

D.-A.-F. DE SADE

LA NOUVELLE JUSTINE

OU

LES MALHEURS DE LA VERTU

Translated by Patrick Kearney

Volume I

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The original manuscript of a work which, though truncated and disfigured as it was, had nevertheless gone through several editions, now entirely out of print, having come into our hands, we hasten to present it to the public as it was conceived by its author, who wrote it in 1788. An unfaithful friend, to whom this manuscript had at the time been entrusted, betraying both the good faith and the intentions of that author—who did not wish his book to be printed during his lifetime—made from it an abridgment which appeared under the simple title of *Justine*, or the *Misfortunes of Virtue*, a wretched extract far inferior to the original, and one which was constantly disavowed by the very writer whose vigorous pen drew the *Justine* and her sister whom the reader will encounter here.

We do not hesitate to offer them as they were born of the genius of that writer, forever famous, if only for this work, persuaded that the philosophical age in which we live will not be scandalized by the bold systems scattered throughout it; and as for the more cynical scenes, we believe, with the author, that since all possible situations of the soul lie within the novelist's domain, there is none of which he is not permitted to make use: only fools take offense; true virtue is never frightened nor alarmed by portrayals of vice, but finds in them only an additional motive to pursue the sacred path it has set for itself. Perhaps there will be outcry against this work—but who will cry out? Libertines, just as hypocrites once railed against *Tartuffe*.

We further certify that in this edition everything is absolutely faithful to the original, of which we alone are in

possession: the structure of the work, the licentious scenes, the philosophical systems—everything is included; even the engravings have been executed from the drawings the author had commissioned before his death, and which were attached to his manuscript.

No book, moreover, is better suited to arouse a livelier curiosity. In none does interest—that spring so difficult to set in motion in a work of this kind—sustain itself in a more compelling manner; in none are the hidden recesses of libertine hearts more skillfully unfolded, nor the excesses of their imagination depicted with greater force; in none, in short, is there written what the reader will find here. Are we not therefore justified in believing that, in this respect, it is destined to pass down to the most distant posterity? Even if virtue should tremble at it for a moment, perhaps its tears ought to be forgotten in the pride of possessing, in France, so striking a production.

N.B. The adventures of Justine that we are publishing at present comprise four volumes, adorned with a frontispiece and forty engravings. The History of Juliette, which follows and is connected to it, comprises six, adorned with sixty engravings; together forming a collection, unique in its kind, of ten volumes and one hundred plates, each more striking than the last.

The publication of this continuation, whose typographical execution is treated with the same care as that of the present work, is delayed only by the preparation of the engravings, which we have wished to have executed in a manner worthy of those contained in the first four volumes. As soon as they are completed, we shall satisfy the curiosity of our readers.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction. — Justine Unleashed.

The masterpiece of philosophy would be to develop the means by which fortune proceeds in attaining the ends it proposes with regard to man, and from this to trace certain plans of conduct which might make known to this unfortunate biped the manner in which he must walk in the thorny career of life, in order to forestall the bizarre caprices of that fortune which has been by turns called Destiny, God, Providence, Fatality, Chance—denominations all equally faulty and equally devoid of good sense, and which convey to the mind nothing but vague and purely subjective ideas.

If, filled with a vain, ridiculous, and superstitious respect for our absurd social conventions, it nevertheless happens that we encounter only brambles where the wicked gather nothing but roses, will not those who are naturally vicious by system, by taste, or by temperament calculate with sufficient plausibility that it is better to abandon oneself to vice than to resist it? Will they not say, with some appearance of reason, that virtue, however beautiful it may be, nevertheless becomes the worst course one can take when it proves too weak to struggle against vice, and that in a century utterly corrupted like the one in which we live, the safest course is to do as others do? A little more philosophical, if one wishes, will they not say with the angel Jesrad of *Zadig* that there is no evil from which some good is not born, and that therefore they may abandon themselves to evil as much as they please, since in fact it is only one of the ways of doing good? Will they not add, with some certainty, that it is indifferent to

the general plan whether such or such a man be good or wicked; that if misfortune persecutes virtue while prosperity accompanies crime, then things being equal with the intentions of nature, it is infinitely better to take one's side among the wicked who prosper than among the virtuous who fail?

It is—let us no longer disguise it—in order to support these systems that we shall present to the public the history of the virtuous Justine. It is essential that fools cease to incense this ridiculous idol of virtue, which has hitherto repaid them only with ingratitude, and that men of wit, commonly delivered by principle to the delightful excesses of vice and debauchery, reassure themselves by seeing the striking examples of happiness and prosperity which almost inevitably accompany them along the overflowing road they choose. Doubtless it is dreadful to have to depict, on the one hand, the terrifying misfortunes with which heaven overwhelms the gentle and sensitive woman who most faithfully respects virtue; and on the other, the abundance of prosperity which falls upon those who torment or mortify that same woman. But the man of letters, sufficiently philosophical to speak the truth, overcomes these inconveniences; and cruel by necessity, he mercilessly tears away with one hand the superstitious ornaments with which folly adorns virtue, and with the other boldly shows the ignorant man who was deceived, vice in the midst of the charms and pleasures that surround and constantly follow it.

Such are the sentiments which shall guide our labours; and it is for these reasons that, uniting the most cynical language to the strongest and boldest systems, to the most immoral and impious ideas, we shall with courageous audacity depict crime as it is—that is to say, always triumphant and sublime, always content and fortunate—and virtue as it likewise appears, always sullen and always sad, always pedantic and always unhappy.

Juliette and Justine, both daughters of a very wealthy Parisian banker, were raised until the ages of fourteen and fifteen in one of the most renowned abbeys of Paris. There, no counsel, no

books, no teachers were denied them, and morality, religion, and accomplishments seemed, as if in rivalry with one another, to have shaped these young women.

At that fatal moment for the virtue of the two young girls, everything failed them in a single day: a dreadful bankruptcy plunged their father into a situation so cruel that he died of grief; his wife followed him a month later. Two cold and distant relatives deliberated over what should be done with the young orphans; their share of an inheritance swallowed up by creditors amounted to a hundred *écus* for each. No one wishing to take charge of them, the doors of the convent were opened to them, their little dowry was handed over, and they were left free to become whatever they wished.

Juliette—lively, heedless, very pretty, wicked, mischievous, and the elder of the two—seemed affected only by the pleasure of no longer vegetating in a cloister, without reflecting upon the cruel reversal that had broken her chains. Justine, more naïve and more engaging, aged, as we have said, fourteen, having received from nature a sombre and romantic character, felt far more keenly all the horror of her destiny. Endowed with a tenderness and a surprising sensibility, instead of the art and subtlety of her elder sister she possessed only an ingenuousness—a candour—which was destined to make her fall into many snares.

This young girl, to so many qualities, joined the beauty of those lovely virgins of Raphael: large brown eyes full of soul and interest, a soft and dazzling complexion, a supple and flexible figure, rounded forms drawn by the very hands of Love, an enchanting voice, a charming mouth, and the most beautiful hair in the world. Such is the sketch of this delightful younger sister, whose enchanting graces and delicate features are beyond the powers of our pencil. Let our readers imagine whatever the imagination can create that is most seductive, and they will still fall short of the reality.

They were given twenty-four hours, the one as well as the other, to leave the abbey. Juliette wished to dry Justine's tears;

seeing that she did not succeed, she began to scold her instead of consoling her. She reproached her for her sensibility; she told her, with a philosophy far above her years, and which proved in her the most singular efforts of nature, that one must grieve at nothing in this world; that it was possible to find within oneself physical sensations of sufficiently piquant voluptuousness to extinguish all the moral affections whose shock might be painful; that this procedure became all the more essential to put into practice since true wisdom consists far more in doubling the sum of one's pleasures than in multiplying that of one's pains; that there is nothing, in a word, which one ought not to do in order to stifle within oneself that treacherous sensibility from which others alone profit, while it brings us nothing but sorrows. "Look," she said, throwing herself upon a bed before her sister's eyes and hitching up her skirts above her navel, "this is how I do, Justine, when I am troubled—I masturbate... I discharge... and that consoles me."

The wise and virtuous Justine was horrified by this action; she turned her eyes away, and Juliette, while shaking her pretty little mound, said to her: "Justine, you are a fool; you are prettier than I, but you will never be as happy." Continuing her operation, the harlot sighed, and her young discharge, ejaculated before the downcast eyes of virtue, dried up the source of the tears which, without this operation, she might perhaps have shed like her sister. "You are mad to worry," pursued this voluptuous girl, coming to sit down again beside Justine; "with the face and the age that we both possess, it is impossible that we should die of hunger." On this occasion she cited the daughter of one of their neighbours who, having run away from her father's house, was now richly kept and doubtless far happier than if she had remained in the bosom of her family. "One must take great care not to believe," she added, "that marriage is what makes a young girl happy. Enslaved under the law of wedlock, she has much ill temper to endure and only a very slight portion of pleasure to expect; whereas, given over to libertinage, she can always guard

herself against the ill-treatment of a lover, or console herself for it by the number of them.” Justine shuddered at such discourse; she declared that she would prefer death to ignominy, and despite the renewed entreaties her sister made to her, she steadfastly refused to lodge with her, as soon as she saw her determined upon a course of conduct that filled her with horror.

The two young girls therefore separated, without any promise of seeing one another again, since their intentions were so different. Juliette, who was going to become a great lady, would she consent to receive a little girl whose virtuous—but lowly—inclinations might dishonour her? And on her side, would Justine wish to risk her morals in the society of a perverse creature who was about to become the victim of public debauchery and dissipation?

We shall now, with the reader’s permission, leave this little libertine for a time, and occupy ourselves solely with transmitting to the public the anecdotes of the life of our prudish heroine.

For all that may be said, a little virtue is necessary in the world; and it is far more agreeable for a biographer¹ to portray, in the hero whose story he transmits, traits of candour and benevolence, than to keep his mind constantly fixed upon debaucheries and atrocities, as will no doubt be required of the one who, following this work, shall give us the very scandalous and very libertine history of the shameless Juliette.

Justine, caressed since her childhood by her mother’s seamstress, believed that this woman would be touched by her misfortune. She went to find her, told her of her troubles, and asked her for work... Hardly was she recognized before she was harshly turned away. “Oh heaven!” said this poor creature, “must it be that the first steps I take in the world are already marked by sorrows... That woman once loved me—why does she reject me today? Alas, it is because I am an orphan and poor; because

¹ One thus names the man of letters who devotes his pen to writing the lives of illustrious persons.

I have no longer any resource upon the earth, and because people value others only in proportion to the help and advantages they imagine they may receive from them.”

Justine, in tears, went to find her parish priest. She described her condition to him with all the energy of her age. She wore a little white sheath dress; her beautiful hair, carelessly gathered beneath a large Madras kerchief; her bosom, scarcely indicated, was hardly distinguishable beneath the double gauze that concealed it from the libertine eye; her pretty face somewhat pale from the sorrows that devoured her; a few tears rolled in her eyes and lent them still greater expression... It was impossible to be more beautiful.

“You see me, monsieur,” she said to the holy ecclesiastic, “yes, you see me in a most distressing situation for a young girl. I have lost my father and my mother; heaven has taken them from me at the age when I most need their assistance. They died ruined, monsieur; I have nothing left. This is all they have left me,” she continued, showing the twelve louis, “and not a corner where I may rest my poor head. You will have pity on me, will you not, monsieur? You are the minister of religion, and religion is the hearth of all virtues. In the name of that God whom it teaches and whom I adore with all the strength of my soul, in the name of the Supreme Being of whom you are the organ, tell me, like a second father, what I must do, what I must become.” The charitable priest replied, while ogling Justine, that the parish was already heavily burdened and that it would be difficult to extend new alms; but that if Justine wished to serve him—if she wished to do the heavy work—there would always be a piece of bread for her in his kitchen. And as he said this, the maker of gods pressed her skirts a little upon her buttocks, as though to gain some slight notion of their shape. Justine, who guessed his intention, pushed him away, saying: “Monsieur, I ask you neither for alms nor for a servant’s place; it has been too little time since I left a condition above that which might make one desire those two favours for me to be reduced to imploring them. I solicit

the counsel which my youth and my misfortunes require, and you would make me purchase it too dearly." The servant of Christ, ashamed of being unmasked, rose in anger; he called his niece and his servant. "Turn this little hussy out!" he cried to them. "You would never imagine what she has just proposed to me... Such vices at that age... and to a man like me! Let her leave—let her leave, or I will have her arrested this instant!" And the unfortunate Justine, repulsed, calumniated, and insulted on the very first day she was condemned to isolation, entered a house where she saw a *To Let* sign, rented a little furnished cabinet on the fifth floor, paid for it in advance, and there abandoned herself to tears all the more bitter because she was naturally very sensitive, and because her pride had just been cruelly compromised.

Justine was not yet at the end of all the petty hardships her disasters were to make her feel; there are an infinity of scoundrels in the world who, far from being moved by the misfortunes of a virtuous girl, seek only to redouble them in order the better to compel her to serve passions to which her indigence condemns her. But of all the vexations she had to endure at the beginning of her unhappy story, we shall cite only that which she experienced in the house of Dubourg, one of the harshest, as well as one of the richest financiers of the capital. The woman with whom Justine lodged had directed her to him as to someone whose credit and wealth might most surely soften the rigor of her fate; after waiting a very long time in the antechamber, Justine was finally admitted. Monsieur Dubourg, fat, short, and insolent like all financiers, was getting out of bed, wrapped in a loose dressing gown that scarcely concealed his disorder; they were preparing to dress his hair, when he dismissed his attendants and, addressing the young girl, said: "What do you ask of me, my child?" — "Monsieur," replied our little simpleton, quite embarrassed, "I am a poor orphan scarcely fourteen years old, and already acquainted with all the shades of misfortune. I implore your compassion; have pity on me, I beg you." And Justine,

with tears in her eyes, described to the old scoundrel the sufferings she endured, the difficulties she had in finding a position—even the repugnance she felt at taking one, not having been born for such a condition. She painted, redoubling her tears, the terror she felt for the future, and ended, stammering, with the hope that a man as rich and as estimable as Monsieur Dubourg would surely provide her with the means of existence—and all this with that eloquence of misfortune, always rapid in a sensitive soul, always burdensome to opulence.

Dubourg was painting while she spoke; growing aroused by this young woman, he was masturbating with one hand beneath his dressing gown, while with the other he held a monocle to the charms presented to his gaze: as he watched her intently, one could see the waves of lust gradually washing over the muscles of his aged face, depending on the degree of pathos with which Justine complained.

This Dubourg was a thoroughly depraved libertine, a great lover of young girls, who bribed women from all quarters to procure such prey for him; though scarcely capable of enjoying them, Dubourg usually confined himself to a fantasy with them that was as brutal as it was peculiar; his sole passion was to see the children brought to him weep, and to bring them to that point, it must be admitted, no one in the world possessed such a rare talent; this wretched scoundrel possessed such malice, such a teasing spirit, that it was impossible for a girl to withstand the vile remarks with which he bombarded her; tears flowed in abundance, and Dubourg, delighted, promptly added a few minor physical torments to the emotional pain he had just inflicted; the tears then flowed with greater violence, and the barbarian, reaching for the heavens, unleashed his passion, covering with kisses the face that his actions had just flooded.

“Have you always been so well-behaved?” asked Dubourg of Justine, finally getting to the point. “Alas, sir,” she replied, “I would not be so poor or in such a predicament if I had chosen to stop being so.” — “But on what grounds, then, do you expect

the wealthy to help you, if you do not serve them in any way?" "Oh, sir, I ask for nothing more than to perform all the services that decency and my youth allow me to fulfil." — "I am not speaking of serving me; you are neither of age nor of figure for that. I am speaking of being useful to men's pleasures. This virtue of which you make such a grand display is of no use in the world; you may bow at the feet of its altars, but its vain incense will not feed you; the thing that flatters men the least, the thing they value the least, the thing they despise most supremely, is the wisdom of your sex; today, my child, people value only what brings profit or what delights, and what profit or what pleasure can the virtue of women bring us? It is their debauchery that pleases us and amuses us, but their chastity bores us; when people of our sort give, it is never for any other reason than to receive; now, how can a little girl like you—quite ugly, and rather stupid at that—show her gratitude for what is done for her, if not by the complete surrender of her body? Come on, get ready if you want me to give you some money, and Dubourg reached out his arm to grab Justine and place her between his legs; but the poor creature held back, "Oh, sir," she cried in tears, "is there then no more integrity or benevolence among men?" "Well, very little," replied Dubourg, whose masturbatory movements intensified because of the tears his words brought to her eyes, "very little indeed; we have moved on from that mania of obliging others for free; we have recognized that the pleasures of benevolence were nothing but the delights of pride, and since nothing is so fragile, we have sought more real sensations; we have seen that, with a child like you, for example, it is infinitely better to reap as the fruit of one's advances all the pleasures that lust can offer than the very cold ones of gratitude; the reputation of a liberal, charitable, generous man is not worth, not even at the very moment one enjoys it most, the slightest pleasure of the senses." — "Ah, sir, with principles like that, the unfortunate man is bound to perish! — "What does it matter? There are more people in the world than there should be; as long as the machine retains

its elasticity, what difference does it make to the state whether there are more or fewer hands working it!" — "But do you believe that children respect their fathers when they are mistreated by them!" — "What does a father care for the love of children who are a burden to him?" — "It would therefore be better if we had been smothered in the cradle." — "Certainly, this is the practice in many countries; it was the custom of the Greeks, and it is that of the Chinese: there, unfortunate children are abandoned or put to death; what good is it to let creatures like you live, who, no longer able to count on their parents' help—whether because they are deprived of it or because they are not acknowledged—serve only to burden the state with a commodity of which it is already overflowing. The bastards, the orphans, and malformed children ought to be condemned to death at birth: the first and second, because, having no one willing or able to care for them, they sully society with a dross that can only one day prove harmful to it; and the third, because they can be of no use to it. Both classes are to society like those excrescences of flesh which, feeding on the sap of healthy limbs, degrade and weaken them; or, if you prefer, like those parasitic plants which cling to sound ones, spoiling and consuming them by appropriating their nourishment. Outrageous abuses are those alms meant to sustain such scum... those richly endowed institutions built for them, as though the human species were so rare, so precious, that even its vilest portion must be preserved—as though there were not, in a word, more men upon the globe than are needed, and as though it were not as necessary to politics and to nature to destroy as to preserve." And here Dubourg, pushing aside the garment that concealed his movements, showed Justine that he was beginning to make rather effective use of the small, dry, dark instrument his hand had been agitating for so long. "Come," he said abruptly, "let us end this talk you do not understand, and stop complaining of fortune when it is entirely within your power to remedy it." — "At what price, just heaven!" — "At the smallest—since all that is required is that

you lift your skirts and show me at once what lies beneath... no doubt very meagre charms, and hardly worth the fuss you make of them. Come, damn it, decide yourself—I am aroused, I want to see flesh; let it be shown me at once, or I shall be angry.” — “But, sir...” — “Absurd creature... stupid whore, do you think I shall grant you more Favor than the others?” And, rising in fury, he barred the door and sprang upon Justine, whose tears flowed abundantly. The libertine kissed them... devoured those precious tears, which suggested to him the dew upon the leaf of the lily or the rose. Then, lifting her skirts himself with one hand, he twisted and held them about her arms, while the other moved, for the first time, to defile what nature had long since formed as most perfect. “Odious man!” cried Justine, making a desperate effort to escape; “savage man!” she continued, as she unbolted the door and fled, “may heaven one day punish you as you deserve for your execrable hardness; you are unworthy of the riches you put to such vile use, and even of the air you breathe only to corrupt it with your brutalities and your crimes.” She left.

The unhappy girl, having returned home, hastened above all to complain to her hostess of the reception she had met with from the man to whom she had been sent; but to her astonishment, the wretched woman, rather than sharing her distress, turned on her with a torrent of reproaches. “Poor fool,” said she angrily, “do you imagine that men are such dupes as to give alms to little beggars like you without demanding interest on their money? Monsieur Dubourg was too good to have acted as he did; I would be damned if, in his place, I had let you leave my house without satisfying me. But since you refuse to profit from the assistance my generosity offered you, arrange matters as you please: you owe me; money at once, or prison tomorrow.” — “Madam, have pity—” — “Yes, yes, pity! One starves on pity; it becomes you well indeed to be so fastidious. Of five hundred little girls like you whom I have procured for that worthy gentleman since I have known him, you are the first to have played me such a trick... what a disgrace for me! That very honest man

will say I do not know my trade, and he will be right. Come, come, mademoiselle, you must return to Dubourg, you must satisfy him, you must bring me back money... I shall see him, I shall warn him, I shall repair, if I can, your foolishness; I shall make your excuses to him—but mind that you conduct yourself better.”

Justine, left alone, gave herself up to the most melancholy reflections... “No,” she said to herself in tears, “no, I will certainly not return to that libertine; I am not yet wholly without resources, my money remains almost entire, it will suffice me to live for some time yet; perhaps before then I shall find souls less hard, hearts more compassionate.” And as she uttered these words, her first impulse was to count her little treasure; she opened her chest... “Oh heaven! I have been robbed... there remains to me only what I have in my pocket, scarcely amounting to six livres. I am lost,” she cried; “ah! I see too clearly whence the blow has come; that vile creature, by depriving me of all my means, would force me to cast myself into the bosom of crime; but—what am I saying, alas!” she continued in tears, “is it not only too true that no other means now remain to prolong my life, and that, in the cruel state in which I find myself, that wretch—or perhaps another still more wicked—are the only beings from whom I may expect any relief!”

In despair, Justine went down to her landlady: “Madam,” she said, “I have been robbed; the theft was committed here, under your roof; it was from a piece of your furniture that the money was taken... Alas! it was all I possessed; it was the unfortunate remainder of my father’s estate; deprived of this meagre resource, nothing is left to me but death. Oh, madam, restore it to me, I beg you...” — “You insolent girl,” Madame Desroches answered brusquely, “before bringing me such complaints, you should know my house; be assured it is sufficiently well regarded by the police that, on the mere suspicion you have just shown me, I could have you punished at once, if I chose.” — “Suspicion,

madam, I have none; these are not suspicions I express, but grievances I lay before you; they are permitted to misfortune. Oh, madam, what am I to become after losing this only resource?" — "Faith, you will become whatever you please; that is no concern of mine; there are ways to make it up, but you do not wish to profit by them"; and these few words completed the final illumination in a mind as perceptive as Justine's. "But, madam, I can serve," replied the unfortunate girl in tears; "it cannot be that misery has no other resource left to it than crime." — "Indeed, it is the only good one today: what will you earn in service? ten *écus* a year; will you live on that? Believe me, my dear, those who serve are themselves obliged to resort to libertinage to get by; I supply that sort every day; as you see me, I am, I dare say, one of the best procuresses in Paris; there is not a day when twenty-five to thirty girls do not pass through my hands; and it brings me in... God knows what! I am sure there is not a woman of my trade in France who manages her affairs as neatly as I do. Look," she continued, spreading before the unfortunate girl five or six hundred louis in cash, nearly as much again in jewels, and the finest wardrobe of linen and dresses, "it is to that very libertinage which frightens you that I owe all this. By heaven, my girl, there is no other trade today; go on, believe me, take the step... and besides, Dubourg is a good fellow; he will not deflower you, at least; he can no longer perform—how would you have him do it? A few little slaps on the buttocks, a few light blows on the cheeks, and if you behave well with him, I will introduce you to other men who, in less than two years, with your age and looks, and a little complaisance, will set you up to ride in a carriage in Paris." — "I have no such lofty aims, madam," replied Justine; "it is not a fortune I seek, especially if I must pay for it with my honour. I ask only for life, and I offer to whoever will grant it all the services that may depend upon my age, together with the liveliest gratitude. Alas, madam, since you are so rich, deign to have pity on my condition; I do not ask to borrow as large a sum as that which I lost here; give me only a single louis, until I find

a place; I will repay you, be very sure of it, I will repay you from the first money I earn.” — “I would not give you so much as two sous,” said Madame Desroches, delighted to see her victim reduced to such a state by her own villainy; “no, not two sous; I offer you the means to earn, take them, or to the hospital: Monsieur Dubourg is one of its administrators; it will be easy for him to have you admitted.” — “Good day, my dear,” she added to a tall, pretty girl who had no doubt come to seek employment with her; “and as for you, my girl, good evening... money to-morrow, or prison.” — “Very well, madam,” said Justine in tears, “see Monsieur Dubourg; I will return to him, since you assure me he will respect me; yes, I will return, my misfortune imposes the law upon me; but while bowing beneath the blows of fate, remember, madam, that I shall at least retain the right to despise you forever.”

“You impertinent creature,” said Desroches, slamming the door in her face, “you deserve that I should have nothing more to do with what concerns you; but it is not for your sake that I do it; so your feelings are all the same to me. Farewell.”

It would be useless to describe the wretched night Justine passed; deeply attached to principles of religion, modesty, and virtue which she had, as it were, imbibed with her mother’s milk, she could not foresee the moment of renouncing them without the most heartrending anguish; occupied with the saddest thoughts, turning over a thousand times in her mind, without success, every means of escaping her predicament without crime, the last course she was about to take was to steal away secretly from Madame Desroches’s house when the latter came knocking at her door. “Come down, Justine,” she said brusquely, “come and breakfast with a friend of mine, and thank me for my mediation. I have succeeded; Monsieur Dubourg, on the promise I have given him of your submission, consents to see you again.” — “But, madam—” — “Come, don’t be childish, the chocolate is ready; follow me.” Justine went down; imprudence is the companion of misfortune, and Justine listened only to her distress. A

very pretty woman of about twenty-eight was the third at the breakfast Madame Desroches was sharing with her. This woman, full of wit and of thoroughly corrupt morals, as rich as she was charming, as skilful as she was beautiful, was soon, as will be seen, to become the one Dubourg would most usefully employ to complete the seduction of our gentle girl; they breakfasted. "There is a charming girl," said Madame Delmonse; "indeed, I sincerely congratulate whoever is fortunate enough to possess her." — "You are very kind, madam," replied Justine sadly. — "Come now, my dear, do not blush so; modesty is a childishness that must be carefully cast aside once one reaches the age of reason." — "Oh, I beg you, madam," said Desroches, "to form this little girl a little; she thinks herself lost because I do her the service of procuring her for a man." — "Good God, what extravagance!" replied Madame Delmonse; "far from refusing such a step, Justine, you ought, on the contrary, to feel infinite gratitude toward the one who urges it upon you. What a false idea you have, dear child, of virtue! and how can you believe that a young woman forfeits it by giving herself to those who desire her? Continence in a woman is an impracticable virtue, my child; never flatter yourself that you will attain it. When passions are kindled in your soul, you will see that such a state is impossible for us; always the target of seduction, how can a woman resist the attractions of pleasure perpetually offered to her senses? and how can she be blamed for yielding, when everything around her strews flowers over the abyss and invites her to throw herself into it? Make no mistake, Justine, it is not virtue that is required of us, but only its mask; provided we know how to feign, nothing more is asked. The one among us who is truly virtuous yet bears the reputation of a wanton would be far less happy than she who gives herself over to every excess while preserving the reputation of an honest woman; for, once again, it is not the sacrifice of one's senses to virtue that brings happiness—there can be no felicity in such constraint. What leads to true happiness is only the appearance of that virtue to which the

ridiculous prejudices of men have condemned our sex. I could offer myself as an example to you, Justine: I have been married fourteen years, I have never lost my husband's confidence; he would stake his life on my virtue; and yet, given over to libertinage from the earliest years of my marriage, there is not in Paris a woman more corrupt than I; there is not a day when I do not prostitute myself to seven or eight men, and often to three at once; there is not a procuress who does not serve me, not a handsome man who has not had me; and my husband will swear to you whenever you like that Vesta herself was less pure. Perfect restraint, the most scrupulous hypocrisy, much art... much falsity—these are the means that disguise me, the bonds of the mask prudence places upon my brow; I deceive everyone: I am as debauched as Messalina, yet thought as chaste as Lucretia; an atheist like Vanini, yet believed devout as Saint Teresa; false as Tiberius, yet thought frank as Socrates; sober as Diogenes, though Apicius was less intemperate than I. In a word, I idolize every vice, I detest every virtue; and if you consulted my husband or questioned my family, they would tell you: Delmonse is an angel; while the prince of darkness himself was inclined to fewer disorders. Is it prostitution that frightens you? Ah, my child, what absurdity! Let us examine it in all its relations and see under which it could be thought dangerous. Does a young girl harm herself by being libertine? Certainly not; she merely yields to the sweetest impulses of nature, which would surely not suggest them if they were harmful. Has not nature placed within her the desire to give herself to men among the primary necessities of life? and is there a single woman who can say she does not feel the need for it as imperiously as for food and drink? How, then, could nature make it a crime for a woman to yield to desires that form the most sublime part of her existence? Shall we consider the libertinage of one of our sex in relation to society? Surely there are few actions more agreeable to the sex that shares the world with us than the prostitution of a pretty woman; and what would become of them if all women, bewitched by the

false systems of virtue preached by fools, obstinately refused the desires of men? Reduced to satisfying themselves alone or with one another, would they have to renounce us entirely? For you will admit that marriage cannot confine them; it is just as impossible for a man to be content with one woman as for a woman with one man. Nature detests, rejects, contradicts all these dogmas of your absurd civilization, and the faults of your foolish logic do not become the laws of nature; let us listen only to her, and we shall never be deceived. In short, Justine, believe one who has experience, learning, and principles, and be persuaded that the best and most reasonable thing a young girl can do in the world is to give herself to all who desire her, while preserving, as I have told you, outward appearances that can deceive; yesterday you scolded that good and honest Desroches for the interest she took in you; ah, my poor Justine, what should we do without such obliging creatures? What obligations we owe them for the care they take of our pleasures and our interests! Is there a profession more estimable or more necessary than that of a procuress? This respectable function was honoured by all peoples; all nations revered it; the Greeks and Romans erected temples to it; the wise Cato procured his own wife; Nero and Heliogabalus drew revenue from the brothels they kept within their palaces; the elements themselves are procuresses, nature herself is so at every moment; this well-exercised talent is, in a word, the most precious, the dearest to society, and those charitable persons who practice it with honour ought to be encouraged with rewards.” — “You are very good, madam,” said Desroches, quite proud to hear her position so supported. — “No, I say what I think,” replied Delmonse; “it is my heart that speaks here; and after praising the profession in general, I congratulate Justine on the particular good fortune she has in having met you to guide her along the voluptuous path of life’s pleasures; let her surrender blindly to your advice, madam, let her listen only to you, and I guarantee her soon, alongside a most agreeable fortune, the most refined pleasures of life.”

This seductive conversation was not yet finished when there came a knock at the door. "Ah!" said Madame Desroches as she opened it, "it is the young man you asked me for, Delmonse"; and at once a superb fellow, five feet ten inches tall, built like Hercules and as handsome as Cupid, entered the salon. "He is charming," said our libertine, as she looked him over; "it only remains to see whether he is as vigorous as his appearance promises; it has been a long time since I have felt myself so ready for pleasure; look at my eyes, Desroches, look at the ardent flames they give off." — "Ah, by heaven!" she went on, brazenly kissing the young man, "I can bear no more; you should have warned me," said Desroches, "I would have given you three or four." — "Come, let us see—this one will do," and the shameless woman, slipping one arm around a young man she had never seen in her life, with the other hand began to unbutton his breeches, with no regard for the innocence and modesty such cynicism offended. "Madam," said Justine, blushing deeply, "permit me to withdraw." — "No, no, by heaven," said Delmonse, "no, no; Desroches, oblige her to stay; I wish to give her a lesson in practice, after having given her one in theory; I want her to witness my pleasures, it is the only way to inspire her quickly with a taste for them; and as for you, Desroches, you are a necessary witness to my orgies; wishing to see you exercise your art to the full, you know, my dear, that the introduction of the virile member is truly agreeable to me only when guided by your hands; besides, you excite me so well when I am engaged, you take such care of my hips, my clitoris, my body! Ah, Desroches, you are the chief instrument of my pleasures. Come, come, let us begin; Justine, sit there before us, do not lose sight of us for a single moment." — "Oh, what torment, madam," cried the orphan in tears, "let me withdraw, I beg you, and believe that the spectacle of the horrors you are about to commit will inspire in me nothing but disgust." But Delmonse, wholly given over to her excesses, and finding, with some reason, that her pleasures were

greatly heightened by thus scandalizing virtue, strongly opposed Justine's departure, and the scene began.

Every detail of the most titillating lust is laid bare before the eyes of our modest child; in Desroches's place, she is forced to grasp the young man's monstrous penis—which her two tiny hands can barely encircle—and to guide it toward the Delmonse's vagina, to insert it there, to submit, despite her repugnance, to the caresses of this impure woman, who, refining all her pleasures, finds an indescribable heightening of their voluptuousness in the lustful kisses she presses upon the innocent mouth of this child, while the vigorous athlete makes her swoon five times in a row under the prodigious thrusts of his cock. "Goddamn it," said Messalina, rising from there like a Bacchante; "oh, Goddamn, what pleasure I've had! Do you know, Desroches, what my desire is now? I want to deflower this little slut with the monstrous cock that just fucked me. "What do you say to the plan?" — "No, no," she replied, "we would kill her, and I would gain nothing by it." Meanwhile the two combatants recovered their strength; ample libations of Champagne, some pastries and truffles soon restored them. Delmonse resumed her place and challenged her conqueror; Justine, condemned to the same duties, was forced once more to handle the instrument; one must see with what pain, with what repugnance, she carried out what was required of her. This time the wanton insisted that she stimulate her; Desroches guided her hand, but the school-girl's awkwardness soon disgusted the ardent Delmonse. "Shake me, shake me, Desroches," she cried; "I perceive that if the corruption of innocence flatters the mind, the weakness of its means is of no use to the body, especially with a libertine like me, who would exhaust in her transports ten hands like Sappho's and ten instruments like Hercules's." This second bout, like the first, ended in ample sacrifices to Venus; Delmonse adjusted her dress again, her partner withdrew, and Desroches, hastily taking a cloak, made her excuses to her friend, saying that an appointment with Dubourg prevented her from staying longer.

“Desroches,” said Madame Delmonse after a few moments’ reflection, “the more I indulge, the more libertine I become; one act in me gives rise to an idea, and that new idea to another act; let me accompany you to Dubourg’s—I have the strongest desire to see what that old rogue will invent to revive himself with this girl; if my assistance is needed, I will give it; you know it is not the first time you have procured me such encounters, and that, without vanity, I bring them to their end as surely as an Agnès. Those old scoundrels often prefer me, as you well know; and art in me making up for youth, I often bring them to their conclusion more quickly than even Hebe could.” — “What you ask is possible,” said Desroches; “I know my Dubourg well enough to be sure he will not be displeased to have one prettier woman brought to him; come.” A carriage arrived; the modest Justine, still frightened, got in first, and they set off.

Dubourg was alone; he awaited the ladies in an even more indecent state than the day before; brutality, libertinism, all the marks of the most unbridled lust shone in his furtive gaze.

“You were counting on only one woman today, monsieur,” said Desroches as she entered; “well, I thought I would not displease you by bringing you two; one of them, moreover, yielding only with great difficulty to your pleasures, I imagined there would be no inconvenience in conducting a second to you, in order to encourage and restrain the first: and who is this girl?” said Dubourg, without stirring, casting upon Delmonse a glance mingled with cynicism and indifference. “A pretty friend of mine,” replied Desroches, “whose excessive complaisance equals her charms, and who may perhaps become as useful to you in the pleasures you promise yourself for the moment as in those you project for the future with the lovely and interesting Justine.” — “What,” said Dubourg, “you think one sitting will not finish all this?” “It is possible,” replied Desroches, “and it is in that apprehension that I thought my friend’s intervention might always become necessary.” — “Come, we shall see,” said Dubourg; “go out, Desroches, go out, you will put all that on the account.

Where do we stand together?” “But monsieur,” said Desroches, “for three months that you have not settled, it amounts to nearly a hundred thousand francs.” — “A hundred thousand francs! good heavens!” “But does monsieur reflect that I have supplied him with more than eight hundred girls since that time; they are all entered... monsieur knows well how I conduct myself, he knows well I would be sorry to cheat him of a sou.” — “Come, come, we shall see all that; go out, Desroches, I feel nature pressing me, I need to be alone with these two women; and you, Justine, before your protectress goes away, thank her that I am willing, in her Favor, to bestow my attentions on you for a moment; you must feel, little girl, how unworthy you are of them after your conduct yesterday, and if you offer the slightest resistance to my desires, two men are waiting in my antechamber to conduct you to a place from which you shall not leave for the rest of your days.” Here Desroches went out. “Oh monsieur,” said Justine, weeping and throwing herself at the feet of that barbarous man, “let yourself be moved, I beg you, be generous enough to assist me without requiring of me what costs me so dear that I would rather offer you my life than submit to it.” — “Yes,” she resumed with the impulse of the deepest sensibility, “yes, I would a thousand times rather die than violate the principles of morality and virtue in which my childhood was nurtured; monsieur, monsieur, do not constrain me, I implore you; can you conceive happiness in the midst of disgust and tears? dare you suspect pleasure where you will see only repugnance? you will scarcely have consummated your crime before the spectacle of my despair will overwhelm you with remorse:” but what was happening prevented the unfortunate girl from continuing. Delmonse, as a clever woman, divining on Dubourg’s brow the movements of his hardened soul, had knelt beside his chair and was rocking it voluptuously with one hand while stimulating him with the other,² in order to render him insensible to that

² All libertines know that this is the term used for the act of putting one or more fingers into the patient’s anus; this episode, one of the

jeremiad. "God damn it," said Dubourg, vigorously aroused by the episode, and already handling the compliant Delmonse, "by God! I spare you! I would rather strangle you, slut;" he rises at these words like a madman, and, exposing a small, dry, dark member, seizes his prey with brutality and boldly tears away the veils that still conceal from his libertine eyes what he burns to enjoy. By turns he insults, flatters, mistreats, caresses: ah! what a spectacle, great God! it seemed that nature wished, in this first circumstance of Justine's life, to imprint forever in her, by this sight, all the horror she ought to feel for a species of crime from which would arise the flood of misfortunes with which she was threatened. Justine, naked, was thrown upon a bed, and while Delmonse holds her there, the libertine Dubourg inventories the charms of the one who, at this critical moment, consents to serve him as procuress: "wait," said the jade, "I feel my skirts are in your way, I shall quickly deliver to you naked the object which, it seems to me, attracts here all your homage; it is my arse you wish to see, I know... I respect that kind of taste in people your age (3):³ here, my friend, here it is; it's a little fuller than that child's; but this contrast will amuse you; would you like to see them both side by side? "Yes, by God," said Dubourg, "climb onto her

most essential in lubricity, is especially suited to old men or those worn out; it promptly produces erection and becomes of incredible voluptuousness at the moment of ejaculation; those, however, who can replace it with a penis will undoubtedly find pleasures infinitely more vivid, and the difference from illusion to reality excessive. It is in fact true that there is no more intense form of lubricity in the world than that of being fucked while fucking.

³ There is no age for this delightful taste; the young Alcibiades loved it as did the old Socrates; entire peoples have preferred this delicious part to all the other beauties of a woman's body; and in fact, there is none which, by its whiteness, its roundness, its conformation, its enchanting form, and the delicate pleasures it promises, can better merit than that one the voluptuous homage of a true libertine. Woe to him who has not fucked a boy, or who has not made a boy of his mistress; he is still very new to voluptuousness who has not dared either the one or the other.

shoulders to hold her down; I'll try to fuck her in the arse while kissing your buttocks." — "Ah! I see what you need, libertine," said Delmonse, straddling Justine's lower back, thereby treacherously subjecting her to Dubourg's brutal lust; "Indeed, yes, that's it," replied the libertine, delivering a few well-aimed slaps to both Fun and the other arse offered up to his passions; "yes, that's it, let's see if I can try sodomy." The rascal tried, but his overly ardent flames were extinguished in the heat of the moment. Heaven avenges Justine for the outrages to which the monster seeks to subject her, and the loss of this libertine's strength before the act spares this unfortunate child from becoming its tragic victim.

Dubourg becomes only the more insolent; he accuses Justine of the faults of his own weakness, and seeks to repair them with fresh insults and even more mortifying invectives; there is nothing he does not say, nothing he does not attempt, nothing that his perfidious imagination, the hardness of his character, and the depravity of his morals do not lead him to undertake; Justine's awkwardness irritates him; she is far from wishing to act; it is much for her merely to submit; yet nothing succeeds; Delmonse herself, with all her art, cannot restore to life that instrument enervated by an abundant discharge; she presses it, shakes it, sucks that flaccid organ in vain—nothing rises; Dubourg himself passes in vain with these two women from tenderness to severity, from servility to tyranny, from an air of decency to the most debauched excesses; all three, exhausted, do not even succeed in restoring to that unhappy instrument the majestic bearing it would require to undertake new assaults. Dubourg renounces it; he makes Justine promise to return the next day, and to better determine her, he absolutely refuses to give her a sou: she is returned into Desroches's hands, and Delmonse remains with Dubourg, who, restored by an excellent meal, soon revenged himself upon this pretty woman for the impossibility in which nature had placed him of consummating his crime with the young girl. It cost some mutual vexations, many efforts on one side and

complaisance on the other; but the sacrifice was accomplished, and Delmonse's superb buttocks received the offering that had been fruitlessly destined for Justine's far fresher ones; the latter, returned home, assured her hostess that, even if she were to perish of want, she would no longer expose herself to such a scene; she overwhelmed with fresh reproaches the wretch capable of abusing her misery so cruelly. But crime, happy and triumphant, laughs at the imprecations of misfortune; its successes embolden it, and its rapid course accelerates in proportion to the curses it receives. Such are the perfidious examples that leave man wavering between vice and virtue, and which most often determine him in favour of vice, because experience always presents happiness there to his eyes.

CHAPTER II.

New outrages directed against Justine's virtue.
— How the hand of Heaven rewards her for
her inviolable attachment to her duties.

Before proceeding, it seems essential to us to set our readers fully in the picture. The less perceptive have no doubt already surmised that the theft from the unfortunate Justine was most certainly the work of Desroches; but what they may not yet be convinced of is the astonishing part Dubourg had in this scandalous affair. It was on the advice of that scoundrel that Desroches had acted: "she will infallibly be ours if we deprive her of all her resources," he had said cruelly; "now what I want is that she be ours: therefore, she must be reduced to begging"; and, harsh as this calculation might be, it was nonetheless infallible. At the dinner Dubourg had had with Delmonse, he had confessed this little horror to her: her mind, fertile in schemes of this kind, was quickly set ablaze by it. The result of the conspiracy was that Delmonse would do everything possible to place Justine in her house during the three months her husband was still to remain in the country; that during this interval Dubourg would attempt new approaches, aided by Delmonse; and that finally, if nothing succeeded, they would take a striking revenge, so that, as Dubourg said, virtue might in this adventure be as harassed and degraded as it always must be whenever it dares to confront vice openly. This charming plot decided upon, the millionaire, as we have said, sealed it with his emission in the depths of Delmonse's fine buttocks; and from the very next day, that amiable friend worked tirelessly toward the success of the

project. Wicked enough to take great pleasure in the idea of ruining the unfortunate Justine, she did not fail to return the next day to breakfast at Desroches's. "You interested me yesterday, my child," said the hypocritical Delmonse to Justine, whom they did not fail to summon; "I did not think one could carry virtue so far; in truth, you are an angel sent expressly from heaven for the conversion of mankind; until now I have shown myself to you only as a libertine: but I must confess, it is to you alone that I owe the sudden change that has just taken place in me; and it is upon your bosom that I swear it, my charming model, you shall see me henceforth only repentant and virtuous. Oh Justine! oh you, who have become so necessary to my conversion! would you consent to come share my retreat; I would have you under my eyes; and the great examples I shall constantly receive from you will soon perfect the work of reflection."—"Alas, madame," replied Justine, "I am not made to give examples; and if your conversion is real, it is to the Supreme Being that you owe it, and not to me; a weak and fragile creature, I am far from what is required to become a model; and it is you, madame, you who will serve as one to me, if you listen to the voice of heaven that thunders within your soul. I thank you for the refuge you offer me; so long as I can be of use to you, madame, without contravening my principles, command me, I am at your service; and my gratitude and my feeble services shall repay, if possible, your kindness." Desroches, forewarned by Delmonse, had sufficient composure not to betray this comedy; she congratulated Justine on her good fortune: what the young woman owed was immediately settled, and they set out.

Madame Delmonse occupied a delightful house: servants, equipage, horses, and the richest furnishings soon made Justine understand that she was in the home of one of the most opulent women in Paris.

"Out of consideration for older servants," said Delmonse, as soon as she had secured Justine, "it is not possible for me to raise you at once to the highest positions in my household; but you

will attain them, my angel; and, however subordinate the post I give you for the moment, believe that I shall have no less regard for you.” — “I will do everything, madame,” said Justine; “too happy to find at least life and honour in your house.” — “You shall be my wardrobe maid, my child,” resumed Delmonse; “everything concerning the cleanliness of that department will be your responsibility, and if you conduct yourself well, within a year I shall raise you to the post of my third woman.” — “Oh! madame,” replied Justine, confused... “I would not have thought...” — “Ah! I see, pride, Justine; are these the virtues I expected from you?” — “You are right, madame, humility must be the first; it is at least that of my condition and my misfortunes; order that I be instructed in my duties, and be assured of my exactness in fulfilling them.” — “I shall instruct you myself, my dear child,” replied Delmonse, leading Justine into two small cabinets arranged behind the mirrored alcove of this sybarite’s elegant boudoir; “here are the places under your care. This one,” she continued, opening one of the two cabinets, furnished with bidets and baths, “this one concerns only cleanliness; it is merely a matter of emptying and filling. This other,” continued Delmonse, opening the second, “is of a somewhat less decent nature; you see, it is a close-stool: there are many water closets in the English style, but I prefer this chair; you understand, my child, the care you must take of it, as well as of the other porcelain vessels intended for more minor needs. There is something else of which I must inform you; it is a delicacy, I know, but it has become a habit with me, and I should regret to give it up.” — “And what is it, madame?” — “You must always be there when I attend to my needs, and... I will tell you the rest in your ear, my child; for when one is virtuous, one blushes at the necessity of making such avowals. You must, with the cotton you see in that mahogany cabinet, cleanse... remove the traces that these unpleasant necessities of nature inevitably leave behind.” — “Myself, madame?” — “Yes, my child, yourself: the one who preceded you did much worse; but you, my dear Justine, I respect

you, you are virtuous, and that restrains me.” — “And what did she do, then, the one before me?” — “The same thing with her tongue.” — “Ah! madame.” — “Yes, I know it is harsh; that is where luxury, softness, and the forgetting of all social duties lead us; when one reaches that point, one becomes accustomed to regarding everything around one only as objects made to be subservient to us... A great name, a hundred thousand livres of income, consideration, influence—such are the things that lead us to these final degrees of reflective corruption: but I am reforming, my dear, I am converting, in earnest, and your sublime example will confirm the miracle. You shall be fed, Justine, you shall dine with my women, and you shall earn a hundred *écus* a year; does that suit you?” “Alas, madame,” said Justine, “misfortune never bargains; all the assistance offered to it is acceptable; but its gratitude is proportioned both to the nature of the services rendered and to the manner in which they are rendered.” — “Oh! you will be content with all this, Justine, I promise you,” replied Delmonse; “there is only my habits, to which I beg you not to make me renounce... Ah! I had forgotten to show you your room; it adjoins these two cabinets, entirely enclosed behind them; it is a sort of little fortress... besides, it is pretty, a good bed... within reach of my bell in case of need, as you see; I leave you in your quarters, my dear, congratulating myself on having been able to do something agreeable for you.”

Justine had scarcely been left alone when her deep sensibility drew from her fresh tears. “What!” she said, seeing the abasement of her condition, “this woman who, as she claims, receives me into her house out of esteem for my virtue, nevertheless takes pleasure in degrading me to the point of assigning me a position as base as the one her pride proposes to me! And why is it, since all individuals resemble one another, that some must be condemned to render to others services as humiliating as these? O sweet equality of nature! will you never reign among men?”

Justine is summoned to dinner; she makes the acquaintance of her three companions, all three as pretty as angels. In the evening she begins her honourable duties: first the wardrobe, then the bidet; Justine handled the sponge, soaked it, washed, cleaned, and all this in a silence that seemed to her most extraordinary; it appeared as though the dignity of Madame the Countess Delmonse would have been compromised by conversing with her servant, or perhaps—and this is what we prefer to believe—Madame Delmonse remained silent so as not to compromise the great secret that concerned her wretched slave.

However, the observant and judicious orphan was not long in perceiving that the examples of virtue which she had been assured would be taken from her had not yet made a saint of her respectable mistress; taking advantage of her husband's absence, the jade indulged herself without restraint, and the orgies celebrated in the voluptuous boudoir adjoining the two rooms entrusted to Justine's care soon convinced her of the insincerity of that woman's conversion; on one occasion, two or three young men even strayed into those rooms of cleanliness and rather rudely insulted Justine as she was performing her duties there; she complained of it; scarcely did anyone seem to hear her, and the virtuous creature, while planning soon to leave that house, nevertheless resolved, out of prudence, to endure it a little longer. One day she thought she heard Dubourg's voice; she listened attentively, and distinguished nothing; it was indeed he, but the precautions were so well taken that everything plotted against her was always cloaked in the most incredible mystery.

She had been leading a life in that house that was as peaceful as it was monotonous for about two months when Madame Delmonse, unable to contain the flames of her lust any longer, came into her dressing room one evening, thoroughly warmed by wine and lewdness: "Justine," she said in a slightly less serious tone, "the position of my third wife will soon be vacant; Suzanne, who currently holds it, has fallen in love with my first footman; I am marrying them. But, my child, to rise to this position, I

demand of you favours quite different from those that have hitherto formed the basis of your duty.” — “And what is it, madam?” — “We must sleep together, Justine; you must masturbate me...” — “Oh! Madam, is that what virtue is?...” — “What? Haven’t you come down from your cloud of fantasy yet?” — “Fantasy, madam?...Virtue a fantasy!” — “Certainly, my angel, there is none more contemptible; virtues, religions—all these are popular restraints that philosophers mock, and which they take pleasure in breaking; the only laws of nature are our passions, and as soon as they conflict with virtue, the latter ceases to have any reality. For a moment I thought I could overcome the violent love you inspire in me; content to have you, I believed that your presence would soothe the pain your eyes inflicted on my heart, and if I subjected you to the tasks you perform, it is because they gave me the pleasure of often appearing naked before you; but your insensitivity revolts me; I can no longer silence my passions; they must be satisfied at whatever cost; “Come, follow me, heavenly maiden”; and Delmonse, despite Justine’s resistance, led her into her apartment; there was nothing this seductress did not employ to finish corrupting the virtue of this young woman; gifts, promises, flattering words—everything was employed, but in vain; and Justine’s firm resistance convinced Madame Delmonse that a young girl’s sense of virtue can be strong enough to withstand all the assaults of vice. From that moment on, the shrew could no longer restrain herself; lust easily turns to fury in souls of this temperament;⁴ “You treacherous creature,” she said to her, at the height of her rage, “I shall know how

⁴ In all of them, ferocity is always either the means or the complement of lust; all the excessive refinements of libertinism are acts of ferocity; there is not a single cruel man who has not been a great libertine, and conversely, not a libertine who does not become cruel; moreover, ferocity, like gentleness, is only a disposition of the soul entirely independent of us, and we should neither blush nor take pride in the one more than in the other. Man works only for his own happiness; whatever path he chooses in the course of life, it is always in pursuit of happiness, though in his own way. Thus Nero took as much

to wrest from you by force what you refuse to give willingly to my passions;” She rings the bell, and two of her maids appear; they had been forewarned. Slaves to their mistress’s whims, they had long been accustomed to indulging and serving her; nearly naked like her and with dishevelled hair, all three resembling Bacchantes, they seize Justine, undress her, and while the two accomplices expose her to the impure caresses of their lustful mistress, the latter, kneeling before the altar of pleasures, terrifies modesty, drives out virtue to replace it with debauchery and the most refined licentiousness... Would you believe it?... The wretch! She was sucking Justine, thrusting a finger into her arse-hole; one of the women was tasked with tickling her clitoris; the other, the two pretty little nipples barely budding on this enchanting girl; but nature had not yet revealed anything to the naive heart of our charming orphan. Cold, insensitive to all the advances made upon her, she responded only with sighs and tears to the repeated efforts of these lesbians; the positions vary: the shameless Delmonse straddles the chest of this beautiful child; she places her cunt on her mouth; one of her women masturbates her simultaneously from the front and from behind; a second continues to defile Justine, whose beautiful face is twice in succession flooded with multiple jets of Delmonse’s impure semen, which, it is claimed, she discharges like a man. Everything horrifies Justine; nothing moves her; everything repulses her. Irritated by so much resistance, Delmonse flies into an inconceivable rage; she grabs Justine by the hair, drags her into her room, locks her in, and leaves her to fast for several days on bread and water.

However, until now Madame Delmonse had thought only of satisfying her passion; she had almost lost sight of what she had agreed upon with Dubourg, who, for his part, occupied with new pleasures, seemed likewise to forget it. The hope of revenge brought Delmonse back to her promises; she delighted in the

pleasure in slaughtering his victims as Titus did in letting no day pass without having made someone happy.

idea of finding yet another enemy for that unfortunate girl, and the account of what follows will reveal the schemes these villains employed.

On the eighth day, Delmonse restored Justine to her liberty. "Resume your duties," she said to her gravely, "and if you conduct yourself well, I may perhaps forget your faults."—"Madame," replied Justine, "I should very much wish that it might please you to take someone in my place; I perceive only too clearly that I have not what is required to please you, and I would prefer a position less lucrative and one that will not compromise me so much."—"I need a fortnight for that," said Madame Delmonse sharply; "perform your service with the greatest exactness until that time, and if you are still of the same mind then, I will replace you." Justine agreed, and everything calmed down.

About five days before the expiration of that term, Madame Delmonse, at the moment of going to bed, ordered Justine to come into her apartment: "Do not be afraid, mademoiselle," she said, seeing her disturbed, "I have no desire to expose myself a second time to your humiliations; I am better suited to preferences than to refusals; it is for my service that I require you, and for nothing else." Justine enters; but what is her surprise when she sees Dubourg, almost naked, in the midst of Delmonse's two women, both eagerly attending to the passions of that libertine; what becomes of her when she hears the doors shut, and when the tone, the discourse, the expression of the one with whom she has to deal foretell to her nothing but misfortune. "Oh! madame," she cries, falling at the feet of that perfidious woman, "what new snare is it that you prepare for me? Is it possible that a mistress should so cruelly abuse the helplessness and misery of an unfortunate servant! Oh! what horror, great God! and what a crime you commit against all divine and human laws!" "Oh! we shall soon, I hope, defile ourselves more thoroughly," said Dubourg, rising and pressing his impure lips upon Justine's delicate mouth, from which she recoils in disgust... "Oh yes, yes," continued the monster, "we shall soon abandon ourselves to

other crimes, and I hope that at last this proud virtue will find no further defence;” at the same time Justine is seized, stripped, and instantly presented naked by Delmonse’s women to the indecent designs of the financier.

Dubourg, almost certain, as he claims, that he will get at least two shots in this time, saves for last the one of Justine’s two virginities that he values most—and it is her cunt that is being offered up to his first thrusts. The scoundrel steps forward; it is Delmonse herself who leads him, and who, with the lecher’s sword in hand, prepares to plunge it into the victim’s bosom; but Dubourg, ever a lover of detail, wishes to begin with a few of those little libidinous torments whose pleasures hold such sway over his numb senses; an arse-worshipper, the rascal wants to see it; Justine’s is so pretty, they expose it to him; he slaps it, has it repositioned, slaps the victim, roughly handles her mound, pinches her nipples, loses himself in the three beauties surrounding him and wants to subject them to the same ordeals; One of the women from Delmonse in particular—a tall, seventeen-year-old beauty made for the canvas, as lovely as an angel—seems to arouse him incredibly; unfortunately, she is masturbating him, and very skilfully, while he is fore playing. Alas! The same mishap that occurred during the first session happens again here; Dubourg has just enough time to throw himself on Justine; her well-lubricated passages are presented to him, half-open; but his member bends as the fluid that holds it in place flows out; Dubourg, whose release is impetuous, loses his head in the process; he no longer has enough presence of mind, nor enough strength, to enter straight. “Ah! Goddamn it, holy Goddamn it,” he cries out, showering poor Justine with slaps and punches and splattering her cunt with cum, “ah! Goddamn it twice over, how I loathe this—my plan has failed.”

“Don’t be afraid, Dubourg,” said Delmonse, “the God or Devil who protects this little slut won’t always be victorious; she will fall; regain your strength; I have what it takes to restore it here.” At the same time, she rubs his balls with a potion whose

properties she knows well, and has him served a broth made of herbs and spices, the effect of which, she says, is guaranteed. New provocations from the three women join these stimulants: there is nothing the minxes do not do, nothing their lust does not invent, no taste they do not anticipate, no fantasy they do not guess, no passion they do not inflame; now victims, now priestesses, they are now receiving what they have just given a moment ago, and Justine's lovely naked body, which is constantly offered up to the lecher, along with the tears and lamentations of this beautiful girl, serve to give the scene all the piquancy it can muster. Dubourg gets an erection; he moves closer to his target. Since it was the jerk he'd intended to attack, we assume he has the same intentions; we imagine him doing so: "No, no, give me the arse, he cries out, it's that damn arsehole that brought me bad luck, I hate them; I was tempted by a virgin, but one cannot go against nature; offer me only the arse, my friends, it is the arse alone that I want to fuck. Justine's charming little buttocks are immediately presented to him; the lecher begins with kisses that prove just how much this delightful part of a woman's body has power over him. Delmonse, while his two accomplices spread her buttocks, continues to guide his instrument; the very first attempts to seize her had already drawn a furious cry from Justine; but the commotion disrupts the attack; Dubourg tries to resume his assault; Justine, terrified, struggles with such violence and agility that she breaks free from the arms holding her captive and throws herself under the bed, letting out terrible screams; there, as if in a fortress, our entrenched heroine protests that neither pleas nor threats will be able to make her flee, and that she would rather perish than surrender. The ferocious Dubourg jabs at her with his cane; more nimble than an eel, Justine dodges everything: "We must crush her," says Dubourg, "we must break through the bed and suffocate her under the mattresses"; but as the lecher ceaselessly jerks off while devising all these dreadful plans, as he handles with both hands every temptation offered to him, nature deceives his criminal

hope a second time; he has only time to plunge into the arse of the pretty seventeen-year-old girl we mentioned a moment ago, where his passions are soothed enough to give poor Justine hope of at least having the rest of the night in peace. But misfortune is always lurking; nothing can persuade our sweet child to leave her retreat until she is certain that Dubourg has done the same. So she goes to her room, trembling, and renews her most urgent pleas to her mistress to let her leave a house where her virtue is so cruelly compromised at every moment. Delmonse, furious, responds only with contempt.

Justine, somewhat reassured by her companions, resumes her duties, without reflecting that, after the wrongs those wretches have to lay at her door, the most striking acts of vengeance must inevitably accumulate upon her head..

Madame Delmonse had the habit, whenever she came to her dressing-room, of placing on a small table a magnificent watch set with diamonds; once she had finished, she would take it up again, sometimes forgetting it, and Justine would then at once bring it back to her. Three days after the event we have just recounted, Madame Delmonse's watch goes missing, and this time it is not found again. Justine is questioned; she answers for her honesty, and offers as proof the conduct she has maintained up to that moment. Delmonse says nothing; but the next evening, scarcely has Justine, withdrawn to her room, thrown herself upon her bed, bathed in tears, to snatch a few moments of rest, than she hears her door burst open... Good heavens! it is her mistress herself, bringing with her a commissioner... and officers. "Do your duty, sir," she says to the man of the law; "this wretched girl has stolen my watch—you will find it on her or in her room..." "I, steal from you, madame?" says Justine, confounded, throwing herself in disorder at the foot of her bed; "ah! who better than you should be convinced of my innocence and my honesty?" At that moment Justine's frightened eyes fall mechanically upon one of the four men who accompany the commissioner; oh, great God! she recognizes Dubourg; it is he, it is that insatiable

libertine, who, not content with the infamy his villainy has earned him, carries his cruelty so far as to come himself, in this disguise, to seize upon the features of his unhappy victim every shade of the pain and despair into which his wickedness has plunged her; an abominable refinement, no doubt, but one whose effect must have been keen upon a soul so depraved. "I am lost," says Justine, recognizing him: she tries to speak, but Delmonse makes such a noise that the unfortunate orphan is not heard; the search continues, the watch is found; Dubourg, who has just placed it there himself, shows it to the commissioner beneath a mattress. With such evidence, there is no reply; Justine is seized: Dubourg disputes with his fellows the honour of binding her himself; coarse ropes, applied by the hand of vice, cruelly tear and wound the hands of innocence. It is even said that, while acting, the scoundrel had the audacity to press those hands he was binding against himself, making them feel the full effect that this atrocious scene produced upon his agitated senses.

Unable at last to explain herself, Justine is thrown into a cab; it is Dubourg and his valet, disguised as one of the other soldiers, who accompany her to consign her to the dungeons where those monsters themselves would have been far better placed. Once in the carriage with his accomplice, one can scarcely imagine the atrocities Dubourg attempts: what defence can Justine offer? she is bound; and what is most extraordinary is that Justice herself, this time, seems to serve the disastrous designs of crime. The valet restrains her; Justine is handled, searched, and subjected to his outrages on every side; but the libertine, too agitated, fortunately does not receive from nature the strength necessary to complete his crime, and the altar is once again stained with an offering that excessive ardour prevents from reaching its intended end. The cab arrives, they descend, and our innocent heroine is imprisoned as a thief, without being able to utter a single word in her defence.

The trial of an unfortunate person, who has neither influence nor protection, is quickly concluded in a country where virtue

is believed incompatible with poverty... where misfortune is taken as complete proof against the accused: there, an unjust prejudice leads one to believe that whoever could have committed the crime has indeed committed it; sentiments are measured according to the condition in which the accused is found; and as soon as neither wealth nor rank establishes his innocence, the impossibility of his being innocent is then considered demonstrated.⁵

Justine protested in vain, she did her utmost to provide the best arguments to the counsel assigned to her for a moment; her mistress accused her, the watch had been found in her room—it was clear she had stolen it.

When she tried to recount the seductions, the outrages directed against her honour, the disguise of Dubourg, and his conduct during the journey, her complaints were dismissed as mere recriminations; she was told that Monsieur Dubourg and Madame Delmonse had long been known as upright people, incapable of such horrors. She was therefore transferred to the Conciergerie, where she saw herself on the verge of paying with her life for having refused to partake in such an abomination. Only a new crime could save her. Providence willed that crime should at least once serve as a shield to virtue, preserving her from the abyss into which the wickedness of men and the stupidity of judges were about to plunge her. Justine allowed herself a few bitter complaints against the villains who were destroying her so cruelly; but her imprecations, far from drawing down heaven's wrath upon them, served only to bring them good fortune: Delmonse inherited, a few days later, from an uncle who died in the islands, leaving her fifty thousand livres in income, and Dubourg obtained from the government a general post which, in that same month, increased his revenue by four hundred thousand francs a year.

⁵ Ages to come, you will no longer witness such a height of horrors and infamies. (*Editor's note*).

So, it is true that prosperity may accompany and crown crime, and that, amid disorder and corruption, all that men call happiness may be spread across a life. How many more examples of this sad truth we still have to present!⁶

⁶ “This truth is discouraging,” say the fools, “it must not be presented to men”; but as soon as it is a truth, why conceal it? what necessity is there to deceive mankind? If that base role is required, is it for philosophy to perform it? No; its torch, like that of the sun itself, must dispel all darkness. It is to love men poorly to disguise from them truths so essential, whatever the consequences may be. (*Author’s note*).

CHAPTER III.

Event that breaks Justine's chains. — The company that carries her off. — New dangers threatening her modesty. — Infamies of which she is a witness. — How, and with whom, she escapes the villains to whom her fate had bound her.

Justine had as her neighbour in the prison a woman of about thirty-five, as renowned for her beauty and wit as for the nature and multitude of her crimes. She was called Dubois, and she was, like Justine, on the eve of receiving sentence of death. The very category of her offenses embarrassed the judges; having defiled herself with every crime imaginable, they found themselves compelled either to invent a punishment for her, or to subject her to one from which the law exempts women. Justine had inspired in this creature a kind of interest—an interest grounded in crime—which nevertheless served to deliver virtue.

One evening, perhaps two days before the one on which they were both to die, Dubois told Justine not to go to bed, but to remain with her, keeping as close as possible—without seeming to do so—to the peephole. “Between seven and eight o’clock,” she continued, “the prison will catch fire; it is the work of my contriving. Many will burn, no doubt; no matter, Justine—the fate of others must always count for nothing when our own well-being is at stake. I do not recognize that ridiculous bond of fraternity which weakness and superstition pretend to establish among men. Let us remain isolated, my child, as nature has made us: do we ever see her bind one man to another? If at times our

needs bring us together, let us separate as soon as our interests require it; for selfishness is the first law of nature—the most just, the most sacred, without question. Let us never see in others anything but beings made for our passions or our caprices; let us dissemble if we are the weaker; let us exercise all our rights like animals if we are the stronger. In short, amid murder and fire, four of my comrades, you, and I shall make our escape. Yes, we shall escape—I promise you; what does it matter to you what becomes of the rest? Follow us.”

By one of those inexplicable caprices of fate, the same hand that had just punished innocence in our heroine now served crime in her protectress. The fire took; the blaze was terrible: sixty people were burned. But Justine, Dubois, and her accomplices escaped, and that very night made their way to the hut of a poacher in the forest of Bondy, an intimate associate of the band.

“You are free now, Justine,” said Dubois; “you may henceforth choose whatever manner of life you please. But if you follow my advice, my child, you will renounce those practices of virtue which, as you see, have never served you. A misplaced delicacy—when it was only a question of yielding—and you cannot doubt, from the accounts you have given me, that Delmonse and Dubourg were the agents of your ruin; a ridiculous scruple, I say, has led you to the foot of the scaffold, while a dreadful crime has saved me. See, then, what use good actions are in this world, and whether they are worth the sacrifice. You are young and pretty, Justine; in two years I will make your fortune. But do not imagine that I shall lead you to the sanctuary of its temple by the paths of wisdom: when one would take that road, one must undertake more than one trade and serve more than one intrigue. Theft, murder, plunder, arson, harlotry, prostitution, debauchery—these are the virtues of our profession; we have never acknowledged any others. Consult yourself, dear girl, and give us your answer promptly; for we are scarcely safe in this hut, and must leave it before daybreak.”

“Oh! madam,” replied Justine, “I owe you a great deal; I am far from wishing to evade it—you have saved my life; it is dreadful to me that it should have been by means of a crime. Believe that, had I been required to commit it myself, I would have preferred a thousand deaths to the anguish of taking part in it. I feel all the dangers I have run in abandoning myself to the honest sentiments that will always remain in my heart; but whatever, madam, the dangers of virtue may be, I shall forever prefer them to the detestable favours that accompany crime. There exist within me principles of morality and religion which, thanks to Heaven, will never abandon me. If the hand of God makes my existence painful, it is in order to compensate me for it in a better world; this hope consoles me, it softens my sorrows, it soothes my complaints, it strengthens me in distress, and makes me defy all the evils that Providence may choose to send me. That gentle joy would be extinguished at once in my soul if I were to stain myself with a crime; and, along with the fear of punishments in this world, I would have before me the dreadful prospect of those in the next, which would not leave me a single moment’s peace in life.”

“Oh, fuck!” cried Dubois, frowning. “There are absurd doctrines for you—ones that will soon land you in the hospital. Drop that infamous God of yours, my girl; his celestial justice, his punishments and rewards—all that nonsense is fit only for idiots, and you have too much wit to believe in it. Oh, Justine! the hardness of the rich legitimizes the misconduct of the poor. Let their treasures be opened to our needs; let humanity reign in their hearts, and virtue may take root in ours; but so long as our misfortune, our patience in enduring it, our honesty, and our submission serve only to double our chains, our crimes will become their handiwork. And we would be great fools to deny ourselves them, when they can lighten the yoke with which their cruelty burdens us. Nature created us all equal, Justine; if the unjust rigors of fate delight in disturbing this original plan of general laws, it is for us to correct its caprices and to repair,

by our own cunning, the usurpations of the strong. I like to hear them, those rich men, those titled men, those magistrates, those priests; I like to see them preach virtue to us. It is very difficult to guard against theft when one has three times more than is needed to live; very hard never to conceive of murder when, constantly surrounded by flatterers, nothing ever provokes revenge; truly painful to be temperate and sober when one is every hour surrounded by the most succulent dishes. They have great difficulty being sincere, those wealthy and idle people, when no interest ever presents itself for them to lie; great merit in not desiring another man's wife when everything the liveliest lust can offer is constantly set before their senses. But we, Justine—we whom that barbarous Providence, that vain and ridiculous God you are foolish enough to idolize, has condemned to crawl in humiliation like a serpent in the grass; we whom people look upon only with disdain because we are poor, whom they tyrannize because we are weak; we whose lips are steeped only in bitterness, and whose steps tread only upon thorns—you would have us defend ourselves against crime when it alone opens the door of life to us, sustains us in it, preserves us there, and prevents us from losing it. You would have us, perpetually submissive and degraded, while that class which rules us enjoys all the favours of fortune, reserve for ourselves nothing but hardship, dejection, and pain—nothing but need and tears, nothing but disgrace and the scaffold. No, no, Justine, no—either that God you are foolish enough to believe in deserves only our contempt, or such things are not his will. Go, my child: when nature places us in a situation where evil becomes necessary to us, and at the same time leaves us the faculty to practice it, it is because evil serves her laws as well as good, and she gains as much from one as from the other. The state in which she created us is equality; he who disturbs that state is no more guilty than he who seeks to restore it; both act according to the impulses they have received; both must follow them and enjoy themselves in peace.”

Dubois's eloquence was far more impetuous than Delmonse's; with equal means, the cause of crime is much better defended by one who commits it out of necessity than by one who indulges in it merely out of libertinage. And Justine, bewildered, thought she might become the victim of this cunning woman's seductions; but a stronger voice contending within her heart, she declares to her corrupter that she is resolved never to yield, that crime fills her with horror, and that she would prefer the most dreadful death to the horrible obligation of committing it. "Very well," replied Dubois, "become what you will; I abandon you to your ill fate; but if ever you are hanged—which cannot escape you, by that fatality which saves crime while always sacrificing virtue—remember at least never to speak of us."

During this exchange, Dubois's four companions were drinking with the poacher; and as wine ordinarily disposes the soul of the criminal to greater excesses, the villains had no sooner learned of our unfortunate girl's resolutions than they decided to make her a victim, since they could not make her an accomplice. Their principles, their profession (they were highway robbers), their morals, the present state of their bodies (a man is well primed after three months in prison), the gloomy retreat in which they found themselves, the depth of the night, the sort of security they enjoyed, their drunkenness, Justine's innocence, her youth, the divine charms with which nature had adorned her—everything electrified them, everything encouraged them. They rose from the table, held council, and the result was an order to Justine to submit at once to satisfy the desires of each of the four, either willingly or by force: if she prostituted herself of her own accord, they would each give her a crown to take her wherever she wished; if they had to employ violence, it would be done all the same; but, to ensure secrecy, they would stab her after satisfying themselves and bury her at the foot of a tree.

It is needless to depict the effect this cruel deliberation produced upon Justine's soul; our readers readily imagine it. She

throws herself at Dubois's knees, imploring her to be once more her protectress; but the wretch only laughs at her tears. "God's blood!" she says, "you are in a fine plight indeed! You tremble at the obligation of being fucked in succession by four fine fellows like these! Here," she adds, presenting them to her one by one, "look at this one: his name is Brise-Barbe, twenty-eight years old, my girl, and a member... one would admire it, if not for that of my brother here; this is Cœur-de-Fer, thirty years old; see how he's built—and that prick! I wager your two hands couldn't grasp it. This third one is Sans-Quartier; look at those moustaches—twenty-six years old; (then in a lower voice) Justine, the day before our arrest he fucked me eleven times in one evening—oh! as for the fourth, you must admit he is an angel; he is too handsome for such a trade, twenty-one years old; we call him the Roué, and he will be one; with the dispositions he has for crime, such a fate cannot escape him. But it's his prick, Justine, it's his prick you must see; one cannot imagine such an instrument; see how long it is, how thick, how hard; that head, how red it is! Go on, I assure you that when I have that in my entrails, I think myself better fucked than Messalina ever was; but do you know, my girl, that there are ten thousand women in Paris who would give half their gold or their jewels to be in your place. Listen," she added, however, after a moment's reflection, "I have enough influence over these fellows to obtain your pardon, on condition that you make yourself worthy of it." — "Alas, madam, what must I do? Command me—I am ready for anything." — "Follow us—kill, steal, poison, massacre, burn, plunder, ravage as we do; at that price I will save the rest." Here Justine did not think she ought to hesitate. In accepting this cruel condition, she was indeed exposing herself to new dangers; but they were less immediate than those with which she was suddenly threatened. "Very well, madam, I will go everywhere," she cried, "everywhere—I promise you; save me from the fury of those men, and I will not leave you for the rest of my life."

“Children,” said Dubois, “this girl is part of the troupe; I’ve taken her in. I beg you not to mistreat her; don’t turn her off the trade. Her age and looks can lure suckers into our nets: let’s make use of her and not sacrifice her to our pleasures.”

But there is a degree of energy in human passions at which nothing can restrain them; the more one then tries to make them heed the voice of reason, the more their perversity stifles that voice, and almost always the very means proposed to extinguish the blaze serve only to feed it. Dubois’s companions found themselves in this unhappy state. All four of them, with their cocks in hand, were waiting only on the lot they were casting with dice to determine which of them would have the first fruits. The scoundrels drank, gambled, and grew erect; and refusals or arguments penetrate very poorly into minds so disposed. “No, by God,” said Brise-Barbe, “the bitch must go through with it; there’s no longer any way to save her. One would think she must prove her virtue to be admitted into a band of thieves, and keep her maidenhead to go murdering on the highways. God’s double damnation! I want to fuck,” cried Sans-Quartier, advancing toward Justine, his cock in hand and ready to force it into her; “yes, by the name of a God I don’t give a damn about, I want to fuck her—or cut her throat; let her choose.”

A gentle and trembling victim, our unhappy girl shuddered; she scarcely had the strength to breathe. On her knees before these four bandits, her weak arms were raised to implore them; and the God whom their blasphemies profaned was devoutly invoked by her. “One moment,” said Cœur-de-Fer, who, by his position as Dubois’s brother, had the honour of commanding the band; “one moment, my friends; I am as hard as you are. You see it,” he continued, striking the table with his cock and cracking a nut with it; “like you, I want to discharge; and yet I believe it is possible to satisfy ourselves while making everyone content. Since this little whore is so attached to virtue, and since, as my sister very wisely observes, that quality, differently employed, may become necessary to us, let us leave her maidenhead; but

we must be appeased; our heads are no longer our own, and in the state we are in—you see it, my sister—we might perhaps cut both your throats if you resist our designs. The passions of unbridled man are terrible; they are a river in flood that lays waste everything around it if no outlet is opened. You must remember, Dubois, having often seen us massacre women who resisted us; and what is most remarkable, you have seen the result of those crimes become the same as that of lust, and our seed flow over blood as it would have flowed into cunts. So do not try to stop us, I advise you; be content to direct us. Here, then, is what I propose:”

“Justine must strip herself as naked as the day she was born. I insist that, in that state, she submit in turn to whatever licentious caprices it may please us to enact with her, while Dubois, appeasing our ardour, burns incense upon the altars whose entrance this extravagant creature refuses us.”

“Strip myself!” cried Justine. “Undress before men! Oh, just Heaven, what do you demand of me? And when I am delivered in this way to your gaze, who will protect me from your outrages?” — “And who protects you now, you whore?” said the Roué, slipping his hand beneath Justine’s skirts and pressing his lips to hers. “Yes, by God, who protects you?” added Sans-Quartier, seizing the counterpart of what the Roué was handling. “You see well enough that you are ours; you see that submission is the only course left to you; obey, then, or you are dead.” — “Come, leave her,” said Cœur-de-Fer, pulling her from his comrades’ hands; “let her proceed quietly with the arrangements required.” — “No,” said Justine, finding herself free; “no, you may do with me what you will—you are the stronger—but you shall obtain nothing from me willingly.” — “Very well, you slut,” said Cœur-de-Fer, striking her with a blow that knocked her onto the bed, “then we shall undress you ourselves”; and immediately pulling her skirts over her head, he slashed them with his knife in so horrible a fashion that for a moment one might have thought it was the belly of this unfortunate girl the

villain was splitting in two. In an instant, the most beautiful body in the world was once again exposed to all that lust can devise that is most monstrous. "Let us proceed," said Cœur-de-Fer. "My sister, lie down on this bed, that Brise-Barbe may take you. Justine, straddling Dubois, will bring her cunt toward Brise-Barbe's face and piss into his mouth; I know his tastes." — "Oh, fuck," said the libertine, quickly fitting himself to Dubois's cunt, "there is no pleasure more intense for me than that one, and I thank you for the idea." He thrusts, she urinates, he discharges—and Sans-Quartier sets to work. "While I fuck your sister," he says to the chief, "hold this slut in front of me." They obey; he strikes her with an open hand, vigorously, now on the cheeks, now on the breasts; sometimes he kisses her on the mouth and bites the tip of her tongue; at other moments, the two nipples of our unhappy girl are so roughly handled that she is on the point of fainting. She suffers, she begs for mercy; her tears flow, and only inflame this scoundrel the more, who, feeling himself at last near release, even as he continues to fuck, seizes her bodily and flings her ten paces from him."

It is the Roué's turn; he takes Dubois. "Wait," says Cœur-de-Fer, "I am going to bugger you, my boy; we shall place this slut between us—you will work her cunt, I her arse." And the unfortunate Justine, pushed and repelled by these two brigands, resembles a young willow beaten by two storms: already that delicate down which covers the mount of Venus is pitilessly torn away on one side, while from the cleft the two prettiest little buttocks ever created by nature appear, all bruised by the pinches that Cœur-de-Fer's hooked nails delight in imprinting upon them; when the two fuckers, nimbly changing altar, substitute incest for sodomy and, by this lubric inconstancy, become one the husband of his sister, the other the lover of his brother-in-law. But Justine gains nothing by it; Cœur-de-Fer, more inflamed, becomes only the more cruel. "Let us see who will strike the hardest," he says, slapping her cheeks; "you, strike the arse, my brother." Alas! it is the story of the hammer upon the anvil;

Justine is so abused that streams of blood pour from her nostrils. "That is what I wanted," says Cœur-de-Fer, placing his mouth beneath; "Brise-Barbe, you want filth—I want blood." He receives it, he swallows, he discharges; his companion in debauch follows him close behind; pleasure crowns them both, and calm returns to the band.

"In all this," said Dubois, rising, "it seems to me that I am the one who has gained the most."—"Oh, your bargains are always like that," said her brother; "it was in order to be fucked yourself that you did not want us to deflower that little girl; but patience—she will lose nothing by it."

There was talk of setting out again; and that very night the band made for Tremblay, intending to draw near the woods of Chantilly, where they expected to pull off some profitable exploits.

Nothing equalled Justine's despair. We believe her now sufficiently known to our readers to be quite certain that it is unnecessary to depict all that she felt at being obliged to follow such people; and if she did so, one easily imagines that it was only with the firm resolution to leave them as soon as she could.

Our scoundrels slept in the vicinity of Louvres, beneath haystacks. The intention of our virtuous orphan would have been to draw close to Dubois, in order to pass the night at her side; but the wretch had other designs than that of defending the virtue of others: three bandits surrounded her, and the abominable creature gave herself to all three at once. The fourth approached Justine; it was Cœur-de-Fer. "Beautiful child," he said to her, "I hope you will not refuse me at least the favour of passing the night near you"; and, perceiving her extreme repugnance, "fear nothing," he added, "we shall talk; but nothing shall be attempted except with your consent."

"O Justine!" continued this libertine, pressing her in his arms, "is it not sheer madness, this pretension you have of preserving your purity among us? Even if we were to consent to it, could such a thing be reconciled with the interests of the band? It is

useless to conceal it from you, dear child; when we are in the towns, it is only by means of the snares of your charms that we intend to take our dupes. — Well then, sir,” replied Justine, “since it is certain that I would prefer death to such horrors, of what use can I be to you, and why do you oppose my escape?” — “We oppose it, of course, my angel,” replied Cœur-de-Fer; “you must serve our interests or our pleasures; your misfortunes impose this yoke upon you—you must submit to it. But you know, Justine, that everything can be arranged in this world: listen to me, then, and make your own fate. Consent to live with me, dear girl; consent to belong to me alone, and I will spare you the wretched role that awaits you.” — “I, sir, become the mistress of a...” — “Say the word, Justine—of a scoundrel, is it not? It is quite certain I can offer you no other title; for you know well enough that we do not marry, we others. The sworn enemy of all restraints is not inclined ever to bind himself by any; and the more such bonds seem to captivate ordinary men, the more scoundrels like us detest them. Yet reason a little: in the unavoidable necessity in which you are of losing what is so dear to you, is it not better to sacrifice it to a single man, who will then become your support and your protector, than to prostitute yourself to all?” — “But first of all, why must I have no other course to take?” — “Because we hold you, my girl, and the law of the strongest is always the best. In truth,” continued Cœur-de-Fer rapidly, “is it not an atrocious extravagance to attach, as you do, so much value to the most futile of things? How can a girl be simple enough to believe that virtue depends upon a little more or a little less width in one part of her body? And what does it matter to men or to God whether that part is intact or spoiled? I will say more: since nature’s intention is that each individual here below fulfil all the purposes for which he has been formed, and since women exist only to serve as pleasures for men, it is plainly to outrage her to resist thus the intention she has for you; it is to wish to be a useless creature in the world, and therefore contemptible. That chimerical modesty which people have had

the absurdity to teach you as a virtue from childhood, and which, far from being useful to nature or to society, visibly offends both, is nothing now but a ridiculous obstinacy and truly blameworthy, of which a person of wit like you ought not to wish to be guilty. No matter—continue to hear me, dear girl; I will prove to you the desire I have to please you and to respect your weakness. I will not touch, Justine, that phantom the possession of which forms all your delight; a pretty girl like you has more than one favour to bestow, and Venus with her is honoured in more than one temple. I shall content myself with the narrowest. You know, my dear: near the labyrinth of Cypris there is a dark cavern where loves go to hide, in order to seduce us with greater force; such shall be the altar upon which I will burn incense. There, not the least inconvenience; if pregnancies alarm you, they cannot occur in this way; your pretty figure will not be deformed; those first fruits, so dear to you, will be preserved intact; and, whatever use you wish to make of them, you will be able to offer them pure. Nothing can betray a girl on that side; however rough and repeated the attacks may be, once the bee has drawn the nectar, the calyx of the rose closes again so completely that one would think it had never opened. There are plenty of girls who have enjoyed themselves in this way for ten years—even with several men—and who have nonetheless married as untouched as any others afterward. How many fathers, how many brothers have thus abused their daughters, their sisters, without those women being any the less worthy afterward of sacrificing to Hymen! How many confessors have made use of the same path without the parents ever suspecting it! It is, in a word, the asylum of mystery; it is there that one binds oneself to love under the guise of modesty. Must I tell you more, Justine? If that temple is the most secret, it is at the same time the most delightful; it is only there that one finds what is needed for happiness; and that vast ease of the neighbouring place is far from equalling the piquant charms of a spot where one enters only with effort, where one is lodged only with difficulty, where one

enjoys only with delight. Women themselves gain by it, and those whom reason has constrained to take only that path have never regretted the other. Try it, Justine, try it; give me your divine little arse, and we shall both be satisfied.”

“Sir,” replied Justine, withdrawing as best she could from the advances of this libertine—made all the more dangerous by the fact that he combined wit and seduction with considerable physical strength and deeply corrupt morals—“oh, sir, I have no experience of the horrors of which you speak; but I have nevertheless heard it said that this offense you extol outrages both women and nature at once. The hand of Heaven punishes it in this world; and the five cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, etc., which God caused to perish in flames, are a striking example of the degree of horror the Eternal feels for such an act. Human justice has imitated, as far as it could, the punishment of the Eternal Being; and pyres consume the unfortunates whom this vice leads astray.”

“What innocence! what childishness!” replied Cœur-de-Fer. “Oh, Justine! who could have instilled such foolish prejudices in you? A little more attention, my dear, and I shall set your ideas straight.”

“The loss of the seed destined to propagate the human species, my dear girl, is the only crime that can exist in this matter. If that seed were placed in us solely for the purposes of propagation, I grant you, then to divert it would be an offense; but if it is demonstrated that, in placing this seed in our loins, nature is very far from intending that it be used entirely for propagation, what does it matter, Justine, in that case, whether it is lost in the cunt, the arse, the mouth, or the hand? The man who diverts it does no more wrong than nature, which does not employ it. Now, do not these losses on the part of nature—losses which it depends only on us to imitate—occur in a multitude of circumstances? The very possibility of producing them is already a first proof that they do not offend her: it would be entirely contrary to her laws and to her wisdom to permit what would offend her.

Such an inconsistency would disturb her uniform course, trouble her plans, prove her weakness, and legitimize our offenses. Secondly, these losses are executed by her herself a hundred and a hundred million times a day: nocturnal emissions, the uselessness of seed when a woman is pregnant, its danger when she has her courses—do not all these prove that nature approves of its loss, or at least authorizes it; and that, very little concerned with what may result from the flow of that liquid to which we have the folly to attach so much value, she allows us to waste it with the same indifference with which she proceeds to it each day... that she tolerates propagation, but that it is very far from being her aim; that she is willing that we multiply, but that, gaining no more from one of these acts than from the one that opposes it, the choice we may make is indifferent to her; that, leaving us masters to create, not to create, or to destroy, we shall neither please nor offend her more by adopting one or the other of these courses, whichever suits us best; and that whichever we choose, being only the result of her power or of her action upon us, will always please her and can never offend her. Ah! believe me, my dear Justine, nature concerns herself very little with these minutiae with which we have the extravagance to compose a cult for her; and, mocking our petty laws and petty combinations, she marches with rapid step toward her goal, proving each day to those who study her that she creates only to destroy; and that destruction, the first of all her laws—since she could not arrive at any creation without it—pleases her far more than propagation, which a sect of Greek philosophers called, with much reason, the result of murders. Be well persuaded, then, my child, that whatever temple one sacrifices in, so long as nature permits incense to be burned there, the homage does not offend her; that the refusal to produce, the loss of the seed that serves for production, the extinction of that seed once it has germinated, the annihilation of that germ long after its formation, the destruction of that same germ when it has reached its utmost maturity—the destruction of all men, in a word—yes, Justine, be

thoroughly convinced of it, all these are imaginary crimes that in no way concern nature, and with which she trifles, as she does with our other institutions that outrage her instead of serving her. You speak to me now of a God who once punished these voluptuous errors in miserable hamlets of Arabia that no geographer has ever known; but first it would be necessary to admit the existence of a God—and that is something from which I am very far, my dear; then to admit that this God, whom you suppose to be the master and creator of the universe, could abase himself to the point of going to verify whether it is into a cunt or into an arse that men introduce their cocks—what pettiness! what extravagance! No, Justine, there is no God; it was in the bosom of ignorance, of alarm, and of misfortune that mortals drew their gloomy and repugnant notions of divinity. Let one examine all religions, and one will see that the ideas of these powerful and imaginary agents were always associated with those of terror. We tremble today because our ancestors trembled centuries ago. If we traced back to the source of our present fears, and of the sombre thoughts that arise in our minds whenever we hear the name of God pronounced, we would find them in the floods, the revolutions, and the disasters that destroyed part of the human race and struck with terror those unfortunates who survived the upheavals of the earth; if the God of nations was born in the midst of alarm, it was also in the midst of suffering that each man fashioned for himself the unknown power he created; it was therefore always in the workshop of fear and sadness that unhappy man created the ridiculous phantom he made into his God. And what need have we of this mover, when the reflective study of nature proves to us that perpetual motion is her first law? If everything moves by itself, from all eternity, then the supreme mover you suppose could only have acted one day; and what legitimate worship could you render to a God proven useless today? But let us return, oh Justine! cease to believe that it was the hand of this vain phantom that destroyed the Arabian towns of which you speak; situated upon a volcano,

they were engulfed, just as the towns near Vesuvius and Etna were later, by one of those natural phenomena whose causes are purely physical, and which prove nothing either for or against the conduct of the men who dwelt in those dangerous places. Human justice, you say, wished to imitate that of God; but I have just shown you that it was not a divine justice but a phenomenon... an accident of nature that destroyed those cities; and, becoming a jurist again after being a philosopher, I will tell you, Justine, that the law which once condemned to the stake those afflicted with this taste is an old ordinance of Saint Louis directed against the heresy of the Bulgars,⁷ who abandoned themselves to this passion. The heresy having been extinguished, through an unpardonable error they continued to persecute the morals of that people and to punish them with the same penalty once directed against opinion; but, having come back from that extravagance, they now content themselves with a temporary punishment; and when man has reached that degree of philosophy to which our century raises him more each day, even that useless correction will be abolished, and it will be understood that, not being masters of our inclinations, we are no more guilty in yielding to them—however depraved they may be—than we are in being born crooked or well formed.”

Cœur-de-Fer was getting worked up as he expounded his wise maxims, lying on the ground behind Justine, in precisely the position he desired to enjoy her to his liking; he was gradually lifting our heroine’s skirts, whilst she, half in fear, half in temptation, still dared not put up any resistance. No sooner did the scoundrel find himself master of the situation than he immediately launched the fiery spear that had been waiting only for the sight of the opening to plunge into it: with his right hand the lecher guided the instrument, whilst with his left he held and pressed Justine’s hips firmly against him; she, almost seduced,

⁷ “It is known that the word *bougre* or *boulgre* derives from that of *Bulgar*. See on this subject the learned dissertation found in *Vénus dévoilée* by the same author.”

contented herself, yielding slightly, with saving what seemed to her most essential, without reflecting on the perils that surrounded her, by allowing a bull to penetrate the narrowest part of her body. ‘Oh, fuck!’ he cried out, ‘I’ve got her!’ And with a vigorous jolt, he brushed so cruelly against the delicate little hole he was trying to penetrate that Justine, terrified, let out a scream, sat up and rushed over to join the Dubois group. “What is this?” cried the whore, who had just fallen asleep, exhausted by the sacrifices three men had just multiplied upon her altars. “Alas, madam, it is I,” replied the trembling Justine... “your brother... he wants...” — “Yes, I want to fuck,” cried Cœur-de-Fer, chasing after his victim and seizing her abruptly to pull her back towards him, “I want to bugger this little girl, whatever the cost;” and Justine, having regained her composure, would have faced the gravest dangers, had not the sound of a carriage been heard at that very moment on the main road.

The intrepid Cœur-de-Fer soon turns his back on his pleasures to attend to his duties; he rouses his men and rushes off to commit further crimes.

“Ah! good,” cried Dubois, awakened and sitting up as she listened attentively, “good, those are the cries—the deed is done; nothing amuses me more than these certain signs of victory; they prove to me that our people have succeeded, and I am at ease.” — “But, madam,” said our fair adventuress, “and the victims?” — “What matter? There must be some upon the earth; and those who perish in armies?...” — “Ah! but those are for causes...” — “Infinitely less important than these: it is not in order to live that tyrants give generals the order to crush nations—it is from pride; directed by our needs, we attack passersby solely with the intention of living, and this law, the most imperious of all, absolutely legitimizes our actions.” — “But, madam, one works... one has a trade—” — “Well then, my girl, this is ours, it is the one we have practiced since childhood, the one in which we were raised, and this profession was that of the earliest peoples

of the universe; it alone restores the equilibrium that the inequality of wealth would completely disturb; theft was honoured throughout all Greece; several peoples still admit it, favour it, reward it as a bold action proving at once courage and skill... as a virtue, in a word, essential to any nation that has energy..." And Dubois, giving herself over to her usual eloquence, was no doubt about to begin a sustained discourse⁸ when the troop returned, bringing a prisoner with them: "here," said Cœur-de-Fer, who led him, "is something to compensate me for Justine's rigors," and by the light of the moon there was seen a young boy of fifteen, beautiful as Love. "I have killed the father and the mother," said this scoundrel; "I have violated the daughter, who was not yet ten; it seems to me only just that I take the son as well." Saying this, he turns toward the haystack that served as the troop's shelter; muffled cries are heard... groans quickly covered by the sounds of this villain's lust; the former soon turn into howls, which prove that the prudent rogue, wishing to leave no trace of his crime, at once enjoys, to accomplish it, the double pleasure of violating and murdering the object of his lust. He reappears covered in blood: "come, calm yourself, Justine, I am at ease now; be so as well until new desires awaken in me new horrors. Let us decamp, my friends," he says to the troop, "we have killed six people; the bodies are on the road; it may be that in a few hours this place will no longer be safe for us." The loot is divided; Cœur-de-Fer insists that Justine take her share; it amounts to twenty louis; she is forced to accept them; she shudders at the obligation of keeping such money; nevertheless they hasten, each takes up his burden, and the troop departs.

The next day, the thieves, believing themselves safe in the forest of Chantilly, set about counting their money while their supper was being prepared; and estimating the total haul at no more than two hundred louis, "in truth," said one of them, "it was hardly worth committing six murders for so small a sum."

⁸ She will reappear in the story of *Juliette*.

“Gently, my friends,” replied Dubois; “it was not for the sum that, when you set out, I myself urged you to show no mercy to those travellers; it was for our sole safety. These crimes are the fault of the laws, not ours: so long as thieves are punished, they will murder in order not to be discovered. Besides, where do you get the idea,” continued this wretch, “that two hundred louis are not worth six murders? One must never judge things except by the relation they bear to our own interests; the cessation of existence in the beings sacrificed is nothing in relation to us: certainly, we would not give a farthing for those individuals to be alive rather than in the grave; consequently, if the slightest interest presents itself to us in one of these cases, we must, without the least remorse, decide it in our favour; for in a matter entirely indifferent, if we are wise and masters of it, we must undoubtedly make it turn to the side that profits us, abstraction made of all that the other party may lose, because there is no reasonable proportion between what affects us and what affects others; we feel the one physically, the other reaches us only morally, and moral sensations are deceptive; there is nothing true but material sensations. Thus, not only are two hundred louis sufficient for the six murders, but even thirty sous would have sufficed to legitimize them; for those thirty sous would have procured us a satisfaction which, though slight, must nevertheless affect us far more vividly than would the six murders, which do not afflict or touch us in any way whatsoever, and from the injury of which there even comes to us a rather agreeable titillation, according to the natural wickedness of mankind, whose first impulse, if they examine it closely, is always a sort of satisfaction in the misfortune and adversity of others.”

“The weakness of our organs, the lack of reflection, the accursed prejudices in which we have been raised, the vain terrors of religion and of the laws—these are what hold fools back in the career of crime; these are what prevent them from immortalizing themselves. But any individual filled with strength and vigour, endowed with an energetic soul, who, preferring himself

as he ought to others, knows how to weigh their interests against his own, to mock both God and men, to defy death and despise the laws, and is fully convinced that everything must be referred to himself alone, will perceive that even the most extensive multitude of injuries inflicted upon others, from which he can feel nothing physically, cannot be set in balance against the slightest pleasure purchased by this unheard-of accumulation of crimes; the pleasure flatters him—it is his; the effect of the crime does not affect him—it lies outside him. Now, I ask, what reasonable man would not prefer that which delights him to that which is foreign to him, and who would not consent to commit this slight act, from which he suffers nothing unpleasant, in order to procure that which gives him agreeable sensation?”

“Oh! madam,” said Justine to Dubois, asking permission to reply, “do you not perceive that your own condemnation is written in what you have just said? Such principles could at most suit a being powerful enough to have nothing to fear from others; but we, perpetually proscribed by all honest people, condemned by all laws, should we adopt systems that can only sharpen against us the sword suspended over our heads? Even if we were not in this unhappy condition—if we stood at the centre of society, if we were at last where we ought to be but for our misconduct or our misfortunes—can you suppose, madam, that such maxims would suit us any better? How can one who, through blind egoism, would wish to struggle alone against the coalition of others’ interests, fail to perish? Is not society justified in never tolerating within its bosom one who declares himself against it? And can the individual who isolates himself contend against all—can he flatter himself that he will be happy and at peace if, refusing the social pact, he will not consent to sacrifice a portion of his happiness in order to secure the rest? Society is sustained only by perpetual exchanges of benefits: these are the foundations that constitute it, the bonds that cement it. He who, instead of such benefits, offers only crimes, must necessarily be feared and therefore attacked if he is the stronger, or sacrificed

by the first he offends if he is the weaker—but in every case destroyed by that powerful reason which leads man to secure his own peace and to harm whoever seeks to disturb it. Such is the reason that renders the duration of criminal associations almost impossible; offering nothing but sharpened points against the interests of others, all must soon unite to blunt their sting... even among us, madam,” added Justine, “how could you hope to maintain concord if you advise each to heed only his own interest? Would you then have anything just to object to one among us who would wish to stab the others... who would do so in order to gather all the shares to himself? And what finer praise of virtue than the proof of its necessity—even in a criminal society?—than the certainty that such a society could not subsist for a single instant without virtue.”

“What frightful sophisms!” said Cœur-de-Fer. “It is not virtue that sustains criminal associations; it is interest, it is egoism. Your praise of virtue, Justine, therefore rests upon a false foundation, drawn from a chimerical hypothesis. It is not at all through virtue that, believing myself—let us suppose—the strongest of the band, I do not stab my comrades in order to rob them; it is because, finding myself alone afterward, I would deprive myself of the means that can secure the fortune I expect from their assistance. This motive alone restrains their hands with respect to me; now, as you see, Justine, this motive is purely selfish—it bears not the slightest character of virtue. You say that he who wishes to struggle alone against the interests of society must expect to perish. Will he not perish far more surely if he has, in order to exist within it, nothing but his poverty and the abandonment of others? What is called the interest of society is nothing but the sum of combined interests; yet it is only by yielding that particular interest can be reconciled and bound to general interests; now, what do you expect to be yielded by one who has almost nothing? If he does so, you must admit he is all the more wrong, since he gives infinitely more than he receives; and from that moment the inequality of the exchange must prevent him

from agreeing to it. Placed in such a position, is it not better for such a man to withdraw from this unjust society, in order to recognize rights only in a different society which, being in the same condition as himself, has an interest in combating, by the union of its small powers, the greater force that sought to compel the wretch to yield the little he had without receiving anything in return? But, you say, from this there will arise a state of perpetual war. Be it so; is it not the only one that truly suits us? Is it not that for which nature created us all? Men were born isolated, envious, cruel, and despotic, wishing to have everything and to yield nothing, and constantly fighting either to maintain their ambition or their rights. The legislator came and said: 'Cease thus to tear one another apart; by yielding a little on each side, tranquillity will be restored.' I do not condemn the proposal of this pact; but I maintain that there are two kinds of individuals who should never have submitted to it: those who, feeling themselves the strongest, had no need to yield anything in order to be happy; and those who, being the weakest, found themselves yielding infinitely more than was secured to them. Yet society is composed only of the strong and the weak; therefore, if the pact must displease both, it was far from suiting society; and the state of war that existed before must have been infinitely preferable, since it left to each the free exercise of his strength and industry, of which he is deprived by the unjust pact of a society that always takes too much from one and never grants enough to another. Thus the truly wise man is he who, at the risk of returning to the state of war that preceded the pact, violently breaks against that pact, violates it as much as he can, certain that what he will gain from these injuries will always exceed what he might lose if he proves the weaker; for he was no less weak while respecting the pact; he may become the stronger by violating it; and if the laws return him to the class from which he wished to escape, the worst that can happen is that he loses his life—which is a misfortune infinitely less great than that of existing in disgrace and misery. Thus we have two chances before us: either crime, which

makes us happy, or the scaffold, which prevents us from being miserable. I ask you, is there any hesitation? And will your mind, Justine, find a reasoning capable of opposing this one?"

"There are a thousand, sir, there are a thousand," replied Justine with vivacity; "but is this life, moreover, the sole object of man? Is he here otherwise than as in a passage, each step of which, if he is reasonable, ought only to lead him toward that eternal felicity which is the assured reward of virtue? I will suppose with you—though it is rare, and assuredly repugnant to all the lights of reason—but no matter, I grant you for a moment that crime may render happy in this world the wretch who abandons himself to it: do you imagine that the justice of that God who exists, though you fail to acknowledge Him—do you believe, I say, that this eternal justice does not await that dishonest man in another world, there to avenge what has been done in this one? Ah! do not maintain the contrary, sir, I beg you; it is the sole consolation of misfortune—do not take it away. When men abandon us, who will avenge us, if not God?" — "Who? No one, Justine, no one at all; it is by no means necessary that misfortune be avenged; it hopes so because it desires it; it flatters itself because it wills it; this grand idea consoles it—but it is no less false for that. There is more: it is essential that misfortune should suffer; its humiliation and its pains are among the laws of nature, and its existence is useful to the general plan, just as that of the prosperity which crushes it: such is the truth that must stifle remorse in the soul of the villain and the malefactor. Let them not restrain themselves, then; let them abandon themselves blindly to all the injuries of which nature's political designs suggest the ideas within them; it is the only way in which this universal mother knows how to make us the agents of her laws. When her secret inspirations dispose us to evil, it is because evil is necessary to her; it is because she wills it, because she needs it; it is because the sum of crimes, being incomplete—insufficient for the laws of equilibrium, the only laws by which she is governed—she demands these in addition to complete the balance.

Let him therefore neither fear nor stop, whose soul is inclined to evil; let him commit it without fear, once he has felt the impulse; it is only by resisting it that he would outrage nature. But since you return once again, Justine, to those deific phantoms and to the worship you imagine is due to them, learn, young innocent, that this religion upon which you so foolishly and constantly rely, being nothing more than the relation of man to God, the homage the creature believes it owes to its creator, is annihilated as soon as the existence of that creator itself is proven chimerical; listen then, one last time, to what I have to object to you on this point:"

The first men, frightened by the phenomena that struck them, necessarily had to believe that a sublime and unknown agent directed their course and influence; it is the nature of weakness to suppose or to fear strength; the human mind, still too much in its infancy to discover within the bosom of nature the laws of motion—the sole springs of all the mechanism that astonished it—found it simpler to suppose a mover for this nature than to believe it self-moving; and, without reflecting that it would have even greater difficulty in constructing and defining this gigantic master, and in reconciling with the qualities it attributed to him all the defects that his operations reveal to us; that it would, I say, have more trouble with all that than with finding in the study of nature the cause of what surprised it, it grew intoxicated, it blinded itself to the point of admitting this first Being and erecting cults to him. From that moment, each nation fashioned one in accordance with its customs, its knowledge, and its climate. Soon there were on earth as many religions as peoples, as many gods as families. Beneath all these disgusting idols, it was nevertheless easy to recognize that absurd phantom, the first fruit of human blindness; the mime was differently costumed, but it was always the same actor; he was served by different grimaces, but it was always the same worship. Now, what does this unanimity prove, if not the equal stupidity of all men and the universality of their weakness? Does it follow

that I must imitate their ineptitude? If deeper study, if a more mature and reflective mind compels me to recognize and penetrate the secrets of nature, to convince myself at last, as I told you just now, that once motion exists within it, the need for a mover becomes null—must I then, bowing like you beneath the shameful yoke of this disgusting chimera, renounce, in order to please it, the sweetest pleasures of life? No, Justine, no; I would be a madman if I behaved thus; I would be a fool unworthy of that reason which nature grants me to discern the snares that the stupidity or knavery of men lays for me each day; cease to believe in this fantastic God, my child—he never existed. Nature suffices unto itself; it has no need whatsoever of a mover: this mover, gratuitously supposed, is only a decomposition of its own forces; it is merely what we call in the schools a *petitio principii*. A God supposes a creation—that is to say, a moment when nothing existed, or a moment when everything was in chaos; if either of these states was an evil, why did your imbecile God allow it to subsist? Was it a good? why then did he change it? But if everything is good now, your God has nothing more to do; and if he is useless, can he be powerful? and if he is not powerful, can he be God? can he deserve our homage? If, in a word, nature moves perpetually, what use is a mover? and if the mover acts upon matter by setting it in motion, how is he not himself matter? Can you conceive the action of spirit upon matter, and matter moved by a spirit that itself has no movement? You say your God is good, and yet, according to you, despite his covenant with men, despite the blood of his dear son, who came to be hanged in Judea solely to cement that alliance—despite all that, I say, there will still be two and a half thirds of the human race condemned to eternal flames because they will not have received from him the grace they nevertheless ask of him every day. You say he is just, this God? Is it equitable to grant knowledge of the worship that pleases him only to a thirtieth part of the universe, while abandoning the rest in an ignorance that he will punish with the ultimate torment? What would you say of a man who

was just in the manner of your God? He is all-powerful, you add? In that case, evil must please him, for there exists on earth infinitely more evil than good, and yet he allows it to subsist; there is therefore no middle ground: either this evil pleases him, or he lacks the power to oppose it; and in either case, I have no reason to repent of being inclined toward it—for if he cannot prevent it, certainly I cannot be stronger than he; and if it pleases him, I ought not to destroy it within myself. You say he is immutable as well? And yet I see him change five or six times in peoples, in laws, in wills, in sentiments; besides, immutability implies impassibility, and an impassible being cannot be vindictive—yet you claim your God takes revenge. One shudders, in truth, when one sees the number of absurdities and inconsistencies you attribute to this phantom; when one carefully examines all the ridiculous and contradictory qualities with which his supporters are obliged to clothe him in order to make him admissible, without reflecting that the more they complicate him, the more they render him inconceivable, and that the more they attempt to justify him, the more they debase him. Examine, Justine, examine how all these attributes destroy and absorb one another, and you will recognize that this execrable being, born of the fear of some, the knavery of others, and the ignorance of all, is nothing but a revolting absurdity that deserves from us neither a moment of faith nor an instant of respect—a pitiable extravagance that offends the mind, revolts the heart, and has emerged from darkness only for the torment and humiliation of mankind. Abhor this chimera; it is dreadful; it can exist only in the narrow brain of fools or madmen; there is none more dangerous in the world, none that ought at once to be more feared... and more detested by humankind.

“Let not, then, the hope or the fear of a world to come—fruit of those first falsehoods—disturb you, Justine; above all, cease to fashion them into restraints for yourself; a feeble portion of vile and inert matter, at our death—that is to say, at the reunion of the elements that compose us with the elements of the

general mass—annihilated forever, whatever our conduct may have been, we shall pass for an instant through nature’s crucible, only to spring forth again under other forms; and this without there being any greater prerogative for him who has foolishly worshipped virtue all his life than for him who has wallowed in the most dreadful crimes, because there is nothing that offends nature, and because all men, equally issued from her bosom and having acted, while on earth, only according to the impulses of this common mother, will all find again, after their existence, the same end and the same fate.”

“Oh! sir,” replied Justine, confounded by these reasonings, “what, do you believe that if, while yesterday abusing your strength to violate and murder an unfortunate child, another individual nearby had occupied himself in relieving distress, that latter would not have deserved heaven, while you rendered yourself worthy of all its wrath?” — “No indeed, he would not have deserved it any more, Justine; first, because there exist neither punishments nor rewards to come; and second, because the benevolent man whom you have just placed in parallel with me, having acted only according to the same impulses of nature, could not, in its eyes, render himself either more culpable or more deserving. Various circumstances would have determined us both; diverse organs, different combinations of those organs, would have produced crime in me and virtue in him; but we would both have acted as it suited nature that we should act—he, in doing a good deed, because it was useful to the present designs of nature; I, in committing a crime, because a counterweight was necessary in the balance; and if this perfect equilibrium did not exist, if one or the other of these modes came to prevail, the course of the stars would be interrupted, and motion in the universe absolutely destroyed... which, being purely material and mechanical, can be judged, combined, and understood only according to mechanical principles, always sufficient to reveal its mysteries.” — “Oh! sir,” said Justine, “these systems are dreadful.” — “Yes, for you, who fear becoming their victim—

never for me, who am the sacrificer.” — “And if fortune turns?” — “Then I shall submit, without changing my opinion, and philosophy will console me, because it assures me an eternal nothingness, which I prefer to the uncertainty of punishments or rewards that your religions propose to me; the former revolt me—they fill me with horror; the latter do not move me; there is no proportion between these punishments and these rewards; from that moment they are ridiculous, and if it is certain that they are so, they can no longer be the work of a God. Following the example of certain doctors, unable to reconcile the physical torments of hell with the benevolence of their God, will you tell me that my sole torment will be to be deprived of his sight? And what does that matter to me? Can I ever be punished for not seeing that of which I have no idea? But, you say, he will present himself to my eyes in order to make me feel the full value of his loss; in that case the loss will be slight, for it is not in the nature of things that I should regret the loss of a being who, in cold blood, comes to condemn me to eternal torment for finite faults; that injustice alone makes me conceive such hatred for him that I certainly shall not regret him when he has pronounced his judgment.” — “Ah! I see it, sir,” said Justine, “your conversion is impossible.” — “You are right, my angel; do not attempt it—it would be in vain; rather let me work at yours, and believe that you will have a hundred times more merit in corrupting yourself after my example than in wishing to sanctify me after yours... We must take her, my brother,” said Dubois, “and take her thoroughly; I see no other means of converting her; it is astonishing how quickly a woman adopts the principles of the man who takes her. The element of the torch of philosophy is pleasure; all principles of morality and religion soon vanish before the passions. Stir hers, if you wish to educate her with success.” And Cœur-de-Fer, already taking her in his arms, was, I believe, about to put Dubois’s advice promptly into practice, when the sound of a man on horseback was heard near the troop; “to arms!” cried

Cœur-de-Fer, hastily thrusting back into his breeches the enormous member with which he was already threatening, for the second time, the unfortunate Justine; “to arms, my friends—we shall think of pleasure later.” They rush off, and within a moment a wretched traveller is brought into the grove where the bandits’ camp was situated.

Questioned as to the reason that made him travel alone and so early along a remote road, as to his age and his profession, the rider replied that his name was Saint-Florent, one of the foremost merchants of Lyon; that he was thirty-five years old; that he was returning from Flanders on business related to his trade; that he had little money on him but many papers; he added that his servant had left him the day before, and that, in order to avoid the heat, he was traveling early in the morning, with the intention of reaching Paris that same day, where he would conclude part of his affairs before departing again a few days later; that moreover, if he was following a solitary path, he must apparently have lost his way after falling asleep on his horse; and having said this, he begged for his life, himself offering all that he possessed. His portfolio was examined, his money counted—the haul could not have been better; Saint-Florent carried nearly four hundred thousand francs payable at sight in the capital, some jewels, and about one hundred louis in cash. “My friend,” said Cœur-de-Fer, presenting the muzzle of a pistol beneath his nose, “you understand that with such riches we cannot leave you your life; we should soon be denounced.” — “Oh! sir,” cried Justine, throwing herself at the feet of this brigand, “I beg you not to give me, upon my reception into your band, the horrible spectacle of the death of this unfortunate man; spare his life; do not refuse me the first favour I ask of you,” and immediately resorting to a rather singular ruse to justify the interest she seemed to take in him: “the name he has just given, sir, makes me believe that I am closely related to him; do not be surprised,” she said, addressing the traveller, “to find a kinswoman in such a condition; I will explain it all to you; on

that account," she continued fervently, again imploring Cœur-de-Fer, "on that account, sir, grant me the life of this unhappy man; I will repay this favour by the most complete devotion to all that may serve your interests." — "You know on what condition I may grant you the favour you ask, Justine," replied Cœur-de-Fer; "you are not ignorant of what I require of you." — "Very well, sir, I will do anything," she cried, throwing herself between the wretch and the robber, always ready to murder his victim; "yes, yes, I consent to everything—save him, I beg you." — "Come then," said Cœur-de-Fer to Justine, "it is this very moment that I wish you to fulfil your word," and saying this, he drags her, together with the captive, into a neighbouring thicket; he binds Saint-Florent to a tree, and, making Justine get down on all fours at the foot of that same tree, he lifts her skirts and prepares to consummate his crime, still holding the muzzle of his pistol to the throat of the poor traveller, whose life depends upon Justine's submission, who, confused and trembling, yields, shuddering and clasping the captive's knees, to all that it may please her executioner to make her endure. But a providential turn once more preserved Justine from the misfortunes reserved for her; and nature, as though at the command of some power, so cruelly thwarted the brigand's desires that his ardour failed him at the very threshold of his purpose, and that, however great his efforts, none succeeded in restoring to him the degree of vigour necessary to accomplish the crime he had planned. "Oh, by God!" he cried in fury, "I am too overheated; nothing will come... or perhaps it is my indulgence that ruins me; I should be far surer of myself if I killed that fellow." — "Oh no, no, sir," said Justine, turning toward the robber; "don't move, you wretch," he said, striking her two or three blows upon the shoulders; "it's your cursed grimaces that disturb me; what have I to do with a face, when it's a body I need?" And the libertine resumes his efforts; the same obstacles persist; nature stubbornly thwarts his desires; he must give it up. "Come," he says at last, resolving upon it, "I see I am exhausted tonight;

let the three of us rest—let us return.” — “Justine,” he adds, once back among the group, “remember your promise if you wish me to keep mine, and reflect that I can kill that rascal tomorrow just as well as today. Children,” he continues, addressing his companions, “you will answer to me for both of them; and you, Justine, go sleep beside my sister; I will call you when it is time; above all remember that the life of that knave, if you hesitate, will avenge me for your deceit.”

“Sleep, sir, sleep,” said Justine, “and believe that she whom you have filled with gratitude has no greater eagerness than to repay you.”

It was far, however, from being Justine’s intention; and here, no doubt, is one of those singular cases in which virtue itself must lean upon vice; it is therefore sometimes necessary, since even the best actions so often require its support: Justine imagined that if ever deceit might be permitted to her, it must be on this occasion; was she mistaken? We believe so; the circumstance was delicate, it is true; but the foremost duty of probity is to be inviolably attached to one’s word; and a good action, paid for by a crime, can never become a virtue; she was offered a man’s life at the price of her prostitution; in refusing, or in deceiving, she endangered that man’s life; now I ask whether she did not commit a far greater wrong in thus risking the life of this unfortunate man than in securing it by her compliance; Justine decided the question as a devotee; we would have judged it as moralists; it is for our readers now to say which is preferable in society—whether a religion that makes us, despite everything, prefer our own interests to those of others, or a morality that commands us to make every sacrifice when it is a matter of being useful to mankind.

Be that as it may, our rogues, filled with excessive confidence, eat, drink, and fall asleep, leaving their prisoner in their midst, and Justine in full freedom beside Dubois, who, drunk like the rest of the troop, soon likewise closed her eyes.

Seizing with eagerness the first moment of sleep that overcame these scoundrels, "Sir," said Justine to the traveller, "the most dreadful catastrophe has cast me among these people; I detest both them and the fatal moment that led me into their band; I most likely do not have the honour of belonging to you," continued Justine, naming her father, "for such is my name—but..." — "What! mademoiselle," interrupted Saint-Florent, "what! that is your name?" — "Yes." — "Ah! then it is heaven that inspired this stratagem... You were not mistaken, Justine—you are my niece; my first wife, whom I lost five years ago, was your father's sister. Oh, how I rejoice in the fortunate chance that has brought us together! Had I known of your misfortunes, with what eagerness I would have repaired them!" — "Sir, sir," replied Justine with emotion, "how many reasons I have now to commend myself for what I undertake for you! Oh, sir, let us profit from the moment while these monsters sleep, and let us escape." As she spoke, she perceived her uncle's portfolio, imprudently left in the pocket of one of these villains; she seized it and carried it off. "Let us go, sir," she said to Saint-Florent; "let us abandon the rest—we could not take it without danger. Oh, my dear uncle, I now place myself in your hands; take pity on my fate; become the protector of my innocence; I entrust myself to you—let us flee."

It would be difficult to convey the state in which Saint-Florient found himself; the agitation produced in him by the multitude of conflicting emotions that stirred him all at once—this very real gratitude, in which he was by no means dissembling, this thankfulness that he at least owed to show if he did not truly feel it—all these sentiments so disturbed him that he could scarcely utter a single word. "What!" some of our readers will say, "was not this man already filled with the sincerest affection for such a benefactress? Could he think of anything but throwing himself at her feet?" Well then, let us dare to confide it here in a whisper: Saint-Florent, far more suited to remain with that infamous band than to be rescued from it by the very hands of

virtue, was scarcely worthy of all the assistance so zealously afforded him by his virtuous and charming niece; and we greatly fear that what follows will show that, if Justine escaped one danger by freeing herself from Dubois and her companions, it was only to fall perhaps into a more real one by delivering herself into the hands of her dear uncle... Oh God! after such great services!... And are there not souls so depraved as to be restrained by no kind of check, for whom the very multiplicity of obstacles becomes but an additional attraction? But let us not anticipate events; it suffices that it be known that Saint-Florent, somewhat libertine and very much a scoundrel, had not beheld, without a most troubling excitement, both the wicked example he had just witnessed and the multitude of charms with which nature seemed to have adorned Justine only to authorize such examples, by kindling the desire for crime in all those who were to behold them.

Having passed the barriers, our two fugitives quicken their pace without exchanging a word, and dawn soon finds them out of all danger, though still in the midst of the forest.

It was then, at the very moment when the rising sun cast its light upon the enchanting features of Justine, that the rogue who followed her was inflamed with all the fires of the most incestuous desire; for an instant he took her for the goddess of flowers, going forth with the first rays of the sun to open the calyx of the roses of which her charms were the image; at times even for a ray of daylight itself, by which nature adorns the world. She walked swiftly; the most beautiful colours animated her complexion; her fair blond hair floated in disorder; nothing concealed her supple and graceful figure, and her lovely head turned from time to time with grace to offer her companion in flight a countenance full of enchantment, at once beautified by calm, by the hope of happiness, and by that still more delicate shade which the joy of a good action impresses upon the face of a virtuous young woman.

If it is true that our features are the faithful mirror of our soul, those of Saint-Florent could not have been cast in the same mold; horrible desires agitated his heart, frightful designs were taking shape in his mind. Yet he smiled as he concealed himself; and, playing gratitude as best he could, he spoke to our heroine only of the pleasure of having found again an unfortunate niece, whose sufferings his fortune would now enable him to end forever; and his penetrating and lascivious eye completed the discovery, beneath the veils of modesty that surrounded Justine, of the full array of charms of which he had thus far perceived only fleeting glimpses.

Such was the state in which they both entered Luzarches: an inn presented itself... they stopped there to rest.

CHAPTER IV

Ingratitude. — A singular spectacle. — An encounter of consequence. — A new situation. — Irreligion. — Depravity. — Filial impiety. — The condition of Justine's heart.

There are moments in life when one feels exceedingly rich, and yet possesses not wherewithal to live: such was the case with Saint-Florent; he carried four hundred thousand francs in his pocketbook, and not a single crown in his purse. This reflection had checked him just as he was about to enter the inn. "Be easy, my uncle," said Justine, smiling at his perplexity; "the thieves from whom I have escaped have not left me without money. Here are twenty louis—pray take them; make use of them, and give the remainder to the poor. I would not, for anything in the world, retain gold acquired by murder."

Saint-Florent, who affected a certain delicacy—though far indeed from that which Justine attributed to him—would not accept the gift offered him save upon the strict condition that Justine, on her part, should receive one hundred thousand francs in bills of exchange, which he compelled her to place in her pocket; "You shall keep this sum," said Saint-Florent, "it is yours, my dear niece; it is but a feeble recompense for the great services you have rendered me; yet accept it, I entreat you, and believe that I will never abandon you so long as I live."

They dined: yet Justine soon fell, despite herself, into reveries—into anxieties which clouded the serenity of her features;

Saint-Florent inquired the cause, and, without further explanation, she sought to return the money. "Sir," said she to her uncle, "I have not deserved so signal a mark of gratitude, and my delicacy forbids me to accept a gift so considerable." Saint-Florent, full of wit, did not lack for reasons to overcome her scruples, and the money, in spite of her, was replaced in her pocket, though the fears of this interesting girl seemed not for an instant diminished. To dispel them—or to appear not to perceive them—Saint-Florent begged his dear niece to recount her adventures; she complied, and, having satisfied him, concluded by confessing the uneasiness she felt at the thought of returning to Paris. "Why, all may be arranged," replied the merchant; "I have, not far from here, a kinswoman whom we shall visit; I will present you to her and entreat her to keep you until I have had time to settle your affairs myself; she is the most respectable of women, and you will be with her as with a mother; she resides in a charming country house near Bondy; it is early yet—the finest time imaginable; are you disposed to walk?"—"Yes, sir."—"Come then, Justine, let us depart; the desire to prove my gratitude presses so urgently upon my heart that any delay in its execution becomes a torment to me." Justine, moved, threw herself into Saint-Florent's arms: "Oh, my uncle," said she through tears, "how feeling is your soul, and how mine responds to it!"—while the monster had the cruelty to behold modesty itself pouring forth the tenderest expressions of gratitude upon a heart hardened by crime, and which throbbed only with lust beneath the gentle caresses of innocence and virtue bathed in tears.

A slight circumstance, which we think ought not to be omitted, in order to place our readers in a better position to judge the character, would no doubt have revealed Saint-Florent to his niece, had she, less confiding, cast upon her uncle a more philosophical eye; but gentle and tranquil virtue is ever far from suspecting crime. On leaving the table, Justine found herself in need of retiring to a private closet; she entered it without at first observing that Saint-Florent followed her, and established himself

in a neighbouring stall, from which, by mounting—as he did—upon the seat, one could plainly discern all that passed in the one occupied by Justine, who, suspecting nothing, exposed herself to the furtive gaze of that libertine in that state of undress required by such necessity. Thus were the most beautiful charms in the world once more offered to Saint-Florent, who there completed the excitation of his passions and conceived, with renewed ardour, designs against the innocence and modesty of this interesting creature. Justine thought she perceived something; she returned hastily, unable to suppress a degree of surprise; Saint-Florent defended himself, a few caresses restored her confidence, and they set out upon their way.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon; aside from this little scene, Saint-Florent had not yet belied himself; the same honesty, the same attentiveness, the same delicacy prevailed; had he been Justine's father, she could not have felt more secure; all her suspicions were fading away. Our unfortunate heroine did not know that this is the custom when danger draws near.

Soon the shadows of night began to cast over the forest that kind of religious dread which stirs both fear in timid souls and the intent to commit crime in savage hearts. Our travellers followed only the paths; Justine walked in front; she turns to ask Saint-Florent whether these remote paths are indeed the ones they should follow... whether he believes, at last, that they will arrive soon? Here the libertine's confusion was at its height; his fiery passions had just broken all restraints... It was night; the silence of the woods, the darkness enveloping them—everything stirred within him desires he finally saw himself as master to satisfy. The lecher, growing hard, recalled to his lascivious imagination the charms that chance or his wiles had revealed in this delightful child. He could no longer contain himself. 'Come on, for God's sake,' he said to his niece, 'this is where I've got to fuck you; I've been hard for you for too long, you whore, I've got to get off.' He grabbed her by the shoulders, knocking her off balance; the poor girl let out a cry. 'Ah! You bitch,' said Saint-Florent

furiously, ‘don’t expect me to let you have the chance to voice your complaints’; and he finished knocking her to the ground, striking her on the head with a vigorous blow from his cane, which left her lying unconscious at the foot of a tree. The gods were deaf: one has no idea of their indifference toward men, even when the latter would affront them; it might have been said that, far from avenging this horrible outrage, they deliberately deepened the shadows of the night, as if to better conceal... to further favour the odious enterprises of crime against modesty and innocence.

Saint-Florent, master of Justine, hikes up her clothes... brings out a monstrous cock, inflamed with lust and rage, stretches himself over the victim, presses her down with his weight, spreads the thighs of this wretched, defenceless girl, and with inexpressible fury drives his shaft to the edges of those delicate first buds, which, destined only to be the prize of love, seem to recoil in horror from the execrable enterprises of villainy and crime; at last he triumphs, Justine is deflowered. Oh, what a course the scoundrel runs! It is the enraged tiger tearing apart the young lamb; he grinds, he rends, he blasphemes, the blood flows, and nothing stops him; an impetuous discharge at last appeases his desires, and the libertine, reeling, withdraws, regretting that a crime which has just given him such pleasure cannot last a century. Ten paces away, his senses revive; he experiences that singular remorse which overturns the soul of the villain, imagining he has only half committed the crime he might have extended; he remembers that he has left in Justine’s pockets the hundred thousand francs he had given her; he returns to steal them; but Justine, seated upon her pockets, cannot be searched without being turned over. Heaven! what new charms present themselves, despite the darkness, to the inflamed gaze of the incestuous Saint-Florent? “What!” he says, contemplating that delicious, fresh arse which had first so keenly excited him, “could I have neglected such attractions? This superb girl has other first fruits I did not dare to gather! Detestable timidity! Let’s fuck, let’s fuck

this divine arse, which will give me a hundred times more pleasure than the cunt; let us pry it open, tear it, by God, without the least pity." Absolute master to carry out whatever he wishes upon an inanimate, defenceless body... the rogue places his victim in the posture suited to his perfidious designs: considering the pretty little hole he is about to pierce, his malice is inflamed by the disproportion; he aims the instrument without moistening it: all those precautions, born of fear or humanity, are unknown to crime and to true lust; and why, after all, prevent the suffering of an object whose pain increases our pleasures? The scoundrel fucks her in the arse; for a full half-hour the wretch delights in this outrage; he might still be at it, had not nature, even while lavishing its favours upon him, set a limit to his pleasures.

At last, the perfidious man withdraws, leaving the wretched victim of his libertinage lying on the ground, without aid, without honour, and almost without life. O man! this is what you are when you listen only to your passions!

Justine, coming to herself and recognizing the horrible state she is in, wishes to end her life. "Monster!" she cries, "what have I done to him? how could I have deserved from him such cruel treatment? I save his life, I restore his fortune, and he tears from me what I hold most dear; tigers, in the depths of the wildest forests, would not have dared such crimes!..." A few minutes of dejection follow these first outbursts of grief: her beautiful eyes, filled with tears, turn mechanically toward the sky; her heart casts itself at the feet of the master her misfortune supposes there; that pure and brilliant vault, that imposing silence of the night... that image of nature at peace, beside the upheaval of her distraught soul, all spreads a shadowy horror around her, from which there soon arises the need to pray: she falls to her knees before that powerful God, denied by wisdom and believed in by misfortune.

"Holy and majestic Being," she cries in tears, "you who in this dreadful moment deign to fill my soul with a heavenly joy

that has no doubt kept me from taking my own life; O my protector and my guide! I long for your goodness, I implore your mercy; behold my misery and my torments, my resignation and my vows. Almighty God! you know it, I am innocent and weak, I am betrayed and mistreated; I wished to do good, in imitation of you, and your will punishes me for it. Let it be done, O my God! all its sacred effects are dear to me, I respect them, and cease to complain of them; but if I am to find here below nothing but thorns, is it to offend you, O my sovereign master, to beg your power to call me back to you, there to pray without disturbance, to adore you far from those wicked men who have, alas! made me encounter nothing but evils, and whose bloody and perfidious hands delight in drowning my wretched days in a torrent of tears and in an abyss of suffering?"

Prayer consoles the wretched; heaven is his chimera; he becomes stronger after having cherished it: yet it would be difficult to draw from this physical effect any conclusions in favour of a God; the state of misfortune is that of delirium, and can the offspring of madness impose upon reason? Justine rises, rearranges her clothes, and moves away.

Very different ideas occupied Saint-Florent's mind. There are souls in this world for whom crime has such charms that they can never have their fill of it; a first offense is for them only a further lure to the second; and their satisfaction is complete only when the measure is filled.

"What a pretty maidenhead I have just plucked," said this traitor to himself, seated against a tree two hundred paces from the scene where his victim had been sacrificed... "what innocence! what freshness! what grace and beauty!... how she set me ablaze!... how she inflamed all my senses!... I would have strangled her if she had been capable of offering me any resistance... Perhaps I was wrong to leave her alive... if she meets anyone, she will complain of me... I could be tracked down, I could be ruined; who knows how far the vengeance of an angered girl may go?... Come, let us finish her off... one wretched creature

more or less in the universe will not make the slightest difference... she is a worm I crush in passing, a venomous animal that aims its sting at me, and which I prevent from wounding me; there is very little harm in ridding oneself of those who wish us ill... let us return." But the unfortunate Justine, destined by the hand of heaven to traverse in full the thorny path of misfortune, was not to succumb so young. Saint-Florent flies into a rage at not finding her; he calls out; she hears him and flees with greater strength. Let us leave this scoundrel here to despair alone at having failed so poorly; let us leave him to resume his way: perhaps we shall meet him again one day. The order of events now permits us only to follow the thread of the adventures of our interesting Justine.

"There he is again, that monster," she said, quickening her pace; "what can he want with me? has he not sufficiently outraged me? what remains for him to attempt?" And she plunged into a thicket to escape the search of a man who would only have caught up with her to murder her; she spent the rest of the night there in dreadful anxiety.

"Well then," she thinks, as day breaks, "it is indeed true that there are human creatures whom nature reduces to the same condition as that of wild beasts; hidden in their lair, fleeing men as they do, what difference is there now between them and me? Is it worth being born for so pitiful a fate?" And streams of tears flowed from her beautiful eyes as she abandoned herself to such cruel reflections.

She had scarcely finished them when an unexpected noise was heard. "Oh God, it is perhaps him again, the barbarian," she said, trembling; "he is pursuing me, he seeks my destruction, he has conspired against my life; I am a lost girl." And, while withdrawing still deeper into the thicket that shelters her, she nevertheless has the courage to listen.

Two men were making this noise; 'Come, my friend,' said the one who appeared to be the master to the young boy following

him, 'come, we shall be perfectly happy here; the cruel and fateful presence of a mother I abhor will not, at least in this wild place, prevent me from enjoying for a moment with you the pleasures that are so sweet to me;' As they speak, they approach and position themselves directly in front of Justine, so that none of their words, none of their movements, can escape her notice. Then the master, who appears to be twenty-four years old, pulls down the trousers of the other man, who is at most forty years old, jerks him off, sucks his cock, and makes him hard. The scene is long... scandalous, full of episodes... interwoven with lust and obscenities well-suited to scandalise the one who still moans from outrages of a similar nature. But what were these infamies? We can already see some readers, more curious about these obscenities than about the virtuous details of the interesting Justine, begging us to reveal these horrors to them: well, we shall tell them, to satisfy them, that the young master, in no way frightened by the monstrous phallus with which he is threatened, excites it, covers it with kisses, seizes it, penetrates himself with it, and swoons as he inserts it into his arse. Enthused by these sodomitic caresses, the rascal writhes beneath the cock that is fucking him, regretting that it is not even bigger; he braves its thrusts, anticipates them, pushes back on them; two tender and lawful spouses would caress each other with less ardour; their mouths press together, their tongues entwine, their sighs mingle, and both, intoxicated with lust, find in a mutual release the culmination of their voluptuous orgies. The homage is renewed, and to rekindle the incense, nothing is spared by the one who demands it; kisses, caresses, defilements, refinements of the most notorious debauchery—everything is employed with the aim of renewing forces that are fading, and everything succeeds in reviving them five times in succession, yet without either of them changing roles; the young master was always the woman, and though he displayed a very fine cock which his lackey was wanking whilst fucking him, and though he could consequently become the man in turn, he did not even seem to harbour the desire for a

single moment. If he examined his fucker's cock, if he jerked him off, if he sucked him, it was to arouse him... to make him hard; but never did any plan of action even seem to enter his mind.

Oh! how long that time seemed to Justine, and how rending it is for virtue to be obliged to contemplate crime!

At last, no doubt sated, the scandalous actors of this scene rise to regain the path that is to lead them home, when the master, approaching the bush to deposit the semen with which his arse has just been flooded, catches sight, as he straightens up, of the tip of the handkerchief in which Justine's head is wrapped. "Jas-min," he says to his valet... "we are betrayed... we are discovered... a woman... an impure creature has seen our mysteries... let us go closer... let us drag that whore out of there and learn the reason that places her there."

But the trembling Justine does not give them time to drag her from her hiding place; she tears herself from it at once, and, falling at the feet of those who have discovered her: "Oh, gentlemen!" she cries, stretching out her arms toward them, "deign to have pity on an unfortunate woman whose fate is more to be pitied than you suppose; there are few reverses that could equal mine. Let not the situation in which you have found me give rise to any suspicion of me; it is the result of my misery far more than of my faults. Far from increasing the evils that overwhelm me, be so good as to lessen them, by affording me the means of escaping the scourges that pursue me."

Monsieur de Bressac—that was the name of the young man into whose hands Justine had fallen—possessed, along with a deep fund of wickedness and libertinage, by no means a very abundant share of compassion. It is unfortunately only too common to see lust extinguish pity in the heart of man; its usual effect is to harden, whether because the greater part of its excesses requires a kind of apathy of the soul, or because the violent shock this passion imparts to the whole mass of the nerves diminishes the force of their action; be that as it may, a libertine is

rarely a man of feeling.⁹ [1] But to this natural hardness, in the sort of people of whom we speak, there was added in Bressac a profound disgust for women... a hatred so inveterate toward everything that characterized that sex—which he called INFAMOUS—that Justine would have found it very difficult indeed to awaken in him the sentiments she had an interest in stirring.

“Turtledove,” Bressac says to her harshly, “if you are looking for dupes, apply yourself elsewhere; neither my friend nor I have anything to do with women—they fill us with horror, and we avoid them with care. If it is alms you ask, seek out people who delight in good works—we never perform any but bad ones. But speak, wretch—did you see what passed between that young man and me?” “I saw you talking on the grass,” replies the prudent Justine, “nothing more, gentlemen, I swear it to you.” — “I am willing to believe it,” says Bressac, “and that for your own sake. If I imagined you had seen anything else, you would never leave that thicket... Jasmin, it is still early; we have time to hear this girl’s adventures—let us listen to them, and afterward we shall see what must be done with her.” The young men sat down; Justine placed herself beside them, and related to them, with her usual ingenuousness, all the misfortunes that had overwhelmed her since she first came into the world.

“Come, Jasmin,” says Bressac, rising, “let us be just for once. Equitable Themis has condemned this creature; let us not allow the designs of the goddess to be so cruelly thwarted; let us make the delinquent undergo the sentence of death she would have incurred. This little murder, far from being a crime, will become only a reparation in the moral order; since we have the misfortune sometimes to disturb it, let us courageously restore it when the occasion presents itself...” And the cruel men, having lifted this wretched girl from her place, already drag her toward the middle of the wood, laughing at her tears and her cries. “Let us strip her first,” says Bressac, “removing all the veils of decency

⁹ And this, for the sole reason that sensitivity proves weakness, and libertinage proves strength. (*Author’s note*)

and modesty," and without the charms the operation reveals softening a man hardened against all the seductions of a sex he despises. "What a vile creature a woman is," he says, turning her over and over on the ground with his foot; "oh, Jasmin, what a filthy animal!" then, spitting on her... "tell me, my pet, would you enjoy this beast?..." "Not even in the arse," replies the valet. "And yet this is what fools call their divinity; this is what imbeciles adore... Look, just look at that pierced belly... Look at that infamous cunt—that is the temple where absurdity sacrifices; that is the workshop of human generation. Come, no pity, let us tie up this bitch..." And the poor girl is at once bound with a rope these monsters fashion from their cravats and handkerchiefs; they then place her between four trees, one limb firmly fastened to each; and in this cruel posture, which leaves her stomach sagging unsupported toward the ground, her pains are so intense that a cold sweat pours from her brow; she exists now only through the violence of her torment; she would expire if they ceased to compress her nerves. The more this unfortunate creature suffers, the more our young men seem to delight in the spectacle; they contemplate her with voluptuousness; they eagerly seize, upon her face, each contortion torn from her by her burning anguish, and model their hideous joy on the greater or lesser violence they observe in those contortions.

"That is enough," says Bressac; "I consent, for this once, that she get off with nothing but the fright."

"Justine," he continues, loosening her bonds and ordering her to dress, "be discreet, and follow us; if you attach yourself to me, you will have no cause to repent it. My mother requires a second woman; I shall present you to her, and, on the faith of your account, I will answer to her for your conduct. But if you abuse my kindness, if you betray my confidence, or fail to submit to my intentions, look well at those four trees, Justine; examine the ground they shade, which was to have served as your grave; remember that this fatal spot lies but a league from the château to

which I am taking you, and that at the slightest fault you will be brought back there at once.”

The slightest appearance of happiness is to the unfortunate what the beneficent morning dew is to the flower withered the day before by the burning rays of the sun. Justine throws herself in tears at the knees of the one who seems to protect her; she swears to be submissive and to conduct herself well; but the barbarous Bressac, as insensible to the joy as to the suffering of this dear child, says to her harshly... “we shall see”; and they set off.

Jasmin and his master spoke together in low tones; Justine followed them humbly, without saying a word. An hour and a quarter sufficed to bring them to the *château* of Madame de Bressac, whose luxury and magnificence made Justine see that, whatever post might be assigned to her in that house, it could surely be advantageous for her—if the malevolent hand that never ceased tormenting her did not once again come to trouble the flattering appearances that seemed to present themselves to her eyes.

Half an hour after her arrival, the young man presents her to his mother.

Madame de Bressac was a woman of forty-five, still handsome, virtuous, and sensitive, but of an astonishing severity of morals; proud of never having made a false step in her life, she forgave no weakness in others; and, by this excessive rigorism, far from attracting her son’s affection, she had, so to speak, driven him from her breast. Bressac had many faults, we admit; but where shall indulgence erect its temple, if not in a mother’s heart? Widowed two years earlier of the father of this young man, Madame de Bressac possessed an income of one hundred thousand *écus*, which, joined to more than double that from the father’s fortune, promised one day, as one sees, nearly a million in annual revenue to the scoundrel in question. Despite such great expectations, Madame de Bressac allowed her son little; an allowance of twenty-five thousand francs—could it suffice to

pay for his pleasures? Nothing is so costly as that kind of indulgence; men, it is agreed, cost less than women, but the lubricities one enjoys with them are renewed far more often; one is fucked far more than one fucks.

Nothing could induce the young Bressac to enter the service; everything that drew him away from his libertinage was so insupportable in his eyes that he could not submit to its constraints.

Madame de Bressac lived, for three months of the year, on this estate where Justine found her; she spent the rest of the time in Paris; but, during this three-month stay in the country, she required that her son not leave her. What a torment for a man who abhorred his mother, and who regarded as lost every moment he spent away from a city where, for him, lay the centre of all pleasures!

Bressac orders Justine to recount to his mother the matters she had related to him; and as soon as she has finished, “your candour and your simplicity,” says this respectable woman to her, “do not permit me to doubt that you are truthful; I shall take no other information about you than to learn whether you are indeed the daughter of the man you name to me; if that is so, I knew your father, and it will be for me an additional reason to take an interest in you. As for the affair of Delmonse, I undertake to settle it, in two visits, with the chancellor, who has been my friend for ages; besides, that creature is a woman lost to debauchery and reputation, and whom I would have confined if I wished. But reflect well, Justine,” added Madame de Bressac, “that what I promise you here is only at the price of an unblemished conduct; thus, you see that the effects of the gratitude I require will always turn to your advantage.” Justine throws herself at the feet of her benefactress; she assures her that there will be reason to be satisfied with her; and at once she is put in possession of her post.

At the end of three days, the inquiries made by Madame de Bressac arrived; they were satisfactory: Justine was praised for her

frankness, and all thoughts of misfortune vanished from her mind, giving way to the sweetest hope; but it was not written in heaven that this dear girl should ever be happy, and if a few moments of calm arose for her by chance, it was only to render more bitter those of horror that were to follow.

Hardly had they returned to Paris when Madame de Bressac hastened to act on behalf of her maid; the calumnies of Delmonse were recognized, but she could not be reached: having left a few days earlier to go and collect in America a rich inheritance that had just fallen to her, heaven willed that she should enjoy her crime in peace. There are many occasions when its inconsistent justice weighs only upon virtue. It must not be forgotten that we publish these facts only to convince of this truth; it is a sad one, but it is no less essential that it be revealed, so that each may regulate his conduct in the events of life accordingly.

With regard to the fire in the palace prisons, it was established that, if Justine had taken advantage of the event, she had at least had no part in it; and her case was, she was assured, annulled, without the magistrates who handled it believing it necessary to employ any further formalities. The poor girl knew no more about it.

However little one may thus far have acquired a sufficiently extensive knowledge of the soul of our heroine, one easily imagines how such proceedings attached her to Madame de Bressac. Justine, young, weak, and sensitive, opened her heart with pleasure to the sentiments of gratitude; foolishly persuaded that a kindness must bind the one who receives it to the one from whom it comes, the poor girl poured out at leisure, in the worship of that childish feeling, all the activity of her ingenuous soul; it was far from the young man's intention, however, to bind Justine so closely to the interests of a mother he could not endure; but we believe this is the moment to depict this new character.

Bressac combined with the charms of youth the most seductive appearance; if his figure or his features had any defects, it

was because they approached somewhat that languor... that softness which belongs only to women; it seemed that, in lending him the attributes of that sex, nature had also inspired him with its tastes. What a soul, however, was concealed beneath these feminine attractions! One found there all the vices that characterize those of the greatest scoundrels; never were wickedness, vengeance, cruelty, atheism, debauchery, the neglect of all duties—especially those in which less strongly marked souls seem to delight—carried further. The first mania of this singular man was to detest his mother above all things, and unfortunately this hatred, founded on principle, was supported in him both by unanswerable reasoning and by the powerful interest he necessarily had in being rid of her as soon as possible. Madame de Bressac did everything to bring her son back into the paths of virtue, but she employed too much severity; the result was that the young man, inflamed all the more by the very effects of that severity, abandoned himself to his inclinations with greater impetuosity, and that the poor lady reaped from her persecutions only a far stronger measure of hatred.

“Do not imagine,” Bressac said to Justine one day, “that it is of her own accord that my mother acts in all that concerns you; believe rather that if I did not persecute her at every moment, she would scarcely remember the attentions she has promised you; she makes much of all her steps, while they are in fact solely my doing. Yes, Justine, it is to me alone that the gratitude you lavish upon my mother is due; and that which I require of you ought to appear to you all the more disinterested, since, however young and pretty you may be, you know well that I do not pretend to your favours; no, dear girl, no. Endowed with the deepest contempt for all that can be obtained from a woman... for her person itself, the services I ask of you are of quite another kind, and when you are fully convinced of what I have done for your peace, I hope I shall find in your soul all that I have the right to expect of it.”

These speeches, often repeated, seemed so obscure to Justine that she did not know how to answer them; she did so nevertheless, and perhaps with too much ease; must it be confessed? Alas, yes; to disguise Justine's faults would be to betray the reader's confidence, and to ill repay the interest her misfortunes have inspired up to this moment.

However unworthy Bressac's conduct toward her might have been, from the very first day she saw him it had been impossible for her to defend herself against a violent movement of tenderness for him; gratitude increased in her heart this involuntary inclination, to which the constant presence of the beloved object lent new strength each day; and in the end the poor Justine adored this scoundrel in spite of herself, with the same ardour with which she idolized her God, her religion... virtue. She had made a thousand reflections on this man's cruelty, on his aversion to women, on the depravity of his tastes, on the moral distances that separated them—and nothing, nothing in the world could extinguish this nascent passion; had Bressac asked her for her life, had he wanted her blood, Justine would have given all, would have shed all, distressed only that she could not, at will, make still greater sacrifices to the sole object of her heart. That is love—that is why the Greeks portrayed it with a blindfold. But Justine had never spoken, and the ungrateful Bressac was far from discerning the cause of the tears she shed for him daily. It was very difficult, however, that he should not suspect her desire to hasten toward everything that might please him; that he should not perceive attentions strong enough, blind enough even to serve his errors, as far as decency would permit, and the care she took always to conceal them from his mother. By this conduct, so natural to a seduced heart, Justine had earned the full confidence of the young Bressac, and everything that came from that cherished lover seemed of such value in Justine's eyes that the unfortunate girl often imagined she had obtained from love what was granted her only by libertinage... by wickedness, or perhaps

more surely still, by the need he believed he had of her for the dreadful designs of his heart.

Would one believe that one day he dared to say to her: “Among the young men I seduce, Justine, there are some who yield to me merely out of courtesy; they would need to see a young girl’s charms laid bare. This necessity offends my pride: I would far prefer it if the state in which I desire them were due solely to me. However, as it is essential to me, I would prefer, my angel, to owe it to you rather than to anyone else; I would suspect nothing, you would arrange them in my study and only bring them into my bedroom when they were ready.” — “Oh! Sir,” replied Justine in tears, “can you propose such things to me? And the horrors to which you give yourself over...” — “Ah! Justine,” interrupted Bressac, “can one ever be cured of this inclination!... If only you could know its charms; if only you could understand what one feels at the sweet illusion of being nothing more than a woman! An incredible delusion of the mind; one abhors that sex, and yet one wishes to imitate it! Ah! How sweet it is to succeed in this, how delightful to be the whore of all who desire you, and, taking this to its ultimate extreme—madness and prostitution—to be, in turn, on the very same day, the mistress of a pickpocket, a valet, a soldier, a coachman; to be, in turn, cherished, caressed, envied, threatened, beaten; now triumphant in their arms, now a victim at their feet, softening their hearts with caresses, reviving them with excesses: oh no, no, Justine, you do not understand what a pleasure this is for a mind like mine. But morality aside, if you could only imagine the voluptuous thrills of this divine pleasure! What it makes one feel... experience; it is impossible to resist; it is such a vivid tickling... such piquant movements of lust... such complete delirium... one loses one’s mind, one loses all reason; a thousand kisses, each more ardent than the last, still do not express with sufficient fervour the intoxication into which the agent plunges us; entwined in his arms, our mouths pressed one against the other, we wish our

entire existence could merge with his; we would wish to become a single being with him; if we dare to complain, it is of being neglected; we would wish that, stronger than Hercules, our fucker might penetrate us, expand us; that this precious seed, slender and burning deep within our wombs, might, through its heat and strength, cause ours to gush forth into his hands; we would wish to be nothing but cum, when he showers us with his own. Do not imagine that we are made like other men; it is an entirely different construction; and that ticklish membrane lining the interior of your infamous cunts, heaven, in creating us, adorned the altars where our lovers sacrifice; in that regard, we are as much women as you are in the act of generation; there is not one of your pleasures that is unknown to us, not one of which we do not know how to enjoy: but we have ours in addition, and it is this delightful union that makes us the men on earth most sensitive to pleasure... the best formed to feel it. It is this enchanting union that renders the correction of our tastes impossible... that would make of us enthusiasts and fanatics, if one still had the stupidity to punish us... that finally makes us adore, even unto death, the charming god who bind us.

Thus spoke Monsieur de Bressac in extolling his pleasures. If Justine attempted to speak to him of the respectable woman to whom he owed his life, and of the grief such disorders must cause her, she perceived in this young man nothing but vexation, ill temper, and above all a great impatience at seeing for so long, in such hands, riches which, according to Bressac, ought already to have belonged to him; she saw in him only the most inveterate hatred toward that woman, so honest and so virtuous, the most open revolt against all that fools call the sentiments of nature, and which, when properly analysed, are nothing but the pure effects of habit.

It is therefore true that, once one has come so far as to transgress, in one's tastes, the instinct of this supposed law, the necessary consequence of this first deviation is a most violent inclination to rush headlong into a thousand others soon after.

At times the ardent Justine employed pious means; often consoled by them, because it is the nature of weakness always to be satisfied with chimeras, she tried to make their illusions pass into the soul of that perverse man; but Bressac, a declared enemy of the mysteries of religion, a stubborn scoffer at its dogmas, a vehement antagonist of its author, instead of allowing himself to be swayed by Justine's opinions, soon strove to subjugate hers by his own. He esteemed the mind of this young woman enough to wish to carry into it the torch of philosophy; moreover, he needed to destroy in her all prejudices. This, then, is how he attacked those of religion:

"All religions proceed from a false principle, Justine," he said to her one day; "all suppose as necessary the admission of a creating being whose existence is impossible. Recall, on this point, the sensible precepts of that certain Cœur-de-Fer, who, you say, had, like me, worked upon your mind. Nothing is wiser than the principles of that brigand; I see in him a man of considerable wit, and the degradation in which people foolishly hold him does not deprive him of the right to reason well.

"If all the productions of nature are the resultant effects of the laws that bind it; if its perpetual action and reaction suppose the movement necessary to its essence, what becomes of the sovereign master that those who have some interest in adopting him gratuitously attribute to it? That is what this wise instructor told you, dear girl. What then are religions, according to this, if not the bridle by which the tyranny of the stronger sought to subjugate the weaker? Filled with this design, he dared to say to the one he wished to dominate that a God forged the chains with which his cruelty surrounded him; and the latter, brutalized by his misery, blindly believed all that the other wished. Religions, born of such impostures—can they deserve any respect? Is there a single one that does not bear the stamp of imposture and stupidity? What do I see in all of them? Mysteries that make reason shudder, dogmas that outrage nature, grotesque ceremonies that inspire only ridicule and disgust; but if, among all, two deserve

more particularly our contempt and our hatred, oh Justine, are they not those that rest upon those two imbecile novels known under the name of the Old and the New Testament? Let us glance for a moment over this ridiculous assemblage of imperinences, lies, and absurdities, and see what value should be set upon it: these will be questions I shall put to you; answer them if you can.

“How, first of all, am I to proceed to prove that the Jews, burned by the Inquisition by the thousands, were for four thousand years the favourites of God? How is it that you, who adore their law, put them to death because they follow it? How has your barbarous and ridiculous God been unjust enough to prefer, to the whole world, the little Jewish horde—and then abandon that favoured people for another caste infinitely smaller and more contemptible?

“Why did that God perform so many miracles in former times? And why will he no longer perform any for us, though we have replaced that people in whose favour he once worked such charming wonders?

“How will you reconcile the chronology of the Chinese, the Chaldeans, the Phoenicians, the Egyptians with that of the Jews, and how will you make agree among themselves forty different ways of reckoning time among the commentators? If I say that God dictated this book, will it not be answered that such a God is, then, a proud ignoramus?

“Does he not appear so again when I assert that he says Moses wrote in the desert beyond the Jordan? How is that possible, since Moses never crossed the Jordan?

“The Book of Joshua tells you that God had the collection of Jewish laws engraved upon mortar; yet all the writers of that time inform you that engraving was done only on stone or brick. No matter—let us admit the idea; I ask how, on that hypothesis, such a collection engraved on mortar could have been preserved; and how a people lacking everything in the desert,

who had neither clothes nor shoes, could concern themselves with engraving laws?

“How is it that, in a book dictated by your God, there are names of cities that never existed, precepts for kings whom the Jews held in abhorrence and who did not yet govern them... in short, a swarm of such contradictions? Is your God then at once an imbecile and inconsistent? I would as soon have none at all as be reduced to worshipping one of that sort.

“How do you take the burlesque story of Adam’s rib? Is it physical or allegorical? How did God create light before the sun? How did he divide light from darkness, since darkness is nothing other than the privation of light? How did he make day before the sun was made? How was the firmament formed in the midst of the waters, since there is no firmament?¹⁰ Is it not clear that your insipid God is as poor a physicist as he is a detestable geographer and a ridiculous chronologist?

“Do you want a new proof of his stupidity? With what disgust do you not read, in the books he dictates, that four rivers, a thousand leagues distant from one another, nevertheless take their source in the terrestrial paradise! What is this ridiculous prohibition against eating the fruit of a tree in a garden one is free to enjoy? There is great malice in God to impose such a prohibition; for he knew well that man would succumb—it was therefore a trap he set for him. What a vile scoundrel your God is! I had taken him only for an imbecile; but, upon closer examination, I find him a very great villain.

“How do you like that great simpleton of an Eternal, who comes to stroll, tête-à-tête with Adam, Eve, and the serpent, every day at noon—and that, in a country where the sun is then at its greatest heat? Why, some time later, does that same original no longer wish anyone to take the air in his park, and place at the gate, to prevent it, an ox,¹¹ with a flaming sword in its hand?

¹⁰ That notion of the firmament is nothing but a Greek fable.

¹¹ “Cherub” means “ox.”

Can anything be more flat and more ridiculous than this collection of anecdotes?

“In what way will you explain to me the story of the angels who fuck the daughters of men and beget giants? If all that is allegorical, it is, in truth, very fine—and it required a prodigious effort of genius to have invented it.

“How will you now extricate yourself from the Flood, which, if it lasted only forty days, as God says, could nevertheless have produced no more than eighteen inches of water upon the earth? How will you explain to me the cataracts of heaven, the animals arriving from the four corners of the world to be shut up in a great chest which, according to the proportions your divine books assign it, would not even contain what is held in the Grand Seignior’s menagerie? And how could Noah’s family, composed of only eight persons, have fed and cared for all these creatures? O mighty God of the Jews! I am quite certain that among all these beasts there was not one more limited than you.

“And the Tower of Babel—how will you get out of that one? It must surely have been far higher than the pyramids of Egypt, since God allowed those pyramids to remain; the only analogy I find here is the confusion of tongues with the makers of your God; there is certainly a great resemblance between people who no longer understand one another while constructing a material colossus, and those who rave while erecting a moral one.

“And good Abraham, who, at the age of a hundred and thirty-five, passes Sarah off as his sister for fear she might be seduced—does he not amuse you a little? I rather like Abraham myself; but I should prefer him a little less of a liar... more submissive, and that when God wishes his posterity to be circumcised, poor Abraham should not oppose it.

“What I find absolutely delightful, Justine, is that splendid episode about the Sodomites, who want to bugger angels, and good old Lot, who’d rather see them bugger his daughters – which surely couldn’t have been the same thing in the eyes of

such connoisseurs in this matter as the inhabitants of Lake Asphalite.

“But the question you will no doubt resolve at once is this: how could the statue of salt into which Lot’s wife was transformed have withstood the rain for so long?

“How will you justify the blessings bestowed upon Jacob, who deceives Isaac his father and robs Laban his father-in-law? How will you make sense of God appearing on a ladder, and of Jacob’s wrestling match with an angel? Oh! how pretty that is—how interesting!

“But tell me, how will you extricate yourself from the little miscalculation of a hundred and ninety-five years that appears when one verifies the duration of the Jews’ stay in Egypt? And how will you explain the bathing of Pharaoh’s daughters in the Nile, where no one ever bathes, because of the crocodiles?

“Moses having married the daughter of an idolater, how did God—who did not love idolaters—nevertheless take him for his prophet? How did Pharaoh’s magicians perform the same miracles as Moses? How did Moses, guided by your powerful God, and finding himself (according to God) at the head of six hundred and thirty thousand fighting men, flee with his people instead of seizing Egypt, whose firstborn had all been put to death by God himself? How did Pharaoh’s cavalry pursue this people in a country where cavalry could never operate? And how, moreover, did Pharaoh even have a cavalry, since, in the fifth plague of Egypt, God had thoughtfully caused all the horses to perish?

“How could a golden calf have been made in eight days? And how did Moses reduce that golden calf to ashes? Does it still seem very natural to you that twenty-three thousand men, in the depths of a desert, should allow themselves to be slaughtered by a single tribe?

“And what will you think of divine justice when you see that God orders Moses—who has a Midianite woman for his wife—to kill twenty-four thousand men because a single one of them

has slept with a Midianite woman? Those Hebrews, whom we are told were so fierce—were they not, nevertheless, very obliging people to allow themselves to be slaughtered thus for the sake of a few girls? But tell me, I beg you, can one help laughing on seeing that Moses finds thirty-two thousand virgins in the Midianite camp, along with sixty-one thousand asses? There should have been at least two asses per virgin; there is not an honest creature who would not be flattered, in such a case, to have one in front and the other behind.

“But will God—stupid, ignorant, a bad geographer, a dreadful chronologist, a detestable physicist—be any better a naturalist? Certainly not; for he assures us that one must not eat the hare because it ruminates and does not have a cloven hoof; whereas there is not a schoolboy of the lowest form who does not know that the hare has a split foot and does not ruminate. But it is when he sets himself up as a legislator, your sublime God, that he becomes truly magnificent: is there anything so wise, so essential, as recommending to husbands that they not sleep with their wives when they have their courses, and to punish them with death if it happens, to prescribe the manner in which one must wash oneself, wipe one’s arse?... In truth, all that is of the grandest kind; and if it is easy to recognize in all this the hand of the Eternal... it is assuredly very easy to love an Eternal who prescribes such fine things.

“How will you prove to me the necessity of a miracle to cross the Jordan, which is not forty feet wide?

“How will you explain that it is only the walls of Jericho that can fall at the sound of a trumpet?

“How will you excuse the conduct of the whore Rahab, who betrays Jericho, her homeland? In what was that treachery necessary, since a mere blast of a trumpet sufficed to make oneself master of the city?

“Why must it now be from the loins of that whore Rahab that God should wish his dear son to draw his origin? Why must your Jesus—of whom we shall soon speak further—be, as the

child of crime and treachery, likewise descended from the incest of Tamar and Judah, and from the adultery of David and Bathsheba? Oh! how incomprehensible are the ways of God—and how lovable an incomprehensible being is!”

“With what eye will you regard Joshua having thirty-one men hanged, merely because he wished to possess their goods?”

“How will you speak of Joshua’s battle against the Amorites, during which the Lord God—always so humane—caused masses of rock to fall for five hours straight upon the enemies of the Jewish people?”

“How will you reconcile, with the knowledge you now have of the heavens, Joshua’s command to the sun to stand still, when the sun is fixed and it is the earth that turns?—Ah! indeed, you will answer me, it is that God did not yet know the progress we should make in astronomy; what a great genius your God is!”

“What will you think of Jephthah, who sacrifices his daughter and has forty-two thousand Jews slaughtered, merely because their tongues are not nimble enough to pronounce the word SHIBBOLETH?”

“Why is it that, in your new law, you speak to me of the dogma of hell and that of the immortality of the soul, whereas the old—upon which the new is modelled—says not a word of these disgusting absurdities?”

“How will you soften the immorality of that pretty little tale of the Levite who comes on his arse to Gibeah, and whom the inhabitants of that town wish to fuck in the arse? The poor devil abandons his wife to get himself out of trouble; but as women are more delicate than we are, the unfortunate creature dies from the sodomitical ordeal. Ah! I beg you, tell me what possible use such charming details can have in a book dictated by the spirit of God?”

“But what I at least hope you will explain to me is the nineteenth verse of the first chapter of Judges, where it is said that God, who accompanies Judah, cannot win a victory because the enemies have chariots armed with scythes. How can it be that a

God who stops the sun, who so often alters the course of nature, cannot succeed in defeating the enemies of his people simply because they have chariots armed with scythes? Might it not be that the Jews, far more atheistic than we suppose, regarded their God only as a local and protective divinity, sometimes more powerful than the gods of their enemies, and sometimes overcome by them? Is not this opinion borne out by that reply of Jephthah: 'You rightfully possess what your god Chemosh has given you; allow us, then, to enjoy likewise the goods that ADONAI our God has given us'? And now I might further ask how there could have been so great a number of chariots armed with scythes in a country so mountainous that one could travel there only with asses?

"You should also explain to me how it is possible that, in a country devoid of wood, Samson set fire to the Philistines' crops by fastening torches to the tails of three hundred foxes, which ordinarily live only in forests; how he killed a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an arse; and how he drew from one of the teeth of that jawbone a spring of clear water. Admit that one must oneself be something of a JAWBONE OF AN ASS to have invented such a fable—or to believe it.

"I ask you for the same explanations regarding the worthy Tobias, who slept with his eyes open and was blinded by a swallow's dropping... about the angel who descended expressly from what is called the Empyrean to go with Tobias and recover the money that the Jew Gabel owed his father... about the wife of that same Tobias, who had had seven husbands whose necks the devil had twisted... and about the method of restoring sight to the blind with the gall of a fish. These stories are truly curious, and I know nothing more charming—after the tale of Little Thumb.

"But could I, without your help, interpret the sacred text which says that the fair Judith descended from Simeon, son of Reuben, although Simeon is the brother of Reuben, according to that same sacred text which cannot lie? I am very fond of

Esther, and I find Ahasuerus very sensible to marry a Jewess and to sleep with her for six months without knowing who she is.

“When Saul was declared king, the Jews were slaves of the Philistines and were allowed no weapons; they were even obliged to go to the Philistines to sharpen their household and agricultural tools. How is it possible then that Saul, at the head of three hundred and thirty thousand fighting men in a country that cannot support thirty thousand souls, nevertheless wins a memorable victory over those Philistines?

“Your David perplexes me no less; I see with difficulty, in such a scoundrel, the stock of your God-Jesus; it is hard for an individual who pretends to be God to derive his origin only from a murderer, an adulterer, a ravisher of women, a pox-ridden man—in a word, a rogue who would have been broken on the wheel twenty times over, had our European laws been able to reach him.

“As for his riches and those of Solomon, you will admit that they seem difficult to reconcile with the poverty of the country? It is hard to accept that Solomon, as your sacred text says, had four hundred thousand horses in a land where there were never anything but asses.

“How will you reconcile, I beg you, the magnificent promises of the Jewish prophets with the perpetual enslavement of that unhappy people, who at one time languish under the Phoenicians, the Babylonians, at another under the Persians, the Syrians, the Romans, etc.?

“Your Ezekiel seems to me either a great swine or a great libertine when he eats dung, and he scandalizes me when he says to a girl: “When your breasts were formed and you had hair, I lay with you, I covered your nakedness, I gave you splendid things; but you built yourself a brothel, you prostituted yourself in the public places, you desired with fury to lie with those who possess members like asses, and who ejaculate like horses.” Oh, modest Justine, is all that, in your view, very decent? Should such a book be called holy, and serve as nourishment for young girls?

“Is not the story of your Jonah, shut up for three days in the belly of a whale, just as disgusting? Is it not clearly copied from that of Hercules, likewise captive in the entrails of such a beast—but who, more ingenious than your prophet, had the wit to roast the whale’s liver on a spit?

“Pray make me understand the opening verses of the prophet Hosea: God expressly orders him to take a whore and beget children of whoredom; the wretched man obeys; God is still not satisfied—he wants him to take a woman who has made her husband a cuckold; the prophet obeys again; tell me, I beg you, what is the point of all this in a holy book? What sort of edification can the faithful derive from such revolting absurdities?”

“But it is with regard to the New Testament that your instruction becomes most necessary to me; I fear I shall be at a loss when I must reconcile the two genealogies of Jesus; I shall be told that Matthew gives Jacob as Joseph’s father, while Luke makes him the son of Heli; I shall be asked how the one counts fifty-six generations, while the other counts only forty-two; why, in short, this genealogical tree is that of Joseph, who was not the father of Jesus. Will you be of the opinion of Saint Ambrose, who says that the angel made Mary pregnant through the ear (*Maria per aurem impregnata est*, or of the Jesuit Sánchez, who asserts that she came while the angel was fucking her?

“If I dare to speak, following Gospel of Luke, of the census of the whole world ordered by Augustus while Quirinius governed Judea—something said to have caused the flight into Egypt—I shall be laughed at; for everyone knows there was never any such census in the Empire, and that it was Publius Quinctilius Varus, not Quirinius, who was then governing Syria.

“When I speak, following Gospel of Matthew, of that flight into Egypt, I shall be told that this flight is a fiction, that none of the other Evangelists mention it; and if I then concede that the Holy Family remained in Judea, I shall be insisted to that it went into Egypt.

“And do you think your astronomers will not laugh at me if I speak to them of the star that led three kings to a stable? How, on the strength of such a tale, will you contrive to make it plausible that Herod the Great, the most despotic of men, could for a moment have feared being supplanted by the bastard of a prostitute, born in a stable? It is unfortunate that no historian comes to support your alleged massacre of the Innocents; it would be much to be wished for humanity that those of the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre, of Massacre of Mérindol, of Massacre of Cabrières, etc., etc., were as doubtful as that one.

“But what I hope to see explained by you is the charming way in which the Devil carries off God and perches him upon a mountain, from which the whole earth could be seen; the Devil who promises all these goods to God, provided that God will worship the Devil, may perhaps scandalize many respectable people—for whom I ask you for a word of reassurance.

“When you are married, Justine, you will kindly tell me in what manner God—who was also present at the wedding—set about changing water into wine, for the benefit of people who were already drunk.

“And while eating figs at your breakfast at the end of July, you will also kindly tell me why God, being hungry, goes looking for figs in the month of March, when it is not the season for figs.

“After all these clarifications, I shall nevertheless still let slip a few absurdities; I shall have to say, for example, that God was condemned to be hanged for original sin. If I am told in reply that there was never any question of original sin either in the Old or the New Testament; that it is only said that Adam was condemned to die on the day he ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, yet did not die from it; if I am taken for a madman for daring to say that God was hanged for an apple eaten four thousand years before his death—I assure you, such a reply will leave me quite at a loss.

“Shall I say, with Gospel of Luke, that it was from the little village of Bethany that Jesus ascended into heaven, or else, with Gospel of Matthew, that it was from Galilee? Or shall I prefer the opinion of a certain doctor who, in order to reconcile everything, claims that God had one foot in Galilee and the other in Bethany?

“Instruct me why the creed called the Apostles’ Creed was only composed in the time of Jerome and Rufinus of Aquileia, four hundred years after the Apostles! Tell me why the first Fathers of the Church cite only the so-called apocryphal Gospels; is this not clear proof that the four canonical ones had not yet been composed?

“And all these frauds, these devices to which falsehood and trickery are forced to resort in order to prop up your Christian absurdities—will you not find it somewhat difficult to legitimize them in my eyes?

“Tell me why, Jesus having instituted no seven sacraments, your religion nevertheless admits seven? Why, Jesus having never spoken of the Trinity, do you nevertheless worship the Trinity? In a word, why does your God, uniting so much power, not possess that of instructing us in all these truths so essential to our salvation?

“Let us for a moment abandon all that is said of your Christ; let us judge him by his words and his actions, rather than by the accounts of those who speak to us of him. How, I beg you, can reasonable men still lend any credence to the obscure sayings and the alleged miracles of the vile founder of this frightful cult? Was there ever a mountebank more deserving of public indignation? What is a leprous Jew who, born of a harlot and a soldier, in the most wretched corner of the universe, dares to pass himself off as the mouthpiece of him who, it is said, created the world? With pretensions so lofty, you will agree, Justine, that at least some credentials were required. What are those of this ridiculous ambassador—what does he do to prove his mission? Does the face of the earth change? Do the scourges that afflict

it vanish? Does the sun shine upon it day and night? Do vices cease to stain it? Are we at last to see happiness alone reign? Not a word: it is by sleight of hand, by antics, and by puns,¹² that the envoy of God announces himself to the universe; it is in the respectable company of labourers, artisans, and prostitutes that the minister of heaven comes to display his grandeur; it is by drinking with some and coupling with others that the friend of God—God himself—comes to bring the hardened sinner under his laws; it is by inventing, for his tricks, only what may satisfy either his luxury or his gluttony, that the impostor proves his mission. Be that as it may, he makes his fortune; a pack of base rogues join this knave, a sect is formed; the doctrines of this rabble succeed in seducing a few Jews: slaves of Roman power, they were bound to embrace with joy a religion which, while freeing them from their chains, subjected them only to a religious yoke; their motive is easily guessed; the seditious are arrested; their leader perishes—but in a manner doubtless too mild for the nature of his crime; and, through an unpardonable failure of policy, his disciples are allowed to scatter, instead of being slaughtered with him: fanaticism seizes minds; women cry out, madmen struggle, imbeciles believe; and behold the most contemptible of beings, the clumsiest knave, the dullest impostor that has ever appeared—behold him God, behold him the son of God, equal to his father; behold all his ravings consecrated, all his words turned into dogmas, and his blunders into mysteries; the bosom of his fabulous father opens to receive him; and this creator, once simple, behold him now become triple, to gratify a son so worthy of his greatness. But will this holy God stop there? Certainly not; it is to far greater favours that his power will lend itself. At the will of a priest—that is to say, of a rogue steeped in lies and

¹² Did Bièvre ever make one to equal that of the Nazarene to his disciples: “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church”? And yet they would have us believe that puns are an invention of our own century.

crimes—this great God, creator of all that we see, will abase himself so far as to descend ten or twelve million times each morning into a morsel of dough, which, destined to be digested by the faithful, will soon be transformed in the depths of their entrails into the vilest excrement; and this, for the satisfaction of that tender son, the odious inventor of this monstrous impiety at a tavern supper. He has said it—therefore it must be so; he has said: ‘This bread that you see shall be my flesh; you will digest it as such: now I am God; therefore God shall be digested by you; therefore the creator of heaven and earth shall be turned into filth, because I have said it; and man shall eat and excrete his God, because that God is good, and because he is all-powerful.’

“However, the absurdities spread: their growth is attributed to their sublimity, to the power of the one who introduces them, while the simplest causes suffice to double their existence; while the increase of error proves nothing but rogues on the one hand, and imbeciles on the other.

“At last, this infamous religion ascends the throne, raised there by a weak, cruel, ignorant, fanatical emperor who, in crowning it, defiles both ends of the earth. O Justine! what weight must such reasons carry with an examining and philosophical mind! Can the wise man see anything, in this heap of appalling fables, but the disgusting fruit of the imposture of a few men, and of the false credulity of a far greater number? If God had wished us to have any religion whatsoever, and if he were truly powerful—or rather, if there truly were a God—would it be by means so absurd that he would have communicated his commands to us? would it be through the mouth of some contemptible bandit that he would have shown us how he must be served? If he is supreme, if he is powerful, if he is just, if he is good—this God of whom you speak to me—would it be by riddles or by farces that he would wish to teach me to serve or to know him? Sovereign mover of the stars and of the human heart, could he not instruct us by means of the former, or speak to us by engraving himself upon the latter? Let him one day

inscribe, in letters of fire, at the centre of the sun, the law that may please him and that he wishes to give us; from one end of the universe to the other, all men, reading it and seeing it at once, would become guilty if they did not then follow it; no excuse could justify their disbelief. But to indicate his desires only in some obscure corner of Asia; to choose, as spectators, only the most deceitful and visionary of peoples; for his agent, only the vilest artisan, the most absurd and the most knavish; to so confuse the doctrine that it is impossible to understand it; to confine the knowledge of it to a small number of individuals; to leave the rest in error, and to punish them for having remained there—no, Justine, no, no, all these atrocities are not made to guide us; I would rather die a thousand times than believe them. There is no God, there never was one; this chimerical being existed only in the heads of fools; no reasonable being can either define him or admit him; and only a simpleton could adopt an idea so prodigiously contrary to reason. But nature, you will tell me, is inconceivable without a God. Ah! I see: to explain to me what you scarcely understand, you invoke a cause you do not understand at all; you claim to clarify what is obscure by thickening the veil; you think to break a chain by multiplying its fetters. Credulous and enthusiastic physicists, to prove to us the existence of a God, copy out treatises on botany; enter, like Fénelon, into a minute detail of the parts of man; soar into the air to admire the course of the stars; fall into raptures before butterflies, insects, polyps, organized atoms, in which you believe you discover the grandeur of your vain God: all these things—say what you will—will never demonstrate the existence of that absurd and imaginary being; they will prove only that you do not possess the ideas you ought to have of the immense variety of matter, and of the effects that may be produced by the infinitely diversified combinations of which the universe is composed; they will prove that you are ignorant of what nature is, that you have no conception of its powers, when you judge them incapable of producing a multitude of forms and beings of which

your eyes, even armed with microscopes, never perceive the slightest part; they will prove, finally, that, for lack of knowing sensible agents, you find it shorter to have recourse to a word under which you designate a spiritual agent of whom it will always be impossible for you to form any certain idea.

“We are solemnly told that there is no effect without a cause; we are constantly reminded that the world did not make itself: but the universe is a cause—it is not an effect, it is not a work; it was not created, it has always been what we see it to be; its existence is necessary; it is its own cause. Nature, whose essence is plainly to act and to produce, in order to fulfil its functions as it does before our eyes, has no need of an invisible mover, far more unknown than she herself: matter moves by its own energy, as a necessary consequence of its heterogeneity; the diversity of motions or modes of action alone constitutes the diversity of matter; we distinguish beings from one another only by the differences in the impressions or movements they communicate to our organs. What! you see that everything in nature is in action, and yet you claim that nature is without energy! you foolishly believe that this whole, essentially active, can require a mover! And what, then, is this mover? A spirit—that is to say, a nullity. Persuade yourself, then, on the contrary, that matter acts by itself, and cease reasoning about your spiritual mover, which possesses nothing required to set it in motion; abandon your useless excursions; return from an imaginary world to a real one; keep to secondary causes; leave to theologians their first cause, of which nature has absolutely no need in order to produce all that you see. Oh, Justine, how I abhor, how I detest that idea of a God! how it offends my reason and revolts my heart! When atheism shall want martyrs, let it say the word—and my blood is ready.

“Let us detest these horrors, dear girl; let the best-attested outrages cement the contempt so rightly due to them. Hardly had I opened my eyes when I abhorred these gross reveries; from that moment I made it a law to trample them underfoot... a vow never to return to them. Imitate me, if you would be happy;

detest, abjure, profane, as I do, both the odious object of this frightful worship and that worship itself, created for chimeras and, like them, fit to be debased by all who lay claim to wisdom. But, fools will tell you, without religion there can be no morality. Imbeciles! what is this morality you preach? and what need has man of morality in order to live content upon the earth? I know of only one, my child: that of making oneself happy, no matter at whose expense; that of refusing oneself nothing that may increase our happiness here below, even if, to succeed, one must trouble, destroy, utterly absorb that of others. Nature, which caused us to be born alone, nowhere commands us to spare our fellow man; if we do so, it is out of policy—I will say more, out of selfishness: we do not harm others for fear they may harm us; but he who is strong enough to harm without fearing retaliation will do great harm, if he follows only his inclinations, for none is more marked, more violent in man than the desire to do harm and to dominate: these impulses come to us from nature; only the necessity of living in society modifies them. But this necessity, which civilization imposes on us, does not erect such constraint into a virtue; it does not prevent the greatest pleasure for man from consisting in breaking all its laws. Is it not ridiculous, I ask you, to dare to say that one must love other men as oneself? and does one not recognize, in the absurdity of this commerce, all the weakness of a deceitful and paltry legislator? What do I care for the fate of my fellow creatures, so long as I delight myself? in what am I bound to that individual, except by appearances? Tell me, then, must I love a being merely because he exists, or because he resembles me—and on these sole grounds suddenly prefer him to myself? If that is what you call morality, then truly, Justine, your morality is most ridiculous; and the best I can do is, assimilating it to your absurd religion, to despise it equally. There is no motive that can reasonably induce a man to restrain his tastes, his habits, or his inclinations in order to please another man: I repeat, if he does so, it is from weakness or from selfishness; he will never do so if he is the stronger; whence I conclude

that whenever nature grants more power or more means to another than to me, that being does perfectly right to sacrifice me to his inclinations, just as he may be sure that I shall not spare him if it is I who prevail; because to make oneself happy, abstraction made of every consideration of whatever kind one may suppose it to be, is, in a word, the sole and unique law imposed upon us by nature. I know the full extent of this principle; I know to what point it may carry men. But men to whom I assign no other barriers than those of nature may go with impunity to everything, and, if they are truly reasonable, they will never set any limits to their actions other than their desires, their wills... their passions. What is called virtue is, to me, a chimerical being; this insignificant and shifting mode, which varies from climate to climate, inspires in me no lofty idea; the virtue of a people will never be anything but that of its soil or of its legislators; that of the truly philosophical man must be the enjoyment of his desires, or the result of his passions. The word crime, equally arbitrary, imposes no more upon me. There is, in my eyes, no crime in anything, because there is none of the actions you call criminal that has not, somewhere, been crowned in the past. Since no action can be universally regarded as a crime, the existence of crime, purely geographical, becomes absolutely null; and the man who abstains from committing one, when he has received the inclination to it from nature, is nothing but a fool who wilfully blinds himself to the first impressions of that nature whose principles he fails to understand. O Justine! my sole morality consists in doing absolutely everything that pleases me, in never refusing anything to my desires: my virtues are your vices, my crimes your good deeds; what seems honourable to you is truly detestable in my eyes; your good works repel me, your qualities alarm me, your virtues horrify me; and if I am not yet, like Cœur-de-Fer, at the point of going out to murder on the highways, it is not that I have not often conceived the desire; it is not that, for sheer pleasure, I may not perhaps have sometimes carried it out; but it is because I am rich, Justine, and that I can

enjoy myself, and do at least as much harm, without taking so much trouble and without running so many risks.”

The sensitive Justine poorly refuted arguments of such force; but her tears flowed in abundance—such is the resource of the weak when they see the chimera that consoled them torn away; they dare not rebuild it before the eyes of the philosopher who reduces it to dust; yet they regret it, the void terrifies them, and, lacking, like the powerful man, the sweet pleasures of despotism, they shudder at the role of the slave, and see it as all the more horrible now that their tyrant has no restraint.

Each day Bressac employed more or less the same means to try to corrupt Justine; but he could not succeed. The poor cling to virtue out of necessity; fortune, in denying them the means of crime, at the same time removes any incentive to cast off a yoke whose removal from society they would see only at the expense of their wretched existence. That is the whole secret of virtuous poverty.

Madame de Bressac, full of wisdom and piety, was not unaware that her son justified, with a kind of irrefutable logic, all the vices with which he defiled himself; she shed the bitterest tears over it in the bosom of the tender Justine; finding in her wit, sensitivity, and that naïve age in which virtue at once charms and deceives men, she took pleasure in confiding her sorrows to her.

Yet there were no longer any limits to her son’s misdeeds toward her: the count no longer even tried to conceal himself. Not only had he surrounded his mother with all that rabble serving his pleasures, but he had even carried his insolence and madness so far as to declare to this respectable woman that, if she dared again to thwart his tastes, he would convince her of their charms by indulging in them before her very eyes.

Here, the scrupulous accuracy we have made a law unto ourselves weighs cruelly upon our virtuous hearts; but we must depict things as they are; we have promised to be truthful, and any

concealment, any veil, would be an injury to our readers, whose esteem is dearer to us than all the prejudices of decency.

Madame de Bressac, whose custom it was to come every year to make her Easter communion at the parish of her estate—both because she was more at ease there, and because the pastor of that village was better suited to her gentle and perhaps somewhat timid soul—Madame de Bressac, we say, had just arrived with that intention, and had brought with her for the journey only two or three servants and Justine. But her son, little touched by such considerations, and having no desire to be bored while his mother went into raptures before a God of bread in whom he scarcely believed, had more or less maintained the same retinue as on all his travels: valets, footmen, runners, a secretary, jockeys—in a word, everything that ordinarily served his pleasures. This lack of regard put Madame de Bressac in ill humour; she dared to point out to her son that, for a stay of eight days, there was no need to have so many people, and, when the young man showed indifference to such sensible remonstrances, she adopted a tone of authority. “Listen,” said Bressac to Justine, who, very much against her will, had on this occasion become the mouth-piece of her mistress’s wishes, “go and tell my mother that the tone she takes with me displeases me... that it is time I correct her of it, and that, despite the good works... the pious duties she performed this morning with you—for I know that, in spite of everything I have done to persuade you of the absurdities of the Christian religion, there is not a day when you do not fulfil its infamous duties—that, despite all that, I am about, in a moment, to give her a little lesson before your very eyes, from which I hope she will profit and cease making me remonstrances.” — “Oh! sir—” — “Obey, and never presume to reply when it is I who give the orders.”

The château is shut up; two guards, left outside, are ordered to tell anyone who presents himself that Madame has just returned to Paris; and Bressac, going back up to his mother’s apartment with his faithful Jasmin and another of his servants named

Joseph—handsome as an angel, insolent as an executioner, and endowed like Hercules—“Madame,” he says on entering, “I must at last keep the word I gave you, to let you judge for yourself the excess of the pleasures that transport me when I give myself over to sodomy, so that you may no longer seek to oppose them.” — “Indeed, my son...” — “Be silent, Madame; do not imagine that this illusory title of mother gives you any right over me; it is no title in my eyes to have had yourself fucked in order to bring me into the world, and these absurd ties of nature have no power over souls such as mine; you shall see what it is all about, Madame; when you have judged my pleasures, I am persuaded you will respect them—you will find them too piquant to dare forbid them; and, convinced of your injustice, you will, I hope, prefer the sweet effects of my passions to those of your ridiculous authority.”

As Bressac spoke, he shut both door and window; then, approaching the bed upon which his mother had just thrown herself for a moment's rest after the holy fatigues of the morning, he brutally seized her, ordered Joseph to hold her down before his eyes, and had Jasmin sodomize him close beside her. “Observe, Madame,” said the villain, “observe carefully these movements, I beg you... look at the ecstasy into which the vigorous thrusts of my fucker plunge me; see my prick, how it stiffens... wait—while holding you with one hand, Joseph can jerk me off with the other, and spill upon your fleshy thighs the sperm that my lover's convulsions are about to produce; you shall be soaked with my seed, Madame, you shall be drenched in it; it will remind you of the happy time when my most honoured father smeared your navel with it... But what do I see, Justine! you turn away—place yourself as your mistress is, and hold her as Joseph does.”

It is no easy task to describe the emotions our various characters were experiencing at that moment: the unfortunate Justine wept as she obeyed; Madame de Bressac seethed with rage; Joseph, consumed by lust, unleashed a monstrous cock, which

was only waiting to find an empty spot to nestle into; Jasmin was fucking like a god; and the wicked Bressac, devouring his mother's tears with relish, seemed ready to cover her in cum; "Just a moment," he said as he withdrew, "I think we can add a few scenes here. Joseph, take these rods, and do me the favour of whipping my mother in front of me; don't go easy on her, I beg you; you, Justine, come and jerk me off, and aim my cum straight onto your master's buttocks, taking care to pace yourself, so that the streams only ejaculate when this respectable arse is sufficiently bloodied by the care of my dear Joseph, who, I hope, will not spare Madame, and treat her all the more rigorously, for it is essential to combine a little mortification with the good works by which she sanctified herself this morning. Alas! Everything is arranged and carried out with ruthless precision; Madame de Bressac may scream all she wants, but the cruel Joseph tears into her, leaving her covered in blood; and Jasmin, who cums before the one he's sodomizing, goes on to whip the poor mother in turn, while Joseph comes to sodomize his master, and Justine, with as much modesty as clumsiness, continues to masturbate him as best she can. "Sir, oh! sir," cries Madame de Bressac, "you are inflicting an insult upon me that I shall never forget in my life." — "I hope so, madam. My intention is that you should remember this scene, so that in future you will no longer place me in the position of having to repeat it." And at that moment, Madame de Bressac's backside being astonishingly raw, our libertine—excited by all the spice of this piquant scene—could no longer restrain himself: "Your buttocks... your buttocks..." he cried, "madam, I feel it necessary to carry matters still further, and, for your sake, I mean to make one supreme effort. That very white behind, and far more beautiful than I should have believed, tempts me to an infidelity... but first I must chastise it." The scoundrel takes the rods, he tears into his mother, while they continue to fuck him; then, casting aside the instruments of this torture, and plunging into her anus—yes, truly, madam, he says to her, yes, on my honour, it's a struggle, it's a struggle: oh!

fuck, how divine it is to fuck his mother in the arse! Come here, Justine, come here, since I'm in the midst of desecrating my worship, come share in the offense, let me handle your buttocks. Justine blushes; but how can one resist what one loves? Isn't it always a favour that the poor girl receives? Her cute little arse offers itself up to the excesses of all these libertines; they all fondle and admire it to their hearts' content; she is condemned to continue her masturbatory act; she must stroke the base of this cock nestled in her mother's arse, and from her delicate fingers finally gushes a torrent of semen into Madame de Bressac's womb, who faints at this horror.

The young man leaves without troubling himself about the condition of the respectable woman he has just outraged, and Justine shuts herself in with her, to console her if she can.

Our readers will easily imagine that such conduct made our unhappy heroine shudder, and that she tried to account for it by personal motives, in order to stifle within her soul the terrible passion that tormented her; but is love then an evil from which one can be cured? Everything one seeks to oppose to it only fans its flame more fiercely: the perfidious Bressac never appeared more lovable in the eyes of this poor girl than when her reason had set before her all that ought to compel her to hate him.

CHAPTER V.

Plan of an execrable crime. — Efforts to prevent it. — Sophistries of the one who conceives it. — Preliminaries and execution of this horror. — Justine escapes.

Justine had been in that house for two years, always persecuted by the same sorrows, always consoled by the same hope, when the infamous Bressac, believing himself at last sure of her, dared to reveal to her his perfidious designs.

At that time they were in the country, and Justine was alone with her mistress, the latter having obtained leave to spend the summer in Paris on some business of her husband's; one evening, shortly after the young woman had withdrawn, Bressac suddenly knocked at the door and begged her to let him speak with her for a moment; alas, every such moment granted by the cruel author of her sufferings seemed too precious for her to dare refuse any. He entered, carefully shut the door, and, throwing himself into a chair beside her, said with some embarrassment, "Listen to me, Justine, I have matters of the greatest importance to tell you: swear that you will never reveal them." — "Oh, sir, can you believe me capable of abusing your confidence?" — "You do not know what you would risk if you proved that I was mistaken in granting it." — "The most dreadful of all my sorrows would be to have lost it; I need no greater threats." — "My dear," continued Bressac, taking Justine's hands, "that mother whom I detest—well— I have condemned her to death... and it is you who must serve me." — "I!" cried Justine, recoiling in horror...

“Do not hope it... Oh, sir, how could you conceive such a plan? No, no, dispose of my life if you must; but never imagine you will obtain my complicity in the dreadful crime you have conceived.”—“Listen, Justine,” Bressac went on, gently drawing her back; “I suspected your scruples, but as you have intelligence, I flattered myself I might overcome them... and prove to you that this crime, which appears so enormous to you, is in fact a very simple matter.”

“Two offenses present themselves here, Justine, to your unphilosophical eyes: the destruction of a creature like ourselves, and the added wrong which, in your view, arises when that creature is so closely related to us. As for the crime of destroying one’s fellow, be certain, my dear girl, that this crime is purely chimerical: the power to destroy is not granted to man; at most he possesses that of varying forms, but not that of annihilating them. Now, every form is equal in the eyes of nature; nothing is lost in the immense crucible where its variations are carried out; all portions of matter that fall into it continually reemerge under other shapes, and whatever our methods upon this may be, none can outrage it, none can offend it; our destructions revive its power, they sustain its energy, but none diminish it, none oppose it. And what does it matter to its creative hand whether this mass of flesh which today forms a bipedal individual is reproduced tomorrow in the form of a thousand different insects? Shall one dare say that the construction of this two-footed animal costs it more than that of a worm, and that it must take a greater interest in it? If, then, this degree of attachment—or rather indifference—is the same, what can it matter to it that by the blade of one man another man is changed into a fly or into grass? When I have been convinced of the sublimity of our species, when I have been shown that it is so important to nature that its laws must necessarily be offended by this transmutation, then I may believe that murder is a crime; but when the most reflective study has proved to me that everything that lives upon this globe, the most imperfect of nature’s works, is of equal value in its eyes,

I shall never admit that the transformation of one of these beings into a thousand others can in any way disturb its designs. I shall say to myself: all animals, all plants, growing, nourishing themselves, destroying themselves, reproducing themselves by the same means, never undergoing a real death but only a simple variation in what modifies them—all, I say, appearing today under one form and a few years later under another—can, at the will of the being who sets them in motion, change a thousand and a thousand times in a single day without any law of nature being in the least affected; indeed, without this transformer having produced anything but a good, since, by decomposing individuals whose elements again become necessary to nature, he merely restores to it, by this action improperly called criminal, the creative energy of which he is necessarily deprived by the one who, through a stupid indifference, dares undertake no upheaval. It is man's pride alone that has erected murder into a crime; this vain creature, imagining himself the most sublime being on the globe, believing himself the most essential, set out from that false principle to assert that the act which destroys him could only be horrible; but his vanity, his madness change nothing in the laws of nature. There is no being that does not feel at the bottom of its heart the most vehement desire to be rid of those who trouble it or whose death might be advantageous to it; and from this desire to the act, Justine, do you imagine the difference is so great? Now, if these impulses come to us from nature, is it likely that they offend it? Would it inspire in us what would degrade it? Ah, calm yourself, my dear girl: we feel nothing that does not serve it; all the movements it places within us are the instruments of its laws; the passions of man are only the means it employs to hasten its designs. Does it need individuals? It inspires us with love—there are creations. Do destructions become necessary to it? It places in our hearts vengeance, avarice, lust, ambition—there are murders; but it has always worked for itself, and we have become, without knowing it, the feeble agents of its slightest caprices.”

“Everything in the universe is subject to the laws of nature; if, on the one hand, the elements act without any regard for the particular interests of men, so too are men left to their own judgment in the various collisions of matter, and may employ all the faculties with which they are endowed to provide for their preservation and their happiness. How, then, can one dare to say that a man who rids himself either of one who has offended him or of one whom his passions condemn can, by this act, incur the indignation of nature, which itself suggested the impulse to him? How can it be claimed that, blind instruments of nature’s will, we can usurp its rights? Shall we say that it has specially reserved to itself the right to dispose of human life, and has not subjected this event, like others, to the general laws by which its hand governs the universe? Let us be well persuaded: the life of man depends upon the same laws as that of animals; both forms of existence are subject to the general laws of matter and motion. How, then, can one maintain that man may dispose of the life of beasts but not of that of his fellow? How can such sophisms be justified except by the most absurd reasonings of self-love and pride? All animals, abandoned in the world to their own prudence, are alternately victims and killers; all alike have received from nature the right to alter its operations as far as their faculties permit. Nothing would exist in the universe without the absolute exercise of this right: all the movements, all the actions of men alter the arrangement of certain portions of matter and divert the general laws of motion from their usual course. From these considerations, we find that the life of man depends upon the general laws of motion, and that it is no offense to nature to disturb or alter those laws in whatever way. It is therefore clear that each man has the right to dispose of the life of his fellow and to make free use of a power delegated to him by nature; only the laws do not possess this privilege, and for two excellent reasons: first, because their motives are not drawn from self-interest, the most powerful and most legitimate of all justifications; second, because they always act in cold blood and by their own

will, whereas the murderer is always driven by his passions—always the blind instrument of a nature that makes him act despite himself. From this it follows that the spectacle of the execution of a criminal offers to the philosophical eye only a crime, where fools see respect for the law; and, in the other case, only justice, where they perceive nothing but offense and infamy.¹³

“O Justine! persuade yourself, then, that the life of the most sublime of men is of no greater importance to nature than that of an oyster, and that it is abandoned to us in precisely the same way. If nature had reserved to herself the particular care of disposing of human life, such that to presume to enjoy it as she does were to usurp her rights, it would be as wrong to act in order to preserve oneself as to destroy oneself; and the action I should perform in diverting the stone ready to crush my neighbor would become as criminal as that which I should commit in plunging a dagger into his breast. From that moment I would be disturbing the laws of nature; from that moment I would arrogate to myself her rights, by prolonging beyond its term a life whose limits her powerful hand had fixed. A hair, a fly, an insect suffices to destroy this powerful being whose life appears to us of such great importance. Is there, then, any absurdity in believing that our passions may likewise legitimately dispose of a thing dependent on causes so trivial? Are not these passions agents of nature, like the insect that kills man or the plant that poisons him, and are they not equally directed by the same will of nature? What! I should not be guilty in arresting, if I had the power, the course of the Nile or the Danube, yet I should be so in diverting a few ounces of blood from their natural channels! What imbecility! There is no being in the world that does not derive from nature all the power and all the faculties it enjoys; there is none which, by any action however extensive or irregular it may

¹³ What do the laws do in punishing the violator of the social pact? They avenge particular interests. If the crime they commit on my behalf is nothing, then the one I commit for the same purposes must assuredly be nothing as well.

appear, can encroach upon nature's designs or disturb the order of the universe: the operations of this scoundrel are the work of nature, just as much as the chain of events he believes he disrupts; and whatever principle makes him act, we may for that very reason regard him as the one most favoured by nature. Nothing that sets our forces in motion can offend the power from which we derive them, because it is neither to be presumed nor possible that she has given us more than can serve her; surely we have not received from her the means necessary to harm her. When the individual I have disorganized shall be dead, will not the elements that compose him still retain their place in the universe, and be just as useful in the great machine as when they composed the being I have destroyed? Whether that man be dead or alive, nothing changes in the universe, nothing is withdrawn from it. It is therefore a true blasphemy to dare to say that a wretched creature such as we can in any way disturb the order of the world or usurp the office of nature; it is to suppose in him a power that this common mother could not possibly have transmitted. Man is isolated in the world; the steel that pierces him materially affects him alone; he who directs that steel in no way disturbs the laws of a society to which the victim was bound only morally. Granting, if you will, for a moment that the obligation to do good is perpetual, it must necessarily have some limits: the good that resulted for society from the existence I chose to disturb certainly did not equal the evils I suffered from the prolongation of that man's days; why then should I lengthen them, when they are of such slight importance to others and so burdensome to me? I go further: if murder is an evil, it is so in all cases, under all suppositions; then sovereigns, nations that expose the lives of men for their passions or their interests—in short, all those hands that direct murderous blades against him—are either all equally criminal or all equally innocent.¹⁴ If they are criminal, I may be so by their example; for the sum of a

¹⁴ What has just been said about the laws brings them back within this hypothesis.

nation's passions and interests is only the result of individual passions and interests, and a nation should be permitted to sacrifice everything to its interests or passions only insofar as it is just enough to allow the individuals who compose it, in similar cases, to make equal sacrifices. Let us embrace the second branch of the hypothesis: if all these actions are innocent, what risk do I run in staining myself with them whenever my pleasure or my interest requires it, and with what eye shall I regard the individual who dares to find them criminal?

“No, no, Justine, nature does not place in our hands the possibility of crimes that could disturb her economy. Can it make sense that the weaker should have the power to offend the stronger? What are we in relation to nature! Could she, in creating us, have placed within us anything capable of harming her? Does such an imbecile supposition accord with the sublime and certain manner in which we see her achieve her ends? Ah! if murder were not one of the human actions that best fulfills her intentions, would she permit it to occur? Would not man be insensible to the blows of man? Can imitating nature harm nature? Can she be offended to see man do to his fellow what she herself does to him every day? Since it is demonstrated that she can reproduce herself only through destructions, is it not to act according to her designs to multiply them without ceasing? Is it not to please her to cooperate in her plans? And in this respect, will not the man who most ardently and most frequently abandons himself to murder be the one who serves her best, since he becomes the one who most energetically fulfills designs she manifests at every instant? The first and finest quality of nature is the movement that agitates her unceasingly; but this movement is nothing but a perpetual succession of crimes; it is only through crimes that she preserves it; she lives, sustains, and perpetuates herself only by means of destruction; thus, the being who produces the most of it, who most resembles her, who is most perfect, will infallibly be the one whose most active agitation becomes the cause of the greatest number of crimes, the one who,

so to speak, fills the world with them, who, without fear or restraint, sacrifices indiscriminately all that his interest or passions may present to him as victims, of whatever kind or nature they may be; while, I repeat, the inactive or indolent being—that is to say, the virtuous being—must surely appear to her the least perfect, since he tends only toward apathy and tranquility, which would incessantly plunge everything back into chaos if its ascendancy prevailed; equilibrium must be maintained, and it can only be so through crimes; crimes therefore serve nature; if they serve her, if she requires them, if she desires them, can they offend her, and who could be offended if she is not?

“But the creature I destroy is my mother; it is therefore under this second aspect that we shall examine murder:

“One cannot doubt, surely, that the pleasure a mother expects from the conjugal act is the sole motive that determines her to it: this established, I ask how gratitude can arise in the heart of the offspring of such a selfish act? In yielding to it, has the mother worked for herself or for her child? I do not believe such a question can even be raised. Yet the child is born, the mother nurses it; shall we discover in this second operation the source of the gratitude we seek? Certainly not. If the mother renders this service to her child, let us not doubt that she is driven to it by the natural impulse to rid herself of a secretion which might otherwise become dangerous to her; she imitates the females of beasts, whom milk would kill just as it would her, if, like them, this process did not promptly relieve it; now, can either rid themselves of it except by letting it be sucked by the creature that desires it, and which another natural impulse equally draws toward the breast? Thus, it is not a service the mother renders the child when she nurses it; on the contrary, it is the child who renders a very great one to the mother, who would otherwise be forced to resort to artificial means that would soon carry her to the grave. Here then is the child born and nourished, without our having yet discovered in either of these operations the least motive for gratitude toward the one

who gave him life and preserves it. Will you speak to me of the care that follows infancy? Ah! see in it no motive but the mother's pride; here silent nature commands her no more than it does other female animals; beyond the care necessary for the child's life and the mother's health—a mechanism no more extraordinary than that of the marriage of the vine to the elm—beyond these cares, I say, nature dictates nothing further, and the mother may abandon the child, who will grow and strengthen without her; her assistance is absolutely superfluous; do the young of animals suffer once they have left the teat? It is through habit... through vanity that women prolong these attentions, and far from being useful to the child, they weaken his instinct, degrade him, and cause him to lose his energy; one would think he always needs to be led. I ask you now whether, because the mother continues to take care that the child can perfectly well do without, and which is advantageous only to herself, that child must consider himself bound by gratitude; what! I should owe something to someone because that person has done for me what I can very well do without, and what only that person needs; you will admit that such a way of thinking would be a dreadful extravagance. Thus here is the child arrived at puberty without our having yet perceived in him the slightest motive for gratitude toward his mother; what will result from his reflections, if he makes them then? Dare one say it—estrangement, hatred for her who gave him life; she has transmitted to him her infirmities, the bad qualities of her blood, her vices... in short, an existence he has received only to be unhappy; are there, I ask you, very strong grounds here for gratitude, or do you not rather see the strongest reasons for antipathy? It is therefore clear that, in all the occasions of his life where the child is master to dispose of his mother's days, he may do so without the slightest scruple; indeed, he must do so, because he can only detest such a woman; that vengeance is the fruit of hatred, and murder the means of vengeance; let him therefore slaughter without pity that individual to whom he falsely imagines himself so greatly obliged; let

him tear without regard that breast which nourished him; he will commit no greater wrong than he would with any other creature, and indeed a lesser one, if he has not toward that other creature as much reason for hatred and aversion as toward this one. Do animals bargain so much with the beings from whom they have life? They enjoy them, they slaughter them, and nature says not a word; measure all the other supposed duties of man by this one; compare them all to these reflections, and then pronounce upon your supposed duties toward your father, your wife, your husband, your children, etc.; once fully imbued with this philosophy, you will see that you are alone in the universe, that all the chimerical bonds you have forged are the work of men, who, naturally born weak, seek to support themselves with such ties; a son believes he needs his father, the father in turn imagines he needs his son—there is the cement of these supposed bonds, of these sacred duties; but I defy anyone to find them in nature; cast aside then your prejudices, Justine, and serve me—your fortune is made.”

“Oh! sir,” replied the poor, thoroughly frightened girl, “this indifference you attribute to nature is once again nothing but the result of the sophisms of your mind; listen rather to your heart, and you will hear how it condemns all these false arguments of vice and libertinage; is not that heart, to whose tribunal I refer you, the very sanctuary where that nature you outrage wills that she be heard and respected? If she engraves there the strongest horror for the crime you contemplate, will you grant me that it is condemnable? Passions, I know, blind you now; but as soon as they fall silent, how wretched remorse will make you; the more active your sensibility, the more the sting of repentance will torment you. Oh! sir, preserve, respect the life of that tender and precious friend; do not sacrifice her—you would perish of despair; each day, at every instant, you would see before your eyes that cherished mother whom your blind fury would have plunged into the grave; you would hear her plaintive voice still utter those sweet names that formed the joy of your childhood;

she would appear in your waking hours, she would torment you in your dreams, she would open with her bloodstained fingers the wounds with which you had torn her; not a single happy moment would then shine for you upon the earth; all your pleasures would be defiled, all your thoughts disturbed; a celestial hand, whose power you deny, would avenge the life you had destroyed by poisoning all of yours; and, without having even enjoyed your crimes, you would perish from the mortal regret of having dared to commit them.”

Justine was in tears as she uttered these last words; she was on her knees at the feet of that ferocious man, who listened to her with an expression mingled with rage and contempt; she implored him, by all that he might hold most sacred, to forget an infamous design which she swore to conceal all her life; but she did not know the monster with whom she had to deal; she did not know, innocent creature, to what extent the passions support and strengthen crime in a soul such as that of Bressac; she was unaware that all that virtue and sensibility can inspire in such a circumstance becomes, in the heart of the scoundrel, so many goads whose sharp pricks drive the projected horror forward with still greater violence; the true libertine delights even in dishonor, in disgrace, in the reproaches his execrable conduct earns him; these are pleasures for his perverse soul; have there not been some who loved even the torments that human vengeance prepared for them... who endured them with joy... who regarded the scaffold as a throne of glory, upon which they would have been very sorry not to perish with the same courage that had animated them in the execrable exercise of their crimes and outrages. There is the man at the ultimate degree of reflective corruption; there is Bressac. He rises coldly; “I see clearly,” he says to Justine, “that I was mistaken; I am more sorry for you than for myself; no matter, I shall find other means, and you will have lost much without your mistress having gained anything.”

Such a threat completely altered Justine’s thoughts; by refusing the crime proposed to her, she risked much for herself, and

her mistress would inevitably perish; by consenting to the complicity, she would shield herself from Bressac's wrath and certainly save the marquise: this reflection, formed in an instant, determined her to accept everything; but as so sudden a reversal would inevitably have aroused suspicion of deceit, she managed her capitulation for a while, and placed Bressac in a position to repeat his maxims to her often. Gradually she seemed no longer to know what to answer; Bressac believed her converted, and rushed into her arms. What delight for Justine, had this movement been inspired by wisdom!... But it was too late; the horrible conduct of this man, his parricidal designs, had annihilated all the feelings once conceived in the weak heart of this poor girl; and now calm, she saw in the former idol of her heart nothing but a scoundrel unworthy to reign there... even for a single instant.

"You are the first woman I have embraced," said Bressac, pressing her ardently; "you are delicious, my child; has a ray of philosophy then penetrated your mind? Is it possible that such a charming head remained so long in dreadful prejudices?... O Justine! the torch of reason has at last dispelled the darkness into which superstition plunged you; you see clearly, you understand the nothingness of crimes, and the sacred duties of self-interest at last prevail over the frivolous considerations of virtue; come, you are an angel, I scarcely know what prevents you from making me change my taste at once." Indeed, Bressac, animated far more by the certainty of his present scheme than by Justine's charms, throws her face down upon a bed, lifts her skirts above her hips despite her resistance, and says, "Yes, fuck, that is the finest arse in the world; but unfortunately, there's a cunt there: what an insurmountable obstacle!..." and, covering her again, "Come, Justine, let us settle our business; when I listen to you, the illusion is sustained, it vanishes when I look at you;" and continuing to stiffen, even obliging Justine to handle his cock... to toy with it in her pretty fingers, "my brave friend," he says to her, "you will poison my mother, I may rely on it; here, this is

the subtle poison you will pour into the linden water she takes each morning for her health; it is infallible and has no taste; I have made a thousand experiments with it.” — “A thousand, sir?” — “Oh yes, Justine, I often make use of such means, either to rid myself of those who inconvenience me, or from sheer lust; I find it delightful thus treacherously to be master of others’ lives, and I have often carried out proscriptions solely to amuse myself; you will act then, Justine... yes, you will act, I guarantee you all consequences, and I grant you as a reward a contract for two thousand écus in income on the very day of the execution.” These promises were signed without stating the cause. Bressac rings; a handsome boy appears. — “What do you want, sir?” — “Your arse, my child; Justine, strip him, jerk my cock, and guide it to the hole.” Bressac, served as he desires, fucks the boy and climaxes furiously. “O Justine!” he says, withdrawing, “it is to you alone that this homage is owed; your altars could not receive it, you know, but your assent to the desired crime alone has kindled the incense; it has burned for you alone.”

At that moment, something occurred too singular—too revealing of the atrocious soul of the monster of whom we are speaking—to allow us not to interrupt for a moment the account our readers expect of the adventure into which his villainy has just plunged our heroine.

On the day after the criminal pact we have just described, Bressac learned that an uncle, on whose inheritance he had not in the least counted, had left him fifty thousand écus in income. “Oh heaven!” said Justine on hearing this news, “is it thus that the hand of the Supreme Being punishes the plotting of crime?”... and soon repenting of this blasphemy against Providence, she fell to her knees, implored forgiveness, and flattered herself that this unexpected event would at least change Bressac’s designs: how great was her error! “Oh, my dear Justine,” he exclaimed, rushing into her room that very evening, “how prosperity rains upon me! I have often told you, the idea of a crime or its execution is the surest means of attracting happiness; it

belongs only to scoundrels now.” — “But, sir,” replied Justine, “this fortune on which you did not count... the hand that grants it... yes, sir, madame has told me everything; without her your uncle would have disposed of his estate elsewhere; you know he did not love you; it is to Madame your mother alone that you owe this last arrangement; she alone compelled him to sign it... and your ingratitude—” — “You make me laugh,” Bressac interrupted; “what does this gratitude you impose upon me mean? In truth, nothing is so absurd; what! you will never understand, Justine, that one owes nothing to a benefactor, since he has satisfied himself in doing the favor, and why then should I reward an individual for the pleasure it pleased him to give himself? And I should delay my designs to give thanks to Madame de Bressac? And I should wait for the rest of my fortune in order to thank her for the great service she has rendered me?... Oh, Justine, how little you know me; must I tell you more?... this new death is my work; I was testing on the brother the poison with which I intend to cut short the sister’s days... Now dare to demand delays... no, no, Justine, let us hasten, far from postponing... tomorrow, the day after at the latest... I am already eager to count out a quarter of your income, to put you in possession of the deed that secures it.” Justine shuddered, but concealed her agitation, and saw that with such a man it was wise to resume her resolutions of the previous day. She still had the recourse of denunciation; but nothing in the world would have determined the sensitive Justine to employ means that prevent one horror only by committing a second; she therefore resolved to warn her mistress; of all the possible courses, that one seemed to her the best, and she adopted it.

“Madame,” she said to her the day after her last interview with the young count, “I have something of the greatest importance to reveal to you; but however deeply it may concern you, I am resolved to remain silent unless you first give me your

word to show no resentment toward your son; you will act, madame... you will take the best measures, but you will say nothing; be so good as to promise me this, or I shall keep silent."

Madame de Bressac, who believed that only some ordinary extravagance of her son was at issue, pledged herself by the oath Justine required, and the latter revealed everything... "The wretch!" cried that unhappy mother, "what have I ever done except for his good! Ah, Justine, Justine, prove to me the truth of this scheme, put me in a position where I can no longer doubt it; I need everything that may extinguish the feelings my blind heart still dares to harbour for this monster;" and then Justine showed her the packet; it was difficult to furnish better proof. Madame de Bressac, who still desired illusion, wished to make experiments; a small dose was immediately given to a dog, which died within two hours in dreadful convulsions. Madame de Bressac, no longer able to doubt, took her resolution; she ordered Justine to give her the rest of the poison, and immediately wrote to Monsieur de Sonzeval, her relative, to go secretly to the minister, lay before him the atrocity of a son by whom she was on the point of becoming a victim, obtain a *lettre de cachet*, and hasten to her estate to deliver her as soon as possible from the monster who was so cruelly plotting against her life.

But this abominable crime was destined to be consummated; once again, by an inconceivable permission of heaven, virtue was to yield to the efforts of villainy: the animal upon which they had experimented revealed everything. Bressac heard it howl and asked what had been done to it; those he questioned, knowing nothing, gave no definite answer. From that moment his suspicions increased; he said nothing, but he was disturbed; Justine informed the marquise of this state, who became all the more uneasy, though unable to imagine any course but to hasten the courier and to conceal, if possible even more carefully, the object of his mission; she told her son that she was sending a dispatch to Paris to beg Monsieur de Sonzeval to take charge of the in-

heritance of the uncle from whom they had just inherited, because if no one appeared at once there would be lawsuits to fear; she added that she was urging this relative to come and give her an account of the matter, so that she might decide to depart herself with her son if the affair required it.

But Bressac, too skilled a reader of faces not to discern the embarrassment that reigned upon his mother's countenance, and to notice a certain confusion upon Justine's, drew his own conclusions from everything and believed nothing. Under the pretext of a hunt, he leaves the château; he waits for the courier at a place through which he must necessarily pass: this man, far more attached to him than to his mother, makes no difficulty about handing over the dispatches, and Bressac, convinced of Justine's betrayal, gives the courier a hundred louis, with orders never to appear again at his mother's house; he returns, rage in his heart, sends all the servants back to Paris, and keeps in the château only Jasmin, Joseph, and Justine. From the fury that burned in the eyes of this scoundrel, our unhappy orphan soon foresaw all the misfortunes that were about to overwhelm both her mistress and herself; nevertheless, Bressac loses no time: the doors are shut, everything is barricaded, gamekeepers forbid entry to everyone. "A great crime has just been committed," says Bressac, "I must discover its authors... You shall know all, my friends, when I have found the culprit; I keep inside only the witnesses along with the one I suspect..." Alas! this atrocious crime had not yet been committed; but the scoundrel was about to consummate it... he was about to... We shudder at the necessity of transmitting these odious facts, but we have promised to be exact, and we owe it, even at the expense of our modesty.

"Execrable creature," said the young man, addressing Justine, "you have betrayed me; but you shall entangle yourself in the very snares you prepared for me. Why did you promise me the service I demanded, if you intended only to deceive me? and how did you imagine you were serving virtue by risking the liberty—perhaps the life—of the one to whom you owed your

fortune? Necessarily placed between two crimes, why did you choose the most abominable? You should have refused, slut—yes, refused—and not accepted in order to betray me.” Then Bressac told Justine all he had done to intercept the marquise’s dispatches, and how the suspicion had arisen that led him to divert them. “What have you done, by your duplicity, imbecile creature,” continued Bressac; “you have risked your own life without saving that of your mistress; for she shall die all the same, and it will be before your eyes; you shall follow her. I will prove to you, Justine, that the path of virtue is not always the best, and that there are circumstances in the world where complicity in crime is preferable to denouncing it.” Bressac then returned to his mother. “Your sentence is pronounced, madame,” said this monster, “you must submit to it; perhaps you would have done better, knowing my designs and my hatred for you, simply to have swallowed the draught; in avoiding a gentle death, you have prepared for yourself a cruel one. Come, madame, no more delay.” — “Barbarian, what do you accuse me of?” — “Read your letter.” — “Since you conspired against my life, was I not to defend myself against you?” — “No; you are now but a useless being upon the earth, your days belong to me, and mine are sacred.” — “Oh, wretch, passion blinds you...” — “Socrates drank without resistance the poison presented to him; one was offered to you from me—why did you not take it?” — “Oh, my dear son, how can you treat with such cruelty the one who bore you in her womb?” — “That service is nothing to me; you did not have me as your object in bringing about my existence; and the result of an act that satisfied only a cunt can have no merit in my eyes. Follow me, slut, follow me, and reason no more.” At these words he seized her, dragged her by the hair into a small garden planted with cypresses and surrounded by high walls—an impenetrable asylum where, with the darkness of tombs, reigned the dreadful silence of death. There, Justine, conducted by Jasmin and Joseph, awaited, trembling, the fate reserved for her. The first objects that

met Madame de Bressac's eyes were, on one side, a wide pit prepared to receive her; on the other, four monstrous mastiffs, foaming with rage and kept fasting for this purpose ever since the discovery of the fatal secret. Arrived in this place of horror, Bressac himself lifts his mother's skirts; his impure hands roam lasciviously over the chaste charms of that respectable woman: the breast that had nursed him excites his fury; he kneads it in his matricidal fingers. "Take it," he says to one of his dogs, indicating a nipple; the animal leaps, and its teeth, sunk into that white and delicate flesh, make the blood spurt at once. "Here," resumes Bressac, pinching the mound and offering it to another hound; a fresh bite follows. "They will tear her, they will devour her, I hope," continues this monster; "let us bind her and see the effect." — "What! you're not fucking her in the arse?" says Jasmin; "put your cock in her arse, and I'll have her buttocks bitten while you sodomize her." — "A fine idea," says Bressac; and the villain carries it out: he fucks his mother in the arse while Jasmin, pinching the middle of her buttocks, offers them alternately to the dog, which devours them as soon as it sees them. "Have her tits torn again while I fuck," says Bressac to the boy; "and let Joseph fuck me in the arse while he handles Justine." What a spectacle! Far from the sight of men, you alone could behold it, O great God! and you did not thunder? your powerless lightning remained suspended! your indifference to the crimes of men is therefore real, since your wrath was nothing while this one was being consummated!

"Let us withdraw, I shall climax," says the infamous wretch after a brief course, "and let us bind this slut to the trees." He strips her and ties her there himself, by means of a rope passed along her loins, leaving her arms free and the ability to move forward and back within a space of about six feet. "What fine buttocks," says the scoundrel, handling again the arse, already all covered in blood, of his unhappy mother! "what splendid flesh! what an excellent breakfast for my dogs! Ah, slut, it was dogs that revealed you to me, it shall be dogs that punish you." And with

the brutal manner in which he handles the thighs, the breasts, and all the fleshy parts of his mother, it seems his murderous hands would compete in fury with the sharp teeth of his hounds. "Come, Jasmin, spur on these animals; you, Joseph, fuck Justine in the arse; we shall have her devoured afterward: this faithful servant must perish by the same death as her dear mistress; they must be united in the same grave; you see how deep it is—I had it dug on purpose." And the trembling Justine wept, begged for mercy, and obtained from her executioners nothing but contempt and bursts of laughter. At last the dogs surround the unhappy Madame de Bressac; urged on by Jasmin, they throw themselves all at once upon the defenseless body of that unfortunate mother and devour her with savage bites; in vain does she try to drive them off, in vain multiply her efforts to avoid their cruel teeth—every movement only excites them the more, and streams of blood flood the grass. Bressac fucks Jasmin in the arse while Joseph sodomizes Justine; he feasts upon the abominations he has caused to be carried out. The cries of our poor orphan mingle painfully with those of her mistress; unaccustomed to the treatment she endures, it requires all Joseph's strength to hold her to it. This duet of groans... of cries... soon brings the young man to ecstasy; he fucks, he excites the dogs, he urges on Joseph; his mother is on the point of expiring, Justine faints, and the most delicious ecstasy comes to crown the villainy of the most extraordinary genius nature has yet created.

"Come," said Bressac, "let us bring these fools back; one must be finished, and the fate of the other decided." Madame de Bressac is carried back to her room, thrown upon her bed; and her unworthy son, seeing that she still lives, places a dagger in Justine's hand, seizes the arm that holds the blade, and, in spite of all the resistance of that unfortunate girl, drives it into the heart of the wretched Bressac, who expires while imploring God's mercy for her son. "You see the murder you have just committed," says the barbarous Bressac to Justine, almost unconscious and drenched in her mistress's blood; "you see it—can there exist

in the world a more dreadful act? You shall be punished for it... it must be so... you shall be broken alive on the wheel, you shall be burned;" and, thrusting her into a neighboring room, he locks her in, placing the still-bloody dagger beside her. He then opens the château, feigns grief and tears, declares that a monster has just murdered his mother, that he found the weapon in that wretch's chamber, that he holds her locked there, and that he urgently calls for all the assistance of justice. But a protecting God here saves innocence; the measure was not yet full, and it was through many other trials that the unhappy Justine was to fulfill her destiny. Bressac, distracted, believes he has firmly shut the door—it is not; Justine takes advantage of the moment when all this commotion fills the courtyard of the château; she slips out quickly, escapes through the gardens, finds the park gate half open, and there she is in the forest. Entirely given over to her grief, Justine throws herself at the foot of a tree, and there, giving it free course, she makes the woods resound with her groans; she presses the earth with her unhappy body... she waters the grass with her tears.

"O my God!" she cries, "you have willed it; it was in your eternal decrees that the innocent should become the prey of the guilty: dispose of me, Lord; I am still far from the sufferings you endured for us. May those I endure while adoring you one day render me worthy of the rewards you promise to the weak, when they hold you as their aim in their afflictions, and glorify you in their pain!"

Night was falling; Justine did not dare go farther; fearing, in avoiding one danger, to fall into another, she cast her eyes about her; she perceived the fatal thicket where she had slept two years before, in a situation just as miserable; she dragged herself to it, and, having placed herself in the same spot, overwhelmed with anxiety and grief, she passed there the most cruel night it is possible to imagine.

Scarcely had day broken, however, than her anxiety redoubled. What dangers still threatened her, remaining within reach

of Bressac's château! She rises, flees at great speed, leaves the forest, and, resolved at all hazards to reach the first dwelling that offers itself, she enters the village of Saint-Marcel, about five leagues from Paris; a fine house stands at the entrance to the village; she inquires, and is told it is a celebrated school where children of both sexes come from more than twenty leagues to receive the best education; and that the master, a man highly learned in all the sciences, especially in medicine and surgery, personally provides his pupils with all the care their health requires, along with the most attentive instruction. "Go in," says the person informing Justine; "if, as I suppose, you are seeking a position, there are always vacancies in this house; Monsieur Rodin, the master of the establishment, will, I am sure, take the greatest pleasure in assisting you; he is a perfectly honorable man, extremely well liked in Saint-Marcel, and enjoys general esteem." Justine does not hesitate; she knocks; and what she saw, what she heard, what she did in this new house will form the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

What manner of refuge this new asylum affords our hapless sufferer. — The species of hospitality she there encounters. — An episode most dreadful.

Our heroine was seventeen when she presented herself at the house of Monsieur Rodin, master of the boarding establishment of Saint-Marcel: her charms, now more fully developed, offered still greater attractions; her whole person had, despite her sorrows, acquired a kind of perfection that rendered her truly one of the prettiest girls it was possible to behold. "Mademoiselle," said Rodin, receiving her with great civility, "you surely deceive me in presenting yourself as a servant; it is neither with so fine a figure, nor with so fair a complexion, eyes so brilliant, hair so magnificent, nor a manner of expression so pure—it is not, assuredly, with all these graces that one is reduced to service. Thus favored by nature, you cannot be the victim of fortune; and I ought rather to expect orders from you than presume to give you any." — "Ah! monsieur, to what a degree, nevertheless, I have cause to complain of fortune!" — "Well then, it is an injustice; we shall repair it, mademoiselle." And thereupon Justine, encouraged, recounted her misfortunes to Rodin. "This is dreadful indeed," said the adroit impostor; "that Monsieur de Bressac is a monster, long known for his excessive debaucheries, and I consider you most fortunate to have escaped his hands. But, fair Justine, I persist in telling you that you were not made to serve: she at whose knees the universe ought to lie, she who

might bind it with her eyes, ought to exist only in freedom. If my house suits you, I offer it; I have a daughter who has just reached her fourteenth year—she will be but too happy to enjoy society such as yours; you shall dine with us; you shall share in our concern for that interesting class of humanity which all France deigns to entrust to my attentive care; like us, you shall contribute to the meritorious work of cultivating the talents of youth; and, like us, you shall labor toward the perfection of their morals.”

Was there in the world a role more suited to the gentle, pious, and sensitive character of our engaging orphan? was there one that could better become her? Tears flowed from her eyes; she pressed the hand of her benefactor... covered it with the kisses of her gratitude; but the adroit Rodin withdrew himself from demonstrations he knew he so little deserved. Rosalie was sent for; Justine was presented to her; and the bonds of the liveliest tenderness soon united these two charming young women.

Before going any further, we must, it seems, give an account of the first duties which Justine believed it necessary to fulfill. She ardently desired to learn what had taken place at the château of Bressac since the time of her flight; for this commission she fixed her eyes upon a lively, intelligent young peasant girl, who promised to obtain, as soon as possible and discreetly, all the information capable of enlightening her. Unfortunately, Jeannette falls under suspicion; she is questioned, becomes confused; and the only thing she has the prudence to conceal is the place of retreat of the one who sent her. “Very well! keep your secret,” said Bressac, “but wherever that hussy may be, deliver this letter to her, and tell her to take care of herself.” Jeannette, frightened, hastens back, and here is the letter she places in Justine’s hands.

“A wretch, capable of having murdered my mother, is indeed bold to send back into the very place where her crime was committed! The wisest course she can take is to conceal carefully the place of her retreat; she may be certain it will be disturbed if it is discovered; let her refrain from a second mission; she is hereby

warned that her emissary would be arrested. Moreover, it is well that she should know that the affair of the Conciergerie, which she believed concluded, is not so; the decree has not been quashed. She has thus been left beneath the sword, to see how she would conduct herself, with the intention of taking an interest in her only if she proved worthy of it: let her judge, then, from the state in which she stands, of the weight that must be attached in justice to the second accusation, far more serious, which has just been brought against her.”

Justine thought she would faint on reading this note; she carried it to Rodin, who reassured her, and the dear innocent returned to question Jeannette. As she withdrew, the clever messenger had thrown them off the scent; and, fearing pursuit, she had entered Paris, spent the night there, and left it the next day at daybreak. Moreover, all was in confusion at the château of Bressac; the relatives were there, the authorities had just arrived; and the son, who affected despair, accused no one but Justine of the misfortune that had occurred. Several previous thefts, which Bressac likewise laid to the charge of the unhappy Justine, cast light upon this second crime; and, unless one had seen it committed, it became certain that no one else could be suspected.

Jasmin and Joseph had given their depositions; they were believed; Justine had cause to tremble. Bressac, moreover, by means of this new inheritance, had become far richer than had been supposed. The strongbox, the portfolio, the furnishings, the jewels placed this young man, apart from his income, in possession of more than a million in ready money. Through his feigned grief, it was said he had much difficulty in concealing his joy; and the relatives, assembled for the examination of the body, while deploring the fate of the victim, had sworn to avenge her. The bites, for a moment, had perplexed the examining practitioner; but Bressac, by plausibly maintaining that a dog had inadvertently been shut up for twenty-four hours with the corpse, before there had been time to summon priests from Paris, had dispelled the surgeon’s surprise.

“Well then!” said Justine, “here is yet another cross which the hand of Heaven presents to me! By an inconceivable fatality of destiny, I shall be suspected, accused, perhaps even punished for a crime... the very idea of which I have abhorred; and he who made me commit it, he who guided my arm, he who alone is guilty of the most infamous matricide that ever stained the earth—he, I say, is happy, he is rich, he is overwhelmed with the favors of fortune; and I, I have not, in all the world, a single corner where I may rest in peace. Supreme Being!” she continued in tears, “I submit myself to Thy designs upon me; let Thy will be done—I was born only to fulfill it...” And while this engaging creature gives herself up to profound reflections upon the wickedness of men, and above all upon that of libertines depraved enough to sacrifice everything to the pleasure of ejaculating their cum a little more intensely, we shall give the reader a succinct idea both of the man in whose house she was, and of the motives for the agreeable reception she had received.

Rodin, master of the house, was a man of thirty-six: dark, with heavy brows, lively eyes, a vigorous air, hardly erect, tall, well made, bearing the look of strength and health, yet at the same time of libertinism. Far above his station, Rodin—practicing surgery only from inclination and maintaining his establishment only for reasons of lust—possessed, independently of the proceeds of his profession, some twenty thousand livres of income. A sister, beautiful as an angel, of whom we shall speak in a moment, replaced for him, in the fullest sense of the term, the amiable wife whom death had taken from him nearly ten years before. A very pretty housekeeper, and Rosalie his daughter, shared the favors of this shameless man. Let us attempt, if possible, to portray these figures.

Célestine, Rodin’s sister, aged thirty, was tall, slender, and well formed, with the most expressive eyes and the most lascivious countenance imaginable; dark, very hairy, with a notably long clitoris, buttocks shaped in the manner of a man’s, little bosom, an excessive temperament, and much malice and libertinism in

her mind; possessing every taste, but chiefly that for women, and, more extraordinary still in a woman, that of yielding herself to men only in that manner which fools proscribe, and which nature has so deliciously made the most divine excess of love.¹⁵

Marthe was the housekeeper's name; she was nineteen, with a round, fresh face, fine blue eyes, white as a swan, all her features in the most pleasing proportion, and the most beautiful arse it was possible to behold.

It is no exaggeration to say that Rosalie was one of those heavenly maidens whom nature so rarely bestows upon mortals; barely fourteen years old, Rosalie combined all the charms most likely to cause a sensation: the figure of a nymph, eyes brimming with the tenderest interest, charming and piquant features, the prettiest mouth, superb chestnut hair falling to her waist, skin of a radiance... of such delicacy... already the prettiest neck in the world and the most beautiful bottom... O divine lovers of this delightful part! There is not one of you who would not have been enthralled by the sight of these divine buttocks, not one who would not have paid them the holiest worship; perhaps only Justine's in the world could have been compared to them.

Monsieur Rodin, as we have said, kept in his house a boarding school for both sexes; he had obtained the privilege during his wife's lifetime, and his sister, replacing the mistress of the house, nothing had changed; Rodin's pupils were numerous and carefully selected. There were always two hundred boarders under his roof, half girls and half boys; he never accepted them below the age of twelve, and they were always sent away at seventeen. Nothing was so attractive as the pupils he admitted. If one were presented to him who had any bodily defect or unattractive features, he was immediately rejected under twenty pretexts, colored by sophisms always impossible to refute; by this

¹⁵ Almost all tribades are thus inclined; in imitating the passions of men, they come to cherish their refinements; and, as that of sodomy is the most delicate of all, it is only natural that they should make of it one of their most exquisite pleasures.

means, either the number of his pupils was not complete, or those he kept were always charming.

Rodin himself gave lessons to the boys; he taught them the sciences and the arts, and his sister Célestine did the same with the girls; no outside master was ever admitted; by this means, all the little libertine mysteries of the house, all its secret iniquities, were confined within its walls.

As soon as Justine began to see clearly, her penetrating mind could not help but give itself up to many reflections; and the intimacy she was allowed with Rosalie soon put her in a position to clarify everything with her. Rodin's charming daughter at first did nothing but smile at Justine's questions; and this manner, only increasing the anxiety of our young adventurer, led her to press Rosalie all the more insistently for an explanation. "Listen," said that charming girl, with all the candor of her age and all the naïveté of her amiable character; "listen, Justine, I am going to tell you everything. I see that you are incapable of betraying the secrets I have to reveal to you, and I wish to have none from you any longer:

"Indeed, my dear friend, my father, as you very rightly observe, could well do without the occupations in which he engages; and if he persists in both, it is for two reasons which I shall now explain to you. He practices surgery from inclination, solely for the pleasure of making new discoveries; he has multiplied them to such an extent and has produced on this subject works so well received, that he is regarded as the most skillful man now in France. He worked for some years in Paris, and it is for his own satisfaction that he has withdrawn to this countryside; the true surgeon of Saint-Marcel is one Rombeau, whom he has taken under his protection, and whom he associates in his experiments. You wish now to know what induces him to keep a boarding-house? Libertinism, my dear—libertinism alone, a passion carried to excess in him. My father and my aunt, equally debauched, both find among their pupils, male and female, objects whom weakness and dependence subject to their lust, and

they take advantage of it; their tastes resemble one another, their inclinations are the same; they serve each other so well that there is not a girl whom Rodin does not give to his sister, nor a boy whom she does not supply to her brother.” — “And the consequences of this abominable intrigue,” said Justine, “no doubt establish between them the most dreadful incest.” — “Would to Heaven they stopped there!” said Rosalie. — “Good God! you frighten me.” — “You shall know everything, my angel,” resumed Rodin’s charming daughter... “yes, I will tell you all. Come, follow me; it is Friday, precisely one of the days when the master corrects the guilty; such is the source of Rodin’s pleasures; it is in inflicting these torments that he delights; follow me, I say—you shall see how he proceeds. One may observe everything from the closet adjoining my chamber, which lies next to the place of his operations; let us go there quietly, and above all take care never to utter a word of what I tell you and of what I show you.”

It was important for Justine to know the character and habits of the new person who offered her an asylum—she felt it; and, wishing to neglect nothing that might reveal them to her, she followed Rosalie’s steps, who placed her near a partition ill joined enough to leave, between the boards that formed it, an opening sufficient to distinguish and to hear all that was said and all that was done in the adjoining room.

Mademoiselle Rodin and her brother were already there; we will give the most accurate account of everything they said to each other, starting from the moment Justine could hear them; and since they had only just entered, they probably hadn’t said much to each other yet. “Who are you whipping, my brother?” said the young lady. “I wish it were Justine; “Does that pretty girl turn your head terribly?” “You saw her, my sister; I came twice last night, and I was only thinking of her... I think she has the most delightful arse... you can’t imagine how much I want to see it.” — “It seems to me that wouldn’t be difficult.” — “More than you think... virtue, religion, prejudice. These are all the

monsters I have to fight: if I don't storm the citadel, I'll never be its master." — "Oh! By God, if all it takes is to violate her, I promise you my help; rest assured that we'll get the better of her, whether by seduction or by force; that whore will have to fall." — "Doesn't she inspire anything in you, my sister?" "She's charming, but I don't think she has much spirit; and I'm not surprised that, with her figure, she turns a man on more easily than a woman." — "You're right; but she irritates me a lot, me..." — "Oh! Surprisingly so;" and here Rodin lifted his sister's petticoats from behind and slapped her buttocks quite hard several times. "Jerk me off, Célestine," he said to her, "get me going"; and our man, sitting down in an armchair, placed his limp cock in his sister's hands, and with two or three deft strokes, she soon restored it to full vigor. Meanwhile, Rodin, still holding his sister's skirts up, exposed the libertine's buttocks to his lecherous gaze: he fondled them, he parted them; it was even easy to tell, from the kind of kisses with which he showered them, just how much this throne of love held sway over his senses. "Take a few strokes," said Rodin as he stood up, "and come and have some fun on my arse; there's no ritual in the world that gets me going more than that one; I need to get into it this morning—my imagination is running wild, and I feel my strength can't keep up with it." Célestine opens a cupboard, pulls out a dozen or so rods, lays them out on a chest of drawers, and, having chosen the best one, proceeds to flog her brother, who is masturbating and moaning with pleasure under the blows, all the while whispering: "Ah! Justine, if I had you in my power... but I will have you, Justine, you'll get what's coming to you; it won't be said that I gave you hospitality for nothing... I'm dying to see your arse, I'll see it... I'll whip it, I'll whip it, that lovely arse, Justine; you have no idea what my desires are like when debauchery stirs them up;" and Célestine, pausing for a moment from flogging her brother, came and rested her hands on the arms of the armchair, her bottom in the air, goading him into a fight; but Rodin,

who wished only to test his strength, and not to exhaust it, contented himself with a few slaps, two or three bites, and asked his sister to fetch him, in turn, the children of both sexes, whom he intended to dispatch. In this moment of respite, Justine throws herself into her friend's arms: "Oh God," she says, "have you heard the plot hatched against me?" "Ah! my dear girl," cried Rosalie, "I'm afraid you won't get away; you'd be the only one to have left this house unscathed." — "I'll escape," said Justine. "That's impossible," replied Rosalie; "his profession gives him the right to lock the doors; this house is like a convent. An escape, with you being branded a seductress or a thief, could land you in Bicêtre; be patient, my dear, it is the quickest way," and the noise our two spies heard forced them to return to their hiding place. Célestine brought with her a fourteen-year-old girl, fair-haired and as pretty as love itself: the poor child, in tears, all too aware of what awaits her, approaches her harsh tutor only with a groan; she throws herself at his feet, she begs for mercy; but Rodin, unyielding, kindles, in that very severity, the first sparks of his pleasure; they are already bursting from his heart through his fierce gaze. "Oh no!" he exclaimed, "no, no, this has happened to you far too often, Julie; I regret my kindness, for it has only served to lead you into fresh misdeeds; besides, given the gravity of this one, could I possibly show leniency, even if I wished to?" "Don't even think of it, my brother," cries Célestine, "that would be encouraging this girl to do wrong; the example would be pernicious in the house: have you forgotten that this little minx gave a note to a boy yesterday, as she entered the classroom..." — "I swear to you that I did not," says the charming Agnès in tears; "oh! nothing could be further from the truth, sir, believe me... believe me, I am incapable of such a thing." — "Do not be taken in by these accusations," says Rosalie quickly to Justine; "all these faults are invented on purpose to bolster her excuses: this little girl is an angel; it is because she resists him that he treats her harshly;" and meanwhile, Rodin's sister, loosening the skirt's drawstring, lets it slide down her legs, and lifting the

child's shirt around her waist, exposes to her brother's gaze the most voluptuous little body one could possibly behold. Meanwhile, the lecher seizes the girl's hands, fastens them to the ring on the pillar placed for this purpose in the middle of the punishment chamber, seizes a bundle of rods, this time dipped into a vat filled with vinegar, where they acquire, through this lotion, greater sharpness and bite, and places his penis in his sister's hands; she, kneeling before him, strokes him whilst he prepares to carry out the most rigorous... the bloodiest of operations. Six strokes, applied quite lightly, are the prelude to the storm; Julie trembles... the poor girl has no defences left... none other than her beautiful head, languidly turned towards her tormentor... her superb hair in disarray and tears flooding the most beautiful face in the world... the sweetest... the most captivating. Rodin gazes at the tableau; his mouth burns with desire, brushing against the victim's... he dares not kiss her, dares not devour the tears that electrify his ferocity; one of his hands, bolder, traces her buttocks... such whiteness!... what beauty! they are roses scattered upon lilies by the very hand of the Graces! What sort of being could be hard enough to condemn such fresh... such lovely charms to torment? What monster could seek pleasure amidst tears and pain? Rodin contemplates; his wandering gaze roams, his hands dare to desecrate the flowers that his cruelty seeks to wither; now the libertine half-opens, and now he clenches these divine charms that enchant him; he offers them, in every form, to his scrutinising eye: yet he confines himself to these alone; though the true temple of love lies within his reach, Rodin, faithful to his own worship, does not even cast his gaze upon it; he fears even its mere semblance. If the pose reveals them, he disguises them; the slightest deviation would disturb his homage; he does not wish to be distracted; finally, his fury knows no bounds; he expresses it through invective, he overwhelms this poor, wretched girl with nonsense and threats, as she trembles beneath the blows that threaten to tear her apart: Rodin, who is constantly being teased, is blinded by pleasure. Come on, he says,

get ready, you must suffer; and the cruel man, with a powerful arm, brings his staff down with full force upon every part offered to him, this time delivering twenty blows, which soon turn the tender, divine rosy hue of that fresh skin a deep crimson. Julie cries out; tears stream from her beautiful eyes and spill like pearls onto her pretty throat: Rodin only grows more furious; he brutally brings his hands back to the battered parts, touches them, presses them, as if preparing them for fresh assaults. Rodin begins again; his sister goads him on. "You're going easy on her," shouts the shrew. "No, no," says Rodin, no longer striking a single blow without first hurling an invective, a threat or a reproach. Blood appears; Rodin is in raptures, revelling in the sight of the telling evidence of his ferocity; he can no longer contain himself; his swollen cock oozes semen; he approaches the child, held back by Célestine, who shows her brother the arse he desires. The wretch, in a rage, presents himself at the opening. "Let him in," he whispers to his sister; and with the tip of the head of his enormous member, he lightly touches the little rosebud before him: what would he not give to go further? But he dares not. Célestine shakes him again; and the cruel fellow, resuming his thrusts, manages, with a series of lashes, to pry open this sanctuary of grace and voluptuousness; He no longer knows where he stands; his intoxication has reached the point where he can no longer even think straight; he swears, he blasphemes, he rages; every charm he beholds is treated with the same severity; the loins, the thighs, the buttocks, whatever he can grasp beneath the prettiest little virgin's arse, everything is torn apart, everything is flogged in detail; nothing is spared his barbaric blows: the violence with which his sister defiles him is such that one might say she is pumping a cistern. The scoundrel stops, however; he senses the impossibility of going any further without risking the loss of strength that will be useful to him for further operations.

"Get dressed," he said to Julie, untying her and straightening his own clothes, "and if anything like this happens to you again,

bear in mind that you won't get off so lightly." Julie went out and returned to her classroom. "You were wanking me too fast," said Rodin to his sister, "I nearly came; you must just fondle me and suck me from time to time. She's a pretty little girl, have you had her?" "And who is there who hasn't passed through my hands?" "But you don't take pity on them when I whip them." — "What do I care about the fate of a whore who made me come? I'd tear her apart myself. Ah! You don't know my heart; it's even more savage than yours. Come into my arse for a moment, Rodin, I'm burning;" and returning to the same spot where she had stood before Julie's flogging, she lifts her skirts and offers her buttocks; Rodin plunges in without warning; he fucks her for about seven or eight minutes; the minx wanks herself, cums, and, satisfied but not sated, she goes off in search of new victims.

The one brought in this time was a girl of Justine's age; she even resembled her somewhat—if it were possible to suppose that nature could have fashioned twice so perfect a model of grace and beauty. "Aimée," said Rodin, "it is singular that at your age you should place yourself in a position to be whipped like a child." — "My age and my conduct ought not to expose me to such an affront, sir," replied this charming girl proudly, "but when one is the weaker, one is always in the wrong." — "That is a very insolent answer, mademoiselle," said Célestine; "I flatter myself it will not excite much indulgence in my brother's mind." — "She may be sure of it," said Rodin, brutally untying her skirts. — "But sir, I didn't realise..." And the lecher, swiftly undoing everything that was in his way, revealed the freshest, most appetising bottom he had ever seen. "Aimée," said Rodin, bending her over an armchair, "you told me that you sometimes suffer from haemorrhoids; whilst I'm at it, I shall examine you, and if this ailment really seems of any significance, you shall be treated with greater gentleness;" "never, sir," replied Aimée modestly, "no, never have I complained of such a thing.." — "Never mind," continued Rodin, and continuing to bend her over, "it

might happen; it is good that I observe;" and as Célestine was helping with the matter, poor Aimée, unable to defend herself, was soon put on all fours, and there was Rodin examining, running his hands over, handling at his leisure the most beautiful flesh... the most divine charms;

"No, really, it's not at all what I thought," said Rodin. "Everything's in good condition. Come on, we can punish her." Their hands clasped, she was bound, and the beautiful Aimée was left at the mercy of these monsters' wickedness. "Start there, sister," said Rodin. "I want to see if pity will make you break your duty. Célestine, take the rods;" her brother watches intently, he wants to enjoy the contortions fear wrings from her, he dares not masturbate, he is being watched; but his hand rubs the thigh upon which his fully erect member rests. The punishment begins, and Miss Rodin, just as cruel as her brother, strikes with at least as much force; yet he, who wishes to see everything, to grasp everything, moves past his sister to better judge the effect of the blows on the fine flesh they are making bleed; unable to contain himself any longer, he seizes a fresh handful, pushes his sister aside, and lashes her with such violence that blood appears at once. The poor wretch draws no breath; one could only guess at her pain from a convulsive movement of her buttocks, which parted slightly when no blow was struck, and clenched at the approach of the blow;

Making the same attempt as before, Rodin prepares to press the attack; Aimée anticipates him and tightens her buttocks; in a rage, Rodin deals her a blow with his fist to the kidneys that instantly makes her bend; he tries again, but Aimée straightens up, and by this movement makes him slip away once more. "All this, sir," she says at last, "does not seem to me to have anything to do with the punishment you intend to inflict upon me; I beg you therefore to finish." Furious, Rodin resumes the whipping, and two hundred strokes, delivered with a steady arm, scarcely calm the anger into which the resistance he encounters has thrown him; his furious member seems to threaten the heavens;

Célestine tries to seize it and direct it toward the unassailable fortress; “No,” says Rodin, “take her out of my sight... Take her away, take away that rebellious girl; I want her shut up for eight days on bread and water, to teach her not to defy me.”

Aimée withdrew, her eyes cast down, and the ferocious instructor called for a boy.

The lad Célestine brings in is a fifteen-year-old schoolboy, more handsome than Cupid himself; Rodin scolds him. Feeling more at ease with him, no doubt, he coaxes him, kisses him, while lecturing him. “You deserve to be punished,” he tells him, “and you will be.” At these words, the breeches come off. But everything interests him here; nothing is off-limits, the veils lift, everything is felt indiscriminately; the arse, the cock, the balls, the belly, the thighs, the mouth—everything is fucked, everything is devoured; Rodin threatens, he caresses, he rails, he flatters; he is in that delicious chaos of lust, where passions heed only their organs, where the voluptuary complains of nothing but the impossibility of not multiplying his outrages. His lewd fingers seek to awaken in this young boy the same feelings of lust that he himself feels; he jerks him off. “Well,” says the satyr, seeing his success, “here you are, after all, in this impure state that I so sternly forbade you; I wager that with two more strokes, everything would come out on me.” Too confident in the titillations he produces, the libertine steps forward to receive the tribute, and his mouth is the temple offered to this divine incense; his hands stir up the jets, he draws them in, he devours them, he himself is on the verge of exploding; but he wants to reach the goal.

“Ah! I’m going to punish you for this foolishness,” he said as he stood up, his lips still dripping with the cum he was swallowing; “Yes, you rascal, I’m going to punish you.” He takes the young man’s hands, holds them captive, offers himself entirely as the altar upon which he wishes to sacrifice his fury; he parts his lips, his kisses run over them, his tongue plunges in, loses itself there. Rodin, drunk with love and ferocity, once again blends

the expressions and feelings of both. "Ah! You little rascal," he cries, "I must take my revenge for the impression you've made on me." The lashes fall; Célestine sucks her brother's cock, while he whips her. Undoubtedly more aroused than he was with the vestal virgin, his blows grow both harder and far more frequent. The child cries; Rodin is in ecstasy. But new pleasures beckon him. The schoolboy is untied; others take his place. A twelve-year-old girl, beautiful as the day itself, takes the boy's place; she is followed by a sixteen-year-old schoolboy, then a fourteen-year-old girl. Rodin, always attended to, always assisted by his sister, flogs sixty of them that morning—thirty-five girls and twenty-five boys. The last is a fifteen-year-old Adonis, with a truly enchanting face.

Rodin can't hold back any longer; having just beaten him bloody, he wants to fuck him; his sister assists in this horrific rape; she holds the patient down to satisfy her brother's unbridled desires. Rodin buggers him, curses, thrusts, tears into him, and soon shoots the frothy jets of his passion deep into the arse of this beautiful angel. They comfort the child; he is bruised; they give him candy, and he falls silent. And this is how this libertine abused the trust placed in him; this is how he deceived the parents, who, seeing only the truly rapid progress of this school, foolishly turned a blind eye to the dangers with which it was filled.

"O heavens!" said Justine, when these orgies were over, "how can one dare abandon oneself to such excesses? how can one find pleasure in the torments one inflicts?"

"Ah! you do not know everything," replied Rosalie. "Listen," she said, as she returned to her room. "What you have seen can have made you understand that, when my father finds certain compliances in young girls, he treats them in the same way as he has just treated that young boy. The girls, by means of this precaution," continued Rosalie, "are not dishonored; there is no pregnancy to fear, and nothing thereafter can prevent their finding husbands. There is not a year in which he does not thus enjoy

more than half the boys or the girls.” —“Oh, Justine!” continued the dear girl as she threw herself into her friend’s arms, “I, too, have been a victim of his debauchery; he raped me when I was seven, and almost every day since then...” “But,” Justine interrupted, “since you reached a more mature age, religion offered you a refuge—why didn’t you consult a spiritual director?” “Alas! Don’t you know,” Rosalie retorted sharply, “that he stifles within us all the seeds of religion as he perverts us, and that he forbids us from all acts of faith? Besides, I know nothing of my religion; he has scarcely instructed me in it. The little he has told me on these matters has only ever been from fear that my ignorance might betray his impiety; but I have never been to confession, I have never made my first communion. He casts such ridicule on all these things, he so thoroughly effaces from us even the slightest ideas of them, that he forever keeps from these duties those whom he has used; or, if they are forced to fulfill them because of their family, it is with such coldness, indifference, and contempt that he has nothing to fear from their indiscretions with confessors. Sometimes he gathers together the young people of both sexes whom he trusts; and there he gives them lectures whose aim is to annihilate in them all the germs of religion and all the seeds of virtue. But there are some who never share in these favors, either because of their excessive weakness or because of their ridiculous attachment to the prejudices with which their family poisons them.” — “What prudence!” said Justine. “It is necessary,” replied Rosalie, “to maintain the calm he wishes to enjoy amid the storms that must inevitably arise in the atmosphere of such a course; and it is to this astonishing policy that he owes the tranquility he has enjoyed for ten years.”

“Come, Justine,” said Rosalie a few days after this scene, “come and judge with your own eyes all that my father undertakes with his sister, with me, his governess, and some of his favorites. These horrors, I hope, will convince you of what I have told you; they will show you what a decent girl like me must endure, one to whom nature seems to have given a horror for

all that her duty subjects her to.” — “Her duty! Never; say her misfortune.” — “Alas! the cruel man turns my misfortunes into duties, and I should be lost if I resisted. Let us hurry,” continued Rosalie; “the class is ending; it is the hour when, heated by his preliminaries, he will come to indemnify himself for the restraint his prudence sometimes imposes on him. Put yourself back where I placed you the other day, and your eyes will discover everything.”

To depict for our readers the libidinous scene of which Justin was a witness, we must first describe its participants.

These characters were Marthe, Rodin’s governess, nineteen years old, as we have said, and as pretty as an angel; Célestine, his sister; Rosalie, his daughter; a sixteen-year-old schoolboy named Fierval; and his sister, fifteen years old, whom they called Léonore; a charming pair who seemed to vie with one another in grace, beauty, stature, and charm. The two looked very much alike, the two loved one another, and we shall see to what extent our lecherous tutor encouraged this incestuous passion.

Now we are secure,” said Rodin, carefully shutting all the doors; “let us think of nothing but debauchery; this morning’s floggings have put me into a state... You can see it,” he added, placing upon the table a stiff, erect member that already seemed to be threatening every arse... yes, every arse; all our readers must grow accustomed here to the idea that Rodin celebrates only this single temple; whether from preference or from prudence, the worthy Rodin denied himself every other pleasure, and it is only in this one that we shall see him exert himself.

“Come, my dear little angel,” he said to Fierval, thrusting his tongue into the boy’s mouth; “come, let me start with you; you know I adore you; Léonore, come and pull down your brother’s pants; you know this is your job: let your hands offer up to my kisses the sublime arse of this beautiful child... Wonderful! That’s exactly what I want... and the rascal kissed, fondled, parted, and sucked the prettiest behind one could imagine. My sister, Rodin continued, while I’m making out with this handsome young

man, kneel before him and suck him; you, Marthe, come and lift up Léonore's skirt; I want to kiss her arse next to her brother's; this reunion will excite me... yes, that's exactly it. But something is missing from the scene; Rosalie, fuck Marthe, and position yourself so that I can handle both of your asses at once; for a moment, the scene remains frozen. But Rodin had too many desires, too much imagination, not to change it up quickly.

Here is how the second arranges himself:

His sister, kneeling before him, sucks his cock; Léonore and Fierval position themselves in a staggered line in front of his mouth, so that he can fuck both the young man's mouth and his sister's arsehole at the same time; with his hands on either side, he fondles the buttocks of Marthe and Rosalie.

"Let's try something else," he said again after a moment; "I must whip you; this is an unheard-of pleasure for me, I cannot get enough of it. Léonore, let me see your beautiful bottom; the kisses I have just showered upon it have only served to stir up my desire to treat it with fury; but I would like your brother to begin the task; standing behind him, rods in hand, I shall treat him harshly if he has the misfortune to go easy on you;" the arrangement is made; but Rodin, whilst he is at work, wants his sister to wank him on his daughter's bottom, and for Marthe to whip him. Who would believe it? Fierval, a worthy pupil of Rodin's, shows no inclination to go easy on his sister; aroused by the blows he himself receives, the little libertine strikes her with all his might: "Come on, my friend," says Rodin, "fuck your sister, sodomise her; nothing is as delightful as fucking an arse that has just been whipped; come, let me lead you, let me be the first agent of your voluptuous incest;" and seizing him by the cock, he draws him close to Léonore's arse, wets both the young man's cock and the victim's arse with his mouth, unites them, teaches them to fuck each other in this manner, places the young man's hand on the patient's clitoris, and then prepares to sodomise the fucker himself: "Climb onto Fierval's loins," he says to Rosalie, "I shall fuck your arse whilst fucking that of this Amour; Marthe,

keep whipping me, and let my sister fill my hand with her lovely buttocks.”

“Oh, fuck! What a thrill!” cries the lecher as he savours her. “Could there be anything more delightful? ... Yes, no doubt there is,” he continues. “Rosalie, you’re going to convince me; it’s your lovely arse that’s going to prove it to me: let’s put all this aside—it’s my daughter I want to fuck.” — “You’re so fickle,” says Célestine, “you’re never satisfied with anything.” — “Eh! Sister, is anyone ever satisfied with a mind as depraved as mine? But is it any wonder? And should even the most lustful of girls be surprised by a few libertine whims?”

“Wait,” said the lecher, “before we form the group that’s bound to cost me some semen, let’s dally a moment longer. Get down on your knees, all of you, leaning against that sofa, so that Léonore offers me an arse, Fierval a mouth, my sister an arse, and Marthe a mouth; Rosalie, holding my cock, will lead me from altar to altar, and I shall pay my homage to each; as soon as she has taken me in, she will leap onto the sofa, squat over my face, and make me kiss, as if against my will, her buttocks and the cute little hole of her arse... Ah! You little minx,” he said to Rosalie, when he reached the end of the line—that is to say, inside Marthe’s mouth—“ah! You little slut, you’re going to be punished for the indecency you’ve just committed... letting the man to whom you all owe your very existence fuck your arse! Daring to thumb your nose at him! You shameless creature... ! I’ll show you if one mocks one’s father like that;” and he seized her, whilst Marthe was sucking him off; he whipped her, he tore at her with a whip fitted with metal studs; nothing was spared, the poor wretch was covered in blood, from the middle of her back down to the base of her thighs; wherever the branches of his cruel instrument do not leave their mark, his lips are immediately pressed there as well; the interior of the altar and the victim’s mouth—everything, except the front, is covered with devouring kisses. Soon, without changing his stance, merely adjusting it to make it more favourable, Rodin enters the narrow sanctuary of

pleasure: the villain sodomises his daughter, Fierval sodomises him; the view is of Léonore's delightful arse, which Rodin covers with kisses; to his right and left, beneath his hands, are the arses of his governess and his sister. What more could he desire? He touches, he fucks, he thrusts, he tears; he is sodomised; a thousand sucks, each hotter than the last, express his ardour for what is offered to his lust. The bomb bursts; it is his daughter's arse that he floods with cum; and the libertine, intoxicated, dares to taste the sweetest pleasures amidst incest and infamy.

A moment of rest follows these orgies: they gather round Rodin, caressing him; one strives to bring him back to life with the warmth of her lascivious kisses; another squeezes his cock, pulls back the foreskin and shakes it gently, whilst a third tickles his arsehole, and a fourth offers her lovely behind to whatever caresses he cares to invent; the young Fierval makes him suck his cock. Such care soon revives our dying man; Marthe, who was stroking him, pointing out the patient's condition, congratulates each of them on their success. "You wish to kill me with pleasure," says Rodin; "well, I consent to it; it is sweet to breathe one's last thus. Célestine, please make love to me right before my eyes with young Fierval, and let Léonore, his sister, kneel between your legs and suck your clitoris; whilst that is happening, Rosalie and Marthe will wank me—one my arse, the other my cock—facing the action, and rest assured that your cum will soon trigger mine."

But Rodin had greatly overestimated his stamina; his sister had already come six times before Rodin's pathetic cock had even reached a quarter of the firmness needed for the ejaculation he was planning. "Come," he said, "come and all suck me, one after the other; whilst one of your mouths squeezes my cock, another fits itself to my lips; a third licks my arse; so that I may be tickled by tongues in the most lascivious parts of my body, and that my ejaculation be due solely to tongues." The plan was well conceived, but Rodin had not calculated the time it would take; it took an hour of nibbling, squeezing and sucking him in

every direction, before nature, at last, bestowed its favours upon him; he came in his daughter's mouth, with Léonore's mouth over his own, Fierval's at his arsehole, and beneath his right and left hands, the buttocks of his sister and Marthe.

"If there is anything delightful in the world," said Rodin, once he was at ease, "it is surely libertinage; where can one find a passion that keeps all our senses in a more lascivious titillation? Is there anything on earth that makes one happier? It is libertinage that shatters the baubles of childhood; it is that which lights the torch of reason, which gives energy to man; and if that is so, must one not conclude that it is for this pleasure alone that nature created him? Let him set all others beside this one—he will see the difference; he will feel whether there is a single one that inflames him with equal ardour. Its empire over the soul is such that, as soon as it is filled with it, it can think of nothing else. Examine a truly libertine man: you will always see him occupied either with what he has done, or with what he plans to do. In a perfect indifference to everything that does not concern his pleasures, you will see him pensive, withdrawn into himself, as though he feared to admit any movement that might distract him for a moment from the libidinous ideas that inflame him; one would say that, once chained to the worship of this god, it becomes absolutely impossible for him to be stirred by anything whatsoever, and that nothing is capable of diverting his soul from the delicious passion that captivates him. It is therefore to this alone that we must sacrifice everything; it alone must be respectable in our eyes; let us sovereignly despise all that strays from it or opposes it; and, to prove our homage the better, let us plunge blindly into all the excesses of its vices; let nothing be sacred to us but what characterizes or serves it; let us feel, exist, and breathe only for it; only fools find it dangerous. And how could a refinement of pleasure ever be so? Is libertinage anything else? No, without doubt: well then, how could what is best have drawbacks? I will say more: even if those drawbacks existed,

would they not still be preferable to all the dangers of temperance... to all the tedium of wisdom? Is not the inert state of the sober man the image of the sleep of death? The cold and indifferent man is the repose of nature: what use is he in the universe? what does he set in motion? what does he accomplish? what is his pedantry good for? If he is useless, is he not blameworthy, and does he not then become a burden to society? If temperance and sobriety were unfortunately to prevail in the world, everything would languish, everything would vegetate; there would be neither movement nor force, and all would fall back into chaos. This is what our moralists will not understand, because, constantly propping up their principles on religious foundations, they cannot conceive a state beyond the designs of their divinity—whereas there is no divinity, and that monster, born of the overheated imagination of men, can never enter into the calculations of philosophy. But one very singular thing is that the restraints man opposes to libertinage are themselves only the spurs of libertinage; modesty, the first of these restraints, is it not one of the most active stimulants of this passion? It is essential to lust; one is vexed that another should know our fancies; it seems they ought to be understood only by ourselves, and that whatever is not ourselves should not have the wit to comprehend them. Such was the first motive that cast veils over impure actions; one did not wish to do before everyone what it did not seem everyone ought to know; but the curtain was drawn only to redouble excesses. Let us not doubt that there would be fewer libertines if cynicism were in fashion; one hides oneself only because one wishes to depart from the ordinary rule, and the first who, in the infancy of societies, led his mistress behind a bush was the greatest libertine of the tribe. Let us then corrupt ourselves, my children, let us defile ourselves with every possible impurity, let us fuck without rule or measure, let us give free rein to all our inclinations, let us cherish our tastes, and let us be certain that the more we abandon ourselves to the debauchery of the senses,

the more we shall approach that happiness with which lubricity will always crown those who cherish and serve it.”

Here, young Fierval showed his desire to fuck Rosalie; he was close to her, he was fucking her, he was handling her. “Go on then, you idiot,” said Rodin, “don’t you seem afraid to give in to your desires? Is this the result of the lecture I’ve just given you? Come and sodomise my daughter in my arms; I’ll hold her for you; I like the idea of being her pimp. Sister, wank his cock whilst he fucks my daughter; and you, Marthe, let him fuck your pretty arse; we must surround this pretty little angel with pleasures; we must sate her with them,” and Rosalie, submissive, was once again forced to endure this assault... she whose very existence was built on virtue! she who, had she been asked, would have desired nothing for her happiness but a convent and God!

Fierval didn’t last long; so intensely aroused, the young libertine soon came. Rodin, who, holding his daughter on his lap, had taken pleasure in sucking her mouth during the act, also wanted to suck the young man’s cock as it withdrew from his daughter’s arse; he milked it until the very last drop of cum; and these episodes having made him hard again, he sodomised Léonore and her daughter in turn; he fucked Fierval’s arse, whilst Célestine and Marthe whipped him in turn; and it was into his daughter’s arse that he came, whilst vigorously spanking Léonore’s delicious buttocks.

The worthy schoolmaster sits down to table after such exploits; and Justine, distressed, ashamed of all she has seen, cries out, retreating into the purity of her conscience: “O my God! was I born only to live amid crime and infamy, and is it to exercise my patience that your justice condemns me to such cruel trials?”

Without the extreme affection she felt for her young companion, there is no doubt that Justine would have escaped at once. But, filled with that strength which virtue gives, she aspired to the honor of rescuing Rosalie from libertinage; this hope determined her to patience, when Rodin, weary of having

waited so long, finally resolved to find out what he might expect from his new acquisition.

It was about fifteen days since our heroine had been in this house when Rodin, inflamed with the desire we have just described, presented himself one morning in her room. After a few moments of general conversation, Rodin gave voice to his desires. Little accustomed to the preliminaries of a sentiment of which the scoundrel knows only the physical need, he seized Justine bodily and tried to throw her onto a bed. "Leave me, sir," said this virtuous girl; "leave me, or I shall call the whole house to witness the horror you intend; and by what right, I beg you, do you presume to make me the victim of your brutality? Is it because you have received me into your house? But I make myself useful here, I earn my living here; and when I conduct myself well, I ought to be safe from your insults. Remember that there will never be anything in the world that can subject me to them; my gratitude is due to you, but I will not discharge it at the price of my honor."

Rodin, confounded by a resistance he had not expected from a girl so entirely without resources, and whom—according to the usual injustice of men—he could not have supposed so unyielding; Rodin, I say, looked at Justine attentively. "My dear," he said after a moment, "you are rather ill-timed in playing the vestal with me; it seems to me I had some right to expect compliance from you; however, do not leave me over this trifle. I am quite pleased to have a virtuous girl in my house; those who surround me are so little so! Since you display such virtue in this instance, I hope you will show it in all others—my interests will benefit from it. My daughter loves you; she begs me to persuade you never to leave us. Stay with us, then—I invite you."—"Sir," replied Justine, "I shall not be happy here; I shall not be seen without jealousy, and I shall soon be forced to leave you."—"Do not fear that," said Rodin; "do not dread any effect of jealousy from my sister or my governess; the latter shall always be subordinate to you, and I know that my sister esteems you. Be

assured, then, that my protection and my confidence will always be granted you. But, to continue to deserve them, you must know that absolute discretion is the first quality I require of you; many things happen here that will run counter to your principles; you must see everything and hear everything, without allowing yourself even a reflection... Oh yes, yes, Justine," Rodin continued warmly, "on these conditions, never leave me; amid the multiplied vices into which a fiery temperament... a thoroughly corrupted heart... carries me, I shall at least have the consolation of possessing a virtuous being near me, into whose arms I shall throw myself as at the feet of a god, when I am sated with my debaucheries." "Well then!" thought Justine at that moment, 'virtue is therefore necessary, it is indispensable to man, since even the vicious are obliged to reassure themselves by means of it.' And our amiable girl, recalling the entreaties Rosalie had made to her not to abandon her... believing she discerned some good principles in Rodin, resolved to commit herself to him. "Justine," said Rodin, "it is with my daughter that I am now going to place you; you will have nothing to do with my other women, and I give you four hundred livres in wages."

Such a position became a fortune in the circumstances of our unfortunate orphan. Fired with the desire to bring Rosalie back to virtue, and perhaps even her father, if she could acquire some influence over him, she did not repent of what she had just done. Rodin presented her to his daughter. "Rosalie," he said to her, "until now I had only a vague desire to bind Justine to you forever; today that intention forms the charm and consolation of my life; deign to accept this gift from my hand." The two young girls embrace, and thus Justine is installed.

Not eight days had passed before this wise and virtuous girl began to work toward the conversions she desired; but Rodin's obstinacy thwarted all her efforts.

"Do not imagine," he replied one day to the wise counsels of that virtuous creature, "that the sort of homage I pay to virtue in you proves either that I esteem virtue or that I wish to prefer

it to vice; no, Justine, do not suppose it—you would be mistaken. Those who, judging from my conduct toward you, would conclude from it either the importance or the necessity of virtue would fall into a great error, and I should be very sorry if you believed such to be my way of thinking. The hut that shelters me while hunting, when the sun's rays fall too fiercely upon me, is assuredly not a useful monument; its necessity is only circumstantial. I expose myself to a certain danger, I find something that protects me from it, and I make use of it; but is that thing any the less useless—does it deserve any the less contempt? In a society wholly vicious, virtue would be of no use; as ours is not of that kind, one must either play at virtue or make use of it, in order to be less feared by those who follow it. Let no one adopt it, and it becomes useless; I am therefore not wrong in maintaining that its necessity is only a matter of opinion or circumstance. Virtue, let us not deceive ourselves, is not of unquestionable value; it is only a manner of conduct that varies with each climate, and consequently has no more reality than the fashions adopted in one province and rejected in another. Only that which is useful at all times, to all peoples, in all countries, is truly good; what lacks demonstrated utility, and what changes perpetually, cannot claim any character of goodness. Hence it is that the Theists, in establishing a chimera, placed immutability among the perfections of their god. But virtue is wholly devoid of this character; not only are there virtues of religion, of fashion, of circumstance, of temperament, of climate, but there are also virtues of government. The virtues of a revolution, for example, are far from being those of a tranquil government. Brutus, the greatest of men in a republic, would have been broken on the wheel in a monarchy; La Barre, executed under Louis XV, might perhaps have deserved crowns a few years later. In general, there are not two peoples on the face of the earth who are virtuous in the same way; therefore virtue has nothing real in it, nothing intrinsically good, and deserves none of our worship. One must

make use of it as a prop, hypocritically adopting that of the country in which one lives, so that those who practice it from inclination, or who must revere it by duty, may leave you in peace; and so that this virtue, respected where you are, may protect you, by its conventional authority, from the attacks of those who profess vice. But once again, all this is circumstantial, and nothing in it assigns any real merit to virtue. There are virtues, moreover, impossible for certain men. Recommend chastity to a libertine, temperance to a drunkard, benevolence to a ferocious man—nature, stronger than your recommendations and your laws, will break all the restraints you would impose, and you will be forced to admit that a virtue which opposes or combats the passions can only be very dangerous. In such men, it will assuredly be the vices opposed to these virtues that become preferable, since they are the only modes—the only ways of being—that suit their constitution or their organs; thus, in this hypothesis, there are very useful vices. Now, how can virtue be useful, if it is demonstrated that its contraries may be so? You are told, in reply, that virtue is useful to others, and in that respect it is good; for if it is agreed that one should do only what is good for others, then in turn I shall receive only good. Let us take care—this reasoning is nothing but a sophism. For the little good I receive from others, because they practice virtue, by the obligation to practice it in my turn I make a million sacrifices that do not compensate me in the least; receiving less than I give, I make a bad bargain; I suffer far more from the privations I endure to be virtuous than I receive in benefit from those who are so. The pact not being equal, I ought not to submit to it; and being sure, in being virtuous, not to do as much good to others as I receive pain in constraining myself to be so, would it not be better that I renounce procuring them a happiness that costs me so much suffering? There remains now the harm I may do to others in being vicious, and the harm I shall receive in my turn if everyone resembles me. In admitting a complete circulation of vices, I run

a risk, I admit; but the displeasure I feel from what I risk is compensated by the pleasure of what I make others risk. Thus everyone is more or less equally happy—which is not, and cannot be, the case in a society where some are good and others wicked, because from that mixture arise perpetual snares that do not exist in the other case. In a mixed society all interests are different—that is the source of an infinity of misfortunes; in a wholly vicious association all interests are equal; each individual composing it is endowed with the same tastes, the same inclinations; all move toward the same goal; all are happy. But, you will say, evil does not make one happy—no, when it is agreed to incense good. But despise, degrade what you call good; revere only what you foolishly call evil, and all men will take pleasure in committing it—not because it will be permitted (that would often lessen its attraction), but because the laws no longer punish it, and no longer diminish, by the fear they inspire, the pleasure that nature has placed in crime. Suppose a society in which incest (let us adopt this moral offense as any other) is deemed a crime: those who indulge in it will be unhappy, because opinion, laws, worship—everything—will chill their pleasures; those who desire to commit it but do not dare, because of its restraints, will be equally unhappy; thus the law that proscribes incest will have produced only the unfortunate. Let in a neighbouring society incest not be a crime: those who do not desire it will not be unhappy, and those who do will be happy; therefore the society that permits this action will suit men better than the one that has erected it into a crime. The same holds for all other things awkwardly considered criminal; by viewing them thus, you create a multitude of unhappy people; by permitting them, no one complains; for he who loves such a thing indulges in it in peace, and he who does not care for it either remains in an indifference that is not painful, or compensates for any injury he may have received by a host of others he in turn inflicts upon those he does not love. Thus everyone in a criminal society is either very

content, or in a state of indifference that is not painful; consequently there is nothing good, nothing respectable, nothing capable of making men happy in what is called virtue; let those who follow it not pride themselves on that sort of homage which the constitution of our societies forces us to render it. It is purely a matter of circumstance; in fact, this worship is ridiculous—it is chimerical; and virtue, which obtains it for a moment, is no more beautiful for that; vice, on the contrary, is full of charms; in its practice alone lies all the happiness of life; it alone inflames and excites the passions; and he who, like me, has acquired the habit of living in it, no longer even has the capacity to adopt another course. I know that prejudices oppose it, that opinion sometimes triumphs over it; but is there anything more contemptible in the world than prejudices, or anything more worthy of defiance than opinion? ‘Opinion,’ said Voltaire, ‘is the queen of the world’—is that not to admit that, like queens, it has only a conventional power, only an arbitrary authority? And what is the opinion of men to me—what do I care what they think of me, provided I find happiness in the principles I have adopted? One of two things: either they conceal this opinion from me, and then it does me no harm; or they express it, and then I experience an additional pleasure—yes, indeed, a pleasure; the contempt of fools is one for the philosopher; it is delightful to defy public opinion; and the height of wisdom, no doubt, is to reduce it to silence. We are told of general esteem—but what does one gain, I ask you, by being esteemed by others? That sentiment costs men; it offends pride; I may sometimes love one whom I despise, but never one whom I revere; the latter will always have many enemies, while the other is scarcely noticed. Let us not hesitate, then, between two modes, of which one—virtue—leads only to the most stupid and monotonous inaction, and the other—vice—to all that man can hope for that is most delightful upon the earth.”

Such was the infernal logic of Rodin’s wretched passions; Justine’s gentle and natural eloquence could not undermine his

sophisms. But Rosalie, gentler and less corrupted, Rosalie, who detested the horrors to which she was subjected, surrendered more readily to the prudent counsels of her friend. This wise guide ardently desired to have her pupil fulfill the first duties of religion; for that, it would have been necessary to take a priest into their confidence, and Rodin would have none in his house; he detested them all as cordially as the worship they professed; for nothing in the world would he have allowed one near his daughter. To take the young girl to a confessor was equally impossible; Rodin never allowed Rosalie to go out without being accompanied. One had therefore to wait until some opportunity presented itself; and, during this delay, Justine continued to instruct her pupil. By giving her a taste for virtue, she inspired in her a taste for religion; she explained its dogmas, unveiled its mysteries, and bound these two sentiments so closely in the girl's young heart that she made them indispensable to her happiness.

"O mademoiselle!" she said to her one day, gathering the tears of her contrition, "can man blind himself to the point of believing that he is not destined for a better end? Is it not enough that he has been endowed with the power and the faculty of knowing his God, to be assured that these gifts were granted to him only in order to fulfill the duties they impose? And what is there in the world more capable of pleasing the Eternal, if not the virtue of which He Himself is the example? Can the creator of so many wonders have any laws other than good? and could our hearts please Him, if goodness, beneficence, and wisdom were not their first elements? It seems to me," continued the credulous orphan, "that with sensitive souls one should never employ any motives of love toward this Supreme Being other than those inspired by gratitude. Is it not a favor to have allowed us to enjoy the beauties of this universe? and do we not owe Him some gratitude for such a benefit? But a still stronger reason establishes and confirms the universal chain of our duties: why should we refuse to fulfill those His law requires, since they are the same as those which secure our happiness with

our fellow men? Is it not sweet to feel that we make ourselves pleasing to the Supreme Being simply by giving ourselves to the virtues that must contribute to our happiness on earth, and that the means which render us fit to live with our fellow creatures are the same that, after this life, assure us of being reborn in the bosom of the Eternal? Ah! Rosalie, how blind are those who would deprive us of this hope! Seduced and deceived by their wretched passions, they prefer to deny eternal truths rather than abandon what renders them unworthy of them; they prefer to say we are deceived than to admit that they deceive themselves: the idea of the losses they would thus prepare for themselves would disturb their dreadful pleasures; it seems less terrible to them to annihilate the hope of heaven than to submit to what would secure it for them; but when those tyrannical passions weaken in them, when the veil is torn away, when nothing more sways their corrupted heart, that imperious voice of the God whom their delirium denied—what must that cruel return upon themselves be, O Rosalie! and how dearly must the remorse that accompanies it make them pay for the moment of error that blinded them! It is in that state that one must judge man in order to regulate one's own conduct: it is neither in intoxication nor in the transport of a burning fever that we must believe what he says; it is when his reason, calmed and enjoying all its force, seeks the truth, suspects it, and sees it. Then we desire for ourselves that holy Being once denied; we implore Him—He consoles us; we pray to Him—He hears us; and why should we deny Him? why refuse to acknowledge an object so necessary to our happiness? why should we prefer to say, with the misguided man, there is no God, when the heart of the reasonable man offers us at every moment proofs of the existence of that divine being? Is it better to dream with fools than to think rightly with the wise? Yet everything flows from this first principle: once a God exists, that God deserves our worship; and the first foundation of that worship is incontestably virtue.”

From these first truths, Justine easily deduced the others, and Rosalie, a deist, soon became a Christian; but how was one to join a little practice to theory? Rosalie, constrained to obey her father, could at most only show her distaste for bearing the chain he imposed upon her; and with a man like Rodin, might not that become dangerous? He was intractable; none of Justine's pious and moral systems could stand against him; but if she did not succeed in convincing him, at least he did not succeed in shaking her.

Whilst Justine was trying to convert the girl in the house where she was staying, Rodin did not give up hope of, in turn, making Justine a convert. Among the countless little traps set to give him the pleasure of examining the bodies of those boarders whom Rodin wished to get to know before seducing them, or whom he simply wished to gaze upon, sensing the impossibility of going any further with such subjects, there was a very elegant privy, the key to which was given only to those whose charms one wished to steal. The seat of this privy was designed in such a way that when the person sitting there was seated, their entire posterior was within Rodin's sight and reach, as he sat comfortably in an adjoining room; did the child suspect anything, did he stand up to look? a spring-loaded trapdoor would close silently beneath him, and the operator, undisturbed, would settle back in peace; the trapdoor would then open again, and Rodin, his nose close to the child's arse, would watch him shit at his leisure: did what he had stolen please him? One was soon condemned to the whip, and from the whip to sodomy.

One can well imagine that the key to this magical chamber was soon entrusted to Justine, and that our lecher, electrified by what he had glimpsed in this lovely child, soon began to plot against her charms in a more determined and resolute manner than he had done hitherto. "Oh God! My sister," he cried out, upon seeing Célestine again on his return from one of these excursions; "oh! Good heavens! You have no idea of this girl's divine charms; no, there is nothing here that compares to her;

there is not a single bottom that resembles hers... Justine turns my head... she drives me wild; I must have her, my sister; I must enjoy her, whatever the cost; try, attempt, promise, seduce, but triumph, or the rage, replacing in my heart the feeling that Justine stirs there, may drive me to excesses... of which you know I am capable, when difficulties get the better of me."

Célestine tried every means; fifteen whole days were spent on these attempts at seduction, without the siren gaining any assurance beyond that of seeing all her plans come to nothing.

"Certainly," she said one day to Justine, "you are very foolish to prefer, over the certain happiness that awaits you, the ideal system of wisdom your extravagance nourishes. How, with the mind I know you possess, can you imagine that this purity of conduct you make such a display of here could ever be of any use? What gratitude do you think men will show you for keeping yourself pure with them? This pride, which at first astonishes by wounding that of others, soon ends by winning from them nothing but contempt, and you will have passed the age of pleasing without deriving the least advantage from the precious gifts nature has lavished upon you; you outrage her by neglecting those gifts. And what harm do you think you do by lending your body to the one who desires it? Is not that impulse in him the work of nature? You offend her by not yielding to it; you oppose the true aim of that wise mother, who, having destined the charms she placed in you for the pleasures of men, must sooner or later punish you for the resistance your virtue sets against her designs. This ridiculous chastity to which you attach such great merit is, as you see, nothing more than a criminal resistance to the intentions she has for you. Ah! believe me, my angel, men esteem us only in proportion to the pleasures they receive from us; if we refuse them, they abandon us; and, withdrawn into ourselves then, all that remains to us for enjoyment is the petty pride of having resisted. Are such triumphs worth those I offer you?... Oh! my child, is there anything sweeter than sensual pleasures? anything that so powerfully delights our whole being... that

gives joys as vivid... as prolonged... Ah! yes, yes, my angel, do not doubt it; a moment in the bosom of love is worth more than a thousand years of virtue. Yield, Justine, yield; your vanity will be satisfied as well. Rodin prefers you to everything here: is not that sweet victory of self-love worth all the sacrifices made to virtue? And, crowned by the hand of the Graces, will you not be happier in yielding to pleasure than in resisting nature? How foolish is the one who believes she raises herself above others by the silly practice of good morals! What becomes of her after centuries of deprivation? Everyone forgets the virtues by which she thought to immortalize herself, and men, divided into two camps regarding her, present one half who despise her and another who refuse to acknowledge her virtue; but not a single being in her favor, not one who feels gratitude toward her for what she has done only for herself... Will you speak to me of self-contentment? Ah, Justine, what a dreary pleasure! and how far beneath the charming being who finds her happiness only in the bosom of libertinage is she who makes herself happy with such chimeras. Taste—taste for a moment those pleasures against which your prejudices revolt, and you will wish to exist for them alone. My brother adores you; he will do everything for you—do you forget what he has already done? Is not the first duty of a sensitive soul gratitude? You fail in that sacred duty; you fail in it, Justine, by resisting your benefactor.”

But nothing persuaded this angelic girl; finding within her honest heart the means to repel such seductions, she persisted in offering her hosts nothing but resistance and refusal, when that libertine, convinced of the scant success of his initial efforts, at last resolved upon carrying out an infernal ruse, the like of which only a mind such as his could have conceived.

Aided by a hole he had made in one of the partitions surrounding Justine’s room, he had observed that in hot weather the dear girl liked to sleep completely naked; she undressed as soon as she believed herself securely shut in, and imprudently

threw herself in this state upon her bed, to rest more coolly. Rodin quickly and secretly had a trap contrived by means of which Justine's bed could be raised into the room above; he took possession of this room, and one fine night, as soon as he believed his victim in the arms of sleep, the trap was set in motion, and there was our unfortunate girl, naked and without the slightest defense, in the power of that scoundrel, well shut in, well barricaded in the chamber where he at last believed himself sure to succeed.

"Ah! I've got you now, you little slut," he cries, throwing himself upon his prey, "you won't escape me this time." And the lecher, as he says this, lit by six candles deliberately placed in the room, at once enjoys the pleasure of contemplating the sublime body of the young innocent, and the still greater voluptuous delight of covering it with his kisses. We have no need to describe his state. One easily imagines that of a libertine who at last possesses what he has desired, after having awaited it for centuries. But whatever vigor this state lends him, it gives him no advantage over Justine. Stronger in her virtue than Rodin is in his crime, she springs away, light and supple as an eel; she slips free, escapes the arm that holds her, opens a window, and cries for help. One never thinks of everything when plotting a wicked act; blinded by the delights our pleasure promises, we almost always neglect the most essential precautions. Rodin had not remembered that this cursed window looked directly onto the girls' dormitory, and that the uproar Justine was making might well ruin him for life. "Stop, wretch, stop!" he cries to her; "go out, I will open the door for you; say nothing; in heaven's name, do not ruin me!" — "Very well, open the door," says Justine, "I will stop shouting as soon as I see it open." He had to obey; prudence required it. Justine goes out, and crime, once again repelled by the force of virtue, draws from its schemes nothing but the regret of having executed them so poorly."

This was indeed the moment to leave Rodin's house; and Justine would no doubt have taken advantage of the opportunity,

had she not at that very time found herself in the most critical phase of Rosalie's conversion. But before relating the dreadful event produced by this scheme, we must go back to Justine's first steps in bringing it about.

This girl, freer to go out than Rosalie, had found a way to confide to a young priest of the parish the entire plan she had devised to initiate her friend into the great mysteries of a religion whose treasures were being concealed from her. The abbé Delne, a fervent servant of Christ, eagerly embraced the holy and sublime idea of bringing back into the bosom of the Church a gentle lamb whom others wished to lead astray. For three weeks, through Justine's mediation, Delne had held pious conferences with Rosalie, and these meetings took place in Rosalie's very room. Rodin's daughter, now sufficiently instructed and filled with the most ardent desire to approach a sacrament whose grandeur had been disguised from her, was to slip away one morning at daybreak, hasten to the church, fulfill so sacred a duty, and then return in secret. Everything promised the fullest success; and Rosalie, torn from her father's libertinage, was then to make a public declaration and obtain admission to a convent—when this time Heaven did not permit, as in the preceding scene, virtue to triumph over vice. A single imprudence ruined everything, and crime regained its rights.

Justine did not usually attend these mystical exhortations; she kept watch, and her role was to give warning if Rodin should appear.

Believing all three of them to be at the harbor, they neglected one another this time. Justine was summoned to Rosalie's; she was invited to share in the ecstasy into which her companion was about to plunge, and our three angels were soaring together toward the vault of heaven, when Rodin, closer to earthly matters and quite naturally consumed by the desire to fuck his daughter, sought her out, cock in hand. He enters her room, thinking to find her in bed. God! what is his surprise to see her

on her knees before a priest, a crucifix in her hand! For a moment Rodin thinks he is dreaming; by turns he advances and recoils in horror; at last, he calls out to them. "My sister," he says to Célestine, who comes forward with Marthe, "you see how I am betrayed. Justine, it is easy for me to see to whom I owe the plan of this infamous seduction; withdraw, I bear you no ill will—my feelings for you are such that, even had you attempted my life, I believe I would still forgive you. But as for you, scoundrel," he adds, seizing the ecclesiastic by the collar, "you atrocious corrupter, unworthy minion of a religion I abhor, you shall not leave here—be assured—as easily as you entered; a dungeon shall answer to me for you; I will teach you what it is to come and defile, with your impure breath, the principles of philosophy I spread in this house. Leave, Rosalie; go to your aunt, and do not come out without my orders." Rodin then drags off the abbé, completely stunned, and helped by his sister and his housekeeper, throws him into a cellar of his house where daylight had never penetrated. He returns from there to fetch Rosalie and shut her up in another dungeon. Rodin goes out and makes his way through the village. "My daughter has just been carried off," he says to everyone, "and I suspect the abbé Delne..." They hurry to his house; the abbé is not there. "Now my misfortune is made clear," says Rodin; "I had only suspicions... dreadful truths enlighten me... It is my fault—I saw this intrigue beginning; why did I not break it off from the very first days!"

Everyone fell into the trap; and once, by means of this ruse, Rodin finds himself master of his man, he opens his prison only to turn it into a tomb; and, with a refinement well worthy of such a monster, as soon as Delne has breathed his last, his body is nailed to the walls of the dungeon, and it is in this coffin that the barbarous Rodin comes to place his daughter. "I want your seducer always before your eyes," he says to her, "until your blood has washed away your crime." Such was the state of things when Justine—whom Rodin had not yet addressed, and who,

trusting herself safe because of the love she inspired in that barbarian—undertook the impossible to discover the fate of her friend, certain that if she found her, she would also learn what had become of Delne. Taking advantage of every moment when she believed herself unobserved, she searched the most secret corners of the house; she thought she heard some groans from the depths of a very dark courtyard; she drew nearer: a pile of wood seemed to block a narrow, recessed door; she pushed forward, clearing away every obstacle; new cries were heard... “O Justine! is it you?” — “Yes, dear and tender friend,” she cries, recognizing Rosalie’s voice, “yes, it is Justine, whom heaven sends to rescue you”; and the eager questions of this tender girl scarcely leave Rodin’s daughter time to answer. It was then that Justine learned both the dreadful situation in which Rosalie found herself and the murder committed by her father upon the person of the poor abbé Delne—though Rosalie did not know the details; the only thing she seemed certain of was that Rodin had had as accomplices both his sister and his housekeeper, and that the victim had no doubt suffered greatly, if one might judge by his cries and by the knife wounds with which his corpse appeared to be pierced. “It is my turn now,” added Rosalie: “last night my father entered my prison, followed by Rombeau, the surgeon of this village, of whom I have already told you and of his connections with Rodin; both permitted themselves horrors with me; my father wished—something that had never before entered his head—he insisted that I serve the unbridled passions of his colleague; my father himself held me during that dreadful scene... Afterwards, words escaped them that no longer leave me any doubt about my wretched fate. O Justine! I am lost if you do not manage to free me; everything, my dear friend, everything proves to me that these monsters are going to make me serve in some of their experiments.”

“Good heavens!” said Justine, interrupting Rodin’s daughter, “has anything like that ever happened to them before?” — “I have strong reason to believe so; whenever they have here young

people of either sex who have neither father nor mother....” — “Well then, you make me tremble.” — “They disappear without it being possible to know what has become of them; not a month ago a girl of fourteen, beautiful as the day, vanished in that way, and I remember very well that that day I heard muffled cries in my father’s study; the next day it was said she had run away. Some time later a young orphan of fifteen disappeared in the same manner, and nothing more was heard of him; in short, I shudder, my dear, if you do not succeed in getting me quickly out of this dungeon.”

Justine asked her friend if she knew where the keys to the cellar were kept; Rosalie did not, though she did not think they were usually taken away. Justine searched for them, but in vain; and the hour to reappear arrived without her being able to offer that dear girl any help beyond consolations, a few hopes, and tears. Rosalie made Justine swear that she would come back to see her the next day, and Justine promised it, even assuring her that, if by then she had discovered nothing satisfactory concerning her situation, she would at once go and lodge a complaint with the authorities, to rescue this unfortunate girl—at whatever cost—from the dreadful fate that threatened her.

Justine goes back upstairs. That evening, Rombeau was supping with Rodin; resolved to do anything to uncover her friend’s fate, she hides in a small room with a private entrance that adjoins the chamber where the two scoundrels were dining. There, their conversation soon convinces her both of the crimes already committed and of those her unfortunate Rosalie still had to fear.

“I am in despair,” said Rodin to his colleague, “that I did not associate you with my revenge. Oh, my friend, you cannot imagine the pleasures I derived from the sacrifice offered to that cherished passion of my soul.” — “It is true that a more sensitive outrage could scarcely have been done to you... your daughter at his knees!... The scoundrel, he would soon have passed from his mystical exhortations to more flattering conversations : he wanted nothing more than to seduce your daughter; you can, I

believe, be quite certain of that. — “I think I would have forgiven him that insult rather than the one of corrupting her mind. The wretch! He would have confessed her, given her communion; he would have ruined that creature. — “How glad you must be to have put a stop to that! And what death did you make her suffer?” — “Oh! It was a scene unlike any other; Marthe and my sister helped me. I had twenty positions performed before him, each more lewd than the last; they sucked him off, jerked him off; I had him exhausted before sending him to the other world; and I tell you that if the Furies get their hands on him, they’ll have a hard time getting him hard.” — “And in the end?” — “I had him crucified; I wanted the servant to suffer the same death as his master; and during the four hours he lingered on that cross, there was not a torment I did not make him endure; I fucked him there, I flogged him there, I drove my knife into his body twenty times. Oh, how I wish you had been there to assist me in that delicious operation! But you were not, and I was pressed for time; one does not live so long as an enemy still breathes.” — “And will your guilty daughter not undergo it as well? Consider, Rodin, consider how useful such a subject may be to anatomy; it will never reach its highest degree of perfection until the examination of the vessels has been carried out on a child of fourteen or fifteen, expired under a cruel death; only from such contraction can we obtain a complete analysis of so interesting a part; the same holds for the membrane that ensures virginity, for which a young girl is absolutely required—what can be observed at puberty? Nothing; the menses tear the hymen and render all research inexact; your daughter’s age is precisely what we need, she is not yet menstruating, and we have only taken her from behind—such assaults do not in the least damage that membrane, and we shall study it at our ease; I hope you will resolve upon it.” — “By God, I am resolved,” replied Rodin; “it is odious that such trifling considerations should thus impede the progress of science; have great men ever allowed themselves to be restrained by such contemptible ties? All our masters in the

art of Hippocrates have conducted experiments in hospitals; my own instructor in surgery dissected living subjects of both sexes every year, and it is only through such operations that we have corrected the errors of our predecessors.” — “For a dozen sacrifices we have saved the lives of more than two thousand individuals; and I ask whether one should ever hesitate in such a case. All artists have thought the same: when Michelangelo wished to render a Christ true to nature, did he make a matter of conscience of crucifying a young man and copying him in his agony? The sublime *★Weeping Magdalene★* of Guido Reni was taken from a beautiful girl whom that great man’s pupils had flogged to excess; everyone knows she died of it. But when it concerns the progress of our art, how necessary must not such means be, and how small is the evil in permitting them? Is the murder carried out by the laws of another kind, and is not the object of those laws, which are thought so wise, the sacrifice of one to save a thousand? We ought, on the contrary, to be rewarded when we are courageous enough thus to overcome nature for the benefit of humanity.” — “Oh! the victory is not so great,” said Rombeau; “I would not advise you to make a merit of it in the eyes of those who know the excessive titillation such actions produce.” — “I do not deny that they spur me greatly: in general, all the pain I inflict on others—whether in operating, in flogging, or in dissecting on the living—throws the seminal spirits within me into such disorder that it results in a manifest itching and an involuntary erection which, without my touching myself, leads me sooner or later to ejaculation, according to the degree of suffering inflicted on the subject. You remember seeing me discharge, without anyone touching me, the last time we operated together on that young boy whose left side I opened to observe the beating of the heart?” “When I came to cut the ligaments that bind that organ, and thus was taking the subject’s life, you remember how my semen burst forth despite myself, and how you had to finish me off; you likewise recall that before the last drops had even issued from the channel, I was

already hard again. But let us not quarrel; I have sufficient proof, my dear friend, of how closely your tastes resemble mine for us to seek any dispute on that score.” — “I admit it,” said Rombeau, “I experience the same impulses, and I cannot conceive by what inexplicable contradiction mysterious nature daily inspires in man the desire to destroy her works.” — “I understand it perfectly,” said Rodin: “those portions of matter, disorganized and cast by us into the crucible of her works, give her the pleasure of recreating them in new forms; and if nature’s delight is creation, that of man who destroys must infinitely flatter her, for she succeeds in her creations only through destructions. One must therefore destroy men prodigiously to compose for her the voluptuous pleasure of creating them.” — “Then murder is a pleasure.” — “I go further: it is a duty; it is one of the means nature employs to achieve the ends she sets for us. And even if it had no important aim, such as that it gains through our experiments—were it committed solely through the effect of the passions—it would still be a good deed; for those passions, do not doubt it, my friend, are placed in us by nature only to soften the repugnance her commands would otherwise inspire. Were it only a matter of my own fancy, I would regard the thing as perfectly simple—how much more so when it becomes necessary to an art so useful to mankind, when it can furnish such great insights: from that moment, this killing becomes the finest and wisest of actions, and it would be only in refusing it that crime could exist; it is the ridiculous value we attach to life that makes us endlessly reason poorly about the act by which a man rids himself of his fellow. Believing existence to be the greatest of goods, we foolishly imagine it a crime to deprive others of it; but the cessation of that existence—or at least what follows it—is no more an evil than life is a good; or rather, if nothing dies, if nothing is destroyed, if nothing is lost in nature, if all the decomposed parts of any body await only dissolution to reappear at once in new forms, what indifference must there be in the act

of killing, and how foolish the being who would dare to find a crime in it!"

"Very well," said Rombeau; "but must I confess it? In view of the ties that bind you to that creature, I feared you might hesitate." — "And what power do you imagine the mere title of daughter can ever have over my heart? Be assured, my friend, that I regard a little spurt of fuck, once issued, with the same eye (weight aside) as that which a whore draws from my prick; I have never made more of the one than of the other; one is master of taking back what one has given; the right of disposing of one's children has never been contested among any people. The Persians, the Medes, the Armenians, the Greeks enjoyed it in the fullest latitude; the laws of Lycurgus, the model of legislators, not only left fathers every right over their children, but even condemned to death those whom the parents did not wish to rear or who were ill-formed. A great many savages kill their children as soon as they are born. Almost all the women of Asia, Africa, and America procure abortions without incurring blame. Cook found this custom in all the islands of the South Seas. Romulus permitted infanticide; the Law of the Twelve Tables likewise tolerated it, and until Constantine the Romans exposed or killed their children with impunity. Aristotle recommends this supposed crime; the Stoic sect regarded it as praiseworthy: it is still very much in use in China; every day more than ten thousand individuals are found in the streets and on the canals of Beijing, immolated or abandoned by their parents; and whatever the age of a child in that empire, a father need only place him in the hands of a judge to be rid of him. According to the laws of the Parthians, one could kill one's son, daughter, sister, or brother without incurring the slightest penalty. Caesar found this custom generally established in Gaul; several passages of the Pentateuch prove that it was permitted to kill one's children among the people of God, and God himself finally demanded it of Abraham. 'It was long believed,' says a celebrated modern, 'that the prosperity

of empires depended on the enslavement of children'; that opinion was founded on the soundest principles of reason. What! a government may think itself authorized to sacrifice twenty or thirty thousand of its subjects in a day for its own cause, and a father may not, when he judges it proper, become master of the life of his children—what absurdity, what inconsistency, what weakness in those who are restrained by such chains! The authority of the father over his children—the only real authority, the one that has served as the basis or model for all others—is dictated to us by nature itself, and a reflective study of her operations offers us examples of it at every moment; Tsar Peter did not doubt this right, and he exercised it: he issued a public declaration to all the orders of his empire, stating that, according to divine and human laws, a father had the absolute right to condemn his children to death, without appeal and without consulting anyone. It is only in our barbarous France that a false and ridiculous pity has thought to shackle this right. No," continued Rodin warmly, "no, my friend, I shall never understand that a father who was willing to give life should not be free to give death; I shall never understand that the being he has created should not belong to him; there can be no property in the world more sacred; and if that property is well established, the possibility of disposing of it at will is a necessary consequence. How many species among animals give us the example of infanticide? How many are there which, like the rabbit, take no greater pleasure than in devouring their young! I go further, my friend: I am firmly convinced that one of the best actions a father or a mother can perform is to rid themselves of their children; we have no greater enemies in the world. And is it not right, then, to free oneself of them before they are of an age to harm us? Propagation, moreover, is far too abundant in Europe; it far exceeds the means of subsistence; the killing of one's children is therefore an excellent action even from this new point of view. What, then, could restrain me? Humanity!—oh, my friend, I confess I know no virtue more false; humanity, I will prove it

whenever one wishes, is nothing but a manner of being which, taken in the sense the moralists give it, would soon overturn the universe.”¹⁶

“Ah!” said Rombeau, full of enthusiasm for such alarming maxims, “I approve of you, my dear fellow; your reasoning delights me, but your indifference surprises me; I thought you were in love with your daughter.” — “I, my dear friend, in love with a woman!... Ah, Rombeau, I thought you knew me better... you, who understand my tastes so perfectly... you, who must be so well aware of the horror inspired in me by a sex I use only for libertinage, and never from inclination. The prodigious taste I have for such pleasures, the intoxication a certain part inspires in me, compels me to favor indiscriminately all beings in whom I suppose superiority in that respect; and it is in order to multiply my pleasures that I never make any distinction either of age or of sex. Do you not have proof of what I say, Rombeau? And despite your forty-five years, does the sublime beauty of your buttocks not compel me, as you well know, to sodomise you from time to time? That is licentiousness... but love... never. That timid sentiment has always been unknown to my heart. There is something better: for if a young girl or a young boy has unfortunately fed my illusion for too long, disgust sets in with vigour, and I have never known but one way to satisfy it delightfully, and that is to kill, my friend, to kill; there is nothing else; it is, I admit, the ultimate pleasure that an object of lust can give us, but it is also the best. It has been seven years since my daughter has served my pleasures; it is time she paid for the end of my intoxication with the end of her existence... And Rodin, who had a raging hard-on, placed his cock at that moment in his friend’s hands, who soon had him gripping his own. “It seems to me,” said Rombeau, “that we are quite ready to carry out our plans.” — “Yes, here are some very stiff cocks,” said Rodin; “get up then, so I can work your arse, I never get enough of it”; and the lecher, pulling down his friend’s trousers, began to fondle,

¹⁶ This dissertation will be found in *Juliette*.

slap and bite his buttocks for a quarter of an hour. Rombeau returns the favor to his companion, and the two wretches place themselves in such a position that they can both wank their cocks whilst fingering each other's arseholes. Rodin can't hold back; he bends his friend over a sofa and shoves his cock up his arse right up to his balls, wanking him with both hands. "If you were," he said, "as certain as I am of not finishing (for one must conserve one's strength); Yes, if you were as steady as I shall be, even while fucking you, I would send for someone to rouse you further, and after an hour of dreadful debauchery, we would go and fetch the victim." — "I'll vouch for myself," said Rombeau, "there's no one in the world who's more in control of his cum." — "Well then! Who do you want? — Some boys..." And here Rodin, having finished with his friend, rang for his housekeeper, who came straight away to take his orders.

Justine does not think she ought to remain any longer; if she has delayed so long, it was only to clarify Rosalie's fate; it is now only too clearly revealed to her; there is nothing left but to rescue her. Our heroine hastens to it, resolved either to perish or to deliver her friend.

"Unfortunate girl!" she cries to her, "not a moment to lose... The monsters!... you were only too right... it is for this evening... they are going to come!" And as she utters these broken words, the all-too-compassionate Justine does the impossible to force the door. One of her blows knocks something down; she reaches for it—it is the key; she picks it up, hastens to open, embraces her friend, urges her to flee, promises to follow close behind. For a moment Rosalie wishes to show Justine the horror of the dungeon she inhabits, the corpse nailed up on the wall. This fatal delay ruins the entire enterprise. Time is lost. Rosalie, realizing it, at last darts forward. Just heaven! it was once again decreed that virtue must succumb, and that the feelings of the most just and tender compassion were to be cruelly punished. Rodin and Rombeau, led by the housekeeper, all three in a disarray sufficient to betray the nature of the acts in which they

have just been engaged, suddenly appear. Rodin seizes his daughter at the moment she crosses the threshold of the door, beyond which she had only a few steps left to take to be free.

“Where are you going?” cries the furious father, stopping Rosalie, while Rombeau seizes Justine. “Ah, ah!” he continues, looking at her, “it is this slut who is aiding your escape... Wretch,” he adds with an oath, “so this is the result of your grand principles of virtue!... To carry off a daughter from her father!—and this is the reward for the kindness I showed in not stabbing you the other day, when I saw, through your doing, my daughter at a priest’s feet!” — “I have only done what I ought,” replies Justine firmly. “When a father is barbarous enough to wish to murder his daughter, there is nothing one must not attempt to prevent such a crime.” — “Indeed?” says Rodin, “spying and seduction... all the most dangerous vices in a servant. Let us go upstairs, let us go; it is very important to judge this matter.” And Rosalie, followed by Justine, both dragged along by those villains, are taken back into the house. Célestine, whom they find almost naked, receives them with a torrent of insults; Marthe carefully bolts all the doors, returns to take her place among the actors, and the most terrifying, the most abominable, the most cruel of scenes is prepared.

Let us attempt to depict it. Failing the energy it might possess under brushes more powerful than ours, let us at least give it truth.

“Let us begin by drinking,” said Rodin; “I do not like to set about such work without my head being a little heated.” As the table was still laid, nothing more was needed than to pop the corks, and six bottles of the best Champagne were swallowed in a quarter of an hour. “Bring six more,” said Rodin to his sister, “we shall finish them while we work.” — “Ah! Mademoiselle Justine,” said the scoundrel, drawing nearer to that poor girl, all in tears and only too aware of the fate awaiting her, “is this how you corrupt daughters under their father’s roof—you who play

the vestal so well? Do you know, Rombeau, that I did the impossible to have that girl there, and could never succeed; but now we have her, by God, we have her—I defy her to escape us now.” — “And you, little slut,” he continued, pulling his daughter toward him and striking her a resounding slap, “so you let yourself be seduced by that wretch!...” — “Rombeau, we must dissect them both: we’ll perform the hymen experiments on my daughter, and those on the beating of the heart on Justine.” — “I’ll do whatever we like with this little minx,” said Rombeau, half-drunk, as he roughly grabbed Justine by the throat; “that slut’s been turning my head for ages; ever since I’ve known her, I’ve already wanked two or three times thinking of her;” and whilst he spoke, Rombeau set about removing the clothes that stood in the way of their lust. These two poor children were soon in a state of complete nakedness; but as everyone knew Rosalie, it was upon our adventuress’s beautiful body that all eyes were fixed. Célestine comes forward and, seizing her in her arms: “Oh, fuck, what a beautiful girl!” she cries. “Well then, get to work,” says Rodin. “Rombeau, let’s enjoy this preliminary spectacle; I rather like forcing a girl who’s crying to come against her will. Mademoiselle Rodin carries Justine, in tears, to a sofa; and, whilst she defiles her with every art at her command, Rodin, kneeling before the buttocks of this beautiful girl, which his sister had taken care to present to him, showers that lovely arse with the most ardent kisses. Rombeau, positioned in front of the couple, was sucking on Justine’s nipples, whilst Marthe was licking her master’s arse, who, with one of his hands, was treating his daughter’s rather roughly.

Célestine triumphs; the wench puts so much skill and energy into it that pleasure overcomes the pain, and our innocent girl comes... “The whore has given cum,” says Rombeau; “I could tell by the tightening of her anus; I was licking it all the while...” “Yes, there is cum,” says Mademoiselle Rodin, “my fingers are wet with it;” and the slut sucks them, kissing Justine on the mouth. “My child,” said Rodin to this charming girl, “I am very

pleased with what you have just done; believe me, continue to be of the utmost compliance with us; perhaps, by this means, you will regain what your follies have caused you to lose. Ah! Triple fuck! How beautiful she is in this blend of pleasure and pain!” — “Oh, sir,” said Justine, “what is it you demand of me?” — “Nothing we cannot obtain by force, and nothing which, I repeat, will not ease your plight, if you grant it to us willingly: for example, at present we want you to pleasure my sister with your tongue; she will position herself so as to offer you both her cunt and her arse; Rosalie will lick her arse and you her cunt.” She had to obey; was there any way to resist demands so easily turned into orders? The scene takes shape; Rodin, to complete the arrangement, lies down to the right of his sister, Rombeau to the left; they are positioned so that their cocks are within reach of Justine’s mouth, and their arses within reach of Rosalie’s tongue, both of whom are instructed to finger and suck them, at the same time as Célestine. Marthe moves between the rows, teasing their balls, ensuring that their mouths take turns working on the parts entrusted to her, and presenting her beautiful bottom in turn to each of the two libertines. Rosalie, more experienced, submits with greater resignation to horrors that repulse Justine, and which, like her, she performs only whilst moaning. These preliminaries electrify our lechers. “Rombeau,” said Rodin, “let’s bugger Justine; you can’t imagine how the beauty of her buttocks sets my head ablaze; there is perhaps no man in France who has seen as many arses as I have, and I swear to you, my friend, that I have never come across one more beautiful, better shaped, whiter, firmer, or more appetising than that of this little slut;” and every one of these compliments was etched in fiery kisses upon the idol being celebrated.

Justine, hearing her sentence, throws herself at the feet of her tormentors. With the most impassioned accents of pain and despair, the unfortunate girl implores their mercy. “Oh, take my life,” she says to them, “but leave me my honor.” — “But you

will be guilty of nothing," said Rombeau, "we are going to violate you." — "No doubt," said Rodin, "from this moment there will be no more sin upon your conscience; it will be force that has taken everything from you." And the wretch, consoling Justine in this cruel manner, was already placing her on a sofa. "What a lovely arse!" he continued, examining it; "Right, Rombeau, take this handful; you strike only the left cheek, I'll take the right; whichever of us draws the first drop of blood will have the honour of sodomising her before the other. Rosalie, come here, kneel before Rombeau, suck his cock whilst he flogs her; you, Marthe, suck mine."

Justine was lying in Célestine's arms, who was stroking her from below to help her forget her sorrows; but Rodin, having noticed this, rebuked his sister: "Let her suffer, then," he said harshly; "It is not pleasures we want them to feel, but pains, and you are disrupting, you are completely altering the spirit of our plans by disturbing her physical condition." The blows were dealt; each was to administer fifty; Rombeau's were vigorous; but Rodin, more accustomed to this exercise, drew blood by the thirtieth, and nonetheless finished the round: "Come on," he said, "you see it's my turn." — "Yes," said Rombeau, "but be careful not to overdo it; think of how much we need our strength: if I were in your place, I'd make do with a few minor blows and save myself for the main event." — "Oh no, no, God damn it!" said Rodin, spreading Justine's buttocks and pressing his cock—harder than an iron bar—against her. "No, no, there could be no consideration in the world that could stop me from sodomising this beautiful creature; I've desired her for far too long, she's got to have it... she'll get it, the whore; and already the head of the fiery instrument was gouging out the delicate, pretty hole of our unfortunate girl, who, having been taken only once before, had regained all her freshness and delicacy. A terrible scream, followed by a violent movement, startled Rodin for a moment; but, too accustomed to this sort of assault to let himself be thrown off balance, he gripped the girl's hips firmly, thrust

violently, and disappeared, right up to his balls, into that fresh, voluptuous arse. “Ah! Damn it all!” he cries, “Here I am, and I dare God or his bloody agents to stop me from sodomising her right now... she’s done for, the bitch... Oh! My friend, what a lovely arse... it’s so hot... so tight... And had it not been for Célestine’s efforts to stifle the patient’s cries, they would have been heard a mile away. “Rombeau,” said Rodin, “fuck my daughter right in front of me, and position yourself so that I can work your arse whilst you’re coming; Marthe will give us both a good thrashing.” — “Wait,” said Rombeau, “hold on a moment; I’m preparing the pleasure of a second round for you. Here’s what I want: we must place these two young ladies one on top of the other; Justine will get down on all fours, her backside in the air; I’ll position your daughter on top of her, their two holes facing each other, and we’ll probe them both, moving back and forth between them: Marthe, as you said just now, will whip us during the operation, and your sister will keep them in position...” “By all the bloody gods of Christianity, nothing is as good as this way of fucking,” said Rodin, as soon as he’d had a go; “but we could do better, it seems to me: let’s put my sister and Marthe in the same position, that will double the sum of our pleasures. For a full hour our lechers amused themselves by probing these four behinds in this manner; they turned them with such speed that one might have taken them for the sails of a windmill; they gave this position its name, which we recommend every libertine to try. At last they grew weary of it; nothing is as fickle as lust: greedy for pleasure, it always imagines that what it conceives is better than what it leaves behind, and it is only beyond the limits that it supposes pleasure to lie.

The fury of the two libertines rose to such a pitch that their eyes seemed to blaze; their members, pressed against their bellies, seemed to threaten the heavens. Rodin, particularly relentless with Justine, seemed to be conjuring up her downfall; he was kissing her, pinching her, slapping her—an incredible mixture of caresses and invective, of delicacy and horror. The rogue seemed

at a loss for nothing to invent, so as to alternately celebrate and debase the divinity of his lust. Modest by nature, we would blush to reveal the obscenities to which he abandoned himself. "Well then!" he said at last to Justine, "you see, my dear, that there is still something to be gained with these fellows; your honour remains intact; less virtuous libertines would have mercilessly sullied it, but we respect it. Fear not that Rombeau or I should even conceive the desire to lay a hand upon it; but the arse... that lovely arse, my angel, it shall be pierced often; it is so fresh, so well-shaped, so pretty..." And the rascal was wanking it as he said this, he was kissing it, he would sometimes thrust his cock into it. At last, the decisive blows were struck; Rodin seized his daughter, he shot her furious glances; the fate of this unfortunate girl was written in his savage eyes. "Oh! Father," cried the wretched girl in tears, "what have I done to deserve such a fate?..." — "What have you done?" said Rodin. "Can you really ask that? Are your crimes not dark enough? You wanted to know a God, you whore, as if there were to exist any others for you besides my pleasures and my cock;" and as he said this, he made her suck it, rubbing it against her face and her arse, with which he seemed to sensually crush the roses of that alabaster complexion. He whipped her, he hurled abuse at her, blaspheming like a scoundrel; and Rombeau, seeing all this, was wanking on Justine's buttocks, encouraging his friend. At last, Rodin's poor daughter is seated on a small, narrow circle, raised two feet high, upon which rests only her rump. Four ropes hung down from the ceiling; Rosalie's limbs were tied to them, spread as wide as possible; Rodin positioned his sister between the victim's thighs, her buttocks turned towards him. Marthe was to assist with the operation, and Rombeau, standing directly opposite, was to sodomise Justine. The infernal Rombeau, seeing that Rosalie's head was drooping and had nothing to support it, conceived the idea of resting it on his buttocks, so that with every thrust he made whilst sodomising Justine, he would make that head bounce off his arse, like a ball off a racket. This idea amuses the cruel Rodin

immensely; meanwhile, he is preparing many other torments for his unfortunate daughter. The villain sodomises his sister; it seems that it is only through incest and sodomy that he wishes to achieve infanticide. Marthe hands him a scalpel, and he sets to work. The victim's screams give the game away; but precautions have been taken to ensure that nothing untoward can result. However, Rombeau wants to watch his colleague operate; he takes his whore with him and positions himself right next to the operation. The lower abdomen is opened. Rodin, whilst fucking, cuts, tears, detaches, and places on a plate, before his accomplice's eyes, the womb and the hymen, and all that follows. The scoundrels lean in to make their observations. Rosalie, languid, raises lifeless eyes towards her father, and seems to reproach him for his barbarity; but does the voice of pity penetrate such a soul! The ferocious Rodin thrusts his cock into the wound; he delights in bathing himself in blood. Rombeau teases her; Marthe and Célestine burst out laughing, whilst only Justine dares to offer comfort and tears to her wretched friend! She is reproached for this compassion, it is opposed, and she who shows it is mistreated. Rodin, to punish her, forces her to suck the cock smeared with the blood of the one she weeps for; then, holding her down, her head bent over the wound, he flogs her in this horrible state. He is flogged himself. He can bear it no longer; such savagery drives him on; he has just enough time to plunge himself back into Justine's arse, whom he has, on his orders, laid out on Rosalie's rack, so that Rosalie's head is between our heroine's legs, and hers is pressed against the vast, bloody wound that her infanticidal blade has just inflicted; he comes; Rombeau follows suit in Célestine's arse, whilst fucking Marthe's buttocks, and our two exhausted scoundrels slump languidly into armchairs.

However, Rosalie is still alive. Justine dares to pray for her. "You fool," says Rodin, "you can see she won't pull through." — "Oh, sir!" says Justine, distraught, "perhaps with some care... untie her... lay her down; I'll watch over her... the poor thing,

what had she done to you?” — “Let us quickly restore our sexual arousal,” said Rombeau, handling Marthe’s breasts rather roughly; “for these two whores are driving me mad, one with her screams, the other with her pleas.” — “Well then!” said Rodin, “let us drink these six bottles of Champagne, and let Marthe and Célestine wank us whilst we down them.”

They begin the operation:

“And what shall we do next?” said Rombeau, “now that Marthe’s writhing and the gulps of Champagne are starting to give us a hard-on...” — “What shall we do? Here’s what,” said Rodin: “we’ll tie Justine to her friend’s corpse; you’ll sodomise me whilst dissecting her alive, and I, positioned near my daughter’s mouth, will catch, whilst being wanked by my sister, the last gasps of our victim...” — “No,” said Rombeau, “I’ve had a completely different idea for punishing your Justine. The pleasure of killing a woman is soon over; she feels nothing once she’s dead; the delights of making her suffer vanish with her life; all that remains is the memory. Let us do better,” continued Rombeau, “by heating an iron in the fire, let us punish her a thousand times more than if we were to take her life; let us brand her, let us disfigure her; this degradation, combined with all the misfortunes she bears upon her body, will cause her to hang herself or die of starvation; she will suffer at least until the very last moment of her life, and our lust, infinitely prolonged, will become all the more delightful;” no sooner had he spoken than Rodin seized Justine, and the abominable Rombeau pressed the red-hot iron used to brand thieves against her shoulder; “Let her dare to show her face now,” says this monster; “let her try, and by showing this ignominious letter, we shall sufficiently justify the reasons that led to her being dismissed with such secrecy and haste.” — “So be it,” says Rodin; “but we must have our fill of her first; let us rise again, and indulge in a few final horrors with her;” a huge bundle of rods falls into the barbarian’s hands; “Take her on your shoulders,” continues this monster, “I’ll whip her on your back, and from time to time I’ll let the blows fall on your

buttocks; let my sister suck you off whilst I do so, and Marthe will return the blows I'll deal to both of you, and Justine's torment will end with a sodomising." The order is carried out; Rodin shows no mercy, and the blood flowing from our heroine's buttocks, falling in beads onto Rombeau's, causes him an indescribable tickling sensation. "My turn," said this rascal, "but I want her to be positioned differently when I take her from behind; it's her cunt I want to lash, those thighs, her belly, her mound—all those hideous features of a woman's front that I loathe." —"Oh! Double-damned God!" cries Rodin, "why didn't that idea occur to me? I'm desperate that you thought of it before I did;" this new lewdness is carried out; all the front parts of our heroine are cruelly lacerated, Rodin's arse is too; Marthe, at this moment, is sucking his cock; Justine is finally placed on a sofa; and the two friends, each flogged—one by Marthe, the other by Célestine—leave deep within the orphan's arse the final proofs of their detestable lust.

Here Rosalie, whom these villains had continued to expose to their gaze in order to inflame themselves by that dreadful spectacle, turns her dying eyes toward Justine and breathes her last. The monsters gather round her, still observing her with a ferocious eye; they touch her, handle her, and the savage Rodin, in a frenzy, fixes his teeth into the still-quivering remains—the miserable result of his former passions. Her body is at last thrown into a pit in the garden, where no doubt many other victims of Rodin's wickedness already lay; and Justine, dressed again, is led back to the edge of the forest, where she is abandoned to her unhappy fate, with a warning of the danger of any accusation should she dare attempt it in the wretched condition in which she is left.

END OF VOLUME I