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DUTIES
OF YOUNG MEN.

by R. A. VAIN.

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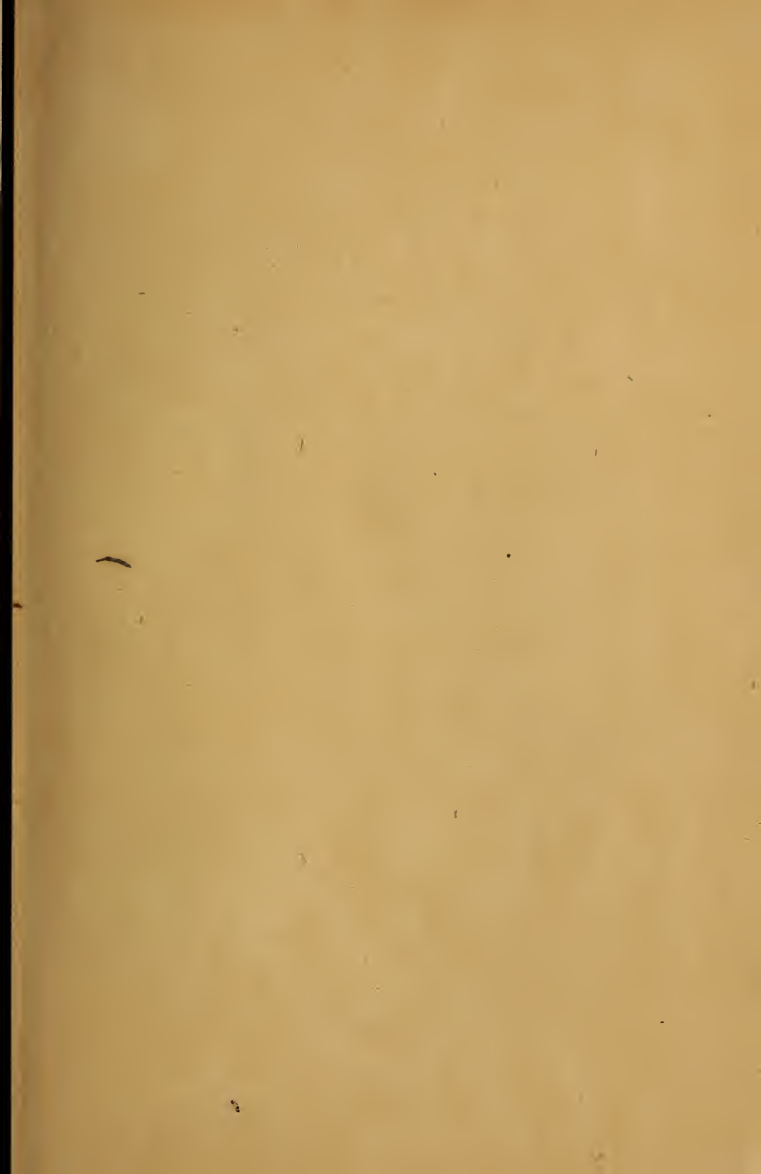
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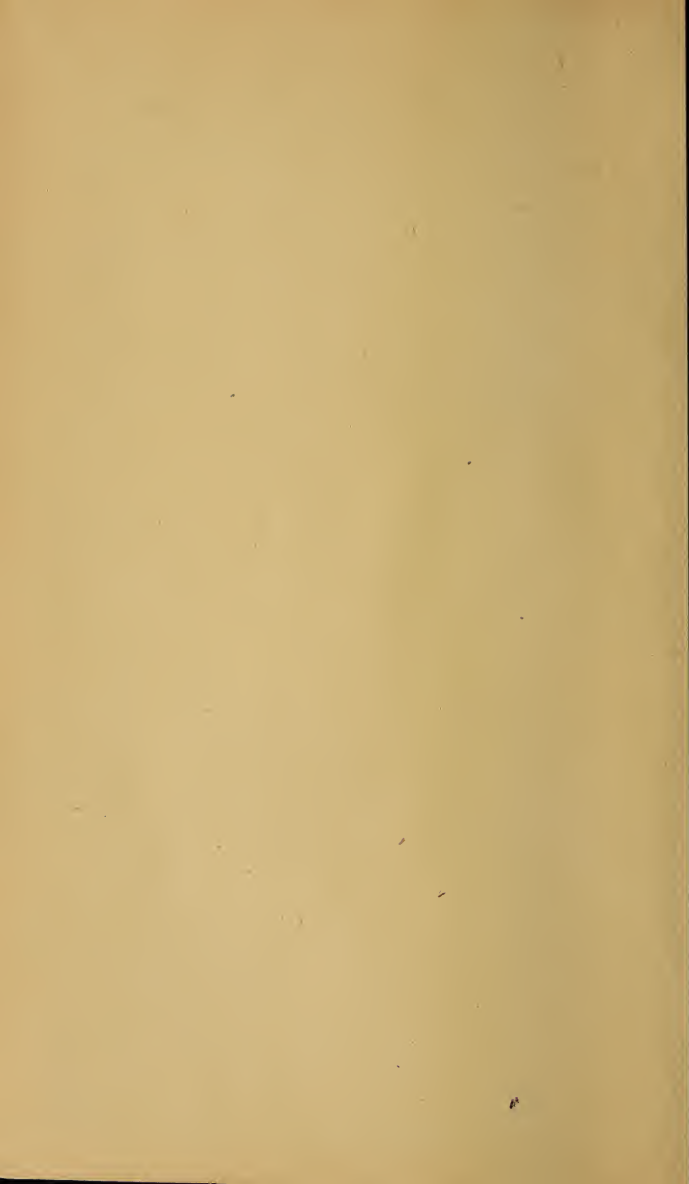
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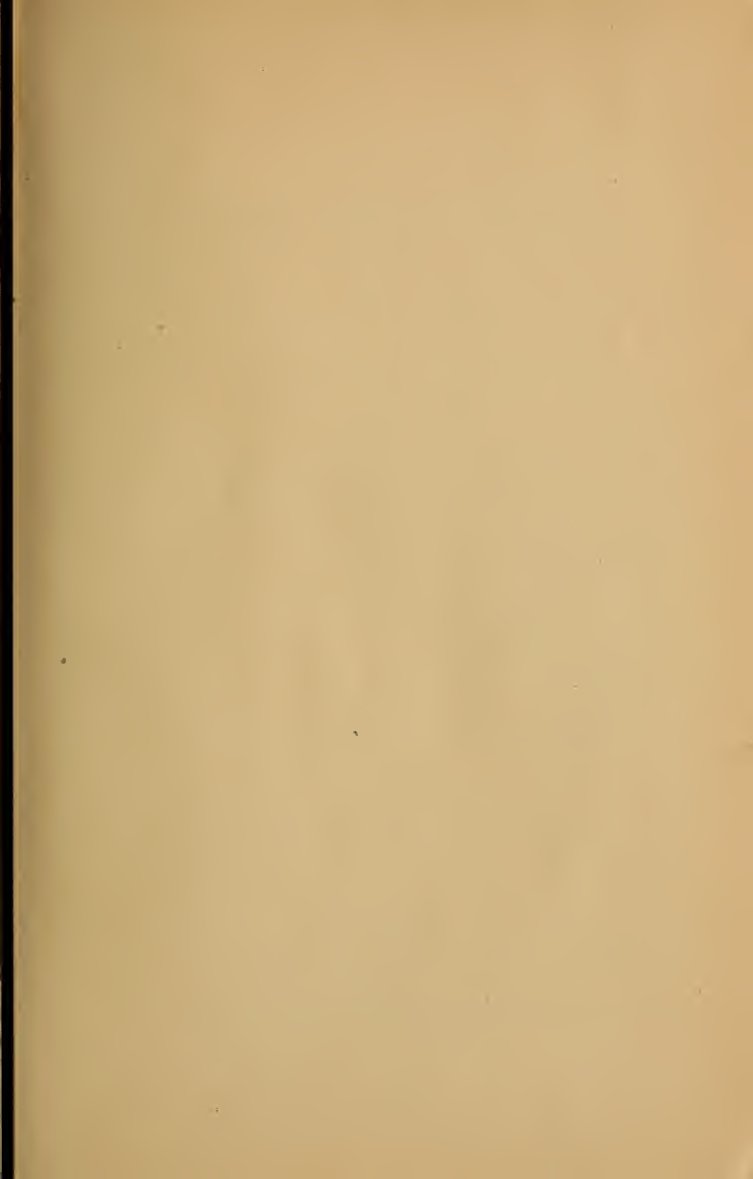
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ON
THE DUTIES
OF
YOUNG MEN:

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN OF
SILVIO PELLICO,
AUTHOR OF "MY PRISONS," "FRANCESCA DA RAMINI," ETC.,

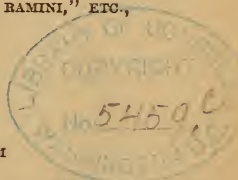
BY
R. A. VAIN.

WITH SELECTIONS FROM
Lacordaire's Letters to Young Men.

"Justicia enim perpetua est et immortalis."
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L. W. T. J. ...

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THIS discourse, addressed to an individual, I publish, in the hope that it may be useful to youth in general.

Here is no scientific treatise, here are no abstruse investigations concerning our duties. In my mind, there is no need of ingenious arguments to prove the obligation of being upright and religious. He who finds not such proofs in his own conscience, will never find them in a book. Here is a simple enumeration of the duties which man encounters through life, an invitation to

ponder them, and to adhere to them with generous constancy.

I have purposed avoiding all pomp of ideas and of style. The subject seemed to me to demand the purest simplicity.

Youth of my country, I offer you this little treatise, with an intense desire that it may stimulate you to the practice of virtue, and tend to render you happy.

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ON THE DUTIES OF YOUNG MEN.

CHAPTER I.

NECESSITY AND NATURE OF DUTY.

FROM the idea of duty, no one may well emancipate himself, and be insensible to the importance of that idea. Duty is inevitably inherent in our being. Of this conscience warns us when we have scarcely attained the use of reason; this it urges with still greater force as our reason increases, and always with renewed energy in proportion to the expansion of that faculty.

In like manner all external things teach us this truth, inasmuch as all things are governed by a law, harmonious and eternal—all have one and the

same destiny, namely, to show forth the wisdom, and execute the will of that Being who is the cause and end of all.

Man likewise has a destiny, a nature; he must needs be what he should be, else he is not esteemed by others, he is not esteemed by himself, he is not happy. It is in his nature to aspire to happiness, to feel, to experience, that happiness cannot be attained otherwise than through virtue, which means the practice of all that is required for our well-being, in accordance with that of others, in accordance with the system of the universe, with the intentions of the Creator.

If in our moments of passion we are tempted to designate as our well-being that which is in opposition to that of others, in opposition to good order; we cannot, nevertheless, persuade ourselves to that effect, conscience proclaims the contrary. Our passion once calmed, all that was opposed to the good of others,

to good order, invariably inspires us with horror.

The performance of duty is so essential to our well-being, that even sufferings and death, which seem to be our most immediate ills, become a source of delight to the generous man, who suffers and dies with the intention of benefiting his fellow-man, or of accomplishing the adorable decrees of the Omnipotent.

Man, being as he ought to be, is consequently the definition of duty, and at the same time that of happiness. This truth religion sublimely expounds, when she says that he was made to the image of God. His duty and his happiness consist in being as that image, not desiring to be aught else, endeavoring to be good, because God is good, and has awarded him as a destiny to aspire to the practice of all virtues, and become like Himself.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE LOVE OF TRUTH.

Our first duty is the love of truth, and faith in that virtue.

Truth is God; to love truth and love God are one and the same.

Strengthen yourself, my friend, in your desire after truth, and suffer not yourself to be dazzled by the false eloquence of those melancholy and insane sophists, who endeavor to cast over all things a veil of discouraging doubt.

Reason is of no avail, but is, on the contrary, pernicious, when employed as a weapon against truth, so as to discredit it, so as to sustain ignoble suppositions: when deducing fatal consequences from the ills with which life is beset, it denies that life is a boon; when enumerating some apparent incongruities in the universe, it refuses to admit the existence of order; when impressed by the palpa-

bility and the death of the body, it shrinks from the belief of another life all spiritual and immortal; when it designates as a dream the distinction between vice and virtue; when it will regard man as a mere animal, having nothing of divine.

If man and nature were things thus vile and abominable, why waste time in philosophizing? Better so—make an end of oneself; reason could not counsel otherwise.

Since conscience bids all to live (the exception of some weak in intellect is inconclusive), since we live to aspire after good, since we feel that the virtue of man consists, not in abasing, in confounding himself with the worm, but in ennobling, in elevating himself towards God, it is evident there is no other sane use of reason, save that which inspires man with an exalted idea of his possible dignity, and impels him to attain it.

This principle recognized, let us boldly

banish scepticism, cynicism, and all degrading philosophy; let us firmly resolve to believe in the existence of truth, of beauty, of goodness. In order to believe we must wish to believe, we must ardently love truth.

Such love alone can give energy to the soul; he who takes pleasure in remaining in his doubts enervates his soul.

To the faith in all upright principles add the purpose of ever being the embodied expression of truth in all your words, in all your actions.

The conscience of man knows no repose save in truth. He who utters an untruth, should he even remain undiscovered, bears his punishment within him; he feels he betrays a duty and degrades himself.

In order to avoid contracting the vile habit of lying, there is no other means than to resolve never to lie. If we make a single exception to this resolution, are we not apt to find pretexts for two, for

fifty, in a word, for an infinity of exceptional cases?

And even so it happens that so many become by degrees horribly prone to deception, to exaggeration, and even to calumny.

Men are most addicted to falsehood during the most corrupt times, when reigns a general distrust—distrust even between father and son, with an incessant and immoderate recourse to protestations, to adjurations, and to perfidy; when amidst the diversity of opinions concerning politics, religion, and sometimes even literature alone, exists a constant stimulus to invent circumstances and intentions in order to depreciate the adverse party, with the persuasion that all means are justifiable to lower an adversary; when prevails the rage to search out evidence against others, and that obtained, despite of its manifest futility and falsehood, great is the ardor evinced in sustaining, in magnifying it,

in feigning belief in its validity. They who have no simplicity of heart, ever deem the hearts of others deceitful. Does one who is displeasing to them only speak, they pretend that all he says is ill-intentioned; does one who is displeasing to them pray or give alms, they return thanks to heaven for not being like him—hypocrites!

You, though born in an age in which falsehood and distrust carried to excess are so general, hold yourself pure from these vices. Be generously disposed to believe in the truth of others, and if others believe not in yours, be not indignant; let it suffice that it shines “in the eyes of Him who sees all things.”

CHAPTER III.

RELIGION.

Being firmly convinced of the superiority of man above the brute, and of the

existence of something divine within him, we should hold in high esteem all such sentiments as tend to ennoble him; and it being evident that none so much exalt him as his aspirations after perfection, after happiness, after God, we must of necessity recognize the excellency of religion, and cultivate it.

Be not daunted either by the multitude of hypocrites, or those scoffers who dare to style you hypocritical, because religious. Without strength of mind we possess no virtue, we perform no exalted duty; consequently, in order to be pious, we must not be pusillanimous.

And be even still less daunted at being associated as a Christian with many vulgar souls, little capable of appreciating all that religion has of sublime. That the vulgar man can and ought to be religious, is no proof that religion is a vulgar matter. If the ignorant are obliged to be honest, is that a reason why the civilized man should blush at being so?

Your studies and your reason have taught you that there is no religion purer than Christianity, more exempt from errors, more resplendently holy, more impressed with a divine character. No other had so great an influence in advancing, in diffusing civilization, in abolishing, in mitigating slavery, in rendering all mortals sensible of their fraternity before God, their fraternity with God Himself.

Weigh all this within you, and especially the solidity of the historic proofs, which are sufficient to stand the test of all dispassionate investigation.

And in order to escape the illusion of sophisms directed against the validity of these, having thus investigated, consider the vast number of men of superior genius who regarded these same proofs as conclusive, some of the profound thinkers of our era, from Dante, St. Thomas, St. Augustine, and the early Fathers of the Church.

Every nation affords you illustrious names which no sceptic may presume to despise.

The celebrated Bacon, so much vaunted by the empiric school, so far from being incredulous, as were the warmest of his panegyrists, always professed himself a Christian. Grotius was a Christian, although in some respects he erred, and wrote a treatise *On the Truth of Religion*. Leibnitz was one of the most ardent champions of religion. Newton did not blush to compose a book *On the Conformity of the Gospels*. Locke wrote on *Rational Christianity*. Our Volta, possessing a profound knowledge of physics and vast erudition, was, during his life, a most virtuous Catholic. The opinion of such men of genius and of so many others, is assuredly of the greatest weight in attesting that Christianity is in perfect harmony with the understanding—I mean to say, with an understanding universal in its knowledge and re-

searches ; not cramped, not biassed, not perverted by its love of scorn and irreligion.

CHAPTER IV.

QUOTATIONS.

Amongst the celebrated men of the world, are to be enumerated some irreligious, and not a few, full of errors and inconsistencies in point of faith. But what of that? Of all they asserted, as much against Christianity in general as against Catholicism, they proved nothing whatsoever, and their leaders could not, in divers of their works, avoid admitting the wisdom of that religion which they detested, or so indifferently observed.

The following quotations, although devoid of the charm of novelty, lose nothing of their importance, and merit a place here.

J. J. Rosseau writes in his *Emile* these memorable words :

“I must acknowledge, the majesty of the Scripture amazes me; the sanctity of the Gospel speaks to my heart. Consider the books of the philosophers with all their pomp, how trivial are they all comparatively speaking! Is it possible that a book so sublime, and so simple at the same time, is the work of man? The actions of Socrates, of which no one thinks of forming a doubt, are by far less authenticated than those of Christ. Moreover, it would be avoiding the difficulty and not surmounting it; it would be more incomprehensible if several men had combined in writing that book, than if a solitary individual had furnished the subject. And the Gospel has characters of truth so grand, so luminous, so completely inimitable, that the inventor would be still more wonderful than the hero!”

The same Rousseau says again :

“Shun those men who, under pretext of unfolding the wonders of nature, infuse

into your hearts destructive doctrines. Upsetting, destroying, trampling under foot all that men respect, they deprive the afflicted of the last consolation of their misery; they take from the rich and powerful the sole curb on their passions; they wrench from the depth of the heart the remorse attendant on crime, the hope accompanying virtue, while boasting of being the benefactors of mankind. Virtue (so they speak) is never pernicious to men. Such is also my belief, and in my opinion a proof that that which they teach is not truth."

Montesquieu, although not himself irreprehensible respecting religion, is indignant with those who attribute to Christianity imaginary faults.

"Bayle," says he, "after insulting all religions, vilifies Christianity. He dares to assert that no states formed by true Christians could hold together! And, wherefore not? They would be citizens highly enlightened, respecting their du-

ties, and ardently zealous in their performance. They would thoroughly comprehend the duty of natural defence, and, believing themselves bound by the obligations of religion, they would in equal measure feel themselves bound by those of country.

“Marvelous to say, the Christian religion, which seems to have no object in view save our happiness in another life, contributes also to that of this present existence.” (v. Spirit of the Laws, l. 3, c. 6.) And further: “it is a vicious mode of reasoning against religion, to collect in one vast work a long series of ills which accompanied her, without at the same time enumerating the benefits for which we were indebted to her. Any one who would choose to sum up all the evils arising in the world from the civil laws, from monarchical, from republican government, would cite astounding facts. If we call to mind the continued series of slaughter under the Greek and Roman

kings and leaders, the destruction of nations and cities by these fierce chiefs; the violence of Tamerlane and of Zingis Khan, who devastated Asia, we shall find that to Christianity are owing, in the government of nations, a certain political equity; in war, a certain observance of the rights of mankind, for which human nature cannot be sufficiently grateful." (Ibid. l. 24, c. 2 and 3.)

The great Byron, that stupendous genius, who was wont by turns, so culpably, to adore now virtue, now vice, now truth, now falsehood, yet was consumed by an ardent thirst of truth and virtue, and attested the veneration he was forced to entertain for the Catholic doctrines. He desired that a daughter of his should be educated in that religion. We know of a letter wherein, in allusion to this resolution, he says that such was his wish, because he could distinguish in no other creed so much of the light of truth.

The friend of Byron, and next to him the greatest poet existing in England, Thomas Moore, after many years of doubt regarding the choice of a religion, made profound investigations into Christianity, and confessed the impossibility of being a Christian and a good logician, without being a Catholic. He related all the researches made by him, and the inevitable conclusion to which they led him.

“Hail! then to thee!” he exclaims, “thou one and only true Church, which art alone the way of life, and in whose tabernacles alone there is shelter from all this confusion of tongues. In the shadow of thy sacred mysteries let my soul henceforth repose, remote alike from the infidel who scoffs at their darkness, and the rash believer who vainly would pry into their recesses, saying to both, in the language of St. Augustine: ‘Do you reason, while I wonder; do you dispute, while I shall believe; and beholding the

heights of divine power, forbear to approach its depths! ’” *

CHAPTER V.

RESOLUTION REGARDING RELIGION.

Let the foregoing considerations and the innumerable proofs in favor of Christianity and of our Church, inspire you to repeat similar words, and to say resolutely: I desire to be insensible to all those arguments, ever specious, yet utterly inconclusive, which assail religion; I see it is untrue that she is opposed to enlightenment; I see it is untrue that she was only suited to a barbarous age, and not to the present times; since, after having been adapted to Asiatic civilization, to Greek, to Roman civilization, to the various states of the Middle Ages,

* See Travels of an Irish Gentleman in Search of a Religion, with Notes and Explanations, by Thomas Moore.

she is suited to all such as subsequently to that period returned to civilization; and she is likewise suited at the present day to understandings which yield to none in elevation of thought. I see that from the first heresiarchs, down to the school of Voltaire and his companions, and afterwards to the St. Simonians of our days, all boasted of teaching better things, and that none ever could do so. And what then? Consequently, while I glory in being the enemy of barbarism and the friend of enlightenment, I glory in being Catholic, and pity those who deride me, who boast of confounding me with the superstitious and the Pharisees.

After this insight and protestation, be steadfast and firm. Honor religion as far as may be possible by your affections and talents, and profess it among believers and unbelievers, but not so in following coldly and materially the routine of worship, but in animating its observance by elevated thoughts, raising yourself to the

admiration of the sublimity of the divine mysteries, without arrogantly desiring to fathom them, penetrating yourself with the virtues which flow from them, and never forgetting that adoration alone in prayer avails not, unless we purpose to adore God in all our works.

The beauty and the truth of the Catholic faith shine in all their lustre before the eyes of some; they feel that no philosophy can be more philosophical, more averse to all injustice, more friendly to the rights of man; and nevertheless, they move with the sad current; they live as though Christianity were only for the vulgar, and that the polished man should take no part in it. They are more culpable than actual unbelievers, and of such there are many.

I, who was myself of the number, am aware that one cannot rise from that state without making the most vigorous efforts, which do you likewise, should you ever engage in a similar course. Let not

the ridicule of others affect you, when it is fitting to avow an upright sentiment—the most worthy of all sentiments is that of loving God.

But, if it should happen that you have to pass from false doctrines or indifference to the sincere profession of faith, afford not to the eyes of the incredulous the scandal of a ridiculous, irrational devotion, and of pusillanimous scruples; be humble in the eyes of God and of men, but never forgetful of your dignity as man, or apostate to common reason. The reason of him who is filled with hatred and pride is opposed to the Gospel.

CHAPTER VI.

PHILANTHROPY AND CHARITY.

It is through religion alone that man feels the obligation of a sincere philanthropy, of a sincere charity.

Charity is a stupendous word, but phi-

lanthropy likewise,—although many sophists have abused it,—is holy. The apostle employed it to designate the love of humanity, and also applied it to that love of humanity which is in God Himself. We read in the Epistle to Titus, chap. iii. : *But when the goodness and kindness of our Saviour God appeared.*

The Omnipotent loves mankind, and desires that each of us should do so likewise. It is not given, as we have already remarked, to man to be good, to be satisfied with, to esteem himself, otherwise than in imitating Him in this generous love, in desiring the virtue and felicity of his neighbor, in rendering him service when in his power.

In this love is comprised almost all human merit; it forms even a most essential part of the love which we owe to God, as we see in several sublime passages of the sacred writings, and principally in the following :

“Then shall the King say to them that

shall be on His right hand: Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me. Then shall the just answer Him, saying: Lord, when did we see Thee hungry, and fed Thee; thirsty, and gave Thee drink? and when did we see Thee a stranger, and took Thee in; or naked, and clothed Thee? or when did we see Thee sick, or in prison, and came to Thee? And the King, answering, shall say to them: Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me." (Matt. xxv.)

Let us form within our mind an elevated type of man, and endeavor to assimilate ourselves to it. But what do I say? Our religion furnishes us with

one, and oh! of what surpassing excellence! He whom she offers us as a model is the Man, strong and merciful in a supreme degree; the irreconcilable enemy of oppression and of hypocrisy; the philanthropist who pardons all, save impenitent crime; He who could take vengeance, and will not be revenged; He who makes Himself the brother of the poor, and condemns not the happy of this world, provided they remember they are the brethren of the indigent; He who esteems not men according to the measure of their wisdom or prosperity, but according to the dispositions of their hearts, according to their actions. He is the sole philosopher in whom we cannot discern the slightest blemish; He is the full manifestation of God in a being of our species—He is the Man-God.

He who has in his mind so worthy a model, with what reverence will He not regard human nature! Love is ever in proportion to esteem. In order to love

human nature deeply, we must esteem it highly.

He who, on the contrary, forms of his fellow-men a type, mean, ignoble, uncertain; he who is pleased to consider the human race as a herd of cunning, unideaed animals, born for nought else but to eat, to increase, to move, and return to dust; he who will see nothing grand in civilization, in the sciences, in the arts, in the search after justice, in our insatiable tendency towards the beautiful, the good, the divine, ah! what motive can such a being have for sincerely respecting his fellow-man, for loving him, for urging him to emulate him in the acquisition of virtues, for immolating himself in his interest?

In order to love humanity, we must bear to look on its weaknesses, its vices, without being scandalized.

Wherever we encounter ignorance, let us reflect on the high faculty bestowed on man of arising from that state, by the right use of his intelligence. Let us like-

wise admire that other noble faculty of human nature, namely, that which enables men, when even sunk in the depths of ignorance, to practice the sublimest of social virtues, as courage, compassion, gratitude, justice.

Those beings who never undertake the task of enlightening themselves, or following the practice of virtues, are individuals, and not humanity. If they be excusable, and to what extent, is known alone to God.

Let it suffice for us that from each shall be demanded an account solely in proportion to the sum of talents bestowed on him.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE ESTEEM OF MAN.

Among mankind, let us fix our attention on such as who, attesting in their own lives the moral grandeur of their

species, show us that which we should aspire to become. We cannot, it is true, equal them in fame, but that is not the important point. We can always equal them in intrinsic worth ; that is to say, in the culture of noble sentiments, when we are not abortive or weak in intellect ; when our existence, gifted with intelligence, emerges from the period of infancy.

When we are tempted to despise mankind, in witnessing with our own eyes, or else reading in history several of their acts of turpitude, let us direct our attention to those venerable mortals who shine in the pages of history. The choleric yet generous Byron, told me that such was the only means by which he could preserve himself from misanthropy.

“The first great man,” as he observed to me, “who occurs to my mind, is invariably Moses : Moses, who raised a people sunk in abasement ; who saved them from the opprobrium of idolatry and of slavery ; who dictated to them a law

replete with wisdom—that marvelous bond between the religion of the patriarchs and the religion of the civilized ages—the Gospel. The virtues and the instructions of Moses were the means employed by Providence to give to that people able statesmen, valiant warriors, excellent citizens, men inflamed with a holy ardor of equity, whose vocation was to predict the fate of the proud and of the hypocrite, and the future civilization of all nations.

“In contemplating certain great men, and chiefly my paragon Moses,” continued Byron, “I repeat always with enthusiasm this sublime verse of Dante :

‘ Che di vederli, in me stasso m’esalto !’ *

and then I adopt a good opinion of this flesh of Adam, and of the spirit which animates it.”

These words of the great English poet remained indelibly impressed in my mind, and I confess that more than once I

* Beholding them, I glory in myself.

derived great advantage from them in acting like him, when assailed by the horrible temptation of misanthropy.

The men of magnanimity of the past and present time, are a sufficient contradiction to any one having a low idea of the nature of man. How many such exalted characters were to be seen in the far distant past! how many in the time of the Romans! how many amidst the barbarism of the Middle Ages, and how many during the period of modern civilization! There, the martyrs of the truth; here, the benefactors of the afflicted; then again, the Fathers of the Church, admirable by their colossal philosophy and their ardent charity; everywhere valiant warriors, champions of justice, restorers of light, poetic sages, scientific sages, artistic sages!

Let not the remoteness of the era nor the exalted lot of these personages, lead us to imagine them as beings differing in species from us. No truly, they were

not in their origin more of demigods than we ourselves. They were born of woman; they suffered and wept as ourselves; like us it was allotted them to combat their evil inclinations, at times to blush at themselves, to struggle hard to overcome self.

The annals of nations and the other memorials extant, record only a small portion of the sublime souls that existed on earth. But thousand-fold again and again are those who, without possessing any celebrity, honor by the productions of their minds, and by their just actions, the name of man, their fraternity with all men of excellence, their fraternity—we repeat it—their fraternity with God!

Is it not deluding ourselves, to recall the excellence and the multitude of the good; is it not merely regarding the fair side of humanity, to deny the existence of an infinity of erring and perverted souls? That the erring and the perverse abound, granted; but the consequence to

be deduced is this: that man may become wonderful by the powers of his understanding; that he may rest unperverted; that he can at all times, with any degree whatsoever of cultivation, in every position of fortune ennoble himself by sublime virtues, and for such like considerations possess a right to the esteem of all intelligent beings. When we grant him all that esteem to which he is entitled—seeing him impelled onward towards infinite perfection; seeing him appertain to the immortal world of ideas, still more than to the few flitting days during which, even as the vegetable and the brute, he appears subject to the laws of this material world; seeing him at least capable of quitting the ranks of the bestial troop, and hearing him exclaim: I am superior to you all, and to all earthly things that encompass me—we shall feel our sympathetic throbs for him redouble. His very miseries, his very errors move us to deeper compassion,

remembering the grandeur of his nature. We shall lament to see the king of creatures debase himself; we shall burn now to throw a veil of charity over his errors; again, to extend a hand to raise him from the depth of his abasement, that he may regain the lofty eminence from which he is fallen; we shall exult each time we behold him, mindful of his dignity, appearing unsubdued amid shame and torture, triumphing over the bitterest trials, assimilating himself with all the glorious energy of his will, to his divine type!

CHAPTER VIII.

LOVE OF COUNTRY.

All such affections as bind man to man, and dispose him to virtue, are noble. The cynic, who employs so many sophisms against every generous sentiment, is wont to make a display of philan-

thropy, in order to depreciate the love of country.

He says: "My country is the world, that corner in which I was born possesses no right to my preference, since it cannot excel in worth all other lands, where one may live equally well, or it may be, better; the love of country is nothing else but a species of common egotism among a group of men, to authorize them in hating the rest of mankind.

My friend, do not be the sport of such a vile philosophy. It is in its nature to vilify man, to deny the existence of his virtues, to designate as illusion, as folly, or as perversity, all that most exalts him. To combine high-sounding words in depreciating some noble tendency, some incentive to social advantage, is an easy but a contemptible art.

Cynicism holds man in the slime, true philosophy burns to withdraw him from it; is religious, and honors the love of country.

In truth, we may say of the entire world that it is our country. All nations are fractions of one vast family, which, by reason of its great extension, cannot be united under one government, although having for its supreme lord the Most High. Considering the beings of our common species as one family tends to render us benevolent towards humanity in general. But this view does not exclude others equally just.

It is likewise a fact that the human species is divided into nations. Each nation or people is that collective body of men, that religion, laws, customs, identity of language, of origin, of glory, of grievances, of hopes, or the greater part of, if not all, these elements united in one particular sympathy. To call common egotism that sympathy, and the unity of interest among the members of a community, would be all the same as if the mania of satire would bethink itself to vilify paternal, filial affection, qualify-

ing them as a conspiracy between all fathers and their sons.

Let us ever bear in mind that truth has many aspects; that among virtuous sentiments there is not one which should not be cultivated. Can any among them, in becoming exclusive, grow pernicious? Let it not be exclusive, and so it will not be pernicious. Excellent is the love of humanity, yet it should not preclude that of our birth-place; the love of the latter is likewise excellent, yet it should not preclude that of humanity.

Shame on the ignoble soul which applauds not the multiplicity of forms and of motives which the sacred instinct of fraternity can assume among men, in the interchange of honors, of aid, and of civilities.

Two European travellers, the one born at Turin, the other at London, meet in another region of the globe. They are Europeans; that community of name constitutes a certain bond of love, I

might almost say of patriotism. And thence arises a laudable zeal in rendering mutual services.

Observe, elsewhere, some persons who understand each other with difficulty, they speak not usually the same language; if you believe not there could be a sentiment of patriotism between them then, you mistake. They are Swiss, the one from the Italian cantons, the other from a French, another again from a German canton. The identity of the political bond that protects them supplies the want of a common language, unites them, engages them to contribute by generous sacrifices to the advantage of a native land which is not a nation.

Take another example—in Italy or Germany: men living under different laws, sometimes obliged to make war among themselves. Yet they speak, or at least write the same language, they honor the same common ancestors, they glory in the same literature, they have all

similar tastes, a mutual want of sympathy, of indulgence, of reciprocal support. Such motives render them towards each other more pious, more ardent in their strife of urbanity.

Patriotism, whether applied to a country of vast, or of inconsiderable extent, is always a noble sentiment. There is no portion of a nation but what has its own particular renown; princes who conferred on it a relative force, more or less considerable; memorable historic achievements, excellent institutions, important cities, some splendid prevailing characteristic of the people, men rendered illustrious by their valor, by their policy, by arts and sciences. Consequently, there exists for each a motive to justify his predilection towards his native province, his native city, or his native town.

But let us bear in mind that love of country, equally in the most extended, as in the more restricted spheres, consists not in a sentiment of vain glory at being

a native of such or such a land, and in feelings of hatred against other cities, other provinces, other nations. That patriotism which is illiberal, envious, ferocious, is to be counted a vice and not a virtue.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TRUE PATRIOT.

In order to love our country with a truly exalted sentiment, we should commence by giving her in our own persons citizens for whom she would have no reason to blush, but in whom, on the contrary, she might feel honored.

To scoff at religion and good morals, and entertain a worthy love of country, are two things which are incompatible, as much so as to imagine it possible to conceive a worthy estimation of the woman we love, without feeling any obligation of fidelity to her on our part.

When a man who scoffs at the altar, at the sacred bond of marriage, at decorum, at probity—exclaims, “My country! my country!” distrust him, he is a hypocrite of patriotism, a citizen of the worst order.

There is no good patriot other than the virtuous man—he who knows and loves all his duties, and makes it his study to accomplish them.

He is not to be confounded either with the parasite of power, or with the malignant hater of all authority: to be servile and to be irreverent are both equally excesses.

Should he occupy a post as governor in a civil or military capacity, his chief aim is not to amass riches, but to promote the honor and prosperity of prince and of people. Should he be a private citizen, these are equally the objects of his most ardent wishes, never acting in opposition to this end, but, on the contrary, contributing, by all his efforts, to its attainment.

He is sensible that in all societies there are abuses, and is desirous of their reformation ; but is abhorrent of that spirit of fury that would correct them by means of rapine and of sanguinary vengeance, because of all abuses these latter are the most terrible and fatal.

Neither does he invoke or excite civil dissensions ; but is, on the contrary, by word and by example, a pacificator, as far as depends on him, of the violent, and the friend of indulgence and of peace ; he ceases not to be the lamb, till his country, in the hour of danger needs a defender. It is then he becomes the lion, fights, and conquers or dies.

CHAPTER X.

FILIAL AFFECTION.

The career of all your actions commences in your own family ; the first arena of virtue is the paternal home.

What shall we say of those who pretend to love their country, who make a display of heroism, and fail in such a high duty as that of filial piety? There exists no love of country, there exists not the smallest germ of heroism wheresoever is to be found black ingratitude.

Scarcely does the idea of duty dawn on the intelligence of the child, when nature proclaims to him: "Love thy parents." The instinct of filial love is so strong that there would appear to be no need to sustain it throughout life. Yet, as we have already remarked, on all good instincts it is needful that we affix the seal of our will, otherwise they become languid; so it is requisite that the exercise of piety towards our parents be based on a fixed purpose.

He who pretends to love God, to love humanity, to love country, how can he entertain otherwise than the highest reverence for those through whom he has become a creature of God, a man, a citizen?

A father and a mother are naturally our first friends; they are among mortal creatures those to whom we are most indebted; we are bound by the most sacred ties of gratitude, to respect, to love, to indulgence, and to the courteous demonstration of all these sentiments towards them.

Yet it too easily happens that the close intimacy in which we live with those persons who are nearest akin to us may habituate us to treat them with utter indifference—little studious of rendering ourselves pleasing or cheering their existence.

Be guarded against similar faults: he who wishes to grow polished should bring to bear in all his affections a certain disposition to exactness and elegance, so as to give them all that perfection of which they are susceptible.

To study to show oneself in society a courteous observer of every art of pleasing, and to be at the same time wanting

in deference and amenity towards one's parents, is irrational and culpable. Good manners are acquired by assiduity, commencing in the first instance in the bosom of one's family.

“Where is the evil,” say some certain persons, “of living in habits of perfect freedom with one's parents? They are already aware that they are loved by their children, without the grimaces of an agreeable exterior, even without any obligation on the part of these latter to dissemble their ill humor or their whims.” You who desire not to become vulgar reason not thus. If living free from restraint means to say to be rude, it is rudeness which no degree of intimacy or relationship can justify.

The mind not possessed of courage to study to be pleasing to others, equally at home as in society, to acquire every virtue, to honor man in self, to honor God in other men, that mind is a pusillanimous mind. From the noble exertion

of being good, courteous, refined, there is no time of repose save that of sleep.

Filial affection is not alone a duty of gratitude, but is also one of infallible propriety. In case one should have—as rarely occurs—parents almost devoid of affection, and with few claims to esteem, the mere circumstance of their being the authors of one's being endows them with such a venerable quality that one cannot without infamy—I will not say despise them, but even in the slightest degree treat them with indifference. In such case, the homage paid them will have greater merit, yet will be none the less a tribute paid to nature, to the edification of one's equals, to one's proper dignity.

Blamable is he who constitutes himself the rigid censor of some defect in his parents! and where shall we commence to exercise charity, if we refuse it to a father, to a mother?

To require of them, in order to respect them, that they should be without defect,

that they should be the perfection of humanity, is pride and injustice. We who likewise all wish to be respected and loved, are we always irreproachable? If, in like manner, a father or a mother be far removed from that ideal of intelligence and virtue we should desire, let us become industrious in excusing them, in hiding their defects from the eyes of others, in appreciating all their good qualities. Thus acting, we shall become better men ourselves, in acquiring a tone of mind pious, generous, sagacious in recognizing the merit of others.

My friend, let this thought, sad, yet fertile in compassion and longanimity, oftentimes enter deeply into your soul. "Those venerable gray heads that are here before me, who knows if they will not shortly slumber in the tomb?" Ah, while you have the happiness to see them, honor them, and afford them consolation in the many ills of old age.

Their advanced age disposes them but

too much to sadness; on your part contribute not to sadden them. Let your manner and conduct towards them be always so amiable that the very sight of you may suffice to cheer, to enliven them. Every smile you will call forth on their aged lips, every satisfaction you will awaken in their hearts, will be for them the most salutary of pleasures, and redound to your own advantage. The benedictions of a father and of a mother on the head of a grateful son, are always sanctified by God.

CHAPTER XI.

RESPECT TOWARDS AGED PERSONS AND OUR FOREFATHERS.

Honor in all aged persons the image of your parents and ancestors. Old age is venerable to every well-bred mind.

In ancient Sparta there was a law obliging young men to rise from their

seats on the entrance of an aged man, to be silent when he spoke, to give him way when meeting him. That for which the law does not provide, let decorum effect, which would be still better.

So high is the estimation in which the moral beauty of this virtue is held, that even those who forget to practice it are obliged to applaud it in others.

An old Athenian was seeking for a seat at the Olympic games, but all the places in the amphitheatre were full. Some rude young men, his fellow-citizens, made him a sign to approach them. On their invitation the old man made his way with much difficulty, but instead of a courteous reception, he was greeted with insolent laughter. The luckless old man, driven from place to place, reached the seats occupied by the Spartans. These, faithful to the custom held sacred in their country, rose up respectfully, and placed him among them. Those same Athenians, who had so shamefully ridi-

culed him, were seized with admiration for their generous rivals, and the most rapturous applause arose on all sides. Tears fell from the eyes of the old man as he exclaimed: "The Athenians understand politeness, the Spartans practice it."

Alexander of Macedon, on whom I here willingly bestow his title of "the Great," while the most brilliant success tempted him to vain-glory, yet knew how to humble himself in the presence of the aged. Being once arrested in his triumphal march by an unusual fall of snow, he commanded a fire of wood to be lighted, and, placed on his chair of state, sat warming himself. Seeing among his followers a man bent down by age, who was trembling with cold, he bounded towards him, and with those victorious hands that had overthrown the empire of Darius, took hold of the shivering old man, and placed him in his own seat.

"There is no man so wicked as he who

is capable of disrespect towards old age, towards woman, and towards misfortune," said Parini. And effectually Parini availed himself very much of his authority over his disciples, in obliging them to show deference to old age. Being once highly displeased with a young person for some grievous misdemeanor which had been reported to him, he happened to meet the same young man in the street, as the latter was sustaining an old Capuchin, and decorously denouncing some ill-behaved men who had pushed him rudely, Parini joined in his vociferations, and, flinging his arms around his neck, exclaimed, "A minute since, I deemed thee perverse, now that I have witnessed thy piety towards the old, I believe thee once more capable of many virtues."

Old age is infinitely more to be respected in those who had to endure the tedium of our childhood, and that of our early youth, in those who contributed their most zealous efforts to form our

mind and heart. Let us be indulgent to their failings, let us generously estimate the pains we cost them, the affection they placed on us, and the sweet reward conferred on them in the continuation of our friendship.

No; he who devotes himself with a noble design to the education of youth, is not sufficiently recompensed in that bread that is deservedly bestowed on him. Those paternal, those maternal cares are not those of a mercenary. They ennoble him who has habituated himself to them. They form the soul to love, and they confer the right to be loved.

Let us pay a filial deference to all our superiors, because they are our superiors; and, likewise, to the memory of all those who deserved well of their country, or of humanity. Sacred to us be their writings, their images, their tombs.

And when, in considering the past ages, and the remnants of barbarism they have left; when, in deploring many ills of the

present times, we recognize them as the consequences of the passions and the errors of by-gone ages; let us not yield to the temptation of vilifying our ancestors. Let us make it an obligation of conscience to form a pious judgment in their regard. They engaged in wars which we now deplore, but were they not justified by necessity, else by some blameless illusions, which, at such an immense distance we can with difficulty estimate? They invoked foreign intervention, which turned out fatal to them; yet, here again, do not necessity and guiltless illusions interpose to justify them? They imposed institutions which have not the sanction of our approbation; but is it not likely that such institutions were suited to their times, that they were the most perfect that human wisdom could devise, consistently with the social elements of the period?

The criticism should be enlightened, but not cruel towards our ancestors, not slanderous, not regardless of the rever-

ence due to those who cannot rise from their tombs, and say to us, "My sons, learn the motives of our conduct."

The maxim of the elder Cato has become celebrated—"It is a difficult matter to render comprehensible to the men of future ages that which justifies our present conduct."

CHAPTER XII.

FRATERNAL AFFECTION.

You have brothers and sisters; take especial care that that affection which you owe to your fellow-men commence to flourish in its highest perfection; in the first instance towards your parents, and next, towards those united to you by the strictest of all bonds of fraternity, namely, the community of parents.

In order to cultivate effectually the Divine science of charity, with regard to all men, it is requisite we should take our first lessons in our own family.

What sweetness in the thought, we are sons of the same mother! What sweetness in the idea of having found, on our first entrance into the world, objects of predilection and veneration! The identity of blood, with the similarity of many habits, amongst brothers and sisters naturally induce a strong sympathy, which nothing less than a horrible species of selfishness can destroy.

If you desire to be a good brother, guard yourself from selfishness; resolve, each day, to be generous in your fraternal relations. Let each and all of your brothers and sisters perceive that their interest is equally dear to you as your own. If one of them commit a fault, be indulgent, not in the same measure as towards any other, but in a still greater degree. Rejoice in their virtues, imitate them, encourage them likewise by your example, so as that they may have cause to bless their lot in having you for a brother.

Innumerable are the motives of sweet

thankfulness, of tender yearnings, of pious solicitude, that contribute incessantly to feed the flame of fraternal love, yet, notwithstanding, those demand reflection, else they frequently escape our observation. It is requisite to command ourselves to appreciate them. Exquisitely refined sentiments are not acquired without a persevering will. As no one becomes a judge of poetry or of painting without study, so, in like manner, no one understands the excellence of fraternal love, or of any other noble affection, without the assiduous will of comprehending it.

Let no domestic intimacy induce you to neglect being courteous towards your brothers.

Be still more gracious with your sisters. Their sex has endowed them with a strong grace; they are used to have recourse to this celestial means in order to diffuse serenity over the whole household, to banish all ill humor, and to soften the

paternal and maternal corrections that they sometimes witness. Honor in their persons the gentleness of feminine virtues, avail yourself of the influence they possess, in sweetening your disposition. And since nature has formed them weaker and more sensitive than you, be consequently more assiduous in consoling them when afflicted, in not afflicting them yourself, in constantly evincing towards them your affection and respect.

They who contract among their brothers and sisters habits of malignity and inelegance, always continue to be inelegant and malignant with others. Let the intercourse of family be altogether lovely, all loving, all holy; and when the man goes forth into the world, he will evince in his relations with the rest of society that tendency to esteem, to all the gentle affections, and to that faith in virtue, that are fruits of a constant exercise of ennobling sentiments.

CHAPTER XIII.

FRIENDSHIP.

Besides parents and the other relations, who are the friends most directly given you by nature, and besides such of your instructors, who, as having chiefly merited your esteem, you style with pleasure friends, it will so happen that you will feel particular sympathy towards others, whose virtues will be less known to you, especially towards young persons of your own, or nearly your own age.

When to yield to that sympathy, or when to repress it, is the question. The answer is not dubious.

We have a debt of benevolence to discharge towards all mortals, but we should not allow that sentiment to assume the form of friendship, unless it may be for such as may merit our esteem. Friendship is a fraternity, and, in its most exalted sense, is the very *beau ideal* of fra-

ternity. It is a supreme bond of two or three souls—not of several—which have become, as it were, essential to one another, which have found amongst themselves reciprocally the most inclination to understand, to aid, nobly to interpret, and impel each other towards good.

“Of all societies,” says Cicero, “none is more noble, none more stable than that of good men similar in habits, and bound together by the ties of intimacy.”

“*Omnium societatum nulla præstantior est, nulla firmior, quam quum viri boni moribus similes sunt familiaritate conjuncti.*” (De off. 4, I. C. 18.)

Dishonor not the sacred name of friendship in bestowing it on a man of little or no virtue.

He who hates religion, who has not the highest appreciation of his dignity as man, who feels not the obligation of honoring his country by his intelligence and his probity, who is an irreverent son and an ill-natured brother, were he the most

wonderful of mortals by the suavity of his manners and of his mien, by the eloquence of his language, by the multiplicity of his acquirements, and even by a certain brilliant impetuosity in the performance of generous actions, yet, nevertheless, be not induced to form a friendship with him. Should he even evince towards you the most lively affection, admit him not to your intimacy; the virtuous man alone has qualities proper to constitute him a friend.

Before knowing any one as such, let the sole possibility of his not being so suffice to decide you to hold yourself towards him within the limits of a general courtesy. The gift of the heart is too important a matter; to hasten to fling it away is a culpable imprudence, an unworthy action. He who frequents perverse companions, becomes perverted, or, at least, causes the opprobrium of their misconduct to reflect on himself.

But, happy is the man who has found

a worthy friend. Abandoned to his own unaided force, his virtue frequently languishes, the example and applause of his friend give it double force. It may so happen that he was at first daunted, at seeing himself inclined to many failings; and being unconscious of his own worth, the esteem of the man he loves exalts him in his own eyes. He still blushes interiorly at not possessing all that merit that the indulgence of the other attributes to him, but his courage augments in his efforts to correct himself. He rejoices that his good qualities have not escaped his friend; for this he is grateful to him, he desires to acquire other virtues; and thus, through means of friendship, we sometimes see courageously advance towards perfection a man who was, and who would have still remained far removed from it.

Constrain not yourself to have friends. Far better have none than to have to repent for having chosen them with

precipitation. But, when you have found one, honor him with an exalted friendship.

This noble affection was sanctioned by all the philosophers, and is sanctioned by religion.

We meet beautiful examples to this effect in the Scriptures. The soul of Jonathan became as one with that of David; Jonathan loved him as his own soul. Yet, what is still more, friendship was consecrated by the Redeemer Himself. He held on His breast the head of John, as he slept; and from the cross, before He expired, He pronounced these Divine words, replete with filial love and friendship: "Mother, behold thy son! Disciple, behold thy Mother!"

I believe that friendship—I mean to say, true, exalted friendship, that which is based on a high degree of esteem—is necessary to man, in order to raise him from ignoble tendencies. It endows the soul with a certain poetry, with a certain

sublime force, without which it soars with difficulty out of the slime of egotism.

But, having once conceived and promised friendship, impress its duties on your heart. They are manifold, these duties. They oblige to nothing less than to render yourself during life worthy of your friend.

Some there are who counsel us to form friendship for no one, for this reason, that it absorbs too much our affections, distracts the mind, produces jealousy; but I incline to the opinion of a philosopher of first order, St. Francis de Sales, who, in his *Philothea*, calls this a bad counsel.

He admits that in the cloister there may be prudence in hindering particular friendship. "But," says he, "in the world it is necessary that those who desire to combat under the standard of virtue, the standard of the cross, make common cause. Those who live in the world, where are to be found so many difficulties to surmount, in order to obtain God,

are like those travelers who, in steep and slippery paths hold by each other for support, in order to advance with greater security." The wicked lend each other aid in their evil actions; why should not the good likewise assist one another in the practice of good?

CHAPTER XIV.

ON STUDIES.

Since it is in your power, attend to the cultivation of your intellect, which is a sacred obligation, and so you will become fit to honor God, your country, your parents, and your friends.

The wild dream of Rousseau that the savage is the happiest of mortals, that ignorance is preferable to knowledge, is contradicted by experience. All travelers have found the savage state most unhappy; we all see that the ignorant man can be good, but that the enlight-

ened man can and ought to be so, even in a higher degree.

Knowledge is pernicious only when allied with pride. Let humility unite with it, it will dispose the soul to a more exalted love of God—to a more exalted love of humanity.

Whatsoever you learn, endeavor to master it as thoroughly as may be possible. Superficial studies too often produce mediocre and presumptuous men, secretly conscious of their insignificance, and the more ardent in leaguings with tiresome, shallow individuals like themselves, to proclaim to the world that they are great, and that the really great are little. Thence proceeds the perpetual war of pedants against men of first-rate intellectual powers, and of vain declaimers against sound philosophers. Thence arises the error into which the multitude falls, at times, of venerating him who cries loudest and knows least.

Our century is not wanting in men

gifted with rare knowledge, but the superficial disgracefully outnumber them. Scorn to range thyself under the banners of these latter, and that, not through vanity, but through a sentiment of duty, of love of country, of magnanimous esteem of the powers of mind with which the Creator has endowed you.

If you cannot attain a profound knowledge in various branches, run lightly over some, in order to acquire certain general notions, of which it is not allowable to be ignorant ; but select one study from among the rest, to which direct all the vigor of your faculties, and principally that of the will, so as to be surpassed by none.

Excellent is this counsel of Seneca : “Dost thou desire that literature leave on thy mind lasting impressions? Limit thyself to the perusal of some authors full of true genius, sustain thy mind with their treasures. Being everywhere is like being in no particular place. A life passed in traveling makes us acquainted

with many strangers, and but few friends. And such is the case with those hurried readers who devour an infinite number of books, without a decided preference for any one."

Whatsoever may be your study of predilection, guard yourself from an error which is very general—that of becoming such an exclusive admirer of your science, as to contemn those to which you have been unable to apply yourself.

The trivial tirades of certain poets against prose, those of certain prose writers against poetry; of naturalists against metaphysicians; of mathematicians against non-mathematicians, and vice versa, are mere puerilities. All the sciences, all the arts, all means employed in discovering, in sensibly portraying the true and the beautiful, have a right to the homage of society, and, first of all, to that of the enlightened man.

It is untrue that the accurate sciences and poetry are incompatible. Buffon was

a great naturalist, and his style is brilliant and animated with a stupendous heat of poetic fire. Maschironi was a good poet, and likewise a good mathematician.

In cultivating poetry and other fine arts, take care not to incapacitate your understanding for the methodical application to figures and logical meditations. Were the eagle to say, "My nature is to fly; I cannot consider things unless in flying," it would be ridiculous, as he could observe so many things with folded wings.

On the other hand, let not that coolness demanded by your speculative studies induce you into the habit of supposing a man perfect because he has stifled within him every light of fancy, because he has crushed the sentiment of poetry. This sentiment, when well directed, instead of weakening the intelligence, in some instances strengthens it.

In studies, as well as in politics, distrust factions and their systems. These

latter examine well, in order to become acquainted with them; compare them with others, and draw your conclusions, so as not to be their slave. What signify the contentions between the furious panegyrist and the defamers of Aristotle, of Plato, and other philosophers, or those between the panegyrist and the defamers of Ariosto and of Tasso? The idolized and abused masters remain such as they were, neither divinities, nor geniuses of inferior order; they who had given themselves so much trouble to weigh them in false scales, were ridiculed, and the world which they had astounded learned nothing new. In all your studies, seek to unite calm decision with acumen, the patience of analysis with the force of synthesis, but principally the will of not allowing yourself to be daunted by obstacles, that of not being too much elevated by triumphs; in other words, the will of enlightening yourself after the manner permitted by God, with ardor, yet without arrogance.

CHAPTER XV.

CHOICE OF A STATE.

The choice of a state is a matter of the highest moment. Our fathers were wont to say that, in order to choose well, it was requisite to implore the Divine inspiration. I know not aught else to be said in this regard, even at the present day. Reflect with religious seriousness on your presumed future amongst men—and pray.

Feeling in the depths of your heart the Divine voice dictating to you, not for a day alone, but for entire weeks, for entire months, and ever with increasing force of persuasion:—Behold the state you should choose: obey with courageous and firm will. Enter into that career, and press forward; but bringing to it all the requisite virtues.

Through means of virtue, every calling is excellent for him who is inclined to it. The ecclesiastical state, which terrifies

him who has embraced it without reflection, and with a heart given to amusement, is all decorous and delightful to the pious and refined man; the very monastic life which so many in the world consider, some as intolerable, others even as ridiculous, is also delicious and decorous in the eyes of the religious philosopher, who does not deem himself useless to society, in exercising his charity on behalf of some few other monks, and of some poor agriculturist. The gown, which many esteem an enormous weight, from the patient cares it entails, is pleasing to the man filled with zeal to devote the powers of his understanding to the defence of his fellow-men. The noble profession of arms has an infinite charm for him who is inflamed with courage, and feels there is no more glorious action than to risk his life for his country.

Marvelous to say, all states, from the highest down to that of the humblest artisans, have their own charms, and a

true dignity. It suffices to have the will to cultivate the virtues requisite for each.

If we hear so many curse the condition they have chosen, it is because few cherish those virtues.

For your part, when you will have prudently chosen a career, imitate not those eternal lamenters. Suffer not yourself to be troubled by vain repentance, by the will to change. Every path in life has its thorns; having once engaged in one, press forward—to retreat would be weakness. Persistence is always excellent, unless, it may be, in error. He alone who knows how to persist in his enterprise may hope to arrive at some distinction.

CHAPTER XVI.

OF CHECKING EXCESSIVE SOLICITUDE.

Many persevere in the state they have chosen, and become attached to it, yet are indignant because they do not ima-

gine themselves sufficiently esteemed and remunerated; they chafe, because they have too many rivals, and all do not consent to be subservient to them.

Banish from your mind such sollicitudes. He who suffers himself to be their prey has lost his portion of happiness on earth; he grows proud, and at times ridiculous in his undue appreciation of self, and at the same time unjust in his undue depreciation of the objects of his envy.

Assuredly, in human society, the rewards of merit are not always equally proportioned. He who works with consummate ability, has frequently such a degree of modesty as not to know how to recommend himself, and is often placed in the shade, and depreciated by bold, but mediocre spirits, whose ambition it is to rival him in the career of fortune. Such is the world; and, in this respect, vain would be the hope for its amendment.

It then rests for you to smile at this

necessity, and resign yourself. Impress deeply in your mind this great truth: The important point is to possess merit, and not to have it rewarded by men. Should they recompense it, it is exceedingly well; or should they not, the merit becomes more exalted, in remaining still the same, though unrewarded.

Society would be less vicious were every one careful to moderate his solitudes, his ambition; yet not so as to become careless of augmenting his own prosperity, or grow indolent and apathetic, but in cherishing an ambition, fair but not frenzied, not envious, but restrained within those limits beyond which he perceives he may not pass, saying within himself: "If I attain not that high grade of which I deemed myself worthy, even in this other less exalted, I am the same man, and have consequently the same intrinsic worth."

It is not pardonable in any one to be solicitous for the reward of his labors,

unless it may be for a sufficiency for himself and family; beyond that we should desire with unperturbed spirit all other augmentations of prosperity that it may be lawful to seek. Should we succeed, let God be blessed; they will be so many means to sweeten our existence, and serve others. Should we be disappointed, let God be blessed equally; we can live worthily even without much luxury, and if we cannot serve our neighbor, conscience will make us no reproach.

Do all within your power in order to be a useful citizen, and induce others to be such. And then, let things take their course. Bestow a sigh on the injustice and the wickedness you may encounter, yet grow not as a bear for all that; fall not into misanthropy, nor, still worse, into that false philanthropy which, under pretence of serving mankind, is consumed with the thirst of blood, and courts that wondrous edifice, destruction, even as Satan courts death.

He who hates the possible correction of social abuses is a fool or a villain; but he who in loving that correction grows cruel is likewise a fool or a villain, and even in a greater degree.

Without tranquillity of soul the greater portion of human judgments are false and malignant. That alone will render you strong in suffering, strong in persevering exertion, just, indulgent, affable with all.

CHAPTER XVII.

REPENTANCE AND AMENDMENT.

In counseling you to banish anxiety, I have given you to understand that you should not fall into indolence. And, above all, you should not relax in the perpetual task of your amelioration.

That man is mistaken who says: "My moral education is complete, and my works have corroborated it." We should

always learn to regulate ourselves for the present day, for the coming days; we should constantly keep our virtue alive, in the performance of renewed acts; we should ever be mindful of our failings and repent of them.

Yes, repent of them! Nothing truer than the words of the Church, that our whole life should be a life of repentance and of aspirations after amendment. Christianity consists in nothing else. Voltaire himself, in one of those moments when not consumed by the rage of ridiculing it, writes :

“Confession is an excellent thing; a check on our failings, invented at a remote period: the practice of confession was general in the celebration of all the ancient mysteries. We have imitated and sanctified this wise custom. It is most effectual in bringing hearts ulcerated by hatred to a sense of forgiveness.”
(v. Quest. Encicl. t. iii.)

That which Voltaire here ventures to

admit, it would be shameful if not felt by him who honors himself with the name of Christian. Let us listen to our conscience, let us blush at the actions with which it accuses us, let us confess them, in order to purify ourselves, and not cease from the holy task till the end of our days. If we perform it not with an apathetic will, if the faults we recall be not condemned alone by our lips, if to our repentance be joined a true desire of amendment, let him laugh who will, yet nothing can be more salutary, more sublime, more worthy of man.

When conscious of having committed a fault, hesitate not in repairing it. In so doing, alone, you will have your conscience at rest. The delay of reparation enchains the soul to evil, habituates it to self-contempt. And woe, when man interiorly condemns himself! woe when he feigns to esteem himself, whilst he feels within his conscience a corruption which should not there exist! woe, when having

that corruption, he believes he had best dissemble it! He has no longer a grade amongst noble beings; he is a fallen star, a misery in creation.

Should some impudent youth call you weak, because you do not, like him, persist in your errors, answer him that he who resists vice is stronger than he who yields to it; answer him that the arrogance of the sinner is a false force, since, on his death-bed, unless in delirium, he is sure to lose it; answer him that that force of which you are enamored consists precisely in not heeding scorn, when you quit the evil path for that of virtue.

When you have committed a fault, lie not in order to deny or extenuate it. Falsehood is a guilty weakness. Acknowledge that you were in fault, which is an act of magnanimity, and the shame attendant on this avowal will merit you the praise of the good.

Should you happen to give offence, have the noble humility to ask forgive-

ness. No one will call you mean for so doing; your general conduct will prove that you are not so. To persist in an insult, or, instead of honorably retracting it, to proceed to duelling and perpetual hostility, is the ridiculous folly of proud and ferocious men; on such infamy we can with difficulty bestow the brilliant name of honor.

There is no honor save in virtue; there is no virtue save in constantly repenting of evil, and purposing to amend.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CELIBACY.

When you will have selected, amongst the different social callings, that which best suits you, and when it would seem to you to have given to your character that force of good habits that renders you worthy of a place among men, then,

alone, if you intend to have a wife, take care to select such a one as is deserving of your regard.

But, previously to quitting the single state, reflect deeply if you should not give it the preference.

If you feel you have not sufficiently vanquished your tendency to anger, jealousy, suspicion, impatience, domineering harshness, to suppose you could render yourself pleasing to a companion, have the firmness to renounce the charms of matrimony. In taking a wife, you would render her unhappy, and yourself likewise.

Should you not find a person who unites all such qualities as you deem necessary to satisfy you, and to insure to you the possession of her affections, allow not yourself to be persuaded to engage in the married state. Your duty is to remain single, preferably to swear a love you could not entertain.

But whether you only prolong your

celibacy, or continue in it for life, honor it by the virtues it prescribes, and learn to appreciate its advantages.

Yes, truly, it has its advantages. And those of every condition in which man finds himself placed, he should recognize and appreciate; otherwise, he will believe himself therein wretched and degraded, and will lose that courage essential for the dignified discharge of his duties.

The mania of appearing furious at the disorders of society, and the opinion that perhaps it may be salutary to exaggerate them with a view to their correction, has frequently induced men of powerful eloquence to direct the attention of others to the scandal given by several single men, and to proclaim that celibacy is contrary to nature, an immense calamity, the leading cause of the depravation of the people.

Suffer not yourself to be carried away by these hyperboles. Unhappily, the scandals of celibacy are but too true.

But, from the circumstance of men having arms and legs, scandals likewise arise, in the shape of kicks and blows; yet that does not mean to say that arms and legs are the greatest of evils.

Let those who multiply reflections on the so-called necessary immorality of celibacy, bethink themselves likewise of computing the evils that flow from determining on matrimony without inclination.

To the brief follies of the wedding succeed weariness, together with horror at being no longer free, with the discovery that the choice was precipitate, that the characters are ill-assorted. From reciprocal complaints, or from those of either party, proceed rudeness, affronts, and daily cruel recriminations. The wife, being the more gentle and the more generous of the two, becomes the victim of this unhappy disunion, suffers till she ceases to exist, or, what is still worse, changing her nature, renouncing her moral worth, she gives admittance to

affections that seem to afford her a compensation for the absence of conjugal love, and yet only bring her shame and remorse.

Of the children born of these ill-starred marriages, the first school is the unworthy conduct of father or mother, or of both parents. Thence it follows that those children are little, or injudiciously loved, imperfectly or badly educated, without deference towards their parents, without tenderness towards their brothers, without any notions of domestic virtues, which form the basis of civil virtues.

All these things are of such frequent occurrence that we have only to open our eyes to witness them. No one will tell me that I exaggerate.

I do not deny the evils that result from celibacy; but whosoever weighs in his mind those other evils, will not certainly regard them as less weighty, and with me will say, of an infinity of mar-

ried persons, Oh, that they never pronounced that fatal vow!

The greater number of mortals are called to the married state, but celibacy is also in nature. To afflict ourselves, because all do not concur in multiplying their species, would be ridiculous. The state of celibacy, when chosen for solid reasons, and observed with honor, has in it nothing ignoble. On the contrary, it is deserving of our highest respect, as much so as any other species of reasonable sacrifice, accomplished with a laudable intention. By not undertaking the care of a family, some have the more time and energy left to devote themselves to certain high studies and functions of religion; others have the more means of sustaining families of their kindred who stand in need of their aid; others, again, are left the more liberty of affection to bestow on numerous indigent objects. All this—is it well, or is it not so?

These reflections are not devoid of

utility. In order to abandon the state of celibacy, or to embrace it, it is requisite to know that which we embrace or abandon. Partial declamations overthrow the judgment.

CHAPTER XIX.

ON HONOR PAID TO WOMEN.

A vile and bantering cynicism is the genius of vulgarity, the satanic tempter, ever forging calumnies for mankind, in order to induce it to ridicule virtue and trample it under foot. He assembles all the facts that dishonor the altar, and, dissembling the opposite facts, he exclaims, "What a God! What beneficent influence of the priesthood and religious instruction! Chimeras of fanatics!" He collects together all such facts as dishonor politics, and exclaims, "What laws! what civil order! what honor!

what patriotism! It is all a war of the crafty and the powerful, on the part of those who govern, or who aspire to govern, and imbecility on the side of those who obey!" He collects all the facts that dishonor celibacy, marriage, pater-nity, maternity—the relations of son, of kinsman, of friend—and cries, with infamous levity, "I have discovered that all is egotism, imposture, tumult of the senses, dislike, and mutual contempt!"

And, precisely, fruits of this infernal and lying wisdom are, egotism, imposture, tumult of the senses, dislike, and reciprocal contempt.

How could it be that the foul genius of vulgarity, which is the desecrator of everything worthy, should not be the enemy, in a supreme degree, of the virtue of woman, and not be anxious to abase her?

In all ages he has been zealous to depict her as abject; to see nothing in her save envy, artifice, inconstancy, van-

ity; to deny in her the existence of the sacred fire of friendship, and the incorruptibility of love. Every woman possessed of any degree of merit was considered as an exception.

But the generous tendencies of humanity protected woman. Christianity exalted her, in prohibiting polygamy and unlawful love, and in offering, as the first of human creatures, after the Man-God, and superior to all the saints, and to the very angels themselves—a woman!

Modern society felt the influence of this spirit of refinement. In the midst of barbarism, chivalry was embellished by the elegant worship of love, and we civilized Christians, we sons of chivalry, regard as educated no man save him who honors the sex of gentleness, of graces, and of domestic virtues.

Yet the ancient adversary of noble affections, and of woman, still exists in the world. Ah! would that he had as followers none save unpolished minds,

save groveling souls! But he depraves at times splendid spirits, and that depravation ever takes place where ceases religion, the sole sanctifier of man!

There were to be seen philosophers—so at least they styled themselves—who, in some of their hours, showed themselves burning with zeal for humanity, and in others, assailed by irreligion, dictating pages replete with obscenity, eager to provoke the intoxication of the senses by shameful poems and romances, by reasonings, by anecdotes, and fictions of all kinds.

That most fascinating among literary men, Voltaire, (a spirit evincing some evidence of good qualities, though corrupted by base passions, and the mad, scurrilous desire of provoking merriment,) jocosely composed a long poem derisive of female honor, derisive of the most sublime heroine that her country had ever beheld, of the magnanimous and hapless Joan of Arc. Madame de

Stael justly entitles that work "a crime of lèse-nation."

From obscure, from celebrated men, from authors living and dead, from the very impudence of certain women, become unworthy of their modest sex; in fine, from a thousand sources, will arise around you that genius of vulgarity that proclaims, "Contemn women!"

Repel the infamous temptation, or you yourself, son of woman, would be contemptible. Shun those who honor not their own mother in woman. Trample under foot, as preaching bad manners, such books as vilify her. Hold yourself worthy, by your noble esteem for feminine dignity, to protect her who gave you life, to protect your sisters, to protect, perhaps, one day, a being who will acquire the sacred title of mother of your sons.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DIGNITY OF LOVE.

Honor woman, but dread the seductions of her beauty, and, still more so, those of your own heart.

Happy you, if not attaching yourself ardently to any other save her whom you will and can choose as the companion of your whole life.

Hold your heart free from all bond of love, rather than give some woman of little worth empire over it. A man devoid of high sentiments might be happy with such, but you could not. You have need either of perpetual liberty, or of a companion corresponding to your generous ideas of humanity, and especially of the female sex.

She should be one of those elect souls that have an exalted comprehension of the beauty of religion and of love. Beware of picturing her to your fancy as

thus perfect, while, in reality, she is far otherwise.

If you should find her such, if you should see her, beyond a doubt, inflamed with the Divine love, susceptible of noble enthusiasm for every virtue, intent on effecting all the good within her reach, the irreconcilable enemy of all actions morally base, uniting to those merits cultivation of mind, without the least ambition of display; if, on the contrary, with all that mind, she is the humblest among women; if all her words, all her actions, breathe goodness, elegant simplicity, elevation of sentiment, a firm will in the performance of duty, attention not to cause pain to any, to console the afflicted, to employ her powers of fascination in ennobling the thoughts of others, then, love her with a deep affection, with a love worthy of her!

Let her be to you as a tutelary angel, as the living expression of the Divine command, to keep you removed from all

baseness, to incite you to every noble work. In all your undertakings, think of meriting her approbation, think of so acting, as that her lovely soul may be content to have you for a friend; think of honoring her, not before men, which is of little importance, but before the all-seeing eye of God.

If this being should be endowed with a mind so elevated, so faithful to religion, your great love for her will not be an excess, an idolatry. You will love her precisely because her will is in perfect harmony with that of God; in admiring the one you will admire the other, or, more properly speaking, you will revere in her the will of the Almighty; so much so, that were it possible for her will to grow opposed to that of God, the delicious charm would be dispelled, you would no longer love her.

This most noble of affections is regarded as chimerical by many vulgar spirits, by those who have no just idea

of a high-souled woman. Commiserate the mean wisdom of such. The existence of such love, pure and prolific in all virtue, is possible ; it is to be found, yet rarely. And men should here exclaim, " Oh for such like, else none whatsoever ! "

CHAPTER XXI.

BLAMABLE AMOURS.

Yet be guarded, I repeat it, against imagining as a paragon of virtue a woman who is not such. That is precisely what is called romantic love, a love ridiculous and prejudicial, an unworthy immolation of the heart before a profane idol.

That there exist women, estimable even in a high degree, I grant ; yes, even on earth. But there exist likewise, and in great numbers, those whom education.

the bad example of others, and their own weakness have spoiled; those who are not gifted with elevation of soul sufficient to appreciate the homage of the virtuous man; those who prefer to be courted for their beauty and the brilliancy of their wit more than to merit being loved for the nobility of their sentiments.

But such faulty women are generally more dangerous, and still more so than those completely fallen. They captivate, not alone by their beauty and their studied arts, but frequently even by some virtue, by the hope they inspire that in them the good predominates over the evil. Cherish not this hope when you see in them much vanity and other grave defects. Be severe in judging them, yet not so as to speak evil of them, or to exaggerate their faults, but in order to fly from them in time, should you see the possibility of falling into some unworthy snare.

The more prone you feel yourself by nature to love, and the more disposed to venerate the woman of merit, the more carefully you should guard yourself from being captivated by mediocre virtues in a female, so as to bestow on her the title of friend.

Ill-mannered youths, and females resembling them, will mock at you, and call you proud, strange, hypocritical. It matters not; scorn their opinion. Be neither proud, nor strange, nor hypocritical; and never fling away your affections. Be firm in holding your heart disengaged, and bestowing it on none save her who has a full right to your esteem.

Let him who loves a worthy woman not waste his time in courting her servilely, in offering her the incense of flattery and vain sighs. She would not suffer such; she would blush to have as a lover the man given to softness and sentimentality; she could alone appre-

ciate the friendship of him who is gifted with nobleness, with frankness, and who is less solicitous to speak to her of love than to please her by laudable principles and by laudable actions.

The woman who tolerates the man chained a puerile slave at her feet, basely subject to her thousand caprices, only occupied with affected elegancies and amorous grimaces, gives a convincing proof of entertaining no exalted idea either of him or of herself. And he who takes pleasure in such a life, he who loves without a noble aim, without that of becoming a better man, in rendering homage to an exalted virtue, that man is a miserable prodigal of mind and of heart, and it will be difficult to say if there may remain to him a remnant of energy to enable him ever to effect aught of good in the world. I speak not of women of degraded morals; the honest man recoils from them; not to shun them is the deepest disgrace.

When a woman seems to merit your love, abandon not yourself to suspicions, to jealousies, or to the excessive pretension of being extravagantly idolized.

Choose judiciously, and then love without tormenting yourself or the chosen one with tiresome extravagances, or troubling yourself should it happen that she is not blind to the amiability of others, and without exacting transports of tenderness towards you.

Be devoted to her, from a sentiment of justice, in order to pay a tribute of admiration and refined homage to superior merit, and to elevate yourself to a being who seems to you one of the noblest order, and not that she may carry her love to a degree higher than she may well manifest to you.

The jealous, those who are transported with fury at not being sufficiently loved, are tyrants in the true sense of the word. In preference to becoming wicked for the sake of some gratifica-

tion, we should renounce that gratification; rather than become tyrannical, or fall into an unworthy temptation, for the sake of love, renounce love.

CHAPTER XXII.

OF RESPECT TOWARDS SINGLE FEMALES AND WIVES OF OTHERS.

Whether you continue to lead a single life, or engage in the married state, conceive a high respect for the state of virginity, and for that of marriage.

Nothing can be more delicate than the innocence and the reputation of a young female. Do not permit yourself towards any single woman the least liberty, in word or in manner, calculated to give the slightest profanation to her thoughts, or disturbance to her heart. Do not allow yourself, either in her presence, when addressing her, or in her absence,

any expression that might lead others to suspect her of levity of mind, or of being easily won. The least appearances suffice for lessening the consideration of an unmarried female, exciting calumny against her, and perhaps occasioning her disappointment in a matrimonial connection that might have rendered her happy.

Should you feel your heart throb for a woman to whose hand you may not aspire, do not make your passion known to her; but, on the contrary, use every means to conceal it. Knowing herself loved, she might grow enamored of you, and become the victim of an unhappy passion.

Should you perceive you have won the heart of one whom you will not or cannot wed, have regard equally to propriety and her peace of mind, cease altogether seeing her. To feel pleasure in awaking in an unhappy, innocent being a delirium that can only bring her shame

and affliction is the most criminal species of vanity.

With married females be not less guarded. A mad passion, under the circumstances, either on your part or on that of another party towards you, might prove to both the occasion of great misfortune, of great infamy. You would lose yourself less than the other; but in reflecting how much a woman forfeits who exposes herself to incur her own contempt and that of her husband, in pondering all this, if you are endowed with generosity, tremble at her danger, leave her not an instant in peril, break the bonds of a love condemned by God and by the laws. Your heart and that of her you love will bleed at the separation; but it matters not. Virtue demands sacrifices. He who knows not how to perform them is a degraded being.

Between a married female and a single man there can exist no blameless rela-

tions of intimacy, save in an interchange of just esteem, founded on a consciousness of real virtue, founded on the persuasion that on both sides there exists, stronger than any other affection, a solid love of duty.

Abhor as the greatest of immoralities the thought of depriving a husband of the affections of his wife. Should he be worthy of her love, your perfidy is an atrocious action. Should he not be an estimable husband, his faults do not authorize you to degrade his unhappy partner. For the wife of an indifferent husband there remains no choice; she should resign herself to tolerate him, to be faithful to him. He who, under pretext of desiring to console her, draws her into a guilty intrigue, is a cruel egotist. Should he even be influenced by motives of compassion, that compassion is illusive, fatal, blamable; in winning her affections you would cause her new unhappiness, you would add to her anguish

at having an unamiable husband, that of hating him still more every day in loving you and exaggerating your worth ; you would, perhaps, add all the torments of the jealousy of her husband and all the agonizing consciousness within her, of culpability. The woman unhappily married can have no peace save in preserving herself from reproach. He who promises her any other, lies and leads her into sorrow.

Regarding such women as you will esteem for their virtues, as well as with regard to unmarried females, be careful not to excite injurious suspicions against them by reason of your friendship for them. Be circumspect in your manner of speaking of them to men used to form unworthy, mean judgments. Those always regulate their suppositions according to the perversity of their own hearts. Unfaithful interpreters of that which is told them, they give an evil sense to the simplest discourses, to the most innocent

facts ; they imagine mystery where there exists none. There is no care too excessive in order to preserve intact the fame of a woman. That fame, next to her intrinsic honor, is her greatest treasure. He who is not jealous of preserving it, he who has the baseness to feel satisfaction in others suspecting some weakness on the part of a female toward him, is undoubtedly a wretch deserving of being expelled from all good society.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MATRIMONY.

Should the inclination of your heart and suitable circumstances determine you in favor of matrimony, go to the altar with holy thoughts, with a firm purpose of rendering her happy who confides to you the care of her existence, who renounces the name of her parents

to assume yours, who prefers you to all she ever held dear, who hopes through you to give life to new beings endowed with intelligence, called to possess their Creator.

Miserable proof of human inconstancy! The greater number of marriages are influenced by love, are accompanied by solemn thoughts, are entered into with the full desire of blessing them till death; and a year or two later, sometimes even after some few months, the married pair cease to love, and tolerate each other with difficulty. Thence ensue affronts and reciprocal reproaches, and a disregard on both sides to all manner of courtesy. Whence arises all this? In the first place, from the imperfect knowledge they have had of each other previously to being wed. Proceed cautiously in your selection, assure yourself of the good qualities of her you love, or you are lost. In the next place, dislike proceeds from cowardice in yielding to temp-

tations of inconstancy, from inattention in saying daily within oneself, "That resolution I formed was a duty, and I desire to be firm in maintaining it."

Here, as in every other circumstance of life, observe that in mankind great is the facility of growing evil, that that which renders a man contemptible is nothing else than the want of a strong will, that that which occasions society to overflow with turpitude and wickedness is the absence of firmness of character.

A marriage can alone be happy on these conditions, namely, that each party should, as a first duty, adopt this unalterable resolution: "I agree to love and honor for ever the heart to which I have given the mastery over mine."

Should the choice have been good, if either of the hearts be not perverse, it is not possible that it can be perverted and grow ungrateful when the other lavishes on it sweet attentions and generous love.

There was never to be seen a husband

who, if not guilty of unworthy roughness towards his wife, or at least of shameful negligence, or of some other vice, having been once dear to her, has ceased to be so.

The soul of woman is naturally meek, grateful, inclined to love in a supreme degree the man who is constant in loving her and meriting her esteem. But, as being extremely sensitive, she is easily provoked by the rudeness of a husband, and by all those faults that may degrade him; and this indignation may drive her to invincible antipathy, and to all its consequent errors. The unhappy creature will then be deeply culpable; but assuredly the husband will be the first cause of her guilt.

Indelible within your soul be this persuasion: no woman who was good on her marriage day loses her good qualities with a man who continues to have a right to her affection.

In order to have a right to the con-

stant love of a woman, one should not diminish in worth in her eyes; the conjugal intimacy should not warrant the husband in dispensing himself in the least degree from the reverence and the courtesy he was wont to evince towards her before leading her to the altar; he should not become to her ridiculously servile and incapable of correcting her, neither should he make her feel a despotic authority, or correct her with asperity. She should have grounds whereon to base a high esteem of his sense and rectitude; she should have reason to take pride in being his consort and dependant; yet that dependence in which she stands towards him should not be imposed by his arrogance, but assumed by her out of affection, out of a sentiment of his true dignity and of her own.

However happy you should prove in your choice of a companion, let not that circumstance, nor the persuasion of the eminent virtues that adorn her, induce

you to imagine it less necessary on your part to preserve an incessant attention to render yourself pleasing in her eyes, or to say, "She is so perfect that she pardons me all her wrongs; I have no need to study to endear myself to her; she loves me always equally well."

How then? Because her goodness is so great will you be the less industrious to please her? Delude not yourself. Precisely because she is endowed with an exquisite mind, carelessness, inelegance, rudeness will be the more afflicting, the more revolting to her. The greater is the refinement of her manners and of her sentiments, the more she will need to find the like qualities in you; and if she finds them not, if she sees you pass from the alluring courtesy of a lover to the insulting carelessness of an indifferent husband, through a sentiment of virtue she will long force herself to love you, despite of your unworthiness. But the effort will be vain. She will

pardon you, but she will no longer love you; she will be unhappy. Woe then, if her virtue be not proof against every attack, if another man render himself pleasing to her! Her heart, by you not sufficiently appreciated, by you ill-guarded, may become the prey of a guilty passion, of a passion fatal to her peace, to your own, to that of the children!

Many husbands are placed in these circumstances, and the wives they execrate were once virtuous. The unhappy creatures erred because they were not loved.

Having bestowed on a woman the sacred title of wife, you should devote yourself to her well-being, as she should devote herself to yours. But the obligation on your part is stronger, because she is the weaker of the two, and you, as being stronger, are the more obliged to afford her every good example, every aid.

CHAPTER XXIV.

*PATERNAL LOVE, LOVE TOWARDS INFANCY
AND CHILDHOOD.*

To bestow good citizens on your country, to give to God spirits worthy of Him, will be your duty, should you be blessed with children. Sublime charge! He who assumes it and betrays it is the greatest enemy of his country and of his God.

The virtues of a father it is not needful to enumerate; you will possess them all should you have been a worthy son and an amiable husband. Bad fathers have all been ungrateful sons and ignoble husbands.

Yet, even previously to having issue, and should you never have any, humanize your spirit by the sweet sentiment of paternal love. Every man should cherish it, in directing it towards all children, towards all young persons.

Consider this new portion of society with great affection, with great reverence.

Every one who spurns, or unjustly afflicts childhood, if not perverse, becomes so. The man who is not attentive to respect the innocence of a child of tender age, not to teach him evil himself, and guard against others doing so; not to inflame him with any other love, save that of virtue alone, may be the cause of that innocent child becoming a monster! But why substitute words less powerful to those terrible and most holy ones pronounced by the adorable Friend of children? "He who receives one of those little ones in My name, receives Me. But he who will scandalize one of those little ones who believe in Me, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung about his neck, and he were cast into the depths of the sea!"

All such as are many years younger than yourself, over whom, for that rea-

son, your word and example may be influential—consider as your children, treat them with that mixture of intelligence and zeal which is calculated to remove them from evil, and to impel them towards virtue.

Childhood is, in its nature, imitative. If the adults that surround a child be pious, amiable, worthy, the child will love to become, and will become such. If the adults be irreligious, low-minded, ill-natured, the child will be, like them, evil.

Appear likewise good in the society of children of tender years, and of young persons whom you do not often see, and with whom you will not have occasion to speak more than once in life; say to them, should an occasion offer, a word fruitful in virtue. That word of yours, that becoming look, may withdraw them from a mean thought, may inspire them with the wish of meriting the esteem of good men.

Should a young man of great promise place his confidence in you, prove yourself a generous friend; aid him with just and efficacious counsels, applaud him, but in his good actions alone; but withdraw him, by unsparing condemnation, from all such as are unworthy.

Should you see a young person inclined to vice, though not in intimacy with him, disdain not, when an opportunity offers, to extend a hand to him in order to save him. Sometimes a youth who is taking the evil way needs only an exclamation, a sign, to make him blush and return to the path of virtue.

What will be the fitting moral education to bestow on your sons? This you cannot understand unless your own has been perfect; acquire such, and you will bestow it in equal measure.

CHAPTER XXV.

ON RICHES.

Religion and philosophy laud poverty, when virtuous, and give it the preference infinitely before the feverish passion for riches. Nevertheless, they admit that a man may be rich, and have an equal merit with the best among the poor.

To this end, he only needs not to be the slave of his riches; not to procure them, nor to hold them, with the design of making an ill use of them; but, on the contrary, to have no other desire than to employ them in the service of his fellow-men.

Honor to all honorable human states, and consequently to that of the rich, provided they turn their prosperity to the advantage of the many, provided their splendor and their enjoyment render them not indolent and proud.

You, most probably, will continue in

the condition in which you were born, equally removed from great opulence as from poverty. Never give admittance to that mean sentiment of hatred towards the rich, that frequently corrodes the hearts of those who are less rich, and of the poor. It is a species of hatred that is wont to assume the gravity of philosophical language, in the shape of warm declamations against luxury, against the injustice of disproportionate fortunes, against the arrogance of the rich and powerful, and a thirst, apparently magnanimous, of establishing equality, and of succoring the many miseries of humanity. Let not all that delude you, though you may happen to hear it from individuals of some note, and read it in the pages of a hundred eloquent pedants, who purchase the applause of the crowd by flattery. In these outbreaks there is more of envy, of ignorance, of calumny, than of zeal, of justice.

The inequality of fortunes is inevitable; from it result both good and evil. He who so deeply execrates the rich man would voluntarily take his place; and, for like motives, the opulent man continues in his opulence. There are few rich who do not give circulation to their money, and in expending it become—all in a thousand different ways, with more or less merit, and likewise, at times, without any merit whatsoever—co-operators in the public good. They give activity to commerce, to the refinement of taste, to emulation in the arts, to an infinitude of hopes in him who desires to fly poverty through means of industry.

Not to be able to distinguish in them ought save idleness, luxury, inutility, is an absurd caricature. If gold renders some indolent, it urges others to worthy actions. There is not a civilized city in the world where the rich have not founded and maintained important insti-

tutions of beneficence; there is no place where they are not, both collectively and individually, the sustainers of the poor.

Consequently, regard them without anger, without envy, and give not echo to the abuse lavished on them by the vulgar. Be neither disdainful nor abject towards them, as you would not desire that one less rich than yourself should be disdainful or abject towards you.

Be wisely economical of the fortune you possess; fly equally avarice, that renders the heart cruel and the intelligence bounded, and that prodigality that leads to shameful loans and blamable acts.

To endeavor to augment one's riches is allowable, yet without sordid solicitude, without immoderate disquietude, without ceasing to remember that real honor and felicity do not depend on them, but on nobleness of soul before God, before our fellow-men.

Should your prosperity increase, let

your beneficence augment in the same proportion. The state of riches may agree with all the virtues; but that of a rich egotist is real wickedness. He who has much should give much; there is no exemption from such a sacred duty.

Refuse not aid to the mendicant; but let not this be your sole alms. A great and well-judged charity it is to provide for the poor a more honorable mode of living than mendicancy; that is to say, by affording to the various arts, both common and refined, labor and bread.

Reflect at times, that unforeseen events might strip you of the inheritance of your fathers, and reduce you to misery. Too many such vicissitudes occur under our eyes; no rich man may say: "I shall not die in exile or in adversity!"

Enjoy your riches with that generous independence of them that the philosophers of the Church, with the Gospel, style *poverty of spirit*.

Voltaire, in his moments of scurrility, affected to believe that that poverty of spirit recommended by the Gospel meant stupidity. So far from that, it is the virtue of preserving, even in riches, a spirit humble, not averse to poverty, should it visit us; not incapable of respecting it in others—a virtue that demands something far different from stupidity; a virtue that cannot originate from aught else but elevation of mind and wisdom.

“Wouldst thou cultivate thy mind?” says Seneca, “live poor, or as though thou wert so.”

Should you fall into misery, lose not courage; struggle in order to live, and that without being ashamed. The needy man may be estimable, as much so as he who aids him. But then, learn to renounce with a good grace the habits of riches; offer not the ridiculous and miserable spectacle of a proud, indigent man, who will not acquire those virtues

so well befitting the poor, namely, a dignified humility, a strict economy, an untiring patience in labor, an amiable serenity of mind, defying adversity.

CHAPTER XXVI.

RESPECT TOWARDS MISFORTUNE.—BENEFACTENCE.

Honor to all honorable human conditions, and consequently to the poor, provided they turn their ill-fortune to their own amelioration, provided they suppose not that their sufferings authorize them to be vicious and ill-minded.

Nevertheless, be not harsh in judging them. Be compassionate, even towards such poor as at times give way to impatience and violence. Reflect that it is a cruel thing to suffer want in the public street, or in a miserable hut, while within a few paces of the suffering

wretch pass men sumptuously fed and clothed. Pardon him, if he has the weakness to regard you with envy, and aid him in his want, because he is—man.

Respect misfortune in all those who suffer from its stings, should they not even be sunk in absolute indigence, should they not even demand your aid.

Let every one who lives deprived of comforts, and by his labor, in a position inferior to yours, be regarded by you with affectionate compassion. Do not, by the arrogance of your manner, make him feel the difference of your fortune. Humble him not by sharp words, even when he displeases you by his coarseness or any other defect.

Nothing is so consoling to the unfortunate man as to see himself treated with affectionate attention by his superiors. His heart is then filled with gratitude; he then understands why the rich man should be rich, and pardons him

his prosperity, because he deems him worthy of it.

Masters who are disdainful and brutal are all generally hated, however well they may remunerate their domestics.

To make yourself detested by your inferiors would be great immorality; in the first place, because thereby you become evil yourself; secondly, because, instead of alleviating their sufferings, you would increase them; thirdly, because you habituate them to serve you with disaffection, to abhor dependence, to execrate the whole class of those who are more fortunate than themselves. And since it is just that all should have as much happiness as may be possible, he who is elevated above the lower grades should take care that his inferiors should not find their condition intolerable, but, on the contrary, love it, because not contemned, because endowed with decent comfort by the rich.

Be liberal in affording all species of

succor to such as may stand in need of it; in money and in protection when in your power; in counsel when circumstances so require; in good manners and example at all times.

But, above all, if you see oppressed merit, use all your endeavors to sustain it; or, if unable to do so, try at least to console, to honor it.

To blush, to evince esteem towards the upright man in his misfortune, is the greatest possible cowardice. You will find this too general; be the more vigilant in not allowing yourself to be infected by this malady.

When any one is unfortunate, the greater number are disposed to throw blame on him, to suppose that his enemies have some reason for abusing and tormenting him. Should those have recourse to some calumny in order to justify themselves and depreciate him, even should not that calumny have a shadow of probability, it fails not to be received

and cruelly re-echoed. The small number who endeavor to crush it are rarely listened to. It would seem as though the greater part of mankind are happy when they may believe in evil.

Hold this wicked tendency in abhorrence. Whenever you hear accusations, scorn not to listen to the defence, and even should there be no defence to be heard, be yourself generous enough to conjecture one. Believe not in guilt, unless when manifest; but bear in mind that all who hate pretend that more than one fault is manifest which is not so. If you desire to be just, hate not; the justice of haters is as the rage of the Pharisees.

From the moment that misfortune has stricken any one, were he your enemy, were he the devastator of your country, to regard his misery with superb triumph would be an act of baseness. Speak of his transgressions, should the occasion so demand, but with less vehe-

mence than in the time of his prosperity ; speak of them likewise with greater attention not to exaggerate them, not to separate them from the merits which were likewise conspicuous in that mortal.

Pity towards the unfortunate, and even towards the guilty, is always a beautiful sentiment. The law may be justified in condemning them ; man has not the right to exult in their pains, or to depict them in colors blacker than the reality.

The habit of pity will render you at times benignant towards the ungrateful. Yet, infer not thence, indignantly, that all are so : cease not to be beneficent. Amongst the many ungrateful is also to be found the grateful man who is worthy of your favors. You would not have bestowed on him these benefits, had you not lavished them on several. The benedictions of this one will compensate you for the ingratitude of the other ten.

Moreover, should you never meet with thankfulness, the goodness of your heart

will be your recompense. There is no greater sweetness than in being merciful, and in being the instrument of relieving the misfortune of others. This exceeds, by far, the satisfaction of receiving aid, since, in the latter case, there is no virtue, and in bestowing aid there is a great degree of merit.

Be refined with all in affording relief, but more so with persons of some respectability, with timid and virtuous females, with such as are novices in the cruel apprenticeship of poverty, and frequently stifle their tears in secret, rather than pronounce the heart-rending words: "I am in want of bread."

Besides that which you will bestow in private, *without one hand knowing what the other gives*, as the Gospel says, concur likewise with other generous souls, in order to multiply the means of relief, found good institutions, and maintain such as are already established.

It is a maxim of religion: *Providentes*

bona non tantum corum Deo, sed etiam corum omnibus hominibus. (Epist. Paul ad Rom., c. xii.) “Be provident in doing good, not alone before God, but also before the eyes of men.”

There are good works which an individual cannot carry out alone, and which cannot be performed in secret. Favor societies of beneficence; promote them should you have the means, excite them when torpid, reform them when corrupted. Be not deterred by the scoffs which the avaricious and the useless are ever wont to fling at those industrious souls who labor in the good of humanity.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ESTEEM OF KNOWLEDGE.

If your occupations and domestic cares should not leave you much time to devote to books, guard against the

vulgar propensity common to those who have themselves nearly, or altogether, given over studying, namely, that of abhorring all knowledge they have not themselves acquired, of sneering at every one who attaches much importance to the cultivation of the mind, of desiring ignorance as a social good.

Spurn false knowledge, which is hurtful; but esteem the true, which is always useful. Appreciate it, whether you possess it, or have not been enabled to attain it.

Cherish an ardent desire, at all times, to make some progress yourself, either by continuing to devote yourself more particularly to some science, or, at least, by reading good books of various sorts. To a man of note, this exercise of the intellect is of importance, not alone from the real gratification and instruction he can derive from it, but for this reason likewise, that being reputed a cultivated man, and a friend of enlightenment, he

will acquire the greater influence in inciting others to the practice of good. Envy is too prone to discredit the upright man; if it have some reason or pretext to style him ignorant, or a favorer of ignorance, his very best works are regarded with an evil eye by the vulgar, depreciated, hindered, as far as may be.

The cause of religion, of country, of honor, demands champions, strong, first, in virtuous intentions; next, in knowledge and distinction of manner. Woe, when the wicked may say with reason to good men, "You have not studied, and you are incompetent."

Yet, in order to obtain the reputation of wisdom, feign not knowledge that you possess not. All impostures are disgraceful, and so, likewise, is the ostentation of knowing that which we do not know.

Moreover, there is no impostor whose mask does not directly fall off, and he is then lost.

All that estimation in which knowledge is to be held should not, nevertheless, render us its idolaters. Let us desire it in ourselves and in others. Yet, should our information be, of necessity, not profound, let us console ourselves, and candidly appear such as we are. A variety of acquirements is good, but that which in the end is of the most value in man, is virtue, which, happily, is not incompatible with a state of ignorance.

Consequently, should you know much, do not for that reason despise the ignorant. Knowledge is like riches, and is desirable, in order the better to assist others; yet he who is not possessed of it, and has the ability, notwithstanding, to be a good citizen, has a right to respect.

Diffuse enlightened thoughts among that class which is possessed of little education. But, what are these thoughts? Not such as are apt to render people pedantic, sententious, and malignant; not

the extravagant declamations that please so much in popular dramas and romances, where those low in rank are always depicted as heroes, and the great as villains, in which the whole picture of society is falsified, so as to make it detested; where the virtuous cobbler is he who speaks insolently to the noble; where the virtuous noble is he who weds the daughter of the cobbler; where the very highwaymen are represented as admirable, so that he who admires them not may appear execrable.

The enlightened thoughts proper to be diffused amongst the lower classes are such as may preserve them from error and exaggeration; those which, without aiming at rendering them abject worshippers of him who knows and can perform more than themselves, inspire them with a noble disposition to respect, to benevolence, and to gratitude; those which keep them removed from the furious and wild ideas of anarchy and plebeian gov-

ernment; those which teach them to perform, with religious dignity, the obscure but honorable functions to which Providence has called them; those which persuade them of the necessity of social inequalities, even though we be, if virtuous, all equal before God.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

REFINEMENT OF MANNERS.

Towards all those with whom you may happen to come in contact, behave with politeness, which, prescribing to you affectionate manners, will predispose you truly to love. He who assumes an austere, suspicious, scornful mien, disposes himself to malevolent sentiments.

Consequently, discourtesy produces two great evils; that of degrading the mind of him who evinces it, and that of irritating or afflicting others.

But study not alone to be refined in manner ; be careful to give refinement to all your thoughts, to all your desires, to all your affections.

The man who is inattentive to banish from his mind all grovelling ideas, who entertains such frequently, is often drawn by them into blamable actions.

We hear even men who do not belong to the lower grades indulge in coarse jests and impure language. Follow not their example. Let your discourse be free from studied elegance, but let it be exempt from all disgraceful vulgarity, from all those unmeaning exclamations with which the uneducated intersperse their conversation, from all those scurrilous jokes with which too many are wont to outrage good breeding.

But you should commence from youth to resolve to acquire beauty of language. He who possesses it not before the age of twenty-five never attains it. Not studied elegance, I repeat, but words noble,

becoming, infusing into others tranquil joy, consolation, benevolence, desire of virtue.

Take care that your conversation be pleasing, by the happy choice of expressions, and by the fitting modulation of the voice. He who speaks kindly allures his listeners, and, consequently, when it is necessary to persuade them to the practice of good or remove them from evil, he will have the greater influence over them.

We are bound in duty to improve all those means which God has bestowed on us, to serve our fellow-men, and consequently, in equal measure, the medium of expressing our thoughts.

Excessive inelegance in speaking, in reading a composition, in presenting, in comporting oneself, usually proceeds less from inability to do better than from shameful indolence, from voluntary inattention to the due improvement of oneself, and to that respect one owes to others.

Yet, while you make elegance obligatory on yourself, and bear in mind that it is a duty, for this reason, that we should act so that our presence be not a calamity for any, but, on the contrary, a pleasure and a benefit—at the same time be not indignant against the unpolished. Reflect that at times gems are encased in mud. It would be better did the mud not clog them; nevertheless, in that humiliation, they are still gems.

It is a great part of politeness to tolerate with indefatigable smile such like people, not less than the interminable array of bores and of fools. When no occasion offers to serve them it is allowable to avoid them, but never in such a way as that they may perceive they are disagreeable to you. They would be pained thereby, or else detest you.

CHAPTER XXIX.

GRATITUDE.

If we are bound to pious sentiments and benevolent manners towards all, how much more so towards those generous beings who gave us proofs of their love, of their compassion, of their indulgence!

Commencing from our parents, let there be no one who, having afforded us some liberal aid by deed or by counsel, may find us unmindful of his benefits.

Towards others we may be sometimes rigid in our judgments, and sparing in politeness, without being much in fault; towards him who has rendered us service it is never allowable to relax in our unremitting attention, not to offend him, not to cause him any affliction, not to lessen his fame, and to show ourselves most ready to defend, to console him.

It happens that many, when a benefactor makes, or seems to make, too high

an estimate of his services in their regard, grow irritated, as at some unpardonable pretension, and assume that they are thereby dispersed from all obligation of gratitude. There are many persons who, because they have the cowardice to blush at the benefit received, are ingenious in supposing it influenced by interest, by ostentation, or by some other unworthy motive, and thence imagine an excuse for their ingratitude. There are likewise several who, when possessed of the means, hasten to repay a service, so as to be freed from the debt of gratitude, and that discharged, they believe themselves blameless in forgetting all the obligations it imposed.

Vain is all the ingenuity used in justifying ingratitude; the ungrateful man is a base being, and in order to avoid that baseness, gratitude must not be parsimonious—it must absolutely be profuse.

Should your benefactor grow haughty by reason of the advantages he has pro-

cured you, should he be wanting towards you in that refined tact you might desire, should it not appear perfectly evident that the motive that actuated him in serving you was pure generosity, nevertheless it becomes not you to condemn him. Draw a veil over his real or possible injustice, and regard only the service he has rendered you; regard that service, even if you should have repaid it—repaid it two thousand fold.

Sometimes it is allowable to be grateful without publishing the favor received; yet, each time that conscience dictates to you a reason for publishing it, let no mean sentiment of shame restrain you; acknowledge yourself indebted to the friendly hand that came to your aid. To thank without a witness is often an ingratitude, says that excellent moralist, Blanchard.

He alone who is grateful for all favors (even for lesser ones) is really good. Gratitude is the soul of religion, of filial

love, of love towards those who love us, of love towards human society, from which we derive so much protection, so much gratification.

In cultivating gratitude for all that good we receive from God and from men, we acquire greater strength, greater tranquillity, in order to tolerate the ills of life, and a greater disposition to be indulgent, and to labor in aid of our brother man.

CHAPTER XXX.

HUMILITY, MEEKNESS, PARDON.

Pride and anger agree not with elegance, and, consequently, he is not elegant who is not wont to be humble and meek. "If there be a sentiment which counteracts the insulting contempt of others, it is assuredly humility. Contempt proceeds from the comparison

made with others, and the preference given to self. Now, how can this sentiment ever take root in the heart educated to consider and deplore its own miseries, to regard all its merit as proceeding from God, to acknowledge that if God did not restrain it, it would be capable of all evil?" (See Manzoni in his excellent work, "Catholic Morality.")

Restrain continually your indignation, else you will become sharp and proud. If a just indignation be opportune, it is a rare occurrence. He who finds himself thus justified every instant, covers his own malignity beneath a mask of zeal.

This failing is fearfully common. Speak with twenty men, one after the other, you will find nineteen of the number, each of whom will solace himself in detailing to you the generous pretexts of his rage against one person or another. All seem burning with indignation against iniquity, as though they were the sole

just men in the world. The country in which they dwell is always the worst on earth, the years in which they live are always the saddest, the institutions not originating from them are always the worst, he whom they hear speak of religion and morality is always an impostor; does a rich man not lavish his gold, he is sure to be a miser; does a poor man suffer and demand aid, he is always a prodigal; do they themselves happen to have rendered service to any one, the individual is sure to be an ungrateful man. To execrate all the members of society, in excepting, through politeness, some few friends, appears in general to be an inestimable satisfaction.

And what is still worse, that indignation, now launched against those who are far distant, again turned against near neighbors, is wont to please whomsoever is not its immediate object. The enraged and satirical man is readily taken for a generous being, who, if a

ruler of the world, would be a hero. The meek man, on the other hand, is wont to be regarded with contemptuous pity, as a weak-minded or cowardly wretch.

The virtues of humility and meekness are not glorious ; but adhere to them, for they are above the price of all glory. The universal display of indignation and of pride tends alone to prove the general scarcity of love and of true generosity, and the universal ambition of appearing better than others.

Determine on being humble and meek, but know how to make it appear that you act neither out of imbecility nor cowardice. By what means? In losing patience at times, and showing your teeth to the wicked? In abusing, in speaking or in writing, him who, by either of these means, calumniates you? No ; disdain to reply to your defamers, and, excepting under particular circumstances, which it is impossible to determine, lose not patience with the wicked, threaten them

not, revile them not. Meekness, when a virtue, proceeds not from deficiency of energetic feeling; it is always in the right. It humbles the pride of the other party more effectually than could the most astounding eloquence of anger and of scorn.

Prove at the same time that your meekness is neither cowardly nor weak; in maintaining a dignified mien with the wicked, in not applauding their iniquities, in not canvassing their suffrages, in not departing from the principles of religion and of honor in the apprehension of their blame.

Accustom yourself to the idea of having enemies, yet be not disturbed thereby. There is no one, however beneficent, sincere, and inoffensive may be his life, who does not count several. Envy is so congenial to some wicked persons that they cannot be at rest without heaping scorn and false accusations on whomsoever enjoys any degree of reputation.

Have the courage to be meek, and pardon from your heart those unhappy beings who injure or are willing to injure you. Pardon, not seven times, says the Redeemer, but seventy times seven; that is to say, without limit.

Duels and all species of vengeance are an unworthy delirium. Rancor is a mixture of pride and of meanness. In pardoning an injury received an enemy may be converted into a friend, and a perverse man be reclaimed to noble sentiments. Oh how lovely and consoling is this triumph! How much it surpasses in grandeur all the horrible victories of vengeance!

Should one who offended you, and whom you have pardoned, have been irreconcilable, and lived and died insulting you, what have you lost in being good? Have you not acquired the greatest of joys, that of remaining magnanimous?

CHAPTER XXXI.

COURAGE.

Courage at all times! Without this condition there is no virtue. Courage to vanquish your egotism and become beneficent; courage to conquer your indolence, and progress in all your honorable studies; courage to defend your country, and to protect on every occasion your brother man; courage to resist evil example and unjust derision; courage to suffer sickness, want, and anguish of every species without cowardly lamentations; courage to aspire to a perfection which it is not possible to attain on earth, but to which, if we aspire not, according to the sublime doctrine of the Gospel, we shall lose all nobility.

However dear to you may be patrimony, honor, life, be ready at all times to sacrifice all to duty, should it so require. Either this abnegation of self,

this renunciation of all earthly advantage, rather than preserve it in becoming iniquitous; otherwise, man not alone is not a hero, but he may become a monster! “*Nemo enim justus esse potest, qui mortem, qui dolorem, qui exilium, qui egestatem timet, aut qui ea quæ his sunt contraria, acquitate anteponit.*” (Cic. *De Off.*, L. 11, c. 9.)

To live with a heart disengaged from all perishable prosperity seems to some an intimation too strange and impracticable. Nevertheless, it is true that without a timely indifference to such prosperity, we know not either to live or to die worthily.

Courage should exalt the mind so as to adopt every virtue; but be careful that it degenerate not into pride and ferocity.

They who think, or affect to think, that courage is incompatible with meek sentiments, they who habituate themselves to the menaces of a Rodomont, to broils,

to thirst of disorder and bloodshed, abuse the strength of their will, and the force of their arm, which God has bestowed on them, in order to be useful and exemplary to society. Those are usually the least courageous in circumstances of great danger; to save themselves they would betray father and brothers. The first to desert from an army are those who jeer at the pale faces of their companions, and shamefully insult the enemy.

CHAPTER XXXII.

EXALTED IDEA OF LIFE, AND STRENGTH OF MIND TO MEET DEATH.

Many books treat of our moral obligations in a manner more extensive and more splendid; my sole pretension, my young friend, was to offer you a manual constituting for you a brief record of all.

I shall only add: Let us not be daunted by the weight of the obligations which are insupportable alone to the slothful. Let us be of good will, and we shall discern in each duty a mysterious beauty inviting us to love it, we shall feel an admirable power augmenting our force in proportion as we ascend in the arduous way of virtue; we shall find that man is vastly more than that which he seems to be, provided that he will, firmly will, to compass the noble end of his destiny, which is to purify himself from all base tendencies, to cultivate in the highest degree those of a superior order, to elevate himself by these means to the immortal possession of God.

Love your life, but not for vulgar pleasures and for miserable pursuits of ambition. Love it for that which it has of important, of grand, of Divine! Love it because it is the arena of merit, and is dear to the Omnipotent, glorious to Him, glorious and necessary to us! Love it

despite of its pains, and even for its very pains; since it is these which ennoble it; it is these which are the cause of the germination, the growth, the development of all generous thoughts, all generous inclinations within the mind of man!

Bear in mind that this life, to which you owe such a great degree of esteem, was given you but for a short space. Dissipate it not in superfluous diversions. Concede to recreation that which is requisite for your health and the comfort of others; or, rather, let your enjoyment consist chiefly in meritorious works; that is to say, in serving your fellow-men in a spirit of magnanimous fraternity, in serving God with filial love and obedience.

To conclude. While thus esteeming life, think of the tomb which awaits you. To dissemble to ourselves the necessity of dying is a weakness that lessens our zeal for good. Hasten not by your own fault that solemn moment, yet desire not to retard it through cowardice. Expose

your life, if necessary, for the safety of others, but chiefly for that of your country. Whatever species of death may be reserved for you, be ready to accept it with dignified fortitude, and to sanctify it with all the sincerity and the energy of faith.

In observing all these things you will be a man and a citizen in the most sublime signification of these words; you will be useful to society, and will render yourself happy.

LETTERS TO YOUNG MEN.

BY LACORDAIRE.

LETTERS TO YOUNG MEN.

I.

HUMILITY.

FLAVIGNY, *July 29, 1850.*

MY DEAR FRIEND :

THE consciousness of all the pride which is within you, and of the pain it gives to others, is a great step forward. There is nothing more hateful nor more hated than pride, when shown exteriorly ; hence, modesty is the first element of real politeness. The Christian, must, however, aim higher. Even when modesty is genuine, that is, when it is the fruit of a real desire to please others, it is but a veil thrown over pride, in order to spare the sight of it to those with whom we live. The Christian must be

humble; and humility does not consist in hiding our talents and virtues, but in the clear knowledge of all that is wanting to us, in not being elated by what we have, since it is a free gift of God, and even with all His gifts, we are still infinitely little. It is a remarkable fact that great virtue necessarily begets humility, and that if great talent does not always produce the same effect, still it softens down a great deal of the unevenness which the pride of second-rate men is continually throwing into relief. Real excellence and humility are consequently not incompatible one with the other; on the contrary, they are twin sisters. God, who is excellence itself, is without pride. He sees Himself as He is, without, however, despising what is not Himself. He is Himself, naturally and simply, with a leaning for all His creatures, however humble. Goodness and humility are almost one and the same thing.

The kind hearted feel themselves natu-

rally drawn to give themselves, to sacrifice themselves, to make themselves cheap; and this is humility. Pride is more hated than any other vice, not only because it wounds our self-love, but because it testifies to a want of that goodness without which it is impossible to win love. Be therefore kind hearted, and you will infallibly become humble. Your eyes, your lips, the lines of your forehead, all will get quite another look, and you will find that you will be sought after quite as much as you were shunned. But, how become kind hearted? Alas! first of all, by begging it earnestly and unceasingly of God, and then by endeavoring on every occasion to consult the pleasure of others, and sacrifice our own to them. It is a lengthy apprenticeship, but will carries a man through everything.

II.

FEMALE SOCIETY.

PARIS, *June 12, 1851.*

Touching your relations with the persons of whom you speak, I have nothing to say except that you should be extremely prudent, but without any affectation. Wherever there are women there are perils for the heart. Avoid everything which you could not do and say before witnesses. This is the great rule, and by it duty and peace are alike safeguarded. Avoid, as far as possible, conversations at which the whole family is not present; when they are all together, one is always safe. I am well aware that in your case nothing grave is to be feared, since you are in a house where all is honor and edification; but sometimes security itself is a peril, because the very innocence of all that surrounds us makes us less watchful over our

hearts. I easily understand, my dear friend, the difficulty you find in prayer, and in your relations with God. A happy and comfortable life readily produces this listlessness of soul. We enjoy ourselves innocently, and yet, little by little, the spring gets weak, prayer becomes irksome, mortification is lost sight of; we get into a negative state with regard to God, which deprives us of the joys of conscious love. The only cure I can see for this is to give God certain regular moments daily, to bind one's self down to certain exterior acts, which may withdraw us, from time to time, from our insensibility. If meditation is hard, spiritual reading might be useful to you. In short, my dear friend, whatever you do, let it be done earnestly and perseveringly.

III.

MODERATION IN WORK.—FLAVIGNY.

FLAVIGNY, *May* 31, 1851.

I was unwilling to scold you for the sore throat you caught through your own fault, and which is now far away; but I will scold you for the doubts these little accidents give you touching your vocation. If you had seen me at your own age, you would never have thought I could live. I was thin and pale; my color came and went at every turn; I could not walk for a quarter of an hour in the streets of Paris without feeling extreme and painful fatigue; and yet, to-day no one can enjoy sounder or brisker health. Time and sobriety of living have strengthened everything in me; head, chest, muscles. The same will be the case with you, if you do not keep too late hours, and are careful not to work too hard. I say nothing of the

rest, because you are a good, pious young man, and your only enemy is excess of intellectual activity. Two of my friends, one at fifty, the other at forty, have become infirm on account of over-study. Don't you do the same. Give Time his rightful due, as he will not let offenders off unpunished. What should I have gained to-day by having half killed myself for the sake of doing things quickly? Go to work gently, and be convinced that your larynx and everything else will become the very humble servants of your good desires. Besides, my dear friend, however precious health may be, it is not Hercules who does the most; a generous soul in a poor little body is mistress of the world.

I am making great preparations for your reception. We have at Flavigny a little wood at the foot of a long terrace, formerly the rampart of the town. A part of the little wood ran along the high-road, without any kind of enclosure.

We have had the edge of it made steep ; it is composed of very hard and tolerably high rock, and by means of a little walling we have succeeded in shutting ourselves up at home. We have also finished making paths in the interior of the wood, and everything has become quite worth your seeing, and very desirous of seeing you.

Stone benches, slightly rustic, have been put up and down, but in the shade, under rocks, so that you may sit down there when you are tired, and meditate quietly in gentle breezes which gather up the perfumes of our trees on their way.

I am ornamenting the house to the best of my power, but in a simple and natural manner. The workmen are very glad of the few days' work it gives them. It is the duty of every proprietor to give work according to the extent of his property, and religious are more strictly bound to do this than others,

because they ought to be more charitable. A man finds in the heart of the poor what he does not find in his own purse.

I wish you a good Whitsuntide. May God make you gentle and humble, and may He keep me the share I have in your heart, and for which you have a great return!

IV.

UPON STEADFASTNESS IN CONVICTION.

FLAVIGNY, *March 22, 1853.*

The news you give me of M. Ozanam is a source of great affliction to me. He will be a very painful loss to the Catholics of France, and to me in particular. He belonged to the few eminent men who, in France, have, despite public vicissitudes, held by old and honorable convictions. His loss will go to thin ranks already scant, but he will leave

them in a memory like his life, pure. You must not despair, my dear child, because the battalion of disinterested and faithful souls is so small in this world, even among those who have a common faith in God and in His Christ. This has ever been and ever will be the case until the end. The majority of men are weak and vacillating; they yield to the current which, at a given moment, sweeps over and carries away the world. Unshaken convictions dwell only in profound minds, and in hearts finely tempered by the hand of God. Do we belong to these latter? God only knows. But however great our obligation of judging ourselves diffidently, we must at least aim at one thing, namely, to become men of strong, pure, and disinterested convictions, and frequently call to mind the beautiful saying of St. Paul: "Our glory is this, that we have conversed in this world in simplicity of heart and in the sincerity of God." You

are young; you will see more uplifting and downfalling than I shall see henceforth. Nerve yourself against these shocks, and know, my child, that the surest way to be invariably consistent is to shun ambition, and that a man is not ambitious when he knows how to circumscribe his tastes, and to seek his happiness in God, in study, and in a few souls which love him. I belong to the latter as regards you. But not being of your age, you will lose me before the end of your perils. May my memory afford you a little light from afar!

V.

BAD BOOKS.—SEPARATION FROM FRIENDS.

FLAVIGNY, *June 30, 1853.*

MY DEAR FRIEND :

Since the receipt of your dear and kind letter I have made a journey to Oullins and Chalais. We left Oullins

with fifteen of our pupils, and crossed from Chalais to the Grande-Chartreuse, a magnificent series of mountains and valleys unknown and unfrequented except by cows, wood-cutters, and forest keepers; for the sake of accuracy, let me add, by the smugglers between France and Savoy. Every one goes to the Grande-Chartreuse by the two roads from Saint-Laurent-du-Pont and le Sappey, no one by the mysterious diagonal which cuts from Chalais across precipices, solitudes, magic sites, valleys dotted with meadows, and pine-clad rocks. I hope you will one day make this excursion with me. It is very different from Flavigny and its tiny woods, which still pleased you somewhat, and which I am about to leave for Mattaincourt, in Lorraine, where I am to preach the panegyric of the Blessed Peter Fourier, before I don't know how many bishops and a crowd of pilgrims. I intend publishing this discourse, and will send

you a copy, however unworthy it be of your illustrious attention.

I am not overpleased at the idea of your reading such books as those you mention to me. You are, it is true, no longer a child; but at every time of life poison is dangerous. What is there to read in Voltaire after his dramatic works? His Contes, his Dictionnaire Philosophique, his Essai sur les Mœurs des Nations, and that multitude of nameless pamphlets launched at every turn against the Gospel and the Church? Twenty pages enable us to judge of their literary worth and of their moral and philosophical poverty. I was between seventeen and eighteen when I read that series of mental debauchery, and I have never since been tempted to open a single volume, not because I was afraid of their doing me harm, but from a deep conviction of their worthlessness. Unless it be for purposes of reference with a useful end, we must confine ourselves to the

masterpieces of great names; we have not time enough for the rest.

We have, consequently, still less for those writings which are, as it were, the common sewers of the human intellect, and which, notwithstanding their flowers, contain nothing but frightful corruption. Just as a good man shuns the conversation of lost women and of dishonorable men, so a Christian ought to avoid reading works which have never done anything but harm to the human race. Rousseau is preferable to Voltaire; he has the sentiment of the beautiful and generous, and he does not despise his reader. But the charm of his writings, useful betimes to young men who respect nothing, is but little to a soul which possesses the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. We read in the Life of St. Jerome that he was scourged by an angel, who, whilst striking him, reproached him for reading Cicero with more ardor than the Gospel. How much more would

your reading deserve this chastisement if God always showed us in this life what He thinks of our actions.

VI.

BAD COMPANY.

SOREZE, *May 8, 1860.*


MY DEAR FRIEND :

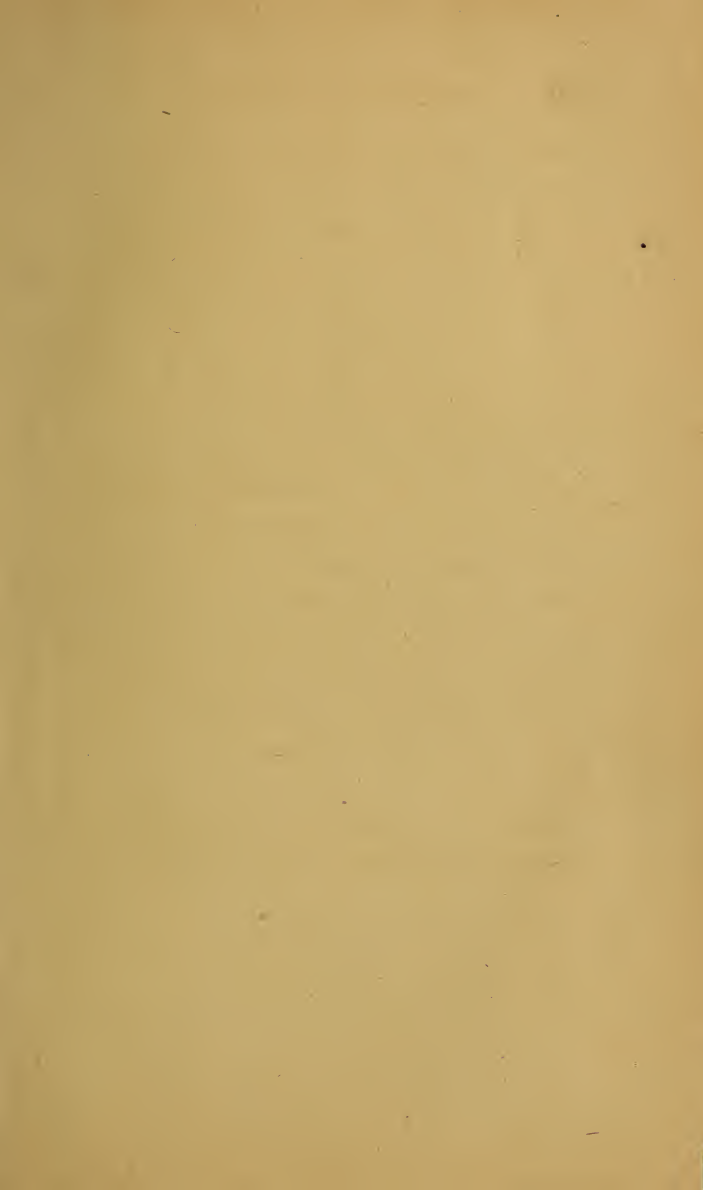
Your letter brought me two pieces of good news. The first is your having broken with some of your former companions, whose conversation was not strictly moral. I cannot sufficiently congratulate you upon this resolution. For, believe me, all our life depends upon the persons with whom we live on terms of familiarity. Familiarity gets us used to things as well as to persons, and what at first appeared to us odious and abject, ends by entering into our habits. The ear loses its delicacy, the heart its modesty, the mind its clearness ; we end by

taking to what once appeared repulsive, and from words we proceed to acts, which complete our corruption. This is the history of the propagation of evil upon earth. I am, then, delighted at your having broken with those young men, and that you have found others more worthy of you. Be convinced, you do not require much to distract you pleasantly. If one real friend is enough, a few comrades are enough too. Besides, good company begets good company; and although less numerous than bad, it also, thank God, may be found in some strength. Thank you for your portrait, It will remind me of the time of your first youth, and will not grow old like ourselves.

Adieu. I expect you soon. I repeat to you beforehand all that I am to you.

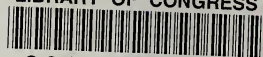
THE END.







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