

LA  
**MESSALINE FRANÇAISE**  
OU LES  
NUITS DE LA DUCHESSE DE POLIGNAC  
ET  
AVENTURES MYSTÉRIEUSES  
DE LA PRINCESSE [DE HÉNIN] ET DE  
LA [REINE]  
[Translated by Patrick Kearney]



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## NOTICE BIBLIOGRAPHICO-HISTORIQUE.

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This virulent pamphlet, directed especially against the Duchess of Polignac, and incidentally against the Princess of Hénin and Queen Marie-Antoinette, has become very rare, as might well be expected. Its author is unknown, but he appears to be well acquainted with the luxurious excesses of the high-born ladies whom he brings upon the stage.

Here we shall speak chiefly of Polignac, the principal heroine of the work, reserving for ourselves the task of entering into details concerning the queen when we come to compose the historical notice of another work which bears more directly upon her: *Le Cadran de la volupté, ou les Aventures du prince Chérubin*.

Yolande-Martine-Gabrielle-Julie de Polastron, Duchess of Polignac, known for the unbridled affection shown her by Queen Marie-Antoinette, was born about the year 1749. Endowed with many charms, she married Count Jules de Polignac in 1767. She appeared at court; the queen saw her, the queen loved her. The queen, with all the abandon characteristic of that age of softness and corruption, one day showed so little reserve, in the midst of a public ceremony, in her amorous demonstrations toward the countess, that the mysteries of their friendship were revealed to the envious eyes of the courtiers!... From that day, Marie-Antoinette placed so dear a friend beneath her powerful protection; she obliged her to come and live near

her, even in the very palace of Versailles.

Her husband was appointed First Equerry, and in 1780 the king made him a hereditary duke. The queen's love for her ardent friend only continued to grow; she had her appointed governess of the Children of France! Her husband obtained the office of superintendent of the posts; from that time on, Marie-Antoinette spent part of each day beside her Sappho. The latter, for her part, knew how to maintain herself in the queen's good graces; she was present at all her pleasures and all her counsels, she watched everything, knew everything, and reported everything. She procured lovers for her, then took them afterwards for herself; she was sometimes the preferred one. She knew how to dry the tears of the lover, while some little grisettes amused the ungrateful or weary lovers. She even succeeded in eclipsing the Princess of Lamballe, that young and proud Savoyard, amiable and seductive in figure and appearance, who for a moment had been the favorite *par excellence*, to such a degree that, after a hard struggle with the austere Turgot—who was dismissed—the Princess of Lamballe was appointed superintendent of the queen's household, with 400,000 livres in salary. But her reign was of short duration; the favor of Polastron returned more brilliant than ever. The duchess was indiscreetly loaded with everything she might wish to desire, as was her husband the duke. She was suspected of the machinations attributed to the queen in the early days of the Revolution. The Polignacs were accused of not having been strangers to the squandering of the revenues of the state; thus the duchess became one of the principal objects of public animadversion. She was even obliged, by order of the king, to leave Versailles on 17 July 1789.

Marie-Antoinette was deeply affected by this forced separation from her beautiful friend; the duchess went to Switzerland with her husband, and from there proceeded

to Vienna, where she died, at the age of forty-four, on 9 December 1793.

There was printed in London, in one volume in-12, the *Mémoires de la duchesse de Polignac*. We believe these are the same as those published in Paris, in Year V, written by the Countess Diane de Polignac, and forming a volume in-18.

Let us say in passing, with regard to the Princess of Hénin, that the husband was worthy of the wife. Captain of the guards to the Comte d'Artois, the Prince of Hénin was fit for all the employments with which he was daily invested in the household of that debauchee; there he fulfilled the offices of pimp, catamite, etc., etc., and a multitude of other *etceteras*. Moreover, he had previously been first maître d'hôtel and chief steward of the finances and households of Sophie Arnould, first singer of the *Académie royale de musique* and the foremost tribade of her century. One readily understands, therefore, that the prince would have been greatly in the wrong to show himself too crabbed over the escapades and the frontal asperities which the princess, his wife, might allow herself or cause him to bear.

Let us conclude this notice briefly with the special bibliography of *La Messaline française*.

The first edition dates from 1789: Tribaldis, from the press of Priapus, in-18 of 101 pages, with an explicit plate.

The second, from 1790, in-18 of 108 pages, with a plate. There was also a reprint which was condemned as an outrage against public morals (*Moniteur*, 15 December 1843), under the rubric *Cologne: imprimerie de Priape*, 1700 [1830], in-18 of 71 pages, three very explicit but mediocre plates, with modern costumes. Another reprint, under the same place and date, was made at Bruxelles about 1867–68; in-16, an ugly square format of 80 pages, laid paper, containing a quantity of gross errors, with facsimiles of the three plates of the 1830 edition, horribly engraved and

very ill-drawn.

The edition which we publish today therefore has every reason to appear at last. We have added four new and previously unpublished engravings, the work of one of our most skillful draughtsmen, and engraved with the greatest care. Perhaps the amateurs of the *Bibliothèque de Paphos* will be satisfied with our work? We desire it; we hope so.

LA  
MESSALINE FRANÇAISE

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I shall at last, my friend, make known to you the source of that rapid and astonishing fortune which you have never been able to comprehend. I shall reveal to you my intrigues with a haughty woman, as shamefully famous for her prostitutions as for her horrible plots against the French people.

O Julie! you who once made my happiness, and who repaid me with the blackest ingratitude, expect no indulgence from me; the confessions I am about to make will add yet another new jewel to your adulterous crown.

My friend, you will see here nothing but the most licentious scenes, the tableaux of the most unbridled libertinage, and my style shall be such as befits the portrayal of a Messalina who leaves far behind her the most abandoned courtesans.

I shall also sketch for you some voluptuous and lascivious pictures of the secret pleasures of two other women of the court, no less well known than the duchess of whom I speak; and these pictures will satisfy you all the more since those who furnish their subjects are made to excite general attention. As it is through them that I came to know Polignac, it is also with them that I shall begin my narrative.

When I arrived at Versailles I had several letters of recommendation for different persons, among others for M. the Prince d'Hé..., captain of the guards of A...; knowing no one in a country where everything is accomplished

through intrigue and patronage, I felt the necessity of being supported by the credit of someone of influence.

I could not have been better directed than to M. the Prince d'Hé... I went to see him and received from him the most flattering reception. He presented me to the princess, his wife.

"Here," said he to her, "is M. D..., who is particularly recommended to me. He still appears rather raw, but we shall polish him. He will dine with us."

I was about to thank him, but he was already far away.

I shall not pause to describe to you the different sentiments that agitated me when I found myself alone with the Princess d'Hé... I could not with impunity behold the most provoking face, the most voluptuous figure, in short the most enticing air imaginable.

The deeper the impression she made upon me, the more my timidity increased with it; fortunately the prince returned, and we sat down to table.

I was seated opposite Madame d'Hé... I perceived that our glances frequently met, and already I believed I saw that I was not indifferent to her.

In order not to weary you, I pass over in silence the first fifteen days during which I paid her attentions without ever daring to speak to her of love.

Madame the Princess d'Hé... perceived my excessive stupidity and saw clearly that she would have to make all the advances herself. In vain had she a hundred times placed me in a position to declare myself. In vain had she allowed herself to be seen several times in all the disorder of her toilette; your foolish friend would understand nothing.

She therefore resolved upon a final attempt. No less mastered than I by her desires, she told me one day to come and fetch her after dinner in order to give her my arm for a walk.

I promised, far from imagining the happiness that was reserved for me. I arrived at the appointed hour, and I was introduced according to the order that had been given.

I penetrated as far as her boudoir. Oh my friend, judge of my surprise! What an enchanting spectacle presented itself to my eyes! My adorable d'Hé... asleep, stretched upon a couch in the most voluptuous attitude: her bosom bare, one leg raised, the other hanging down to the floor, the whitest thighs parted, and by the posture in which she lay absolutely uncovered...

I caught a glimpse of the center of pleasures, shaded by a thick moss whose color contrasted admirably with the alabaster of her motionless skin. I scarcely dared to breathe: torrents of fire coursed through my veins. I advanced on tiptoe; I knelt down; I admired all that nature ever formed most beautiful... I dared apply my lips... but I feared to awaken her and lose so fine an opportunity.

My timidity vanished; I rose again, and mounting upon the couch, I established myself between her thighs with the greatest precaution. I applied my mouth to hers; I penetrated the sacred cavern of voluptuousness; but soon I felt myself carried away by the excess of my transports. Like a river whose course is held back by a dyke—should it break, it resumes its course with greater impetuosity; such again is the young wild bull, irritated, overturning and trampling underfoot all that he encounters; thus I broke and shattered all that opposed my passage.

My adorable princess awoke, struggled, feigned to wish to escape from beneath me; I clasped her more tightly in my arms; I saw her eyes moisten with the tears of pleasure. Already her movements answered to mine; she shared my transports... At last we swam in a torrent of delights...

God! what voluptuousness, when stretched upon her I pressed out the juice of that forbidden fruit.

What shall I tell you, my friend? Six times love covered

me with his wings; six times we died only to be reborn.

For two months the princess and I lived thus in the most perfect union; but at the end of that time her husband began to entertain some suspicion of our intimacy. We perceived that we were being watched, and we took our precautions so as not to be discovered.

One day, however, despite our precautions, we very nearly were discovered and taken *in flagrante delicto*. I had just enjoyed my adored princess, who, stretched upon a flat sofa, had abandoned herself in complete delirium to my transports—transports which she had shared with unparalleled ardor, raising her loins amorously and pressing her heels strongly against my back in order to drive more deeply the agent of pleasure into its burning path—when her husband entered the chamber where we were, just as she had repaired as best she could the disorder occasioned by our amorous frolics. To his great shame he covered himself with ridicule by displaying his jealousy; he even carried his impoliteness so far as to request that I cease honoring him with my visits.

This original, as you see, is not made for inhabiting this country. Where should we be if all husbands took it into their heads to watch their chaste halves in this manner?

We were therefore obliged to meet elsewhere than in her hôtel. The marquise rented a small house near Versailles, and we went there as often as her Argus had the kindness to absent himself.

We also sometimes made appointments upon the terrace in the park.

It is here that the chain of my adventures with Polignac and another person whom I cannot name will begin.

Madame d'Hé... sent me word by a confidential person to come one evening to the terrace.

A day of excessive heat had been followed by one of those cool nights that seem destined for lovers. The moon,

somewhat veiled, allowed objects to be faintly distinguished.

I had been waiting about an hour when I perceived two ladies in light undress coming toward me. I believed it was my amiable princess with her maid. In this persuasion I approached them eagerly and was about to clasp in my arms the one whom I took for Madame d'Hé...

Judge of my astonishment when I felt myself repulsed and when a silvery voice, which I did not know, said to me:

“What do you intend to do, sir? Would you insult us?”

Ah! my friend, that voice went straight to my heart. Ashamed of my mistake, I stammered out my excuses.

I was about to withdraw. They were already a few steps away from me when I heard them burst into laughter, and the one who had spoken said distinctly:

“He is a very handsome man; do you know him?”

I confess to you, my friend, that I took these two women for adventuresses, which prompted me to approach them again.

“Ladies,” said I, “it is doubtless from taste that you walk without a cavalier? When one is as charming as you are, one ought never to lack one; and if I did not fear becoming importunate, I would beg you to permit me to accompany you.”

A new burst of laughter was the answer I received; however, the one who had not yet spoken now addressed me.

“We thank you, sir, for your obliging offer. It is true that it was from taste that we were walking alone. Do not take our laughter for an incivility; its cause lies only in an adventure my sister had just been telling me when you encountered us. We are the less disposed to accept the offer you have made, since that would doubtless cause you to miss your appointment with the person for whom you

mistook us.”

“To prove to you, ladies, that nothing of the kind exists, I shall continue the walk with you, if you permit me.”

As you see, my friend, infidelity already begins to steal into my heart. I forget the princess in order to follow two unknown women, perhaps two courtesans; but soon a conversation sustained with wit on their part, manners of the great world, a tone of the best society, all made me judge that they were women of rank.

One of them, the one whose voice had so vividly affected me, pleased me more than the other; it was to her that I most often addressed myself; it was for her that all my flattering and gallant remarks were intended. The two hours we passed together flowed like a dream.

Midnight struck; they spoke of withdrawing. I offered to escort them home, which they formally refused, even forbidding me to follow them.

I saw them depart with regret. I held the hand of the one who had so quickly subjugated me; I pressed it in mine and applied to it my lips burning with desire. Soon carried away by an involuntary movement, I released her hand and clasped her herself in my arms. My mouth encountered hers.

O God! my kiss was returned; I felt her tongue introduce itself between my lips; I slipped mine to meet it; she wished to draw it in. Our sighs mingled; suddenly she escaped with rapidity.

“Adieu,” she said to me, “we shall see each other again.”

And they disappeared.

I remained for some time motionless; I could not leave the place where I stood. An invisible bond seemed to hold me there. I believed I had had a pleasant dream. Gradually, however, my ideas calmed themselves as the violent storm that had arisen in my senses dissipated.

When I came fully to myself I was astonished no longer to find the image of the princess there; that of my unknown beauty had taken its place.

Comparing the sentiments that agitated me, could I even say that I had loved the first? *Adieu, we shall see each other again*—those words resounded in the depths of my soul. But what a dreadful reflection! I did not know their residence, and they did not know mine. How then could we ever see one another again?

I ran along the path they had taken in order to repair my omission; but soon I recalled the prohibition they had given me. The fear of incurring the indignation of one whom I already loved more than my life was strong enough to stop me.

Tormented horribly by anxiety and love, I left the park and returned home.

I could not close my eyes all night. I thought of everything that had happened to me. I scarcely thought of the Princess d'Hé..., except to devise means of eluding the pursuits she would not fail to make and of avoiding meeting her.

I had resolved never to see her again. I imagined her reproaches and was little touched by them. But how was I to find my unknown beauty again? Would she return to the terrace? Perhaps I had seen her for the last time. That cruel thought drove me to despair. At last day found me still plunged in these reflections.

Devoured by impatience, I found the hours insupportably long. I could not remain longer in bed; I rose and went out without any determined object. I went to the terrace and remained there without seeing anything until dinner time.

When I returned home I found a letter from Madame d'Hé..., giving me an appointment at the little house for the afternoon. I failed to keep it; she was offended and

ceased writing to me. I have not seen her since.

Devoured by impatience, I found the hours of an insupportable length. I could not remain longer in bed; I rose and went out without any fixed purpose. I returned to the terrace and remained there without seeing anything until the hour of dinner.

On returning home I found a letter from Mme d'Hé..., who appointed a meeting with me at the little house for the afternoon. I failed to keep it; she was piqued by this and ceased writing to me. I have not seen her since.

I was on the terrace again at six in the evening. I ogled every woman there, running now to the right, now to the left after one who seemed to me to resemble my charming unknown. Night came; I remained alone. A hundred times I consulted my watch; I always imagined that the chime which struck upon my ears announced at least an hour of delay. At last eleven o'clock struck and told me that I should wait for her in vain. I returned home and went to bed.

Oh! this time I believed that she was lost to me forever.

I cursed my awkwardness in not having asked her residence before leaving her, or in not having given her mine. Exhausted with fatigue, sleep at last overtook me.

If I were writing a novel, I would tell you, my friend, that I was tormented by the most disagreeable dreams; but on the contrary I did not awaken until my valet de chambre came at eight o'clock in the morning to bring me a letter that had just been delivered to him. The handwriting was unknown to me. I opened it. Judge of my surprise, of my transports—it was from my unknown. Here is what it contained:

“I am flattered by your impatience, Chevalier. I know that you looked for me on the terrace and that you remained there very late. It was impossible for me to go there, despite all the desire I had to do so. I am not free,

my dear Chevalier, and I must take the greatest precautions. You see, however, that I have not forgotten you, since it was necessary to have you sought out in order to deliver you this note. Come the day after tomorrow at the same hour and to the place where you found me. Adieu, Chevalier.”

Conceive the excess of my joy: one calls me *my dear Chevalier*... one could not come to the terrace despite the desire to do so...

Then I am loved; but how had she managed to discover my residence? I was confused at not having been able to do as much for hers. Had she not the right to reproach me with having shown less activity than she in my researches?

Yet three long days were to pass before I had the happiness of seeing her again. My impatience made me regard them as three centuries.

At last I saw that fortunate moment arrive. At eight in the evening I was already at the appointed place, as though by arriving earlier I could hasten the instant she had fixed. Never did I find time so long. How often I accused the hours of slowness!

Ten o'clock struck at last. My neck outstretched, my ear on the alert, I listened attentively to hear if anyone was approaching. The slightest noise, the rustling of leaves, threw me entirely out of myself; my heart beat with the greatest violence... But I heard someone; it was the step of two women. My love told me it was she; I ran, I flew to meet them. She was with her sister; I had not been mistaken. Soon I was at her feet.

“Chevalier, what are you doing? We are not safe here; if someone should come... we might be seen...”

I held her hand, which I covered with burning kisses. She forced me to rise; I clasped her in my arms. Her bosom was half uncovered; I applied my lips, inflamed with love, to it... We heard some noise and withdrew hastily.

“Follow us, Chevalier,” she said. “We are going to a safe place where we shall not fear intruders. But be wiser, and do not make me repent of the step I take in coming thus to meet you.”

Soon we arrived at a place filled with hornbeam hedges. After a hundred turns through these groves we reached a kind of cabinet of greenery surrounded on all sides by very thick hedges, forming within a veritable boudoir and having no other opening than the side by which we had entered. All around were turf benches, couches, and sofas, expressly made for celebrating the tender mysteries.

“Remain a few steps from here,” she said to her sister, “and warn us if you hear anyone.”

Thus I found myself alone with my adorable unknown. I drew her toward one of the softest sofas and threw myself at her knees. Already my hand was about to wander along the path of pleasures when she spoke in these terms:

“Listen to me, Chevalier, and do not interrupt me. Sit down and attend to what I am about to say. I know you, and I am not ignorant of your liaison with the Princess d’Hé... I know that you have not seen her since the moment you met me. I require from you the promise that you will never see her again...”

I was about to swear it; but she did not give me time, placing her hand upon my mouth and continuing:

“But you do not know who I am, and I wish you to remain ignorant of it until it pleases me to inform you. I therefore beg you to take no steps to discover me. Do not seek to penetrate a mystery which I wish to reveal only when I am perfectly assured of your love and your discretion.

“I warn you that I shall watch over your conduct; and if ever you allow yourself to be carried away by an indiscreet curiosity, if ever you attempt to lift the veil with which I wish to cover myself, you will lose me forever—

and I shall know how to avenge myself.

“Leave to me the care of your happiness. I will have you informed every time that you may see me; and believe, Chevalier, that it will never be as often as I should desire; for, I repeat it, I am not free, and I am surrounded by watchers whom I must deceive.

“I know that you are not rich; be at ease, I shall take care of your fortune. Love, fidelity, discretion—these are all that I require of you; but the facility with which you have just abandoned the Princess d’Hé... makes me fear that you may have an inconstant character...”

“Ah, madame,” I replied, interrupting her here, “can one cease to love you once one has seen you? I swear at your feet to observe exactly all that you have just prescribed. Your orders shall be sacred to me; you will always be dear to me. In you I love only yourself. And how could I fail to adore that face, the seat of the Graces? That vermilion mouth which invites one to take from it a kiss?”

And I took one.

I placed my hand upon it, which soon gave way to my mouth. She opposed my enterprises only weakly.

I covered her with burning kisses; her breathing became broken; the titillation of my tongue upon the tip of her breast produced in her a more hurried movement. I felt her heart beating violently; she at last succumbed to the excess of her desires and drew me into her arms.

Stretched upon her, already that jealous veil which seemed to oppose my happiness had risen; I explored all her most hidden beauties. My finger fixed itself upon the throne of voluptuousness; but suddenly, yielding to my transports, it demanded a victim for love. The dagger of desire was ready to strike; she seized it boldly and plunged it with a courageous hand... The most beautiful blood flowed in abundant streams... Victim and sacrificer fell annihilated beneath the weight of pleasure, and scarcely had

the still smoking blade left its wound when love plunged it there again several times.

Oh! my friend, I shall not attempt here to describe all the delights I experienced during that fortunate evening.

At last we had to separate. We swore eternal fidelity; we promised to see one another again the next day at the same hour.

She departed, and I returned home enchanted with my new acquaintance.

I confess to you, however, that I was greatly puzzled by the mystery she maintained with me. Why did she fear so much that I should know her? Why those threats of vengeance if I attempted to discover who she was?

How surprised I was at the role she made the woman she called her sister play! How was she to take care of my fortune? I lost myself in these reflections and did not know what to think of this astonishing adventure.

At last I abandoned myself blindly to my fate; I went to bed and slept, lulled by the most flattering dreams.

The next day I went at ten in the evening to the theatre of our amorous frolics. I had in truth the greatest difficulty in finding it again, so many turnings had I to make before reaching it.

Scarcely had I entered when I heard someone walking near me; it was my charming unknown. Great God! how beautiful she was! The weather was excessively warm; a few flowers carelessly intertwined in her blond hair, which fell in large curls upon an ivory neck, formed her entire coiffure and gave her the air of the Goddess of Flowers. The vermilion color of her cheeks put to shame the bouquet of roses that covered her naked bosom.

She was dressed only in a long gown of white muslin, fastened with a pink ribbon that set off the line of her waist and allowed one to notice the soft contours of her voluptuous figure.

The mere sight of her in this state inflamed all my senses. I approached and held her long embraced. I seated myself upon a sofa; she herself seated herself upon me, one leg on each side. I admired at leisure all the most secret charms now displayed. With a gentle and light hand she had taken possession of my furious Priapus, which she moved and caressed amorously. Our tongues, darting mutually between our lips, made torrents of fire circulate through our veins. Never was a kiss more prolonged. The excess of our delight made us swoon in one another's arms, and soon we both fell stretched upon the couch.

Meanwhile her sister had withdrawn a little distance away on seeing us begin so well. I had even noticed that she had regarded us for a moment with a jealous eye that showed she would gladly have been in my unknown's place.

The sequel of my story will prove whether I was right; but let us not wander from my subject.

Scarcely did I see that we were alone when I untied the ribbon that prevented her gown from opening; no longer held, it fell at her feet. I found no other obstacle than a chemise so fine that it scarcely seemed she wore one; soon it too was removed, and I held my adorable mistress naked in my arms.

Shall I ever be able to express to you the whiteness and satin softness of her skin, that divine bosom upon which are placed two pretty rosebuds, the elegance and suppleness of her waist, the contour and firmness of two buttocks whose upper curve forms the most admirable fall of the back, the roundness of two thighs that art could never imitate? Shall I paint for you that smooth and polished belly upon which I imprinted a million kisses?... Shall I above all give you an idea of that admirable retreat, the most beautiful work of nature, the center of all our pleasures, the delicious place where love has fixed his dwelling! Was

ever a mound more raised and furnished with more charming moss!...

My happy hands wandered in detail over all these beauties; my mouth clung to every part of that lovely body.

Soon carried away by my transports, I threw myself upon her; with a light finger I opened the dwelling of the powerful god who animated me. I introduced there the burning dart with which he had armed me. I thrust it in with a kind of fury; my movements were rapid. Already my mistress uttered only broken sighs. Her legs crossed over my loins drew me forcibly toward her. She seemed to fear that I might escape her; her movements answered mine.

Already the instant marked by voluptuousness approached—that instant which, if it lasted, would render us superior to the gods. Already the springs of pleasure burst forth.

“Ah! God! ah! dear... dear lover! go... oh! go... harder... what... pleasure! ah! ah! I ex... pire!”

These were the only monosyllables we could pronounce.

At last we fell into the most complete prostration of strength.

Our annihilation was at its height, and we revived only a few moments later to plunge ourselves again into the same voluptuous intoxication. Our excessive weakness alone put an end to our transports.

We resumed our garments; I repaired the disorder of her coiffure as well as I could, and we took leave of one another.

Before departing she placed in my hands a portfolio which she recommended that I should not open until I was alone in my room. I confess that I made some difficulty about accepting it: my delicacy revolted at receiving presents from a person whom I loved.

She perceived it.

“Chevalier,” said she, “your refusal would mortify me greatly. Love makes everything equal and common; it is therefore by accepting what I offer you with a good heart that you will prove to me that you love me sincerely.”

I could not therefore refuse her, and I took the portfolio, kissing respectfully the hand she extended to me, which she immediately replaced with her pretty mouth. I saw the moment when we were about to recommence our agreeable follies, had not her sister come to warn us that it was time to separate. They departed.

When I reached my chamber I wished to see what the portfolio she had given me contained; but conceive my astonishment when I observed that it was enriched with diamonds to the value of nearly twenty thousand francs; the clasp which served to open it alone was worth more than eight thousand. It contained besides thirty notes of the treasury, each of a thousand francs. What a magnificent present for me! I could scarcely believe my own eyes! What then must be the fortune of a woman rich enough to make such sacrifices?

I had already resolved to return the whole to her, when at the bottom I found this note:

“Accept, my dear Chevalier: when it is love that gives, pride must remain silent. You would greatly offend me if you refused this slight present from my hand. My lover must not be embarrassed in his means of subsistence. The little hôtel of ... is to be let... You must take it until it can be purchased. Do not be surprised at these sacrifices; thank God, I am rich enough to make them. I wish to bring you as near to me as possible. Buy yourself horses also, and a handsome equipage. Establish your household suitably; fear no expense—love will supply everything. Adieu, my dear Chevalier; I will let you know the day when we may see one another again. I leave you while sending you a

million kisses.”

P.S. Always remain faithful to me...

I passed from astonishment to astonishment. What! said I to myself—I, who had come to Versailles to solicit a position that might compensate for my lack of fortune; I, who not long before, through the means of the Princess d’Hé..., had obtained one which I had accepted only because it might later enable me to aspire to a more considerable one—was I now to have my hôtel, my servants, my carriage, etc., etc.? Upon my honor, my dear friend, I believed I was dreaming a splendid dream.

The very next day I took my resolution and faithfully executed the orders which my divine unknown had given me in her note; and from being entirely unnoticed I soon made myself remarked by the lavish expense I displayed, by my arrogant splendor, and by the insolence of my lackeys. I had taken the name of D. S., the name of an estate which had formerly belonged to my family.

This commerce with my unknown lasted about six months. During that time I had received from her, on several occasions, considerable sums which would have enabled me to live always in the greatest ease, had not my ostentation carried me so far.

One day, when we were together, and when one of our amorous scenes was followed by one of those moments of calm and effusion that are as interesting for tender and sensitive hearts as those in which one is boiling with effervescence—in one of those moments, I say—my unknown asked me why I had taken the name of D. S.

I told her the reason which I have just related to you. She then inquired whether I knew to whom this estate now belonged.

“It has passed into the family of the Count of P. S.,” I replied.

She reflected for a few moments; then we spoke of

other things.

About a month later she handed me a sealed packet in which I found a contract transferring the ownership of that estate, worth thirty thousand écus.

What generosity! Oh, why was I later forced to repay her with ingratitude, as you will see in the continuation of these memoirs!

Every time I was with my beneficent friend, I pressed her to reveal herself to me at last. Ought she not by now to be sufficiently assured of my love and my discretion?

This mystery, I told her, was an offense to a lover.

She had always eluded my requests. At last she begged me to cease tormenting her to learn something she did not wish to tell me, and ordered me (these are her own terms) above all to guard myself from making any inquiries about her or attempting to follow her, threatening me—should this occur—with all her indignation and with a hatred equal to the love she had shown me.

I was keenly wounded by the harsh manner in which she expressed herself, and I resolved from that moment to do everything in my power to discover what I so strongly desired to know.

I gave no sign of it, and we separated apparently as good friends as usual.

The next day I received this note:

“You absolutely wish to know who I am; very well, Chevalier—you shall be satisfied. Present yourself tomorrow morning at the entrance to the terrace about seven o’clock. You will carry a bouquet of roses in your hand so that the person I send may recognize you; you will follow her without asking any questions. Adieu, Chevalier.”

This note gave me the liveliest satisfaction. I awaited the promised moment with the greatest impatience. That evening I ordered that I should be awakened the next morning at six o’clock. This was done, and I went to the

terrace.

Soon I was approached by a woman who told me to follow her. She made me pass through many entrances and exits of the château, led me along various passages; finally, after a quarter of an hour's walk, she stopped before a door and made me enter.

I crossed several rooms magnificently furnished; at last my guide introduced me into a chamber where she left me alone after announcing me to a person who was lying in bed. The shutters closed and the curtains drawn allowed only a very faint light to penetrate the room.

"Is it you, Chevalier?" said a voice so low that I could scarcely hear it.

"Yes," I replied; and immediately I crossed the space that separated me from the bed, sprang into it, and soon shared it with her.

It was the first time that I was about to enjoy her charms entirely at my ease.

Already the coverlet and the sheets were at the foot of the bed; my hand wandered over her charms. She wished to speak, but I closed her mouth with a kiss.

Yet one thing astonished me greatly: she seemed to wish to escape all my caresses. I held her voluptuously in my arms; my tongue caressed hers; my finger seized the seat of pleasure. Already I felt her clitoris swelling beneath it. These rapid titillations drew toward that part all the libidinous spirits; I made pleasure circulate through her veins in great torrents. Her thighs, which until then she had kept tightly pressed together, gradually opened; a slight movement of her hips announced to me that it was time to act more decisively. I stretched myself upon her and penetrated the place with vigor.

But, O gods! what transports seized my mistress! She abandoned herself to my caresses with the greatest fury; she sucked and bit every part of my body that her mouth

could reach.

The excess of pleasure carried her away... she no longer knew herself. Strongly clasped in her arms, her legs entwined around me, our two bodies seemed to form but one.

What precipitation! What agility in the various movements!... But they redoubled still further, and soon there were nothing but broken sighs. I myself felt that the springs of supreme pleasure were ready to open. Together we reached the goal...

“Ah!... dear... Cheva...lier... how... I... love... you... my... soul... you... kill... me... go... go... oh!... it... is... too... much... I... die...”

I felt indeed her arms loosen and fall languidly, and I myself was plunged into that delicious ecstasy in which nature, overwhelmed by pleasure, seems to confound and annihilate itself amid the sweetest enjoyments.

When I had recovered my senses, my adorable mistress had not yet returned to hers. I wished to admire her in the state of abandonment in which she lay.

I went to open one of the curtains; but, O God! judge of my astonishment—I did not recognize my unknown. It was her companion, the one who had accompanied her to our meetings in the park.

Shall I confess it to you? I felt new desires arise within me which perhaps I should not have experienced so quickly with my mistress.

Could one behold with impunity before oneself the superb body of a naked woman without wishing once more to render to it the homage it deserved?

I admired the beauty of her form: a divine bosom... her parted thighs allowed me to glimpse the interior of that part which I had just celebrated with so much ardor. Its color would have eclipsed the finest carmine. Its two lips, adorned with black hair, contrasted admirably with the

whiteness of her skin, opening and closing frequently as though they challenged me.

Already she began to recover her senses; her eyes fixed themselves upon me with a kind of shame—but how quickly I dissipated it! I threw myself into her arms and we plunged anew into a flood of delights.

We ceased our frolics only when our exhausted strength placed an obstacle to our desires... Our bodies were more weary than satisfied. Oh! why did nature make us so weak?

I begged her to explain this adventure to me, and how, believing myself conducted to my unknown, I had been brought to her. Here is what she replied:

“After what has just passed between us, I may make you every confession without blushing. I loved you from the moment I first saw you; I perceived with sorrow that my friend pleased you more than I did. All your attentions were directed toward her; you scarcely paid any attention to me. Your liaison was formed so quickly that I had not time to thwart it as I had intended; but knowing the inconstant character of my companion, I thought that you would soon cease to love one another.

“I was deceived in my expectation. Your caresses, your amorous transports, of which I was so often witness, only inflamed me the more, and to such a degree that I resolved to satisfy myself at whatever cost it might be.

“All those notes you received from my friend were written by me. As she wished always to remain unknown, she did not wish you to have her handwriting.

“At your last interview I noticed that you were not very well satisfied with one another and that some coolness existed between you. I imagined profiting by this circumstance to make you come to me. I wrote the note which you believed came from my friend; you came—and you know the rest,” she added, striving to blush.

“May I not repent of my imprudence. Oh! I did not think it would have such consequences; I was far from imagining that you were so enterprising.

“I will confide to you something further that you do not know, my dear Chevalier. Envious of my rival’s fortune, I wished to share with her the pleasure of being useful to you. It was I who persuaded her to purchase your estate in your name; I even took the liberty of sending you certain sums under the name of my companion. And believe me, Chevalier, I do not make these confessions to diminish the sentiments of gratitude and love which you bear her, nor to make you believe that you owe me any in return; no, Chevalier, I know love and know that it cannot be commanded. Am I mistress of not loving you?

“I require nothing from you. Love your unknown, and may you long be loved in return if that is necessary to your happiness; but...”

You see, my friend, with what address this woman sought to lead me toward her aim. She weakened the sentiments I felt for her friend; she did all that was possible to turn them to her advantage; she affected greatness of soul and generosity. She even made me doubt my mistress; for what did that *but* signify? I asked her, and she replied in such a way as to increase my doubts, saying that she spoke only of her friend’s habitual inconstancy.

What shall I tell you finally? If she did not succeed from that moment in making me wholly inconstant, she at least succeeded in determining me to divide myself between her and my unknown, as you will see if you continue to read this history.

I pressed her with the most urgent entreaties to tell me her name and that of her friend; she resisted my insistence.

I insisted still more, and at last obtained what I desired.

She began by making me swear upon my honor that I would never reveal what she was about to tell me. I did

everything she required.

“Well then,” said she, “your unknown is the... (queen)... and I am the Duchess of Polignac—and I am not her sister.”

I keep my word, my friend; I shall never pronounce the name of a woman whose memory will always remain dear to me. I shall speak of her only under the name of *the unknown*.

I shall strictly observe the oath that was imposed upon me; besides, gratitude obliges me to it. As for the Duchess of Polignac—a woman branded and detested everywhere where honest people exist—by naming her I can do her no harm. For a long time she has had no reputation left to lose.

Although until now I have made you review scenes sufficiently licentious, they are nothing in comparison with those that remain for me to recount to you. I shall lead you through every degree of libertinage, and I shall stop only at the *nec plus ultra* of the most unbridled dissolution.

Before leaving the Duchess of Polignac she recommended that I observe myself carefully before her friend, who would be a ruined woman if I did not keep the greatest secrecy, her husband being jealous and excessively brutal.

She urged me to have myself introduced to her two days later about midnight; she would have me fetched at my house, and we should pass the whole night together.

I returned to my hôtel exhausted with fatigue. I had a broth, a chicken, and a bottle of Bordeaux served to me, and applied the whole to my stomach. I ordered that my door should be closed to everyone and went to bed until evening.

When I awoke I felt perfectly restored; yet still incapable of renewing the assaults of the morning.

My valet de chambre handed me a note from my unknown, informing me that she would come in the evening to the rendezvous at the usual hour.

I would gladly have excused myself from going; but how was I to do so? I could neither warn her nor send anyone in my place.

I took my resolution. I had new restoratives served to me, and above all a quantity of strengthening preserves suitable for reviving exhausted strength.

At last I set out at the appointed hour, with the poorest opinion of my vigor. I was not wrong; for despite all the caresses that were lavished upon me, though I had at my disposal all those beauties that formerly inspired me with so much courage, in vain were the most varied postures tried, in vain were all imaginable provocations employed—I could scarcely accomplish more than a single effort, and that with the greatest difficulty.

They tried not to appear offended; but I saw that dissatisfaction pierced through the most forced gaiety, and we separated much earlier than usual.

From that moment I perceived that my unknown grew colder toward me from day to day. Our meetings became more rare, until at last they ceased altogether.

She had taken me because my appearance pleased her; she had kept me because she was satisfied with my vigor; and she abandoned me because my weakness wounded her pride and no longer satisfied her fiery temperament.

But let us return to the Duchess of Polignac.

She introduced me to her house as she had promised. I found her in the most charming night undress, half uncovered. As soon as she saw me enter she threw herself into my arms.

“Well then, Chevalier,” she said, “did I deceive you when I spoke of the inconstancy of the...? A new lover is ready to succeed you.”

“I know it; it may even already be an affair concluded.”

“It has been said that you acquitted yourself very badly of your duty at the last interview... Once is too little; but the labors of the previous day no doubt had much share in that accident. Poor Chevalier! Why did you not answer her as Bigdore replied to Argénie in *La Comtesse d’Olonne*: ‘Madame, pardon this sad accident—it comes from too much love...’

“Go, my friend, I am delighted. I shall no longer share you; I shall possess you entirely for myself, and...”

She covered me with kisses.

During this monologue I had not remained inactive. I had seated her upon my knees; I held one of my hands upon a globe of ivory; with my finger I lightly stirred one of the little buds that crown them; I drew the other between my lips. The forefinger of my right hand had entered the road of pleasures, and the thumb had placed itself a little higher upon the clitoris.

She could not long resist this quadruple manner of summoning voluptuousness. Already her languishing eyes announced its approach. She agitated herself with fury; she herself broke the obstacles that enclosed the sceptre of love; she seized it vigorously. It was so impetuous that her hand could scarcely contain it; she gave it light movements. Her limbs stiffened; at last she poured forth into my hand the most copious libation and fell into complete exhaustion.

I confess to you, my friend, that I have never seen a woman whose passion was as energetic as that of the Duchess of Polignac.

I had time to undress her and leave her entirely naked before she had recovered her senses. I carried her to her bed; the sight of all her charms excited in me the most violent desires. I lay beside her to satisfy them.

But scarcely had I done so when she sprang upon me

herself, clasped me violently in her arms, covered me with burning kisses, and with movements so precipitate that soon we had both finished this career only to begin another—except that this time I resumed the upper hand. And remark well, my friend, that each time she experienced a double enjoyment for my single one.

What a fiery temperament! Five times I doubled her pleasures in this manner, and six times as I had done upon my knees before lying down.

We agreed that we should not see each other again for several days. She gave me the key of a little door by which I could enter her apartment through a secret staircase that led to a wardrobe adjoining her bedroom.

The third day, feeling certain inclinations, I decided to visit her and thus to advance by twenty-four hours the moment we had fixed.

I left my house at midnight. I reached the staircase without being perceived and entered the wardrobe. A few words spoken in the duchess's chamber made me understand that she was not alone.

I placed an eye to the keyhole and saw two women naked upon the bed: one was the duchess, and the other a very pretty brunette of eighteen years; it was her maid.

Never did a more beautiful body come from the hands of nature. They were lying one upon the other, caressing mutually the part which distinguishes us.

Unable to restrain my desires, I joined them in the bed. Oh my friend! what a night! But listen.

Scarcely had I lain down when the young girl wished to withdraw. I prevented her and covered them alternately with kisses. The duchess made up her mind; her inflammable imagination was soon heated; she ordered her maid to remain.

She placed herself between us two, turning her back toward me and presenting herself to me while Agathe—

that was the maid's name—stimulated her with the most lascivious caresses. Meanwhile the duchess passed one of her hands beneath Agathe and struck her lightly while with the forefinger of her other hand she stimulated her with great agility.

At last we all three reached that formidable moment, announced by a thousand cries and sighs.

The duchess then made me change place and insisted that I should render my homage to Agathe. The poor girl had difficulty resigning herself to it, but she had to submit.

Soon the proud stimulus touched her to the quick. The fire of pleasure shone in her eyes; our movements multiplied. Agathe trembled with extraordinary violence and at last announced the supreme moment with broken words:

“Ah! monsieur... I beg you... do not spare me... do not spare me!”

Her eyes closed, and I myself uttered, in concert with her, the final confession of my defeat.

During this scene the lubricious duchess had made use of the hand of our amiable Agathe. We repeated these amorous exercises until daybreak. The duchess especially remained constantly stretched either upon me or upon Agathe: she is truly insatiable.

Reeling upon my legs, weakened by the excesses to which I had just abandoned myself, I slowly regained my lodging and went to bed.

I did not leave it until the following day. A substantial meal and repose soon restored the strength I had lost.

I passed six days without returning to my Messalina; she was already occupied in forming her aristocratic cabal, which made a diversion to her loves.

On the seventh day I received from her a note inviting me to come to her at the usual hour and in the customary manner.

In it she reproached me for having remained so long

without seeing her. I went there about midnight; she was already in bed.

I excused my negligence upon an illness (which I had not had), and I got into the bed beside her; but scarcely had I attempted to place my hand upon her when she prevented me.

“No, my dear Chevalier,” she said to me, “it is impossible for us to enjoy one another today. An obstacle I did not expect... an inconvenience which I share with all women. I did not know it was about to come when I wrote to you... and despite my desires, which at this moment are even more violent than at other times, I cannot overcome an invincible repugnance.”

Nevertheless I advanced toward her an irresistible argument. Never had I found myself in a more brilliant condition; the more she sought to oppose my caresses, the more I redoubled them.

“Leave me, leave me, I beg you, my friend; you set me all on fire. Do not torment me uselessly, or I shall soon put you to reason.”

I replied that it was impossible if she refused what I demanded.

“Ah!” said she, “since you defy me...”

Immediately she seized the Priapus and, with a complaisant and delicate wrist, attempted to calm the desires that animated me. My obliging finger repaid her in kind; but suddenly, carried away by passion, she turned herself and guided my hand so that it might continue its office. This narrower path accelerated my pleasures.

The duchess, feeling herself flooded by the springs of voluptuousness which burst forth with force, fell in her turn into the excess of delight. We repeated it three times in this manner, and I confess that I never experienced greater pleasure.

I did not return to see her again until her indisposition

had passed. Lubricity could not be carried further than we carried it that night. For a long time, both of us in our shirts, we amused ourselves in her chamber, where a blazing fire burned, frolicking in every imaginable way.

There came a moment when the duchess, her hand resting upon the edge of the mantelpiece, suddenly presented herself to me; bending slightly, she herself guided the sceptre of love into the path of pleasure, thus forcing me to possess her standing.

God! how she knew to manoeuvre from behind as well as from before...

After having tried all the different manners we had employed since we had known one another, my desires still survived my exhausted strength. In a passionate moment the duchess threw herself backward upon me with her feet raised, so that our heads were placed between one another's thighs. She placed between her lips that burning shaft which she seemed eager to swallow; her mouth resembled a suction pump. I myself applied my lips to those which were presented before me; I drew from them the quintessence of voluptuousness. My tongue trembled upon her clitoris, which I left only to plunge repeatedly into the road of perfect happiness and to return again.

Soon our strength abandoned us and we succumbed beneath the weight of that delicious enjoyment.

The following day Agathe again joined in our pleasures. We invented another posture, which was this: after all three of us had undressed, I laid Agathe upon the bed so that her hips rested upon the foot of it and her legs were supported upon two chairs placed apart from one another, which held her thighs very widely open. In this position her head reached only halfway along the bed. The duchess occupied the other half; her hips rested against Agathe's head and her tuft formed a kind of crown. She also had her thighs widely separated.

I then stretched myself upon Agathe; while I enjoyed her I kissed alternately Agathe's mouth and the jewel of the duchess. At last my tongue fixed itself upon the latter, darting rapidly; I devoured and sucked the interior of her lips and her clitoris.

The duchess could not long endure the excess of voluptuousness which my tongue procured her. Soon she succumbed to her transports; the reservoirs of pleasure opened and I received the liquor which flowed from them. It redoubled my vigor, which soon was itself annihilated at the same moment that Agathe fainted in my arms.

Such was the life I led for a very long time with the Duchess of Polignac.

One day I asked her how, with a temperament as ardent as hers, she had been able to play the complaisant spectator of the pleasures of her friend with me.

"Do you think," she replied, "that I was foolish enough to remain there guarding your cloaks while, watching you, I inflamed my imagination in vain? No, my friend, no. I had also arranged my rendezvous in the same place, and I was exercising myself on my side with a most vigorous athlete while you were doing your part."

(I later learned that it was one of her lackeys.)

"My friend knew it; but I had begged her not to tell you. Therefore do not be surprised at my complaisance."

At last came the epoch of the Revolution. I knew that she had the greatest share in the projects of the aristocratic cabal; I knew that several times each week she attended nocturnal assemblies, but I did not know what passed there. I was far from suspecting that these secret meetings were held by villains who were plotting the ruin of the French people.

She had always acted with me in the greatest secrecy; had I been informed, I should have regarded it as the first

and most sacred of my duties to reveal these infernal conspiracies.

Suddenly we learned at Versailles of the insurrection of the people of Paris. I then saw many traitors seized with terror.

The duchess sent for me and had me told not to lose a moment.

I hastened there. I found her in alternate excesses of fear, rage, and despair.

“Oh, dear Chevalier! what will become of me? All the Parisians have taken up arms; they will come here. I know they detest me; they will murder me... Where shall I flee? Where shall I hide? Ah! save me.”

I tried to reassure her and told her that I did not believe those whom she feared could come, since the road was closed by troops.

“And those troops are composed of cowards who will abandon us and go over to their side.”

“Well then,” I replied, “I will send someone upon the road who will inform me of everything that happens. Calm yourself and wait for my return.”

I kept a man constantly upon the road to Paris, relieving him every twelve hours with another, until the day of the famous taking of the Bastille. My sentinel came to inform me that a great noise of musketry and cannon had been heard in Paris.

I immediately reported it to the duchess, who from that moment made her preparations for departure.

Soon we learned of the surrender of the citadel and the massacres of De Launay and Flesselles. The terror of the duchess reached its height.

“Oh! let us flee, Chevalier... they will do the same to me... be my savior... you alone remain on earth who can take interest in my fate. Ah! unhappy woman—what will become of me?”

At these words she threw herself at my knees, bathed in tears, and fainted.

It required the touching spectacle of that scene to decide me to accompany her in her flight. The siren triumphed.

I had gathered at her house and mine everything most precious that we possessed. I disguised myself as an abbé and we departed.

We were stopped at Sens and asked what news there was from Paris. My presence of mind did not abandon me in so critical a moment. The duchess was pale and ready to faint. I feared she might betray us. I diverted the attention of these curious people from her by speaking horrible things about the very person they held before them.

“The best news I can tell you,” said I, “is that that hussy Polignac and all her crew are in flight. They are being pursued, etc.”

They all uttered cries of joy. Fortunately they did not yet know that all carriages were being stopped unless provided with passports. They allowed us to continue on our way, loading us with blessings for the good news we had brought them.

We took indirect roads and made a thousand detours in order to mislead them, in case they should take it into their heads to pursue us. This precaution saved us; for we afterwards learned that, reflecting upon the embarrassment the duchess had shown, they had decided to follow us and bring us back.

Could I describe to you the transports of the Polignac when we were outside France? She testified her joy by every imaginable caress—but it lasted little.

Her temper soon became peevish and irritable. She could not accustom herself to exile. After the sumptuous life she had long led, private existence became for her an insupportable monotony.

She ended by regarding me as a husband and treated me accordingly; finally she formed a new liaison with a Swiss baron whose only merit consisted in his great height and broad shoulders.

I wished to complain; no one listened to me. Soon she did not even conceal herself from me. My unhappiness was all the greater because I still loved her; jealousy had given new strength to my love.

At last I could no longer endure the sight of a rival who was preferred to me, and I separated from this Messalina, cursing her ingratitude and the folly I had committed in accompanying her from place to place.

I later learned from the baron himself, whom I encountered afterward, that she had left him after eight days and that since then she had given him seven or eight successors.

Such, my friend, are the details you asked of me. I am persuaded that you will find them interesting. They show you what is the conduct of those titled women whose opulence and pride crushed and insolently treated the modest virtue of the bourgeoisie, which they regarded as far beneath them.

My example teaches you how dangerous it is to abandon oneself too much to perfidious friends and not to place a bridle upon the violence of one's passions.

This moral, no doubt, will appear singular enough after descriptions so licentious.

I shall soon attempt to return to France. What risk do I run? I was never among the proscribed, since I took no part in their detestable plots.

Adieu, my friend; I hope soon to come and embrace you, etc., etc.

## **NOTE DE L'ÉDITEUR.**

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The author of these *Memoirs* has now returned and gives here proofs of the most steadfast patriotism; yet it is not known that he ever had any connection with Polignac. It is with his consent that I have brought his manuscript to light, and I hope the public will be grateful to me for it. Can one do too much to make known the prostitute of whom it treats?

FIN DE LA MESSALINE FRANÇAISE