

LE CADRAN
DE LA VOLUPTÉ ;
OU
LES AVENTURES
DE CHÉRUBIN.

[Translated by Patrick Kearney]



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NOTE¹

This little obscene and defamatory novel directed against the Queen and Mme de Polignac appeared most probably in the early months of 1793. The title under which it is announced here is that of the copy belonging to the *Enfer* of the Bibliothèque Nationale. There exists another, even more explicit, and here it is exactly: *Le cadran des plaisirs de la Cour ou les aventures du petit page Chérubin, pour servir de suite à la vie de Marie-Antoinette, ci-devant Reine de France, suivi de la confession de Mlle Sapho*; à Paris, chez les marchands de nouveautés, in-18, 270 pages.

The *Confession de Sapho* here announced is merely a reprinting of the famous passage of *l’Espion anglais* devoted to tribades. It has no connection with the novel of Chérubin properly so called, and it is probable that it appears there only in order to swell the volume. This latter edition is almost certainly later than the one we cite at the head of our note. Indeed, in that one the Queen is still treated with some consideration — if one may express it thus. The notice placed at the beginning of the *Cadran* indicates very clearly the author’s sentiments in this regard. Here, moreover, is the complete text:

“Who has not heard of the little page known by the name of Chérubin, whose story Beaumarchais lightly touched upon in *Le Mariage de Figaro*? Some, at performances of that play, smiled at certain passages as though they had been in the secret of my adventures; others, more sincere, and less in a position to know — or to pretend to know — the secret intrigues of

¹ Extracted from Hector Fleischmann’s *Madame de Polignac et la Cour galante de Marie-Antoinette* (Paris : Bibliothèque des Curieux, 1910), pp. 242-245. Fleischmann reprints *Le Cadran des plaisirs*, but a bowdlerized version of it.

the Court, saw in the character I was made to play only the play of the imagination of the author of *La Folle Journée*. Informed upon my return to France of the fabricated anecdotes that had been spread about me, I formed the design of informing the public of the truth of my history. I confess that my respect for the one who first initiated me into the mysteries of love would have closed my mouth, despite the unjust persecutions she exercised against me, had I not quite recently experienced further acts of her malice. Who would believe that at a time when all Frenchmen boast of being free and of having shaken off the yoke of arbitrary power, despotism would still have vile agents who would not blush to lend themselves in secret to its odious manoeuvres? Hardly had I arrived in Paris when I perceived that my steps were being watched, and that... I will say no more, for I should fear that, embittered by misfortunes which teach a man to become suspicious, I might give rise to suspicions that perhaps would be unjust; and my intention is not to raise up new enemies for one whose name is already sufficiently detested throughout France. Without seeking here to justify her for all the wrongs imputed to her, I believe her less guilty than inconsiderate and giddy; and her faults belong more to the Polignac, who introduced me to her, than to a character too fond of pleasures to be wicked on principle. If, despite public opinion, I speak of her thus, I beg pardon of the Constitution and of good patriots; whether the memory of the pleasures she first made me taste, or the traits of greatness of soul and generosity of which I was several times a witness, have effaced the impression of the sorrows she caused me to endure, I owe it to myself to render her this justice: indeed, in order to judge her properly, let us impose silence for a moment upon our passions, and let us picture to ourselves a young princess carried into the whirl of a Court given over to the most unbridled libertinage and the most ruinous luxury; we shall see her by turns surrounded by masked personages, constantly occupied in spying out her tastes and passions in order to draw an unworthy advantage from them, multiplying beneath her feet the crowd of pleasures so as to profit from a moment of intoxication. What do I say! painting vice for her in the most agreeable colours, and persuading her that the

Treasury of France can, without the people lamenting it, abundantly supply the most extravagant expenses. You who judge kings and princes with so much promptitude, if you imagined all the reefs that are strewn beneath their steps, those floods of flatterers who constantly beset them, and who all have an interest in deceiving them, perhaps you would judge them with more indulgence, and might even thank them for all the vices they do not possess; but here I find myself praising the Q... Ah! I feel too strongly that I still love her!"

These considerations are not preserved in the second edition, nor indeed in the third, published at Lyon in 1796 under the title *Chérubin ou l'heureux libertin*. The plot of this book has several points of resemblance with that of *La Messaline Française*. Here as there Mme de Polignac serves as gallant intermediary for the Queen, betrays her, urges her on to the worst debaucheries, and does not hesitate to employ all the most unexpected resources of love. It is the Marquis de Sade, with somewhat less voluptuous cruelty. And, no more than de Sade, is it something that can be recounted. One can scarcely even read it. But it was assuredly not the literary taste of posterity that the pamphleteers of 1793 troubled themselves about!

A WORD.

Who has not heard of the little page known as Chérubin, whose story Beaumarchais merely brushed upon in *Le Mariage de Figaro*? At performances of this play, some smiled at certain passages as though they were privy to the secret of my adventures; others, more candid and less in a position to know—or to pretend to know—the secret intrigues of the court, saw in the character I was made to play nothing more than a creation of the imagination of the author of *La Folle Journée*. Having learned, upon my return to France, of the fabricated anecdotes that had been circulated about me, I resolved to inform the public of the true history of my life. I confess that my respect for the one who first initiated me into the mysteries of love would have sealed my lips, despite the unjust persecutions she exercised against me, had I not quite recently experienced fresh proofs of her malice. Who would believe that, at a moment when all Frenchmen boast of being free and of having shaken off the yoke of arbitrary power, despotism should still possess vile agents who would not blush to lend themselves secretly to its odious manoeuvres? Hardly had I arrived in Paris when I perceived that my steps were being watched, and that... but I shall say no more; embittered by misfortunes which teach a man to become suspicious, I might give rise to suspicions that would perhaps be unjust, and it is not my intention to raise up new enemies for the one whose name is already held in sufficient horror throughout France. Without attempting here to justify her for all the wrongs imputed to her, I believe her less guilty than inconsistent and thoughtless; and her faults belong more to the Polignac—who first introduced me to her—than to her own character, too fond of pleasure to

be wicked by design. If, despite the voice of public opinion, I speak of her thus, I beg pardon of the Constitution and of all good patriots; whether the memory of the pleasures she first caused me to taste, or the marks of greatness of soul and generosity of which I was several times the witness, have effaced the impression of the sorrows she made me endure, I owe it to myself to render her this justice. Indeed, to judge her properly, let us impose silence for a moment upon our passions, and picture to ourselves a young princess carried into the whirlwind of a court given over to the most unbridled libertinage and the most ruinous luxury. We shall see her surrounded in turn by masked figures, ceaselessly occupied in spying out her tastes and passions in order to derive some unworthy advantage from them, multiplying beneath her feet the crowd of pleasures so as to profit from a moment of intoxication. What am I saying? Portraying vice to her in its most seductive colours, and persuading her that the treasury of France could, without causing the people to groan, abundantly supply the most extravagant expenditures. You who judge kings and princes with such promptness—if you could imagine all the pitfalls strewn beneath their steps, those waves of flatterers who constantly besiege them and who all have an interest in deceiving them—you might perhaps judge them with greater indulgence, and might even thank them for all the vices they do not possess. But here I find myself praising the Q[ueen]... Ah! I feel only too well that I still love her!

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THE HAPPY NIGHT

Son of love, legitimated by marriage, I received at birth all the seductive gifts that might render me better suited than any other to the mysteries of Priapus. A firm and vigorous body, richly proportioned; an animated countenance; large blue eyes gracefully shaded by long lashes; supple and agile limbs; an imagination constantly turned toward the pleasures of love—such was I when I was placed among the Pages of the Q[ueen]. At what a moment of my life did I find myself in the midst of a court that seemed rather the court of pleasure than that of a great king! I was in that happy age when the mind, stirred by a

thousand agreeable dreams, presents nothing but enchanting and ever-changing scenes; my soul, inflamed with all the fires of love, sought keenly to feel its own existence: I longed for pleasure. When I was near a woman my heart beat with such violence that I could scarcely breathe! I was lost in distraction; my state was too intense to last long. The women of the court are connoisseurs, and the Q[ueen] is said to possess a sure instinct. One night when I was on duty in her apartments, my eyes fell upon a painting... Great gods! what beauties the canvas seemed to breathe! At once my imagination caught fire. I seized, with a hand trembling with pleasure, the god who was setting me ablaze with all his flames; I was on the point of reaching the height of delight when a door opened... A woman, her bosom entirely uncovered and dressed in the most voluptuous dishabille, approached me (I had been observed without suspecting it). "What were you doing there, young man?" she said in a tone that inspired more confidence than shame. "What! does this game hold charms for you?" — "Ah, pardon, my beautiful lady; alas! since I cannot enjoy the reality, my foolish imagination..." I was trembling all over. — "Reassure yourself, my friend." Then taking my hand, which she pressed gently, "Follow me," she added with an agreeable smile. — "But if the Q[ueen] should learn that..." — "Do not fear; I have influence with her. I shall arrange everything." I followed her. We crossed several apartments; at last, having reached a small cabinet faintly lit, she seated me beside her on a rich sofa. She held one of my hands, and leaning amorously toward me, her mouth—fresh as a rose—seemed to invite a kiss. I ventured one, which was returned with great ardor! I was all fire; I no longer possessed myself. My hand slipped, despite a slight resistance, toward a certain place... I threw my beautiful nymph upon the couch and, in the

finest condition imaginable, plunged into an ocean of delights... What expression could render all that I felt? Twice we grew intoxicated with the precious nectar we poured upon the altar of pleasure. Returned from my first ecstasy, my hands wandered over the most beautiful body in the world. With what delight I felt and covered with burning kisses those forms rounded by the hand of the Graces! Never have I seen a more beautiful bosom (and since then I have seen thousands): alabaster breasts, firmly poised. I analyzed, while adoring them, every part of her body. A tender curiosity led her to let her beautiful hand wander over me; I was radiant with triumph. "Nature has done everything for you, handsome Page." "Love does even more—it grants me the favours of his mother." "You are very warm; remove your clothes, they hinder you." In an instant I was entirely naked. "I shall follow your example; we shall be more at our ease. My friend, we must intoxicate ourselves with pleasure!" "Let the gods envy me!" I cried, throwing myself into her arms. Soon we spoke only through kisses and sighs. My divinity was furious; she gently bit my lips. Soon she returned to me all the caresses with which I had covered her. I again took the road to the highest pleasures, and three times I traveled it without interruption... "That is enough," she said, embracing me closely. "Enough, my dear love, enough! Spare yourself for pleasures which more than any other mortal you deserve to feel. The hour that must separate us approaches. Withdraw now, and tomorrow at the same hour you will follow the one who will show you the matching curl to this one. Be faithful to me, and Love will multiply your delights. Farewell, little friend." A kiss—the most voluptuous of kisses—ended this scene of pleasure. I withdrew to take the rest that had become necessary to me.

THE NEXT DAY.

No sleep came to me; my heart violently agitated, my mind fixed upon the adorable object of my new worship, the night seemed of an unbearable length. At last, the day appeared... What a day! it was a century. How many conjectures did I not form? I did not know the one who caused all this turmoil... And what does it matter? She is... DIVINE: yes, DIVINE! Very well then, that shall be her name. Tormented by my imagination, feeling all the emptiness of solitude, and wishing for the pleasure of conversing with her, I set about writing her a letter. This is what I wrote.

“Are you an angel, a sprite—what do I know? Surely you are not a mortal, for you have made a god of me. Could you perhaps be one of those beneficent fairies whom I so love when I read their stories? I do not know what you are; but what I know very well is that I adore you. Ah! I had not yet lived; I feel my existence only since yesterday. Farewell, angel, fairy... no—DIVINE: that is the beautiful name my heart gives you, and the one that suits you best. Farewell: I fall at your knees.”

Entirely occupied with my divinity, I had not yet examined the clasp she had entrusted to me, which was to be compared with the one I awaited with such impatience. This clasp was of great richness: it was of gold, set with a double row of fine diamonds... this increased my embarrassment considerably. I was plunged in my reveries when I saw a man enter my room carrying a basket full of bottles.

“Here is some Tokay wine that has been sent to you,” he said.

“To me? You are mistaken, surely, my friend.”

“Sir, your name is Monsieur D...l?”

“Yes.”

“Well then, that is correct. Your servant.”

Hardly had he left when a ray of light seemed to illuminate me. It is my DIVINE, I said to myself; it is she who sends me this gift in a roundabout way. Her clasp, which I have here, tells me she is wealthy enough to do so; but... by what means... what does it matter? She is truly prudent; while restoring my strength she wishes to procure me new ones. What pleasure I shall have in losing them again this evening!

I made an excellent dinner; I drank a bottle of Tokay. Oh, how disposed I felt after this meal! I felt my powers doubled; and had the desired hour not been so near, aided by my ardent imagination which painted for me pleasures past and pleasures to come, my hand would perhaps have hastened—while diminishing them—the sensations for which I sighed with such ardor.

At last, someone knocked at my door. A woman approached and presented me, together with the clasp, a note couched in these terms:

“Follow, my handsome friend, your guide. Make haste; love awaits you with crowns of roses.”

The person who was to conduct me had a charming hand, which I kissed in gratitude for the service she rendered me. I could not see her features; her face was covered, and she enjoined me, for my own good, to respect her secret. It was the order of my beautiful unknown. I followed my guide; we passed along the terrace of the château to the southern parterre. My guide spoke into the ear of a man in African dress; we then reached a small cabinet artfully illuminated.

I saw DIVINE. To cry out with joy and throw ourselves into each other's arms was the work of an instant. While our kisses and amorous embraces compensated us for the long hours of absence, the guide disappeared; we found

ourselves alone and safe. What happiness! DIVINE wore for her only garment a chemise of the finest muslin; through it I saw all the beauties I adored. The scene of the previous night had made me bold.

“Permit me, my DIVINE, to kiss—to devour—this masterpiece of nature, this sanctuary of love. Gods! how small it is! How wonderfully this coral contrasts with that alabaster...”

“I am constrained; I must rid myself of my clothes. The priests of love, when they sacrifice to him, must be naked like that god.”

Already I was in a state of pure nature. DIVINE untied a pink ribbon; the light garment fell... Heaven! what beauties! Venus rising from the bosom of the waves never appeared so lovely. I took her in my arms, pressed her against my breast, then gently laying her back upon a heap of eiderdown cushions, I pierced her with repeated strokes of the dart which Love himself seemed to guide. Soon a torrent of fire flooded the secret charms of DIVINE; her beautiful eyes closed languidly, she swooned. I succumbed with her beneath the excess of pleasure. My mouth wandered over hers; I wished to gather her sighs. Her sweet breath, which I inhaled, was a subtle flame that ran through all my veins and set every part of my body ablaze. I gained a new life, only to set about losing it a second time. DIVINE opened her eyes and clasped me in her beautiful arms.

“Ah! dear lover,” she said to me, “suspend your strokes...”

“But no—faster... Ah!... I die...”

Plunged together in that voluptuous ecstasy which follows perfect enjoyment, we gazed amorously at one another, when suddenly DIVINE, moved by an involuntary impulse, sprang upon the alabaster column which had given her the delights of beatitude and covered it with

kisses.

“Stop, DIVINE, stop! I am overcome... I feel that one could die of pleasure...”

The torch of love sparkled with new flames. DIVINE threw herself upon me, seized it, and set herself ablaze with it. Gods! what movements! She herself directed mine; her voluptuous tongue plunged into my mouth; I intoxicated myself with ambrosia. DIVINE felt a universal trembling, and for the third time lost the use of her senses.

It was five o'clock in the morning; already the horizon was being veiled with a purple curtain. We had to part—but how firmly we promised to see each other again the following night! I could not tear myself away from DIVINE. Twenty times I bade her farewell, and twenty times I returned to her arms. At last, whether love still demanded a sacrifice, or whether upon the breast of DIVINE I drew new vigor, “Take this, DIVINE,” I cried, “see the power of your charms; your beautiful eyes would animate marble. Enjoy your handiwork; and just as we offer to the gods the gifts we hold from their beneficence, so I offer you homage for that which you have just caused to be born.”

Soon I had placed my offering in the sanctuary of pleasure; our mingled sighs were the incense we offered to the god whose mysteries we celebrated. No—one can only feel, and one cannot describe, what we experienced.

The sacrifices completed, I wished to return the rich clasps which had served me as a passport to enter Cnidus.

“I intended them as a gift for you,” said DIVINE. “Keep them as a pledge of my love. I add this portfolio as well. Accept it, my dear heart; I am rich enough for us both. Spare nothing; spend freely—love will provide for everything. Farewell. The word *Rosalba* will be the signal of our rendezvous. The same person who gave you the clasp will tell it to you, and you will follow her.”

“Love will lend me his wings—I shall fly.”

THE WALLET.

What was my surprise, on opening the portfolio—which in itself was very rich—to find inside it forty thousand livres in banknotes? The clasps were worth at least as much... “She is a fairy,” said I to myself, “or else she is the..... she alone could make such magnificent presents; and then the mystery she employs in order to conceal from me who she is, the superb apartments she inhabits...” I was greatly perplexed to discover the answer to this riddle. I was not yet certain; I had only suspicions, and I feared certainty. I liked to see in DIVINE a fairy—or at least my equal; the idea of supreme greatness alarmed my love.

I shall pass lightly over the details of the day... in order to come to the night, which, like the two preceding ones, was witness to the most exquisite pleasures. DIVINE, in the disorder of her senses, was in an enchanting delirium: she gave herself up to all the ardor of her temperament; no more restraint—she sought to multiply both her pleasures and mine through a thousand attitudes that possessed for me all the charm of novelty...

Fifteen nights passed in these erotic sports... But the sixteenth deserves an honorable place in this account.

It was a Thursday. Hardly had I opened my eyes to the light when I saw my guide enter.

“Wonders are expected of you tonight. Here is an essence that must be taken at the moment of departure; it is of Cagliostro’s composition. Fear nothing, young athlete: this sacred oil will, in all men, increase all the fires of love, double and triple your strength, and by a happy miracle raise you above the common sphere and make a god of you. Be this evening upon the terrace of the château; you will hear a guitar, upon which the air *Sentir avec ardeur* will

be played. That will be the signal. Approach the place from which the sounds proceed, and Love will do the rest. Farewell—rest yourself, and above all spare your rich dispositions.”

I wished to embrace her.

“Stop—it is not yet time,” she said to me. “Perhaps one day...”

She left.

THE GUITAR.

I had been walking upon the terrace for a quarter of an hour. The aphrodisiac elixir had begun to act and made the slightest delay unbearable to me. At last I heard the ravishing sounds of the guitar; in two leaps I was beneath the window from which the tones of that sweet harmony proceeded. A woman coughed; I approached. It was no longer the same guide. In a low voice she said, "Rosalba." I recognized the password and replied, "DIVINE." She made me enter the chamber where the woman who had been playing the guitar was seated. I saw a charming woman, no less beautiful than DIVINE... I was struck by her beauty and remained motionless with surprise.

"Ah! I thought nothing could ever appear so beautiful to me as DIVINE—but..."

"Let us go," she said. "I have no time to hear your compliments, nor perhaps have you time to make them. Follow me."

I recognized the voice of my guide. I had always seen her with her face covered; how pleased I was to find her more beautiful than the portrait my imagination had formed of her. "Ah!" said I to myself, "it is a Grace who conducts me to Venus!" "Go on," she said, opening a secret staircase for me. "Climb to the first door and blow your nose twice." She closed the lower door behind me. I gave the signal. The door opened. It was a temple of which DIVINE was the goddess. The light of a hundred candles, reflected in the crystal of the chandeliers, illuminated paintings executed by the hand of the Graces with the brushes of Voluptuousness; repeated in twenty mirrors, they gave this superb apartment the appearance of a chapel

consecrated to the mother of the Loves. DIVINE, half-naked, lay beneath a canopy upon a heap of cushions strewn with flowers. The chamber was perfumed with the richest fragrances; every sense found its delight.

I fell at the feet of DIVINE and embraced her knees. “O my goddess,” said I to her, “behold at your feet the most devoted of your adorers; receive his vows and his sincere homage. Let me die upon your bosom. My life, my soul—everything is yours; dispose of them as you will.”

“Rise, my beloved,” she said to me. “Come into the arms of your lover and receive the reward of your love—the crown of pleasure and immortality.”

I sprang into DIVINE’s arms; soon our two bodies, mingled together, seemed to form but one. Love waved above us all the fires of his torch; the incense we offered this god smoked upon his altars. DIVINE, overwhelmed with pleasure, was ready to expire in my arms; I alone, in a state more than human, redoubled my abundant libations. I began to believe myself a god!

Recovered from her ecstasy, DIVINE no longer possessed herself; she was transported beyond the common sphere. In the delirium of pleasure, her hair disordered, she was no longer a goddess but a bacchante. She wished to enjoy in every possible manner—furious, carried away, no longer observing any restraint. With an eager hand she seized the thyrsus that inspired her, brought her beautiful mouth toward it... her voluptuous tongue... at last she pressed it against every part of her body. It was her god! Her firm and polished bosom served it as a throne. Then, by a strange caprice, she placed it in the narrow opening beside that which nature had destined for it. Taking my hand, she guided my finger into the inflamed retreat which I had just quitted with regret. I moved it, and soon the gentle dew of pleasure moistened my fortunate hand. I found the path she had made me take not disagreeable, and

was ready to give proof of it, when, by a quick and skillful movement, DIVINE changed my direction and received in the coral vase destined for that purpose a torrent of flame whose imminent eruption she had doubtless foreseen by instinct.

A moment of repose—or rather a calmer enjoyment—succeeded this scene of varied pleasures. DIVINE possessed a creative spirit; she herself arranged the preparations for the new sacrifice we wished to offer to the god of Lamp-sacus. Extended upon the altar, she made me pass one of my thighs beneath her supple and light body, so that my head lay near her feet, while mine corresponded—one beneath her loins and the other upon her shoulder. In this attitude the proud god of gardens was obliged to bend his head somewhat in order to penetrate the burning course he had to run; she herself introduced him into the arena. Never have I experienced ticklings or delights greater than those which I owed to this fortunate discovery. Ah! this time I died in my turn. DIVINE disengaged herself and stretched herself upon my body, which she long held embraced. Her rose-like mouth gathered my sighs; soon by her lascivious caresses she revived my dying ardor. Filled with the god who inspired her, DIVINE invented a new method. She imagined passing one leg through each of the double cords that served as supports for raising oneself from the elastic cushions that formed our bed, so that her head alone rested upon a slightly elevated pillow. The cords that supported her legs being apart from one another kept her thighs separated. She placed me between them like a pack, so that my head lay beneath her beautiful hip, while before her eyes were displayed the handsome forms with which nature had pleased to adorn my body. Her hand wandered with pleasure over those two firm and polished globes; then slipping beneath them she encountered the sacred sources of delight, and by the gentle agitation of

her fingers hastened the moment of ecstasy. It is impossible for me to describe the infinite enjoyments which this charming posture procured for us. Yet our delights had to be brought to an end; it was of the utmost importance to avoid the profane eye. We tore ourselves with difficulty from each other's arms. I regained my lodging secretly, and I confess sincerely that I stood greatly in need of rest.

HOLIDAYS.

The following day I received a letter, which ran as follows:

“Let us be sparing of pleasures in order to enjoy them the longer. You will pass two days without seeing me, but it is to prepare you to be initiated into the sacred mysteries of Venus. Your trial ended yesterday; your discretion and your respect for the incognito I wish to maintain prove that you are worthy of this favor. A succession of prodigies will soon strike your soul with astonishment and delight. You know my power... Farewell, handsome friend; be assured of the love of

The Fairy DIVINE.”

THE TEMPLE OF VENUS OF CNIDUS.

On the third day, toward evening, a carriage stopped at my door. A footman came to inform me that I was expected to enter it. I went out and took my place beside a young man wrapped in a rich cloak... it was DIVINE. A kiss upon her rose-like mouth proved that I recognized her. The carriage set off—it flew; we arrived in Paris in a very short time. We stopped at the door of a house in a small cul-de-sac; we descended, and the carriage drove away. A woman, to whom DIVINE said a few mysterious words, led us into a lower room where there was a trunk. From it DIVINE drew two complete white garments in the Greek style. She dressed me in one of them, fastened a superb pink sash about my waist, and placed a crown of flowers upon my head; she herself was soon attired in the same fashion. Gods! how beautiful she was—I thought I beheld a Grace.

We ascended a magnificent staircase adorned with festoons and garlands. Arrived at a portico, DIVINE knocked three soft strokes. The door opened. Three warriors, armed from head to foot, conducted me to a small altar upon which lay two naked swords crossed together. There I was made to swear, by all that is most sacred, to keep the strictest silence about everything I was about to see. “Your life depends upon it,” they said. This beginning, together with the apartment hung in black, frightened me; I promised whatever they wished. Then one of the knights, taking DIVINE and me by the hand, led us into a temple. A

double row of Gnidians and Gnidiennes surrounded an altar strewn with flowers. Music, whose soft and melodious sounds intoxicated the soul with pleasure, filled every sense with sweet confusion. I believed myself in those happy times when mortals, communicating with the gods, took them as the models and witnesses of their delights. All the young nymphs who adorned this temple came to give me the kiss of fraternity. How tender and voluptuous it was! The young men came in their turn; their kisses, no less passionate than lascivious, made an impression on me equally vivid.

After this ceremony three young priestesses came to remove my garments; I was placed naked upon a couch while the company formed a circle around me. The three priestesses successively pronounced the praises of every part of my body, and it was decided that I was worthy to be initiated into the most secret mysteries. One after another all these beauties came to kiss that fair and precious portion of my being to which I owe all my happiness. The men, in their turn, kissed those two globes which once merited altars to Venus Callipyge. Scenes so lascivious could not fail to inflame me in return: I gave the least equivocal proof of it, and all immediately clapped their hands and celebrated my glory.

A clap of thunder announced the approach of the god who presided over these festivities. He descended in a golden cloud, to the sound of instruments of every kind. His brow was encircled with a crown of roses; he held for a sceptre the most beautiful priapus one could behold. All waited in silence for him to pronounce his oracles.

“It is time,” he said, “it is time, charming youth impatient to enjoy, to open the course to your pleasures. Approach, young and handsome initiate, receive from my hand your lovely mistress. Go and multiply your delights.

And you, priests and priestesses, form around them voluptuous groups, and let Venus preside over these mysteries.”

DIVINE was instantly in my arms. The god himself—whose whole body was a masterpiece of nature—placed with his own hand my radiant dart within the burning retreat destined for it. Each person then abandoned themselves with frenzy to the most varied pleasures. What sighs! what multiplied attitudes! Ah! I cried out in the ecstasy of happiness:

*Remain, adored and lovely sights,
Remain forever in my eyes;
Receive the homage of my rites,
My lawgivers, my gods, my skies.*

THE DIAL OF CNIDUS.

All the phases of voluptuous pleasure were marked upon a dial whose hand was directed by the god of gardens. This dial was divided into twenty-four points, which indicated twenty-four manners of enjoyment, and which each person passed through in succession. This mysterious and beneficent dial is represented in the frontispiece of this book. DIVINE and I passed through the first stages; but soon the god came to set us again upon the proper path by showing us the dial. What refinement of pleasure! Having arrived at the twenty-fourth point, I continued my joyous exploits to the great astonishment of the whole company, who formed around us choruses of dances like those once performed at Paphos and Amathus. Soon the torch of love, whose fires I had exhausted, cast only a wavering flame; I was invited to take some repose. Four nymphs, entirely naked, brought the rarest and most delicious fruits; all the regions of the earth had been laid under contribution for this feast. The most exquisite and precious wines were freely drunk. A new Ganymede (and I was soon to play that role completely), I was charged with pouring the nectar for the god of this temple, while another Hebe presented him with ambrosia.

After this delicate collation had revived our exhausted strength, preparations were made for new contests. I was already upon the bosom of DIVINE when the god, applying to my mouth a kiss full of fire, introduced me into the charming abode which DIVINE had reserved for me and insinuated into me a ray of his own divinity. He did this with such art and address that, instead of the pain I had expected to feel, I felt my pleasure redoubled. He penetrated me with all the fires of his divinity, which in return

inflamed the bosom of DIVINE.

At length it was necessary to put an end to so many delights. The tenderest kisses and burning sighs preceded and accompanied our farewell. Each withdrew in admirable order. We resumed the road to Versailles and traversed it with the same rapidity as before. I alighted at the entrance to the town in order to regain my lodging on foot, while the carriage darted away like an arrow. Once arrived at my rooms, I went to bed. Gods! with what enchanting dreams was my sleep filled! I did not awake until very late. Upon waking, I ordered a restorative breakfast, which soon restored all my vigor. A quarter of an hour later I was told that a lady wished to see me; it was the beautiful guitar player—my guide.

“Still in bed! Where did you pass your night?” she said with a smile.

“In the heavens, among goddesses and immortals.”

“Ah! I understand; you have been at the temple of Venus of Cnidus, and no doubt the god Cagliostro has made you partake of his divinity!”

“What! The one who knows how to enjoy and to make others enjoy with so much art—is the Count Cagliostro?”

“He himself. And your DIVINE... I suspect... I can now inform you about her, since she has exhausted every species of pleasure with you; she will soon give you a successor. Such is her character: loving to frenzy so long as one answers the impetuosity of her temperament; her passion ends with that which nourished it. What a pity that so handsome a young man should soon be without a mistress!”

“Ah! it will depend only upon you whether I feel that dreadful void. I can still offer a few crowns of myrtle to the god Priapus, and to prove it to you... see...”

At these words I seized the beauty and, lifting her with a vigorous arm onto my bed, I immediately committed

two acts of infidelity to DIVINE.

“Gods! dear Page,” she cried, “you are a treasure! The Q[ueen] shall not possess you alone. The moment I see you I become her rival. Ah! if you prefer the one who loves you best, I am sure of victory.”

“What do I hear—the Q[ueen]! What! I would have...”

“Yes, dear love, I reveal the secret to you; but take care! an indiscretion would ruin you forever. You will see her this evening. Behave with her as before, without seeming to suspect anything. Pursue your noble career, but do not rest too confidently upon your good fortune, for you will soon experience the effects of her inconstancy.”

While she spoke, this female Mercury was already brandishing in her hand the javelin destined to pierce my royal conquest; and as soon as she saw it in its full splendor she directed it toward the grotto of Venus. I wished to examine it at my leisure, to compare it with that of DIVINE. The difference was noticeable: this one, shaded by a thick forest whose dark hue contrasted admirably with her satin-white skin, offered a striking contrast. The vessel of DIVINE, surrounded by a soft blond down like silk, contrasted with her alabaster body only by its coral edges. The one was a blonde who possessed all the vivacity of a brunette; the other a brunette who possessed all the softness of a blonde.

Gods! what pleasures I tasted upon the bosom of my lively and sparkling guide! How she possessed the art of amorous combat! How rapid, voluptuous, and varied were her attitudes and movements! Yes, I confess it: she almost made me forget DIVINE. Yet we had to part, for the hour at which I was to see the latter again was approaching. I know not what presentiments troubled me; I was in a state difficult to define. I desired and feared my return to her. Whether the knowledge I had now of her rank restrained me, or whether her charming emissary had exhausted the

fires that burned in me for her, I felt embarrassed and timid; and it was rather obedience than love that led me to the rendezvous.

THE UNFORGIVEABLE FAULT

I saw DIVINE again, yet I was no longer transported with love; desire no longer hurried me into her arms. She herself sprang into mine; I pressed her there faintly and sighed... I delayed as long as I could that moment which formerly could never arrive soon enough for my impatient wishes. At last I was obliged to act as though I desired it. The little preliminaries which formerly had been the work of an instant were prolonged for quite some time; I gave only weak signs of sensibility. Timid, almost trembling, I no longer possessed that firmness which had won me so many pleasures and honors. I nevertheless set about giving DIVINE proof that her charms had not entirely lost their power over me... O grief! I succumbed at the very first steps I took in the course. DIVINE in vain encouraged and excited me... Alas! she was no longer that DIVINE, that beneficent fairy, that amiable and simple priestess of Venus; I knew her now, and my imagination no longer at work, I saw in her the Q[ueen]. This thought chilled me; it rendered me fearful and constrained in her presence. Formerly the charming illusion of a sweet equality had scattered flowers over all our actions. I had been the lover of DIVINE before I knew who she was; and suddenly finding myself her subject, I respected her in spite of myself. And who does not know that respect is the scarecrow of love? Add to my moral state the physical exhaustion into which the beautiful messenger had plunged me, and one may judge the embarrassment in which I found myself.

DIVINE, disguising her displeasure and her surprise, addressed me with tender reproaches.

“No doubt another has shared with you pleasures of which all that I have done for you seemed to assure me the sole possession. I had counted somewhat more upon your fidelity. You know, doubtless, who I am; but reassure yourself. She whom love has caused to descend from her rank in order to unite herself to your pleasures remembers her greatness and her power only to heap benefits upon the one who was once so dear to her.”

Tears flowed from my eyes. I confessed that I knew her and swore to her the deepest secrecy. In vain did I protest that I would adore her all my life; in vain did I promise that I would live only for her... Alas! love had given place to indifference. I could not conceive how one could pass so quickly from the most ardent attachment to the coldest indifference. What! was the state of weakness in which I found myself an unpardonable fault? Could I not repair tomorrow the time lost today? Ah! it is only too true that women never forgive what their self-love regards as an outrage done to their charms. Our meeting was short; my inflexible beauty declared herself afflicted with a headache. I understood, and withdrew deeply saddened, well punished for having had too great confidence in my powers. Ah! how I regretted the famous liquor which had transformed me into a god!

I passed a melancholy night. Fortunately, the next day at ten o'clock I received a visit from my ambassadress. I told her everything; she seemed surprised at nothing.

“You are already replaced,” she said to me, “and for two days the C... de R... has shared with you. But come forget your fickle mistress in my arms. I wish to compel you to find me superior to her.”

Soon she made me forget the whole universe. With her I relived all the pleasures that DIVINE had procured for me; she surpassed them all, and I easily consoled myself for the loss of the one in possessing my beautiful J.... Several days

passed in pleasures. Each evening I went to share her bed; and Morpheus, fleeing from the brightness of the torch of love, placed no interruption upon the delights with which we intoxicated ourselves. The Graces and happiness spun our fortunate hours; but nothing is lasting in this world below. One morning, as I was preparing to go see J. P..., I received a letter whose handwriting was unknown to me. It was an order to depart within twenty-four hours for Nantes, and from there to pass to America, where employment was promised me. With this order was enclosed a draft for ten thousand livres for the expenses of my journey.

Groaning, I communicated this cruel order to J. P....

“You must depart,” she said to me. “Disobedience would ruin you. It is with sorrow that I make you feel the necessity of leaving; it is love that gives me the strength to urge you to go. I shall have great grief... Yet I shall know how to conceal it.”

“Perhaps one day fate, which separates us now, will reunite us.”

I pass over an infinity of details—over the seal we placed upon our farewell, over my reflections upon the nature of women.

I arrived at Nantes... What was my surprise to encounter there the messenger who had once brought me wine at the time of my triumph! This meeting made me hasten my embarkation, by proving to me its irrevocable necessity. I crossed the seas without misfortune, and we cast anchor at Port-au-Prince. When I arrived at the governor’s residence, I was not a little surprised to hear myself called by name. He overwhelmed me with politeness and gave me the post of secretary to the government. I vegetated in this position for three years without receiving any news from the two women who had both made me progress so rapidly in the art of libertinage. The perfidious creatures

understood each other perfectly in deceiving me. Since then I have learned a saying of my first conquest which makes me know her entirely. One day one of her lovers—for she had several—spoke to her of men.

“Men,” she said, “I treat them like an orange: when I have sucked the juice, I throw the peel far away.”

Alas! I was indeed that orange. Wearied of my exile, I longed for my country; a fatal languor seized me. I was sad; nothing pleased me any longer. What had I done to deserve to be exiled so young? Alas! for having served the pleasures of a woman of rank, who herself made the first advances to me, I was condemned to live in exile, forever far from my country, without hope of ever seeing it again! I was in this state of sadness when I learned the news of the most astonishing revolution.

Ah! I leapt with joy. France is free! Man has reconquered his rights! My chains are broken, my exile is finished; I may once again behold the sky of my country. I also learned all that was being said about the Q[ueen] and J... P.... I myself appeared in an incomplete manner in various works in which both women were covered with opprobrium and dark accusations. I resolved to return to France with the firm determination of undeceiving the public about several fabricated anecdotes attributed to me, and of teaching it others which it did not know. I have fulfilled my task as best I could; it is for those who read me to judge me. I submit entirely to their decision. If this work pleases them, I have material enough to give it a supplement; for, being pressed and persecuted by a friend to publish these adventures, I have been able to recount only certain selected facts among those which appeared to me the most striking...

Fin de la première Partie.

LE CADRAN
DE LA VOLUPTÉ,
OU
LES AVENTURES
DE CHÉRUBIN.

Seconde Partie.

After five years of silence I take up the pen again, in order to inform those who have read the first part of my adventures of those which have happened to me anew since my return from America.

It will easily be believed that the excesses to which I had abandoned myself with the Q[ueen] and the charming J. P... had exhausted me, and that, transported all at once into a country where the customs, habits, and climate were unbearable to me, I returned from it in a state even more pitiable than that to which I had been reduced at the time of my exile.

But what cannot youth accomplish upon a well-constituted body! The satisfaction of the soul and the tranquillity of the mind are the best physicians of the body. Scarcely had I breathed for a few months the air of my native country when I saw all my sorrows fade from my memory.

I was then only twenty years old. I felt the desires

awaken again in my heart which I had believed forever insensible.

My emaciated body, which had presented only the image of dissolution, soon regained its fullness. I had become a new man. My features had changed only to assume a more manly air. I was no longer that effeminate Chérubin to whom, beneath a woman's costume, gallantry might have been whispered; my stature had gained more height. The beard had replaced the light down which once covered my chin, and I possessed, in a word, the physique of a Hercules joined to a lascivious and fiery temperament. One must therefore not be surprised that, with such a constitution, I again ran the career of pleasures.

There are moments in life which one always recalls with a very sweet pleasure. Who among us can forget the woman who first initiated him into the mysteries of love? Who does not remember with delight those tender tremblings, that burning intoxication one feels when pressing the bosom of the beloved—those moments of delirium and abandonment when bodies unite, souls mingle, and seem to fly together to the abode of Elysium! All the attitudes and voluptuous scenes which I had practiced with the Q[ueen] and the charming P... were as present to my memory as if they had only just occurred. I had forgotten all the evils that followed them; in this I resembled all men. One easily wipes away the most unhappy periods of one's life when they are followed by some interval of relief.

Although I had no hope of renewing my connection with the Q[ueen], I was nonetheless strongly urged by the desire to appear again before her eyes. It was doubtful whether she would recognize me after the changes that had taken place in my entire person.

But my dear J. P..., whom I knew to be her inseparable friend, was no less the magnet that attracted me. I persuaded myself that by placing myself again in the lists I

should soon become once more the happy possessor of her charms. She loved her dear little Page too much for an absence of five years to have entirely banished him from her memory.

Could she have renounced the idolatrous worship which she had so often lavished upon every part of my being, and which I had returned to her, without seeking in her inventive mind some means of reviving our secret interviews?

One day, filled with these ideas, I went out and mechanically took the road to Versailles while reflecting upon the events of my life. I was distracted from my reflections by the overturning of a cabriolet which, descending the slope of Chaillot, had run against a heavy carrier's wagon.

I hastened to fly to the assistance of those inside it. I arrived just in time to stop the furious horse that was dragging them and to prevent some fatal accident.

I cast my eyes upon them—what was my surprise! I recognized the Chevalier B..., page to the Q[ueen], my former comrade. To see one another and rush into each other's arms was but a single movement. He told me that he was now possessed of an immense fortune which had fallen to him through the death of his uncle, the Marquis de B...; that he had resisted the perfidious solicitations of his friends who had cowardly emigrated to bear arms against their country; that far from allowing himself to be seduced by their advice he had declared himself the defender of the rights of the people; that he was aide-de-camp to General La F...; and that if my sentiments agreed with his he was ready not only to be useful to me but also wished to tighten the bonds of the closest friendship. These dispositions accorded too well with my own for me not to yield to the desires of the Chevalier B.... From that moment we swore a friendship which to this day has not been altered by any circumstance.

I asked the Chevalier B... with the greatest eagerness for news of the court. He merely told me, with a few details, what I already knew of its disfavor in the eyes of the people and of the events preparing against it by that execrable sect known under the name of Jacobins. I learned that the Q[ueen] was at the château of M... with her suite; that she was deeply affected by the atrocious calumnies published about her and her family; and that, very different from what she had formerly been, she had no longer any society but that of her husband, no pleasures but those she procured for herself in the midst of her charming children, and that she sought, by practicing every virtue, to make people forget the wrongs and grievances she had drawn upon herself by her imprudences. I also learned news of my dear J. P...—always the same: sensitive, loving pleasure, giving herself up to it with fury, seeking gallant intrigues, enjoying the present without fearing the future, and preserving amidst political storms that serenity of soul which is the ordinary share of the careless and unprincipled woman.

I expressed to the Chevalier B... the desire to see the royal family. This was easy for him, since he had access to the court as aide-de-camp to General La F.... He promised to introduce me the next day at the château of M..., and we agreed to meet in the Bois de Boulogne.

When two former comrades meet again after five years of absence, they do not fail to give each other a warm welcome. How many things they have to say to one another! The heart is full and must pour itself out. This was what the Chevalier B... and I experienced.

We left the servant with the task of having the carriage taken back. A fiacre happened to pass; it brought us to the Chevalier's hotel, where I had the pleasure of dining with him.

The Chevalier B... knew that I had departed for America, but he did not know that it had been in exile, nor that the Q[ueen] had been the cause of it; I had always kept the deepest silence concerning all that had passed between her and me.

I did not fail to tell him that it was to the Revolution that I owed my return to my country, and that I had resolved never again to leave it, since I had no more Bastilles to fear. "I would never have imagined," he said to me, "that you had anything to fear from them; on the contrary I believed you one of those favorites of fortune who could obtain everything from her." "Ah! my dear B..., that existed for a few moments, and I remember it only as an agreeable dream. The awakening was terrible for your unhappy friend. It is to the favor with which I was overwhelmed at court that I owe a part of the misfortunes that afterwards crushed me. The favor of the great is never durable; it is like the rose which the burning ardor of the sun soon consumes. I shall one day have the occasion to tell you my adventures; you will see that no one has been more tossed about than I by that inconstant female whom we call Fortune."

The Chevalier B... was cheerful. We drank several glasses of champagne, and after dinner we went to finish the day at the Opera.

It was my first excursion. I had not yet been to the theater. That day they were performing the famous ballet of *Psyche*, and there was a great crowd. I was mute with surprise to find myself in this enchanting world, while the Chevalier B..., on the contrary, soon left me in the middle of it.

The Chevalier B... might speak to me as much as he pleased, I answered nothing. At last, weary of being beside an automaton, he disappeared to review the duennae—excessively accommodating and complaisant at the sight of

ready coin. Soon he returned to tear me away from the sweet sensations I was experiencing and to conduct me to a box occupied by a procurer whom I heard called Dupré. She was accompanied by two women whose piquant charms were capable of stirring the soul of the most insensible man. We descended with them without much ceremony, and off we went without even waiting to see the end of the performance.

THE SERAGLIO.

We arrived at the seraglio of Dupré. We were introduced into a salon magnificently decorated; the light of the chandeliers, reflected in the mirrors, produced an enchanting spectacle. Dupré had, with prudent foresight, adorned this salon with portraits of the women of her seraglio, so that those to whom some modesty still remained might be spared the shame of appearing before a man without first knowing whether they would please him.

The Chevalier B... was all-powerful in this house; he was feared there, and Dupré easily consented, out of consideration for him, to depart from the rules she had established.

The Chevalier B... had abandoned himself from his earliest youth to the most refined debauchery, which had almost destroyed his virile powers. He could recover them only by means of obscene and luxurious images. For that reason he ordered all the women of Dupré's establishment to be summoned. There were twenty of them, all pretty. He required that they should all undress completely; we did the same. Then began the ceremony employed to make the blade of love grow in the Chevalier B...

The women formed a circle around us and passed before us one by one, presenting the sanctuary of love to be kissed; afterwards they in their turn came to render homage to the god Priapus. The ceremony ended with a general revel: the Chevalier B... and I were surrounded by our priestesses, while Dupré directed the movements of the actors with the sound of a tambourine. Its rhythm increased in speed in proportion as pleasure appeared in their eyes; the women moved with fury, and when Dupré gave the final roll of the drum they all swooned together, and

then the Chevalier B... found himself in a state of grace.

One may imagine the effect that such a scene must produce upon a heart as easily inflamed as mine. I was all on fire. The Chevalier B... seized one of the women, and the sweetness of the one I had brought from the Opera determined me to make her my favorite sultana.

She abandoned herself to pleasure with fury, and during the three assaults she had to sustain with me she repeated each time, with a holy enthusiasm, these beautiful verses:

*For this dear shaft, my love—were I but all delight!
Heaven! how nobly does it run its eager race!
I'm mad for it—so much the better! Reason, take flight,
Yield wholly now to pleasure's warm embrace.
Let us caress in many a changing way,
Give, take, return—let nothing be denied,
Till body, soul, and sense in union stay,
And front or back, we revel side by side.*

We would not have stopped there, but the Chevalier B..., who had already lost his vigor again, came to interrupt our amorous sports. It was a pity indeed, for Rosalie (that was the name of my goddess) was well able to withstand the vigorous assaults I directed against her. What a turn of the hips she possessed! Venus herself was not more ingenious in inventing new positions. What pleasures I enjoyed in the arms of this charming creature! It must be admitted that the morsel was a delicious one. Imagine a figure somewhat above the ordinary height; beautiful dark hair; a skin soft as satin; a voice as agreeable as the flute; a breath as gentle as the zephyr; a firm and well-rounded bosom; large blue eyes in which voluptuousness was painted; a form as beautiful as the Venus de' Medici; a shapely leg; and a delicate foot, emblem of the narrow grotto that adorned her lovely body. Such was the sketch of Rosalie's portrait—such was the charming courtesan

who received the first fruits of my convalescence.

THE PROMENADE.

The next day we met in the Bois de Boulogne at the Ranelagh, and after entrusting our horses to our servants, the Chevalier B... introduced me into the château of M... We learned that the Q[ueen] was walking with J. P..., and we advanced in that direction. I was in the greatest agitation; I could not take a step without these places recalling past pleasures to my mind...

As we turned from the great avenue of chestnut trees toward the Bois de Boulogne, we encountered the Q[ueen] and the beautiful P... The latter fixed her eyes in my direction; scarcely had she perceived me when she uttered a cry mingled with surprise and fear and immediately fainted. I guessed that I was the cause of this event, and I took care not to show myself, fearing that my presence might produce the same effect upon the Q[ueen] and that my imprudence might draw upon me some new misfortune. It is known that the Q[ueen], who had for her the solicitude of a lover for his mistress, had her conducted back to her apartment. Without revealing to my friend the effect which the sight of the Q[ueen] and P... had produced upon me, we withdrew.

We mounted our horses, and after a rustic ride returned to dine with a restaurateur at the gate of the wood.

We had scarcely arrived when I was asked for by my real name. To my great surprise I found in a small cabinet adjoining the room where we were a servant who handed me the following letter.

“I could not see you without feeling the liveliest satisfaction and the greatest inquietude. I wish to prove to you my attachment; you must deserve it by your constancy.

Ah! if I dared believe that I have had a share in your imprudent conduct, I would do even more for you. If you indicate your address, I will be this night at midnight in the arms of my dear Page. Reply by the faithful servant who will deliver this note to you.”

REPLY

“Chérubin is always the same; despite his misfortunes he has never been able to forget his dear J. P... There is no danger he would not face to see her again; there is nothing he would not do to renew the assurances of the most ardent love, which will end only with his life. He awaits midnight with impatience; he will count the seconds as though they were years. At midnight, Rue de Richelieu, Hôtel de ***. Meanwhile receive the burning kisses of the loving Chérubin.”

I gave this letter to J. P...’s servant and returned moved and radiant with joy at what had just happened. The Chevalier B... soon perceived my distraction, and despite the gaiety of his character he could not make it disappear.

“You will pardon the question I am about to ask,” he said to me. “I am greatly mistaken if you have not just received the happy news of some good fortune. I have some claim to your confidence; and if I deserve it, deign to share it with me so that I may rejoice with you.”

“I confess, my worthy friend, that you have guessed correctly. It is an old acquaintance whom I sought in coming here. I have found her; she saw me; our eyes understood one another; she had me followed—and I shall receive her in my arms at midnight. It is necessary then, chevalier, to repair well the strength that yesterday’s infidelity has made me lose. I regret only that we cannot make a party of four... but I think... I reflect upon the means... The thing shall be done, my dear friend; we shall pass a

delightful night. Leave me to conduct the adventure. The maid is well worth the mistress; all I wish is that you may recover sufficient vigor to participate second in the pleasures that await us.”

“I abandon the conduct of this affair to you, chevalier. Guided by you I cannot fail to become a hero in amorous combats. What cannot example accomplish upon a pupil who desires to do well? This intrigue appears to me so piquant that I already feel myself very much in love with my maid, and that, weary of the beauties of brothels, a new kind will revive my appetites and make me perform extraordinary exploits.”

We finished dinner gaily and took care to choose foods that might excite in the chevalier a fermentation capable of preventing him from remaining an indifferent spectator of the happy night I was about to pass. We returned to Paris to await the hour of the shepherd; a moment at the Italian Comedy, and from there supper at my hotel with the companion of my pleasures.

A letter from my dear J. P... awaited me. It was conceived in these terms:

Bourges, This Day...

“I arrive this evening in Paris at eleven o’clock. Have a bed prepared at your hotel for me and one for my maid. I am so fatigued from the cursed carriage in which I have traveled that I cannot write more. I embrace you,
your sister Julie.”

I leapt for joy on reading this interesting letter. I told the chevalier the name of my heroine, and his surprise was extreme. He knew the Duchess of P... and her maid, who was no less appetizing; his good fortune transported him with joy.

We waited impatiently for the moment of our reunion.

At last eleven o'clock struck; a carriage was heard. I had the Chevalier B... hide himself until I had informed the duchess of the presence of my friend, for I feared she might refuse to lend herself to the arrangement I had devised.

At last I reached the carriage door and received in my arms my supposed sister, who had prudently veiled herself. We were introduced into my apartment, where, while the maid had a rather heavy trunk carried in, I was permitted to express to my charming friend the satisfaction I felt in pressing her to my heart and the just gratitude I owed her for so great a proof of her love.

The Chevalier B... was in a cabinet next door. I informed the duchess of my intimate friendship with him, and I soon removed her scruples by announcing that the Chevalier B... would form a party of four with her maid.

"You have singular ideas, my dear Chérubin," she said, "and I perceive that absence and misfortune have not made you wiser. But since I have delivered myself into your discretion, you will make use of your victory as you please. You know that I am docile, and that I shall do everything to satisfy the wishes of my charming conqueror."

"DIVINE friend, so much complaisance cannot be repaid with too much love. Words fail me to express my gratitude, but—"

"But be silent," she said, little idolater, throwing her lips upon mine; and her burning kisses cut short my speech. I was in a delirium; I was about to forget that the moment of pleasure had not yet come.

"Do you think of it?" she said, tearing herself from my arms. "Let us see your second; it is time to make his acquaintance."

The duchess, to whom I had indicated the cabinet, ran at once with enchanting grace to bring out my prisoner; taking the Chevalier B... by the hand, she said: "Since your friend has informed you of everything concerning

our love, I need not fear that the chevalier will be indiscreet enough to divulge my weakness. I ask from him his silence and his friendship.”

“I promise you the one, madame, and I honor myself in accepting the other,” replied the chevalier, respectfully kissing her hand.

While waiting for supper the duchess told us the trick she had employed to obtain from the Q[ueen] permission to come and sleep in Paris.

“I had a letter placed at the small post by which I was summoned by the Duchess of B..., my relative, who declared herself dangerously ill. It was not difficult for me to obtain permission to go and render her my care.”

“The duchess is my intimate friend. She is extremely indulgent toward the faults of her neighbors. I informed her beforehand, and she lent herself very readily to my little deception. I have obtained leave for two days.”

What the duchess told me filled me with joy.

SUPPER.

The supper was delicious. The duchess insisted that all ceremony should be banished from it; and in order that we might not be embarrassed by importunate glances, the servants were soon dismissed. My princess then proclaimed the principles of equality by having her maid seated at table with us, where she instantly became the partner of the Chevalier B...

The Duchess of P... was credited with delightful sallies of wit and a gaiety bordering upon folly. The charm of her conversation caused time to pass so quickly that the hours seemed like minutes. Lisette went with the Chevalier B... to unpack the trunk; it contained wines of every variety, which had been carefully brought in order to impress incredulous hosts. These beneficent elixirs served no less to excite us to pleasure than to repair the strength we were about to lose in this nocturnal revel.

THE NOCTURNAL ORGY.

It became a veritable revel. The juice of the vine circulated through our veins and inflamed our blood. The Duchess of P..., endowed with a most lascivious temperament, could restrain herself no longer. Seated beside me, she seized with ardor the object of her dearest affections; her beautiful mouth pressed against mine. No electric shock could be swifter. I answered the attack with equal intoxication. I took possession of her bosom, still white as a lily, and covered it with kisses; while my other hand soon sought the most sensitive part of her being. Introducing my finger into its narrow opening and redoubling my movements so as to irritate every fibre of pleasure, I soon saw the ravishing transports sparkle in her eyes.

“Dear love,” she cried, “you overwhelm me with delight. Courage, my life—well done! very well. Still better... and quickly, quickly!... stop, stop, little rogue—you will make me die. Come, Lisette, imitate us; go amuse yourself with the chevalier in that cabinet.”

For now, intoxicated with pleasure, she scarcely knew what she said. “Go, Lisette—and you, Chérubin, come place that charming weapon, your generous shaft, in my burning bosom of love; refresh it with your DIVINE nectar.”

As she spoke she seated herself upon the edge of my bed. I plunged headlong into the vessel of love; she redoubled her learned movements. We formed but one body; in our embraces our souls and our sighs were mingled together, and in the height of ecstasy she cried:

“Ah! Chérubin, dear lover, I die!”

I answered only with these words: “Then my soul flies with yours!”

A moment of repose followed this charming operation. We saw nothing, heard nothing; we returned to ourselves with our mouths still joined, closely clasped in one another's arms, reviving each other with our burning sighs.

"Always, always the same," said the duchess. "If only all men were endowed with your strength, women would fall at their feet and become slaves to them."

"Ah! dear duchess," I replied, "if they were all as beautiful and charming as you, all men would become Herculeses; and to speak without metaphor, one would wish to die only in the midst of love."

"But let us see the chevalier," she said, tearing herself from my arms. "I am impatient to know whether he has acquitted himself as well with Lisette as you have with me. I should be sorry if the mouth had been watered without moistening the part that required it."

At that moment we heard the chevalier speaking with rapture to his Lisette. He was complimenting her upon her talents in the occult sciences and upon her art of reviving masculine faculties by the subtle movements of her fingers.

"You are incomparable, Lisette," he said. "I have known many women, but never one whose movements were as elastic and expressive as yours. If I possessed a hundred powers I would dedicate them all to your service, and I am certain you would know how to bring them all to reason."

Lisette was radiant with joy at the chevalier's satisfaction; no doubt she herself had found her reward. We approached their door, which was half open, and saw her preparing to perform yet another miracle upon the Chevalier B..., lightly manipulating him while pressing her tongue upon his lips and caressing his whole body with her delicate hands.

The duchess, surprised to find her so skilled, could not refrain from exclaiming:

“Very well, Lisette—I did not believe you so well instructed!”

“Ah, madame,” replied the latter, “what does one not learn with so good a mistress?”

This sarcasm closed the duchess’s mouth, though she ended by laughing at it.

The night was far advanced. Reflection for a moment suspended the intoxication of my senses. I shared with the joyful companions of my pleasures the fear that by prolonging too far our nocturnal banquet and the enjoyments which had rendered it so delightful we might furnish matter for scandal. The servants were therefore summoned, and we feigned retiring each to our own apartment. But impatient to finish intoxicating ourselves at the cup of pleasure, we soon rejoined our mistresses quietly.

New scenes, new sports in which the duchess and I exhausted every avenue of delight. The generous wines we had swallowed in long draughts had quintupled the vigor of my robust powers; yet my insatiable divinity, by her burning caresses, her glances, and her devouring kisses, still solicited another offering.

“Well then, glutton,” I said to her, “be at last satisfied. May pleasure overflow every part of your burning being; may it burst forth from every pore and force you to confess that it is enough.”

And at the same time, pressing forward with renewed ardor, I drove my attack so vigorously that I heard my eager duchess cry:

“Ah—finish, finish! I yield the field... receive the glorious title of my conqueror and champion of love!”

At seven in the morning I saw the Chevalier B...; his satisfaction equaled my own. Lisette had restored him to the proper pitch of pleasure, and it was a victory which did him no less honor than mine did me. Content with one another, we unanimously resolved to count among the

happiest hours of our lives those we had just passed—and then to separate.

THE RETREAT.

It was indeed necessary after so laborious a night. The Chevalier B... went to rest at his own house from his fatigues, and I withdrew to my apartment, where a beneficent sleep immediately seized my senses.

I slept until four o'clock in the afternoon. I rose in haste and ran to the apartment of my dear J. P..., but I was strangely surprised to find no one there. I asked the servant where my sister was; he replied that about ten o'clock in the morning a lady had come to fetch her in a carriage, and that before leaving she had charged him to tell me that I would find in my secretary a letter explaining the cause of her departure. Trembling, I took this precious letter and read the following:

“You will be surprised, my dear Chérubin, by my departure. You may judge of my sorrow by that which you yourself will feel. Nothing but the most pressing affairs could have torn me away from you.

“The Q[ueen] sent for me this morning at my relative's house with very precise orders that I should come to court immediately. I could not resist the pleasure of embracing you before my departure. I entered your apartment. You slept so deeply that even the fire of my kisses could not awaken you. I do not know when I shall be able to see you again. I will create the occasions whenever I can; they will not be long in presenting themselves, unless the misfortunes that are about to fall upon the royal family force me to flee. But wherever I may be, I shall not pass a single instant without thinking of my charming page.”

I remained motionless after reading this letter. It affected me deeply; my heart was constricted and I could scarcely breathe. I lamented to see the dawn of happiness

vanish once more... I loved my dear J. P... passionately, and her letter filled me with fears. I even had a secret presentiment that I was losing her forever...

The arrival of the Chevalier B..., who entered precipitately and with a distracted air, increased still further my inquietude and our grief when he informed me of the sad events that were preparing.

THE CATASTROPHE.

“My friend,” he said, “gather your courage—you will need it to hear me.

“Tomorrow will signal either the shame or the glory of the Parisians. A horde of hired brigands, emboldened by the certainty of impunity, intends to march upon the Tuileries and massacre the royal family and their friends. I trust in your principles; I have enrolled you among their ardent defenders.”

I replied to this brief harangue by placing my hand upon my sword: “The enemies of my K... are mine. I swear it by the honor I have never violated, and by the love which commands me to save all that is dear to me—or to perish.”

The next day I went to the post which the chevalier had assigned to me. But of what use was our heroic defense? Numbers overwhelmed us—or rather the K... hastened his own ruin and ours by delivering himself and his family into the hands of their most mortal enemies. I would have fallen beneath the fury of the assassins had I not escaped by means of a secret staircase.

I draw a curtain over the atrocious and unparalleled events of that day. Unable to endure the thought of living in so barbarous a country, I withdrew to Switzerland. It was time. I had been denounced; my enemies were in pursuit of me. I had reason to congratulate myself upon my prudence, for I afterward learned that the royal family had been sacrificed, that my best friends had suffered the same fate, and that France was covered with scaffolds upon which all who possessed a name or virtue were threatened with losing their heads. Despite my love for my country, I preferred the tranquil residence of this land to the noisy

pleasures of Paris.

I have not been able to find my dear J... P... It is not the same with Lisette; I found her again at Basel. She has become my housekeeper and the consolation of my exile. While speaking together of the good old days and of absent friends, it often happens that our imagination is inflamed, and we seek to drown troublesome memories in the pleasures of Bacchus and of love.

Perhaps the time will come when the unfortunate Chérubin may return to his native country and once again appear upon the stage of the great world. That is the most ardent of his wishes.

Fin de la seconde et dernière partie.