psychologists of Newnham and Girton might come to our help, I thought, looking again at the blank spaces on the shelves. For surely it is time that the effect of discouragement upon the mind of the artist should be measured, as I have seen a dairy company measure the effect of ordinary milk and Grade A milk upon the body of the rat. They set two rats in cages side by side, and of the two one was furtive, timid and small, and the other was glossy, bold and big. Now what food do we feed women as artists upon? I asked, remembering, I suppose, that dinner of prunes and custard. To answer that question I had only to open the evening paper and to read that Lord Birkenhead is of opinion--but really I am not going to trouble to copy out Lord Birkenhead's opinion upon the writing of women. What Dean Inge says I will leave in peace. The Harley Street specialist may be allowed to rouse the echoes of Harley Street with his vociferations without raising a hair on my head. I will quote, however, Mr. Oscar Browning, because Mr. Oscar Browning was a great figure in Cambridge at one time, and used to examine the students at Girton and Newnham. Mr. Oscar Browning was wont to declare "that the impression left on his mind, after looking over any set of examination papers, was that, irrespective of the marks he might give, the best woman was intellectually the inferior of the worst man." After saying that Mr. Browning went back to his rooms--and it is

this sequel that endears him and makes him a human figure of some bulk and majesty--he went back to his rooms and found a stable-boy lying on the sofa--"a mere skeleton, his cheeks were cavernous and sallow, his teeth were black, and he did not appear to have the full use of his limbs. . . . . 'That's Arthur' [said Mr. Browning). 'He's a dear boy really and most high-minded.'" The two pictures always seem to me to complete each other. And happily in this age of biography the two pictures often do complete each other, so that we are able to interpret the opinions of great men not only by what they say, but by what they do.

But though this is possible now, such opinions coming from the lips of important people must have been formidable enough even fifty years ago. Let us suppose that a father from the highest motives did not wish his daughter to leave home and become writer, painter or scholar. "See what Mr. Oscar Browning says," he would say; and there was not only Mr. Oscar Browning; there was the *Saturday Review*; there was Mr. Greg--the "essentials of a woman's being," said Mr. Greg emphatically, "are that *they are supported by, and they minister to, men*"--there was an enormous body of masculine opinion to the effect that nothing could be expected of women intellectually. Even if her father did not read out loud these opinions, any girl could read them for herself; and the reading, even in the nineteenth century, must have lowered her vitality, and told profoundly upon her work. There would always have been that assertion--you cannot do this, you are incapable of doing that--to protest against, to overcome. Probably for a novelist this germ is no longer of much effect; for there have been women novelists of merit. But for painters it must still have some sting in it; and for musicians, I imagine, is even now active and poisonous in the extreme. The woman composer stands where the actress stood in the time of Shakespeare. Nick Greene, I thought, remembering the story I had made about Shakespeare's sister, said that a woman acting put him in mind of a dog dancing. Johnson repeated the phrase two hundred years later of women preaching. And here, I said, opening a book about music, we have the very words used again in this year of grace, 1928, of women who try to write music. "Of Mlle. Germaine Tailleferre one can only repeat Dr. Johnson's dictum concerning a woman preacher, transposed into terms of music. 'Sir, a woman's composing is like a dog's walking on his hind legs. It is not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all.'" So accurately does history repeat itself.

Thus, I concluded, shutting Mr. Oscar Browning's life and pushing away the rest, it is fairly evident that even in the nineteenth century a woman was not encouraged to be an artist. On the contrary, she was snubbed, slapped, lectured and exhorted. Her mind must have been strained and her vitality lowered by the need of opposing this, of disproving that. For here again we come within range of that very interesting and obscure masculine complex which has had so much influence upon the woman's movement; that deep-seated desire, not so much that *she* shall be inferior as that *he* shall be superior, which plants him wherever one looks, not only in front of the arts, but barring the way to politics too, even when the risk to himself seems infinitesimal and the suppliant humble and devoted. Even Lady Bessborough, I remembered, with all her passion for politics, must humbly bow herself and write to Lord Granville Leveson-Gower: ". . . notwithstanding all my violence in politics and talking so much on that subject, I perfectly agree with you that no woman has any business to meddle with that or any other serious business, farther than giving her opinion (if she is ask'd)." And so she goes on to spend her enthusiasm where it meets with no obstacle whatsoever upon that immensely important subject, Lord Granville's maiden speech in the House of Commons. The spectacle is certainly a strange one, I thought. The history of men's opposition to women's emancipation is more interesting perhaps than the story of that emancipation itself. An amusing book might be made of it if some young student at Girton or Newnham would collect examples and deduce a theory--but she would need thick gloves on her hands, and bars to protect her of solid gold.

But what is amusing now, I recollected, shutting Lady Bessborough, had to be taken in desperate earnest once. Opinions that one now pastes in a book labelled cock-a-doodle-dum and keeps for reading to select audiences on summer nights once drew tears, I can assure you. Among your grandmothers and great-grandmothers there were many that wept their eyes out. Florence Nightingale shrieked aloud in her agony. Moreover, it is all very well for you, who have got yourselves to college and enjoy sitting-rooms--or is it only bed-sitting-rooms?--of your own to say that genius should disregard such opinions; that genius should be above caring what is said of it. Unfortunately, it is precisely the men or women of genius who mind most what is said of them. Remember Keats. Remember the words he had cut on his tombstone. Think of Tennyson; think--but I need hardly multiply instances of the undeniable, if very unfortunate, fact that it is the nature of the artist to mind excessively what is said about him. Literature is strewn with the wreckage of men who have minded beyond reason the opinions of others.

And this susceptibility of theirs is doubly unfortunate, I thought, returning again to my original enquiry into what state of mind is most propitious for creative work, because the mind of an artist, in order to achieve the prodigious effort of freeing whole and entire the work that is in him, must be incandescent, like Shakespeare's mind, I conjectured, looking at the book which lay open at *Antony and Cleopatra*. There must be no obstacle in it, no foreign matter unconsumed.

For though we say that we know nothing about Shakespeare's state of mind, even as we say that, we are saying something about Shakespeare's state of mind. The reason perhaps why we know so little of Shakespeare--compared with Donne or Ben Jonson or Milton--is that his grudges and spites and antipathies are hidden from us. We are not held up by some "revelation" which reminds us of the writer. All desire to protest, to preach, to proclaim an injury, to pay off a score, to make the world the witness of some hardship or grievance was fired out of him and consumed. Therefore his poetry flows from him free and unimpeded. If ever a human being got his work expressed completely, it was Shakespeare. If ever a mind was incandescent, unimpeded, I thought, turning again to the bookcase, it was Shakespeare's mind.

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