

D.-A.-F. DE SADE

LA NOUVELLE JUSTINE

OU

LES MALHEURS DE LA VERTU

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CHAPITRE XVI.

End of the orgies. — Dissertation. — How the company disperses. — Justine's escape.

The debauched company, gathered the following day for further infamies, revelled just as merrily as if the most atrocious of all cruelties had not been committed the day before. And such is the soul of libertines; utterly jaded by any sensation other than that of their vices, the most culpable indifference either drives them to new crimes or soon consoles them for the old ones. Rose and Lili bore, on that day and the two that followed, the full weight of these monsters' lusts. As for Gernande, raving over his sister Marceline, in whom he found the most beautiful arms in the world, he bled her ten times over those two days, ceaselessly pressing his mouth to the jets of blood, letting them gush into his throat, and moistening his insides with them. "It seems to me," said Bressac to him, a great advocate of this refinement, "it seems to me, my uncle, that this is the only way your fantasy can hold any charm; when one loves blood, one must have one's fill of it; only then is cannibalism truly realised, and I confess that cannibalism gives me a hard-on." Everyone tried this charming episode; even Dorotheé swallowed Marceline's blood: these horrors were interspersed with outings, during one of which Bressac discovered a fourteen-year-old girl, beautiful as the day itself, whom he abducted to amuse the company. Nothing was received as well as this gift, and there was no sort of depravity, torture or abuse that was not committed against this unfortunate girl. One evening, as we were discussing the fortunate chance of this discovery, Madame de Gernande took it into her head to

say: "Do you believe, gentlemen, that if the parents of this unfortunate girl were as powerful as you, they would not pursue the infamy with which you have just overwhelmed them? Now, if their poverty is the sole reason for the peace with which they leave you, are you not scoundrels to abuse it thus?"

"My friend," said Verneuil to his brother, "if my wife had dared to offer me such an absurd argument as that, I would have had her brought to her knees before the company and flogged until she bled by my footman; but as Madame does not belong to me, I shall content myself with demolishing her objection."

"That is splendid," replied the lord of the castle; "but as I do not claim to be any gentler than my brother, the company will deem it fitting that Madame de Gernande should listen to the speech about to be delivered to her only in a posture of pain; I therefore sentence her to be on all fours, her bottom high in the air; two candles, held very close to her arse, will slowly sizzle her skin during that time." Cheers rang out; Madame de Gernande was positioned, and Verneuil began. "Let us first establish, I pray," said Verneuil, "as the unshakeable foundations of any system concerning such matters, that there is necessarily, in the intentions of nature, a class of individuals essentially subordinate to another by virtue of their weakness and their birth: this being established, if the subject sacrificed by the individual who gives in to his passions belongs to this weak and feeble class, the sacrificer, in this case, has done no more harm than the owner of a farm who slaughters his pig. Would you doubt my first principle? Travel the world over; I dare you to find a single people who have not had a caste that was despised; the Jews formed that of the Egyptians; the Helots that of the Greeks; the Pariahs that of the Brahmins; the Negroes that of Europe. Who, I ask you, is the mortal foolish enough to dare assert, in defiance of the evidence, that all men are born equal in rights and strength; it was only a misanthrope like Rousseau who could establish such a paradox, because, being very weak himself, he preferred to bring down to his level those to whom he dared not rise; but with what face,

I ask you, can the four-foot-two-inch Pygmy hold himself equal to that model of stature and vigour to whom nature has granted both the strength and stature of Hercules? Would it not be the same as saying that the fly is equal to the elephant? Strength, beauty, stature, eloquence—such were the virtues which, at the dawn of society, conferred authority upon those who governed. A family, a village, compelled to defend its possessions, would certainly choose from among its own ranks the individual who seemed to possess the greatest sum of the qualities we have just described. This leader, once invested with the authority that had just been entrusted to him, took slaves from among the weakest and sacrificed them without mercy at the slightest demand of his interests or his passions... or even at the whim of those who had placed him in power. How often, perhaps, was this cruelty necessary to maintain his authority? Who doubts that the despotism of Rome's first emperors was not useful to the splendour of this sovereign of the universe? When societies were established, the descendants of these first leaders, accustomed to ruling—even though their strength or moral qualities often no longer equalled those of their fathers—continued to maintain authority over their subjects or within their households; and this is the origin of the nobility, whose roots can be traced back to nature itself: slaves continued to gather around them, either to serve them or to maintain, under the orders of this leader, the greatness and prosperity of the nation; and this master, realising how essential it had become for him to command respect, both for his own interest and for the general good, became cruel out of necessity, ambition, and most often out of debauchery. Such were the Neros, the Tiberius, the Heliogabals, the Wenceslas, the Louis XI, etc.; they inherited a power passed down from their predecessors out of necessity; they abused it on a whim. But what harm did these abuses cause? Undoubtedly far less than the curtailment of their powers; for the abuse maintained the empire, whilst claiming a few victims. The abolition of authority did not spare them, and plunged the people into anarchy. There

are therefore (and this is my point) very few drawbacks to the strongest abusing their power... there could be no fewer obstacles to them crushing the weakest. Are not all the workings of nature, moreover, examples of this necessary harm inflicted by the strong upon the weak? The north wind snaps the reed; the earth's internal upheavals topple and destroy the frail dwelling recklessly built upon it; the eagle devours the wren; we do not breathe, we do not move a single limb, without destroying swarms of atoms: Well then! say the fools here who advocate an impossible equality: we cannot dispute the physical and moral priority of certain creatures over others; it strikes us, we must admit; but grant us at least that all beings must be equal in the eyes of the law; and that is certainly something I shall be careful not to agree to: for how indeed can you expect that he who has received from nature the most extreme disposition towards crime—whether because of the superiority of his strength, the delicacy of his organs, or the education necessitated by his birth or his wealth— how, I ask, can you expect this individual to be judged by the same law as one whom everything urges towards virtue or moderation? Would the law be more just if it punished these two men alike? Is it natural that he whom everything urges to do wrong should be treated like him whom everything urges to behave prudently? There would be in this approach a dreadful inconsistency, an abominable injustice, which no prudent and wise nation could ever permit itself. It is impossible for the law to suit all men equally. This moral remedy is like physical remedies. Would you not laugh at the charlatan who, having but one remedy for all constitutions, would purge the strong man of the market hall just as he would the delicate young lady with vapours? No, no, my friends, the law is made solely for the people; being both the weakest and the most numerous, they absolutely require restraints which the powerful man has no need of, and which cannot suit him in any respect. The essential thing in any wise government is that the people should not encroach upon the authority of the great; they never do so without a host of

misfortunes overturning the state and corroding it for centuries. But as long as there is, in any nation, no other drawback than the abuse of the strong's power over the weak—since the result is merely to fasten the people's chains—this action will become good rather than bad; and any law that protects it will henceforth contribute to the state's glory and prosperity. The feudal system favoured this way of seeing things; and it was under this system that France reached the height of its greatness and prosperity... following the example of Rome, which was never so great as when despotism was in its final phase. There are countless governments in Asia where the powerful can do as they please... where the people alone are in chains. It is to act against nature to seek to diminish the strength of those to whom nature has bestowed it; it is to serve nature to imitate the models of cruelty and despotism that she constantly presents to our eyes... than to use all the means it has placed within us to unleash our energy; he who refuses to do so is a fool who does not deserve the gift he has received from it..." And Verneuil, returning here to the subject of our discussion, "we are therefore in no wrong, my friends, to make this creature serve every whim of our lust; we have taken her, and we are the masters, as soon as nature makes us the stronger, to do with her whatever we please. Only fools or women could find this wrong; for these two kinds of individuals, being part of the class of the weak, must necessarily take their side."

"Well!" said Bressac, electrified by his uncle's moralising, "who could fail to be convinced that the law of the strongest is the best of all, the only one that governs the workings of the world, and that it is at once the cause both of the virtues that restore disorder and of the crimes that maintain order in every part of this vast universe?"

Our readers can easily imagine that such schemes, in the minds of the people whose story they are reading, were bound to exacerbate their misdeeds. Madame de Gernande was condemned, despite her agony, to remain in the same position in

which those scoundrels had placed her; and it was upon her, along with the new victim, that all manner of methods of bleeding and every possible form of lewdness to be carried out whilst the blood was being drawn were perfected. D'Esterval claimed that it must be delightful to fuck during that time; he did so. And the praise he lavished on this new passion encouraged the others to imitate him. Verneuil said that one must pinch, prick, and molest the blood-drained creature, all whilst fucking her. They covered her with bruises; Gernande wanted her to jerk off cocks with each hand, and for those instruments to be drenched in blood; another whim that was found delightful. Victor claimed that one ought to administer enemas, and watch them be expelled during the bloodletting. La d'Esterval maintained that the best course of action was to hang her by the hair, whilst the blood flowed from all four limbs: further outbursts of violence. So much was done to her, in the end, that the unfortunate child soon joined Cécile; she was buried beside her, and new atrocities soon set the imaginations of these cannibals ablaze.

At the end of a dinner where the wildest debauchery had been indulged in, where minds, in a state of wild frenzy, would accept no restraints or boundaries, where indecency had been elevated to a principle, cruelty to a virtue, immorality to a maxim, atheism to the sole opinion capable of bringing happiness to mankind, and every crime to a system; where the most depraved lust, having mingled with the excesses of the table, had driven the madness to the point of sodomising young boys, without ceasing to drink and eat; where the excrement exhaled from the bodies of these young boys, their tears, their sweat and their blood, had been mixed with the food we were gorging ourselves on; at the end of this infernal feast, Gernande and Verneuil finally decided that the blood of Cécile, and of the young woman who had just been sacrificed, was not enough for the infernal gods, to whom this feast was dedicated, and that one more victim was absolutely essential. At this, all the women shuddered. Our unfortunate Justine, upon whom many eyes

turned, felt faint when Gernande proposed to the assembly that the victim should be chosen on the basis of the superiority of her buttocks; and here is the sophism he used to support his opinion. "The one with the finest arse," he said, "must necessarily be the one who has made us come the most. Now, the creature who has most aroused our desires must be the one by whom we must be most disgusted: it is therefore she of whom we must absolutely rid ourselves..." "No," said Verneuil; "there would be partiality; she must be excluded entirely, and let fate alone decide. Let us consult the God who has already guided us to such good deeds; once his voice has designated the victim, we shall have no further regrets..." — "An excellent way to reassure ourselves," said d'Esterval, bursting into laughter; "never have Jesuit dogmas been so refined. Come, our God will soon be restored; let us go and consult him in his temple." The names of Justine, the ladies of Gernande and Verneuil, Marceline, Laurette and Rose were written on slips of paper. These six names, placed in the chalice that had been used for the previous orgies, were presented by Lili to the effigy of the Eternal One, who, after a moment's reflection, put his hand inside and threw out the slip that came out; Bressac picked it up eagerly; he read the name of Madame de Gernande... "I would have bet on it," said the husband coldly; "I have always believed heaven to be just towards me; I am delighted that, through such a fair choice, her reputation is preserved. Come now, my dearest friend," he said, drawing near to his unfortunate wife; "come now, my love, take heart. Of all the occasions when one must know how to make up one's mind with firmness, this, no doubt, is the most important... it is a difficult time to get through... oh! a very difficult one, my angel... for we shall cause you incredible suffering, that is certain: but it will end; you will then return peacefully to the bosom of this nature that loves you so much... and which nevertheless has in store for you a rather nasty way of reuniting you with it. Take heart, however, my Love; is it not better to die at once than to continue the tedious course into which my passions were

driving you? It was a ceaseless flight from torments; they will come to an end; an eternity of happiness awaits you, your virtues assure you of it. What grieves me, my child, I repeat to you, is the thorny path... the exceedingly painful path by which you will reach the delights prepared for you for all eternity." And the cruel husband might still have been mocking his unfortunate wife, had the impetuous Verneuil not at that very moment thrown himself upon the victim, to enjoy her, as he put it, in the state of crisis and anguish in which she must have been. The scoundrel fucks her, pounds her with fervour... shamelessly plucks lustful kisses from a mouth withered by the most bitter pains, and which now opens only to lamentations and despair... "Wait," said Gernande to her brother, urging him not to rush his ecstasy; it must be whilst enjoying her—you from the front, Bressac from behind, me in her mouth, d'Esterval and Victor beneath her armpits—that all five of us pronounce her torment. Let us be given what we need to write," he continues as soon as he sees his idea fulfilled; "I shall begin by sketching out mine;" and the scoundrel, with deliberation, does so whilst taking pleasure in his unfortunate wife, whom he contemplates with every word he writes. Victor does the same; he writes with composure, upon his aunt's shoulders, the form of torture to which he destines her, and which seems best suited to his notorious depravity. The others imitate the method; and, to add the most bizarre refinements to all these infamies, since Gernande knew of Justine's devotion to her mistress, he wants her to be the one to read out the sentence that has just been pronounced. Alas! The poor girl barely had the strength to stammer out these barbaric words; but, as she was threatened with the same death if she did not obey, and her refusal would have served no purpose, she had to submit; she read. No sooner had Gernande heard her sentence than she threw herself at the feet of her tormentors. Ah! It is not in such souls that pity was ever born! They insulted this unfortunate girl, they mocked her, and, to proceed immediately with her execution, they shut themselves in the drawing room, where

the horrors previously described had taken place. Everything required for the planned executions was displayed there with great pomp.

First, the patient was required to ask aloud for forgiveness from God and from mankind for the crimes she had committed. The poor woman, whose mind was already elsewhere, uttered whatever they demanded. The torments began; each man inflicted the punishment he had ordered, and whilst he was doing so, two individuals, of either sex, were forced to arouse him or to indulge his lusts. The old women assisted in the tortures.

Verneuil began. Justine and Dorothée attended to him; he tormented the victim for two hours, and, just as she was experiencing a terrible fit, the lecher, whipped by d'Esterval, came in Justine's arse, which an old woman was plucking at the same time, to give the patient's hip movements greater agility.

Victor appeared, accompanied by Laurette and Madame de Verneuil; that is to say, the young pupil was tormenting his aunt whilst indulging his lustful desires on his mother and sister. Madame de Verneuil felt a moment of overwhelming horror, which her son unfortunately sensed. The little monster was then holding a steel needle, with which he was pricking his aunt's buttocks; he thrusts it into his mother's nipples, hurling cruel insults at her. The assembly took up the cause; the matter seemed serious; the proceedings were halted to judge the guilty party, and, on the mere accusation of her son, the mother was instantly sentenced to four hundred lashes, to be administered indiscriminately over her entire body, despite the wounds she had just received. The sentence, at the hands of these four barbarians, is carried out at once; Victor demands that her throat be handed over to him; and the scoundrel flogs her, whilst Gernande sucks his cock, and his father sodomises him. They set to work again; the little scoundrel, aroused, prolongs the torture he inflicts on his aunt for three hours, and comes twice whilst working her; once whilst wanking himself; the other whilst sodomising his mother, whilst his sister licked her arsehole.

Gernande seizes his wife, stabs her repeatedly with a lancet, and ejaculates into the mouth of a young lover, driving a final stab into the right eye of the unfortunate woman.

D'Esterval surpasses all others in his horrors; it is Justine's cunt that receives his cum; he severely abuses her nipples, spurt-ing it into her womb.

When the victim arrives at Bressac, she scarcely has the strength left to suffer. Pale, disfigured—her once-beautiful face, where grace had formerly reigned, now presents only the most heartrending image of pain and death. Yet she still has the strength to throw herself at her husband's feet, to beg his forgiveness once more; but Gernande, unyielding, takes pleasure in keeping her in this state of anguish. "Oh, for God's sake," he cries out, "what a pleasure to see a woman in such a state! How beautiful pain is to behold! Come and wank me, Justine, on your mistress's face..." — "My friend," says Verneuil, "that beautiful face ought to be whipped..." — "Shit on it," says Victor... "Slap it," says d'Esterval... "Coat it in honey and release wasps onto it," says Dorothée... "A little patience," says Gernande, who was savouring on that charming face all the various degrees of pain caused by each of these proposals; "it is impossible to satisfy us all. Does everyone wish to do what they have proposed?" ... "Yes" ... Well then, be content, my friends; I shall grant your wish." All these various horrors are carried out; five monsters rage against this unfortunate creature; and thus, after a very short life, brought to an end by eleven hours of the most excruciating torments, this heavenly angel ascends back to heaven, from whence she had descended only to adorn the earth for a moment.

Will it be believed? The body of this beautiful woman is placed in the middle of the table, and around it a most magnificent supper is served. "This is how I like pleasure," says Verneuil; "if one who seeks it does not cast off every restraint, he will never attain it... How delicious it is to feast thus upon the crime one has just committed!... how good crime is; it is in savouring

it, in delighting in its consequences... Oh, my friends, to what a degree ferocity has the power to spur our pleasures!... And yet, there she is—the one who lived an hour ago... who heard us... who feared us... who implored us... A moment has ended all, and this creature, so sensitive just an instant ago, is now nothing more than a shapeless mass disorganized by our passions... Oh, how beautiful and grand are the passions that lead to such excesses! how majestic their force... how noble and sublime! If it were true that a God existed, would we not be his rivals, in thus destroying what he had formed? Oh yes, yes, I maintain it—murder is the greatest, the finest, the most delicious of all acts to which man can abandon himself... Well then, my friends, where is that marvelous soul which our excesses have just separated from this body? By what path has it passed?... what has become of it? Must one not be mad to suppose its existence even for a moment? Did we not see this soul weaken as we irritated the organs or destroyed their workings? All this, then, was nothing but matter; and so I ask, where can the crime be in deforming a little matter?...”—“One moment,” says Bressac; “since we are reasoning so seriously about so important a subject, allow me to set forth my ideas on the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, which for so long has stirred the various schools of philosophy...” —“Yes, yes,” says Gernande, “let us hear my nephew in this discussion; I know he is capable of examining it thoroughly.”

“By going back to the most remote ages,” said Bressac, “we unfortunately find no defenders of the absurd system of the immortality of the soul except among peoples sunk in the grossest errors. If we examine the causes that may have led to the acceptance of this dreadful absurdity, we find them in politics, in fear, and in ignorance; but whatever the origin of this opinion, the question is whether it is well founded. I greatly fear that, upon examining it, we shall find it just as chimerical as the forms of worship it authorizes. One must admit that, even in the centuries when this belief seemed most widely accepted, there were always people wise enough to call it into doubt.

“It was impossible not to feel how necessary to mankind the knowledge of this truth had become, and yet none of the gods their extravagance had erected took care to instruct them in it. It seems that this absurdity arose among the Egyptians—that is to say, among the most credulous and superstitious people on earth. One thing, however, is worth noting: Moses, though educated in those schools, did not say a single word about it to the Jews; a sufficiently shrewd politician to create other restraints, he never dared, as is known, to employ that one among his people—too much stupidity characterized him for him to think of making use of it. Jesus himself, that model of tricksters and impostors, that abominable charlatan, had no notion of the immortality of the soul; he expresses himself only as a materialist, and when he threatens mankind, it is clearly to their bodies that his words are addressed—he never separates the soul from it.¹ But it is not in seeking the origin of this hideous fable that I ought to engage here; to demonstrate its complete absurdity becomes the sole object of my work.

“Let us first speak for a moment, my friends, of the causes that may have produced it. The misfortunes of the world, the upheavals it experienced, and the phenomena of nature were unquestionably the first; poorly understood and misinterpreted physics gave rise to the second; politics became the third. The inability of the human mind to understand itself arises less from the inexplicability of the enigma than from the way it is posed. Ancient prejudices have biased man against his own nature; he wishes to be what he is not; he exhausts himself in efforts to find himself within an illusory sphere which, even if it existed, could never be his. How, under such conditions, could he come to know himself? Has not the mechanism of instinct in animals

¹ “If your arm,” says somewhere that insolent buffoon, “is an occasion of scandal to you, cut it off and cast it far from you; for it is better to enter the kingdom of heaven with one arm less than to be cast whole into hell.” Is there anything more materialistic than such a statement?

been sufficiently demonstrated by the perfect harmony of their organs alone? Does not experience show us that this instinct in those same animals weakens in proportion to the deterioration that occurs in them, whether by accident or by age, and that the animal is ultimately destroyed when the harmony of which it was only the result ceases? How can one be so blind as not to recognize that what happens in us is exactly the same? Does not what you have just made that woman suffer—whose corpse lies before your eyes—prove it to you clearly enough? But to complete the identification of these principles within ourselves, we must first be convinced that nature, though one in its essence, nevertheless varies infinitely; next, we must never lose sight of this axiom of eternal truth: that an effect cannot be superior to its cause; and finally, that all the results of any given motion differ among themselves, increasing or diminishing in proportion to the strength or weakness of the force that sets that motion in action.

“With the aid of these principles, you will stride rapidly across the field of sentient nature. By means of the first, you will discover the unity it proclaims: everywhere in the animal kingdom there is blood, bones, flesh, muscles, nerves, viscera, movement, and instinct.

“By means of the second, you will account for the differences found among the various living beings in nature; you will not compare man to the tortoise, nor the horse to the gnat, but you will form for yourself a graded scheme of diversity, in which each animal holds the rank that suits it. The examination of species will convince you that the essence is everywhere the same, and that differences concern only modes. From this you will conclude that man is no more superior to the matter that produces him than the horse is superior to the matter that produces it; and that if there is any superiority between these two species, man and horse, it lies only in their modifications or forms.”

“By the third principle—which states that the results of any motion differ among themselves and increase or diminish according to the strength or weakness of the forces that set that motion in action—you will be persuaded, I say, that there is nothing marvelous in the construction of man when he is compared with the animal species inferior to him; however one approaches the matter, one sees nothing but matter in all beings that exist. ‘What!’ you will say, ‘are man and the tortoise the same thing?’ No, certainly—their form is different; but the cause of the motion that constitutes both is most assuredly the same thing: ² ‘Suspend a pendulum from this ceiling by a string; set it in motion: the first arc that this pendulum describes will have all the extent permitted by the length of the string, the second will have less, the third less still, and so on, until at last the pendulum’s motion is reduced to a simple vibration, which will end in complete rest.’”

“From this experiment, I say to myself: man is the result of the most extensive motion, while the tortoise is only the result of a mere vibration; yet the coarsest matter was the cause of both alike.³

“The supporters of the immortality of the soul, in order to explain the phenomenon of man, endow him with an unknown substance; we materialists, far more reasonable no doubt, consider his qualities only as the result of his organization. Suppositions cut through many difficulties—we admit it—but they do

² We do not conceal that we have borrowed this learned comparison from a man of great wit; for that reason we distinguish it from the text by quotation marks. We shall use this method wherever we allow ourselves to add the ideas of others to our own.

³ This will suit very well, the friends of the ridiculous system of divinity will say here; but then you admit a cause for motion. And what is that cause, if not God? What a wretched syllogism! No, I admit no cause for the motion of matter; it contains within itself the principle of its motive force; it is always in motion, and it is this perpetual motion—well recognized within it—that plays the role of the agent I employ in the comparison I adopt.

not resolve questions. Advancing toward the goal by a much more direct path, I offer you only proofs; what is noteworthy is that none of these half-philosophers agree on the nature of the immaterial substance they assume—the contradiction of their views would indeed, it must be admitted, be one of the strongest arguments one could use against them; but disdaining to rely on it, I prefer instead to examine the question that makes the soul a created substance.

“A thousand pardons, my friends, if in the course of this dissertation I find myself compelled for a moment to admit that chimerical being known as GOD. You do me, I hope, enough justice to be well convinced that, atheism being the most sacred of my principles, I resort to such suppositions only out of necessity and only temporarily; but since all errors are linked together in the minds of those who accept them, one is often obliged to rebuild one in order to combat and dispel another. I ask, then, on the basis of this hypothesis admitting a God, where could this God have found the essence of the soul? ‘He created it,’ you will say. But is such a creation possible? If God alone existed, he would occupy everything, except the absurdity of nothingness. God, wearied of nothingness, is said to have created matter—that is, he gave being to nothingness; thus everything is now occupied: two beings fill all space, God and matter. If these two beings fill everything, if they constitute the whole, there is no longer any room for new creations; for it is impossible that a thing both be and not be at the same time. Mind then fills all metaphysical void, while matter physically fills all sensible void; therefore there is no longer any place for beings of new creation, however one might reduce their existence. At this point, recourse is had to God, and it is said that this God receives these new productions within himself; but if God could lodge within the spiritual sphere of his infinite spirituality new substances of the same nature, it clearly follows that he was not of a complete and perfect infinity, since he has admitted additions; for infinity

excludes all limits, and a being that excludes all limits cannot admit of additions.

“If it is said that God, by his omnipotence, has contracted his infinite essence in order to make room for newly created substances, I reply that he is no longer infinite; for in contracting himself, the side on which this occurred would reveal a limit.

“Even if God could receive newly created substances within his sphere, it remains certain that this sphere would experience a void each time a substance departs from it to enter the sphere of matter and animate a body.

“This void could persist forever; for, according to the supporters of this absurdity, souls condemned to punishment will never leave hell.

“If God continually fills the void caused by the absence of a soul, then his own substance must undergo a retroactive effect when some of these souls return to his sphere—which is absurd; for a complete infinity such as your God, whose parts are themselves infinite, can neither contract nor expand.

“If the void caused by the absence of a soul is not filled, then it is nothingness; for every space must contain either spirit or matter. Now, God cannot fill this void either with his own substance or with portions of matter, since God cannot contain matter; therefore there is nothingness within the divinity.

“At this point our adversaries adopt a milder tone: when we say, they claim, that God created the human soul, we merely mean that he formed it; one must admit that this change of terms does not greatly alter the dispute.”

“If God has formed the human soul, he must have formed it from some essence; it is either from spirit or from matter that he has drawn it.

“It cannot have been from spirit, because there is only one, which is the infinite, or God himself; now everyone senses that it is absurd to suppose the soul to be a portion of the divinity. It is contradictory to render worship to oneself; yet that is what

would occur if the soul were a portion of God. It is no less contradictory that a substance should eternally punish a portion detached from itself; in short, under this hypothesis, do not speak to me of hell or of paradise, for it would be absurd that God should punish or reward a substance emanating from himself.

“God has therefore formed the soul from matter, since there is only matter and spirit. But if the soul has been formed from matter, it cannot be immortal; God, if you will, may have spiritualized, rendered matter diaphanous to the point of impalpability, but he cannot make it immortal; for whatever has had a beginning must assuredly have an end.

“Even the deists themselves can conceive of God’s immortality only through his infinity, and he is infinite only because he excludes all limit.

“Matter, even when spiritualized, is no less divisible, because divisibility is essential to matter, and spiritualization does not change the essence of things; now what is divisible is subject to alteration, and what is susceptible to alteration is not permanent, still less immortal.

“Our adversaries, driven to the wall by all these objections, fall back upon the omnipotence of God: it suffices for us, they say, to be persuaded that we are endowed with a spiritual and immortal soul; it matters little to us to know how and when it was created. What is certain, they add, is that by its faculties one cannot judge it to be of any substance other than that which is attributed to angelic spirits.

“To have constant recourse to omnipotence, as the theists do—is that not to open the door to every abuse? Is it not to introduce a universal Pyrrhonism into all the sciences? For if omnipotence acts contrary to the laws it is itself supposed to have established, I can never be certain that a circle is not a triangle, since it could make the figure before my eyes be both at once.

“The sounder portion of the deists, sensing how repugnant it was to reason to suppose the soul a substance similar to that

of their God, have not hesitated to say that it is a substance, an entelechy of a particular form, drawn from I know not where; and when it was objected to them that, apart from God—who, by reason of his infinity, excluding all limit, has no form—everything else in nature must have a figure and consequently an extension, they readily admitted that the human soul has extension, parts, local motion, etc. But enough of arguing against our adversaries: they grant us, as we see, that the soul has extension, that it is divisible, that it has parts; this is sufficient to lead us to believe that even those who uphold its immortality are not firmly convinced of its spirituality, and that this opinion is untenable—it is time to convince you of it.

“Whoever says a spiritual substance says an active, penetrating being, such that, within the body it penetrates, no trace of its passage is perceived; our soul would be such under this hypothesis: it sees without looking, hears without lending an ear, moves us without moving itself. Now, such a being cannot exist without overturning the social order.

“To prove this, I ask: in what manner do souls see? Some have answered that souls see everything in the divinity, as in a mirror in which objects are reflected; others have said that knowledge is as natural to them as the other qualities with which they are endowed. If the first of these opinions is absurd, one may assert that the second is at least as much so; indeed, is it not impossible to understand how a soul could know, within a general category, all the particularities it contains and all the conditions of those particularities? Suppose the soul endowed with knowledge of good and evil in general; that knowledge would not suffice for it to pursue the one and avoid the other: for a being to determine itself consistently toward such avoidance or pursuit, it must know the particular instances of good and evil contained within these two general categories. The supporters of Scotus’s system maintained that the human soul did not possess in itself the power of seeing, that it had not been given at the moment of its creation, and that it received its properties

only on the occasions when circumstances required it to make use of them.

“Under the preceding supposition, the soul—which possesses an innate knowledge of evil in general—is an impotent substance, for it foresees the evil to come and does not avert it; matter then becomes the agent and the soul the patient, which is absurd. From Scotus’s view it follows that man can foresee nothing, which is false; if man were truly reduced to that state, his condition would be far inferior to that of the ant, whose foresight is remarkable. To say that God impresses knowledge upon the soul as it needs to exercise its faculties is to make your God the author of all crimes; and I ask whether such consequences would not revolt even the most steadfast adherents of that God. Thus the defenders of an immortal and spiritual soul are reduced to silence on the question of how and by what means this soul sees and knows things; yet they do not abandon the field, and say that the human soul sees and knows things in the same manner as other subtle or spiritual substances of like nature—which, as one can see, amounts to saying nothing at all.

“In defending a false opinion, difficulties arise anew just as one seems to overcome them. If the human soul does not have the faculty of penetrating present objects, nor that of representing absent ones unknown to it and forming true ideas of them by which it might judge their inner dispositions; if it can receive impressions only through the sensible presence of objects, and can judge their qualities only by the outward signs that characterize them, then its intellect has no more subtlety or properties than the instinct of animals, which seek or avoid certain objects according to the movements produced in them by the unchanging laws of sympathy or antipathy. If this is so—as everything proves to us, as it is impossible to doubt—what folly it is for men to suppose themselves composed of two distinct substances, while the animals they regard as mere material machines are endowed, according to the place they occupy in the chain of beings, with all the faculties observed in the human species. A little

less vanity and a few moments of reflection upon himself would suffice for man to convince himself that he possesses nothing more than other animals except what suits his species within the order of things, and that a property indispensable to the being to which it is attached is not the gratuitous gift of some fanciful creator, but one of the essential conditions of that being, without which it would not be what it is.

“Let us therefore renounce the ridiculous system of the immortality of the soul, destined to be as constantly despised as that of the existence of a God—equally false, equally absurd; let us, with the same courage, abjure both of these fables, fruits of fear, ignorance, and superstition. These dreadful chimeras are no longer made to impose upon people such as ourselves; let the lowest populace feed upon them as long as it wishes, but its prejudices, like its morals, must not bind us for a single instant. Let it console itself for its misery with a chimerical future... As for us—happy in the present, untroubled by what follows, loving only ourselves and referring everything to ourselves—the most piquant, the most sensual pleasures alone are worthy to fix our hearts; to them alone must be directed our devotions, our only homage. A thousand times accursed be the frightful impostor who first thought to poison mankind with such infamies; even the most terrible punishment would still have been too mild for him. Ah! would that the same fate might be reserved for all those who proclaim or follow such detestable errors.”

“I know of nothing,” said Verneuil, “that puts one more at ease than these systems; for it is quite certain that, according to them, since we are no longer masters of any of the actions of our lives, we need neither fear nor repent any of them.” — “And who fears,” said Dorotheé, “who can repent?” — “Weak minds,” replied Verneuil, “people who, not yet sufficiently familiar with the true principles my nephew has just established, still retain, despite themselves, the foolish prejudices of their childhood.” — “And that is why,” said Bressac, “I never cease to say that the seeds of these absurd prejudices cannot be stifled too early; it is

the foremost duty of parents, of instructors, of all those to whom youth is entrusted, and I consider a dishonest man anyone in that class who does not regard it as his first concern to extinguish them.” — “It is to the most false notions of morality that, in my view, all religious imbecilities are due,” said Gernande. — “Quite the contrary,” replied Bressac; “religious ideas were the fruits of fear and hope, and it was to foster and serve them that man arranged his morality according to the imagined goodness of his absurd God.” — “Faith,” said Gernande, raising a glass of champagne, “whether one gave rise to the other or the latter produced the former, I have for both the deepest horror, and my immorality, founded upon my atheism, will make me mock and ridicule social bonds with as much charm and energy as I destroy religion.” — “That is how one must think,” said Verneuil; “all these human absurdities can only bind fools, and people of wit such as ourselves must despise them forever.” — “We must go further,” said d’Esterval; “we must confront them head-on; all the actions of our lives must have as their aim the violation of morality and the pulverizing of religion: it is only upon the ruins of these two chimeras that we must establish our happiness in this world.” — “Yes,” said Bressac; “but I know of no crime that fully satisfies the degree of horror I feel for morality—none that destroys, as I would wish, all religious superstitions. What are all the things we do? There is nothing but the commonplace in them: all our petty immoral offenses amount to a few sodomies, a few rapes, a few acts of incest, a few murders; our petty religious crimes to a few blasphemies. . . . Is there one among us here who can say he is sufficiently delighted by such trifles?” — “No, certainly,” replied d’Esterval’s impassioned wife; “I perhaps suffer even more than you from the mediocrity of the crimes nature allows me: in all that we do, it is only idols and creatures that are offended; but nature is not—and it is she I would wish to outrage. I would like to disturb her designs, thwart her course, arrest the motion of the stars, overturn the globes that float in space, destroy what serves her, protect what harms her, build up what

offends her, insult her, in a word, in her works, suspend all her great effects—and I cannot succeed.” — “That proves there are no crimes,” said Bressac; “the word would apply only to the actions Dorothee sets forth, and you see they are impossible; let us take our revenge upon what is offered to us, and multiply our horrors, since we cannot improve them.”

The conversation had reached this point when everyone noticed a convulsive movement in Madame de Gernande’s corpse; Victor was so frightened that he lost control of himself, but Bressac immediately held him back: “Do you not see, you little imbecile,” he said, “that what is happening there is precisely the clear proof of what I just advanced concerning the necessity of motion in matter? You see, my friends, that no soul is needed to set a mass in motion. It is through a series of movements like these that this corpse will decompose... and at the same time generate other bodies that will have no more souls than it.⁴ Come, let us proceed, my friends,” continued Bressac, “yes, let us continue; let this phenomenon of nature—one of the simplest expressions of its motive force—take nothing away from our pleasures. The more nature unfolds itself to us, the more we must affront it; it is only by challenging it that one discerns it: it is known only through such affronts.” d’Esterval seizes Madame de Verneuil, who for some time has seemed to occupy him greatly; Verneuil in turn repays d’Esterval in kind. — “One moment,” said Gernande; “before pointing out the delightful enjoyment you seem to be forgetting, I must first relieve myself.” — “Do

⁴ As soon as a body appears to have lost motion through its passage from the state of life to that which is improperly called death, it tends, from that very moment, toward dissolution; now dissolution is a very great state of motion. There is therefore no instant in which the animal body is at rest; it never truly dies, and because it no longer exists for us, we believe it no longer exists at all—there lies the error. Bodies are transformed... they are metamorphosed; but they are never in a state of inertia. Such a state is absolutely impossible for matter, whether organized or not. Let these truths be well weighed, and one will see where they lead, and what a blow they deal to human morality.

not withdraw for that, my uncle,” said Bressac; “we are told that such acts are passions—indulge them before us.” — “Do you truly wish to see this?” replied Gernande. — “Yes, yes,” answered d’Esterval; “everything connected with libertine excess is sublime, and we must miss no lesson.” — “You shall be satisfied,” said Gernande, turning toward the spectators. What followed was a display of excess characteristic of this libertine: attendants surrounded him, assisting and observing the act, praising it extravagantly as it occurred; once it was finished, they continued their attentions in turn, lingering over every detail as part of their ritual.”

“Oh, for fuck’s sake,” said Bressac, still sodomising Victor, whilst fondling the buttocks of his pretty little sister Cécile; “Bloody hell, lads, I’ve never seen anyone shite so lecherously... truth be told, I’m going to pick up the same habit.” Come now, Uncle, tell us then what is this pleasure you claim to have forgotten? — “You’ll see”, said Gernande, seizing Justine and having John and Constant bind her, belly to belly, on top of his wife’s corpse; “I shall, in this state,” he said, “sodomise the maid, pressed against her mistress. You must admit,” he continued as he set about it, “that this detail had escaped your notice.” Everyone applauded the idea, and everyone wanted to try it as soon as Gernande had finished. But the unfortunate Justine was so repulsed by this horror that her features contorted and she fainted. “Well then!” says Bressac, who was sodomising her at the time, “there’ll be two dead women instead of one; there’s no great harm in that.” — “We must whip her,” said Verneuil, “pinch her vigorously; rest assured that this is the only way to restore vigour to the organs.” — “It would be better to reach the nerves and prick them, if possible,” said d’Esterval, who was fondling Cécile’s buttocks whilst a young lover was wanking him. “We must try everything, starting with the simplest,” said Verneuil, who was already beginning to whip the victim, whilst sodomising Dorothée, whose little Rose was sucking her clitoris; “if the

first methods fail, we shall move straight on to the second.” Fortunately, they proved unnecessary: Justine, mercilessly flogged, opened her eyes again, and it was, alas! only to find herself covered in blood. “Oh! Good God!” she cried, showering her mistress’s lifeless face—against which her own was pressed—with tears, “Oh Heaven! shall I therefore always be an object of sorrow and scandal? Hasten to end my days, Supreme Being; I love death a hundred times more than the horrible life I lead.” The plea provoked only bursts of laughter, and the debauchery continued.

Here d’Esterval, emerging from Madame de Verneuil’s arse—which he had just been fucking for a while—approaches the husband and asks him why on earth he wouldn’t bring his wife together with his sister-in-law? — “Ah, ah!” says Verneuil, whilst sodomising the wife of the man who’s questioning him, “does that idea give you a hard-on?” — “You can see for yourself,” replied d’Esterval, pointing to his member pointing skywards; “I assure you that the torment of this slut would excite me immensely. She is incredibly arousing when she cries; and I would like,” continued the libertine, wanking himself, “to make her shed some real tears.” — “Well then, my friend,” said Verneuil, “I agree; but here are the two conditions I set. The first is that, in killing my wife, you shall cede yours to me—a woman I love dearly and wish to make my own.” — “Agreed,” cried d’Esterval and Dorothée at once. “The second clause,” continued Verneuil, “is that the torment you prepare for my worthy companion must be appalling... that it be carried out in a room extremely close to the one where, at that very moment, I shall be fucking yours, so that I may come to the sound of your victim’s screams.” — “I agree to all that,” said d’Esterval; “but I also demand a condition of my own: I need a wife; I ask for Cécile; it will be a delight for me to marry the daughter, her hands still stained with her mother’s blood.” — “Oh! Father,” cried Cécile, shuddering at this dreadful idea, “could you consent to sacrifice me in this way?” — “Certainly,” said Verneuil, “and the repugnance you

show seals the deal... I'll sign it. D'Esterval, you have my word; please bring this little girl up a bit." — "Oh, by Jove," said Bressac, "where better for her to become accustomed to murder than in a house where people are killed every day?" — "Well then," continued Bressac, "I demand the bribe for the deal. What is it?" — "I beg you, Uncle, to give me your son Victor; I am madly in love with this young man; entrust him to me for two or three years, until I have been able to perfect his education." — "He could not be in better hands," said Vemeuil; "may he take after you, my friend; that is the happiest wish I could make for him. Correct his weaknesses above all; initiate him into our principles; automatise his soul, and make him detest women." — "He could not be in a better position for all these things," said Justine; "the poor child! What a pity! How I pity him! And..." — "I am far from saying the same," Dorothée interrupted her sharply; "Monsieur de Bressac is perhaps the best tutor I know; if I had ten children, I would entrust them all to him at once."

"In truth, my friends," said Gernande, "I am very well pleased to see you all so advantageously provided for; it seems to me that, in all this, I alone have been forgotten." — "No," replied Verneuil; "I had meant to take Justine from you, but I leave her to you; do not complain of the share—it is worth all of ours; there is not in society a girl more beautiful, more gentle, or more virtuous than she. You spoke to me of a new marriage; Justine, well versed in the conduct to be observed with your wives, becomes in truth most valuable to you; I renounce all my designs upon her: you see, my brother, that you will not be alone." — "So then, you are all leaving me?" said Gernande. — "Oh yes, tomorrow; such is our intention," said d'Esterval. — "It must be so," resumed Gernande; "come, I shall make haste to take another wife, that we may soon be reunited for some new orgies."

They withdrew. D'Esterval, assisted by John and one of the old women, led Madame de Verneuil into a safe room, separated from de Verneuil's only by the thinnest of partitions. As he left, her ferocious husband shoved it up her arse for a few moments;

she wept; and d'Esterval, who had no desire to spare her, had a surprisingly stiff cock. Verneuil took Marceline and Dorothée; Cécile, Rose, Justine and two young lads fell to Gernande's lot.

The scene that unfolded was horrific. Bressac and Victor had secretly made their way into d'Esterval's home; and the pleasure derived by d'Esterval and his friend Bressac was to have the mother tortured by her own child. We know enough of this little monster's character to be certain of the pleasure this scene gave him, and of the zeal with which he played his part. Bressac and d'Esterval took turns sodomising him without ceasing, whilst he carried out the tortures they had ordered. For several hours, Verneuil was kept in the dark as to his son's part in this horror. We shall soon see how he learnt of it: let us first speak of the peculiar cap with which the victim had been crowned. As it was known that Verneuil's lust would be aroused only by the cries he was about to hear his wife utter, his head had been fitted with a horned helmet, designed so that the cries wrung from him by the torments he was subjected to resembled the bellowing of an ox. "Oh! Christ, what is this?" said Verneuil, hearing this music and throwing himself upon d'Esterval... "It is impossible to hear anything more delightful... what on earth are they doing to her to make her bellow like that?" At last, the cries subsided, and in their place one heard those of d'Esterval's climax, which were usually very expressive. "He's finished," said Verneuil, simultaneously shooting his load into Dorothée's arse... "Now I'm a widower." — "I believe so," said d'Esterval's lovely wife, whom Marceline was jerking off at the time; "but we're left with the painful regret of not having seen it." — "Perhaps I would have had less pleasure," said Verneuil; "the naked scene would have offered me only things... that I know by heart... by leaving everything to my imagination, it has aroused me far more..." — "Oh! my friend," said Verneuil's new companion, "what you say there is delightful; I adore your wit, and I believe we shall do some very daring things together," — "Yes," said Verneuil, "always on condition that I pay you... that I shower you with gold; perhaps,

without that clause, you would see me feel nothing more for you... And you know, my dear, that this money must still be spent on infamies: you will have to inflame my imagination with tales of the women you have paid for with this money; the more hideous they are, the more new funds you will receive.” — “Oh! for heaven’s sake”, replied Dorothée, “since this is the one episode, of all those you demand of me, that pleases me most, how could I refuse? Money is made only to procure pleasures.” — “I regard it only as the instrument of all crimes and all passions,” said Verneuil, “and if I had the misfortune to run out of it, I confess there would be no means I would not use to procure it.” — “What! You would steal?” — “Oh! I would do worse.” — “Ah! I can see it, Verneuil, your head’s getting hot; you need to lose some cum again, — Let’s get up to some new follies, my angel... go into your husband’s bedroom, I can still hear him fucking away, persuade him to let John fuck you on my wife’s corpse... so I can hear you both cum... John and you. You’ll come back dripping with cum and covered in my wife’s blood; I’ll fuck you in the arse in that state, and I can feel that this fantasy will give me the greatest pleasure... But listen... listen to a formality that must be observed whilst you’re doing this... you see, Dorothée, I’m getting hard just telling you all this; whilst you’re swooning, I say, beneath John’s vigorous member, you’ll scream at me, as long as you have the strength... ‘Verneuil... Verneuil, you are a widower and a cuckold; my husband has just murdered your wife... and I am defiling you...’ Yes, my angel, yes, you shall shout these words at me with all your might, and you shall see, when you return, the state into which such words will have put me...” — “Oh, Verneuil! What an imagination! cried Dorothée as she prepared to obey... “Oh! My dear Verneuil, what a mind! — It is rotten... putrid, I agree; but what can you do, my dear? If debauchery has ruined me, it is their madness that must save me.”

Imagine Dorothée's astonishment when she realised that Bressac and Victor had just been accomplices in the crime committed right beside her! She was signalled not to say a word; but, instead of John, it was Victor who put the gun to her back; and, just as he fired, the little scoundrel began to shout: "It's me, Father... it's me who killed your wife, and it's me who's made a cuckold of you." Verneuil could not bear it; he rushed into d'Esterval's room, hard as a rock: they showed him his wife's body, or rather the bloody shreds of that unfortunate woman, who had breathed her last in torments too horrific to describe. Verneuil sodomised his son, who, as we have just said, was fucking Dorothée; Bressac fucks his uncle; John sodomises Bressac; Marceline whips... and encourages all the participants in this furious orgy, which slows only to take on new forms, and to continue until the rising of the star that was finally to illuminate the parting of these scoundrels.⁵

One easily imagines that this parting took place only amid the most fervent promises to meet again soon; each swore it, and departed escorted by the new companions he was taking with him.

Gernande, for his part, went to spend a few days at the château of the woman he coveted, and soon brought her back to his own. Madame de Volmire did not accompany her daughter; consumed by gout and rheumatism, she could no longer leave her chair, so that Gernande, once in possession of the young woman, quickly contrived to isolate her as he had the other. Instead of madness, they spoke of epilepsy; the young countess, it was said, needed to be kept under constant watch, and had not a moment's calm. The mother of this unfortunate girl, of modest

⁵ "One expresses things better by suppressing them," writes Julien Offray de La Mettrie somewhere; "one excites desire by pricking the curiosity of the mind with an object partly veiled, which one does not yet discern, and which one wishes to have the honour of divining." Such are the reasons for the veil we cast over the scenes we do no more than announce.

means and enriched by Gernande, dared not verify anything; opinion prevailed, it was controlled with money, and the libertine, left in peace, soon enjoyed with this new victim the same pleasures that had delighted him with the former.

It was in the interval of these new ties that Justine conceived the idea of flight; and she would certainly have carried it out at once, had she not glimpsed the hope of being happier with this second mistress than with the one whose loss the cruelty of these monsters had just inflicted upon her. Mademoiselle de Volmire, nineteen years of age, even more beautiful and more delicate than her predecessor, so moved Justine that she resolved to save her, whatever the dangers might be. For some six months the perfidious Gernande had been bending this gentle and charming girl to his infamous caprices; the season was about to bring back the whole infernal band, and with it the same atrocities. Justine hesitated no longer; she opened her heart to her young mistress... and expressed, with such frankness, her desire to break her chains, that the latter placed in her entire confidence.

The plan was to inform the mother and reveal to her the count's atrocities; Mademoiselle de Volmire did not doubt that the woman who had given her life, however afflicted she might be, would hasten at once to deliver her; but how was it to be accomplished? They were so carefully watched. Accustomed to scaling walls, Justine measured with her eye those of the terrace; they were scarcely thirty feet high. No outer enclosure appeared to her; she believed she would be upon the road through the wood as soon as she had cleared the walls; Mademoiselle de Volmire, having arrived by night, could not correct her impression, and during Gernande's absence Justine, guarded by the old women, had been unable to acquire any knowledge of the place. Our brave and sincere friend therefore resolved to attempt the descent; Volmire wrote to her mother in the manner most likely to move her and determine her to come to the aid of so unhappy a daughter; Justine placed the letter in her bosom, embraced that dear and engaging woman, and then, with the help of her sheets,

let herself slide down to the base of the fortress. What became of her, great God! when she discovered that she was far from being outside the enclosure, and that she was only in a park surrounded by the highest walls, whose existence had been concealed from her by the thickness and abundance of the trees; those walls, thirty feet high and three feet thick, were lined along their crest with glass... What was she to do? Day was about to overtake her in this perplexity. What would be thought of her, found in a place where she could not reasonably be, except by supposing a proven design of escape? Could she escape the count's fury? What likelihood that this ogre would spare her!... He would glut himself with her blood; she knew it—that was the threatened punishment... Return was impossible; Volmire had at once withdrawn the sheets; to knock at the doors would have been to betray herself still more surely. Little was wanting for our poor Justine's reason to give way entirely then, and for her to yield to the violent effects of her despair. Had she discerned any pity in her master's soul, hope might perhaps for a moment have deceived her; but a tyrant, a barbarian, a man who detested women, and who had long sought an opportunity to sacrifice her herself, by making her lose her blood drop by drop, in order to see how many hours she would take to die under such a torment! What means had she of escaping her fate? Not knowing what to do, finding danger everywhere, she cast herself at the foot of a tree, resigning herself in silence to the will of Heaven. Day at last appeared: the first object that struck her was the count himself; he had gone out to lie in wait for little boys whom he tacitly allowed to come gather branches in his park, in order to have the pleasure of catching them in the act and flogging them to the blood by way of punishment; one such expedition presented itself; he carried it out; he tore the flesh of the poor child's arse and pursued him with blows of his cane, when his eyes fell upon Justine; he thought he saw a spectre... he drew back. Courage is rarely the virtue of traitors. Justine rose trembling; she flung herself at his knees. "What are you doing there?"

said this anthropophagus harshly. — “Oh, sir, punish me; I am guilty, and have nothing to say in my defense...” The unfortunate girl... she had, alas, forgotten to tear up her mistress’s letter. Gernande suspected her; he demanded it, caught sight of the fatal writing, seized it, devoured it with his eyes, and ordered Justine to follow him.

They reentered the château by a concealed stair that led beneath the vaults; the deepest silence reigned there. After several turns, the count opened a dungeon and flung Justine into it. “Imprudent girl,” he said, “I warned you that the crime you have just committed is punishable by death; prepare yourself, then, to undergo this just punishment: tomorrow, after dinner, I shall come to dispatch you.” The poor creature again threw herself at the knees of this barbarian; but, seizing her by the hair, the cruel man dragged her along the ground, forced her thus to make two or three circuits of the cell, and ended by hurling her against the walls so violently as almost to crush her. “You would deserve that I open your four veins this instant,” he added, as he closed the door; “and if I delay your punishment, be sure it is only to render it more prolonged and more horrible still.”

One cannot picture the night Justine passed; the torments of her mind, joined to the many bruises inflicted by Gernande’s treatment, made that night one of the most dreadful of her life.

One must have been unhappy oneself to imagine the anguish of an unfortunate creature who awaits his punishment at every hour... from whom all hope has been taken, and who does not know whether the moment in which he breathes may not be the last of his life. Uncertain of the nature of the sufferings that await him, he pictures them to himself in a thousand forms, each more horrible than the last. The slightest sound seems to him that of his executioners; his blood runs cold; his heart stands still; and the sword that is to end his days is less dreadful to him than the moment that threatens him.

It is likely that the count began by taking vengeance upon his wife; the event that saved Justine at least leads us to suppose

as much. For thirty-six hours our heroine had remained in the state we have just described, without any relief being brought to her, when the doors were opened and Gernande at last appeared. He was alone; fury blazed in his eyes.

“You know the death that awaits you,” he said to Justine; “that corrupt blood must be drawn off little by little; you shall be bled three times a day—I have told you so—it is an experiment I burn to make; I thank you for having provided me with the means.” And the monster, attending for the moment to no passion but his vengeance, took one of Justine’s arms, pricked it, and bound up the wound after the loss of three small basins of blood. He had scarcely finished when cries were heard. “Sir, sir,” said one of the old women, running in, “come at once; madam is dying, she wishes to speak to you before she breathes her last”; and the messenger hurried back to her mistress.

However accustomed one may be to crime, it is rare that the news of its accomplishment does not strike terror into the one who has just committed it. That terror for a moment restores virtue to rights of which crime soon again deprives it. Gernande goes out distracted and forgets to close the doors. Justine seizes the opportunity; however weakened she may be by a fast of nearly forty hours and by heavy bloodletting, she darts from her dungeon, crosses the courtyards, and finds herself upon the open road without being perceived by anyone... “Let us go on,” she says to herself, “let us go on with courage: if the strong despises the weak, there is a powerful God who protects the latter and never abandons him.”⁶

Filled with these consoling yet chimerical ideas, Justine pressed on with ardor, and by nightfall found herself in a cottage more than six leagues from the château.

Believing her mistress dead, and no longer having the letter on which the mother’s address had been written, Justine abandoned all hope of being of use to the young Volmire, and set out

⁶ Could Justine—so constantly abandoned by that God—reason thus?

the very next morning, likewise renouncing all plans of complaint, whether old or new, and thinking only of making her way to Lyon, where she arrived on the eighth day, very weak and in great suffering, but without having been pursued. It was there that, after resting and recovering for some time, she again resolved to go on to Grenoble, where happiness (according to her ideas) awaited her unfailingly. But let us see, before the execution of this plan, all that in fact befell her, to be related to the indulgent reader who is kind enough to take the trouble to read us.

CHAPTER XVII.

Singular Encounter. — A Proposal Refused. — How Justine Is Rewarded for a Good Deed. — Refuge among a Band of Beggars. — The Manners and Customs of These People.

Nothing gives rise to reverie like misfortune; ever gloomy, withdrawn into himself, he whom fortune afflicts bitterly accuses the whole world, without being just enough, even for a moment, to feel that, since there is in the world an approximately equal sum of favours and adversities, each must necessarily have some small share of both.⁷

Justine, yielding for a moment to the natural impulse common to all men, thus wrapped herself in the mournful crepe of her reflections, when a gazette fell beneath her eyes: she read there that Rodin, that artist of Saint-Marcel, that wretch who had so cruelly punished her for having wished to spare him the most odious infanticide, had just been appointed chief surgeon to the Empress of Russia, with considerable emoluments. "Great God!" she cried in astonishment, "is it then written in heaven that I am to see only examples of vice rewarded and virtue in chains? Very well! let that villain triumph, since Providence so

⁷ The Greeks depicted Zeus seated between two vats: in one were the gifts of fortune, in the other its reverses. The god took up with both hands, by turns from one and then the other vessel, to scatter them among men; but it was observed that he returned more often to the store of misfortunes than to that of prosperities.

wills it—let him triumph; and you, suffer, unhappy one; but suffer without complaint: it is the decree of destiny; submit yourself, and however thorny the path may be, learn to traverse it with firmness; the reward lies in your own heart, and the purity of its enjoyment is worth more than all the remorse with which your adversaries are tormented...” She did not know, the poor creature, that remorse is nothing in souls such as those that made the misery of her life, and that there is a certain stage of wickedness at which man, far from grieving over the evil to which he gives himself, is driven to despair only by the weakness of his faculties, which prevent him from committing still more.

The interesting creature was not yet at the end of these striking examples of the triumph of wickedness—examples so discouraging to virtue, so delightful to vice, which amuses itself with them unceasingly; and the perversity of the person she was about to encounter would vex and astonish her more than any other, no doubt, since it was that of one of the men from whom she had received the most cruel outrages.

She was occupied with her departure when a footman, dressed in green, handed her one evening the following note, requesting a prompt reply:

“A person,” it said, “whom you believe to have wronged you greatly, burns with the desire to see you; hasten to come to her; she has matters to reveal to you which may perhaps acquit her of what you think is owed you.”

“From whom do you come, sir?” said Justine to the servant; “I shall not reply until I know who your master is.” — “He is called Monsieur de Saint-Florent, mademoiselle; he once had the pleasure of knowing you in the environs of Paris; you rendered him, he says, certain services which he is determined to acknowledge; now at the head of the commerce of this city, he enjoys at once a standing and a fortune that place him in a position to carry out his favourable intentions toward you. He awaits you.”

Justine's reflections were soon made. If this man, she thought, had no good intentions, would it be likely that he would write to her in such a manner? He no doubt repents of his former infamies; he recalls with horror having torn from me what I held most dear, having reduced me, by the chain of his outrages, to the cruellest condition in which a woman can be placed; he remembers the ties that bind us. Oh yes, yes, these are remorse—let us hasten to him; I should be guilty before the Supreme Being if I did not lend myself to appeasing them: am I, moreover, in a position to reject the support that presents itself? Ought I not rather to seize with eagerness whatever heaven offers for my relief? It is in his hôtel that this man wishes to see me; his fortune must surround him with people before whom he will respect himself too much to dare offend me again; and in the state in which I am—great God!—can I inspire anything but compassion and respect?

These calculations made, Justine assured the footman that on the following day, about eleven o'clock, she would have the honour of calling upon his master to congratulate him on the favours fortune had granted him; but that she herself had been treated very differently. She went to bed, so preoccupied with what this man wished to say to her that she did not close her eyes all night. At last she arrived at the address indicated: a splendid hotel, a crowd of servants, the humiliating looks cast by this rich rabble upon misfortune, which it despises—all this impressed her so strongly that she was on the point of withdrawing, when she was approached by the same footman who had spoken to her the day before, and who, reassuring her, conducted her into a sumptuous cabinet where she easily recognized her persecutor, though now forty-five years old and though it had been nearly ten years since she had last seen him. Saint-Florent did not rise; but he ordered that he be left alone, and signalled to Justine to come and seat herself on a chair beside the large arm-chair in which he sat.

“I wished to see you, dear niece,” he said in a tone of arrogant superiority; “not because I believe I have done you any great wrong; nor because some unpleasant memory compels me to make amends... matters I consider myself above; but I recall that, in the brief time we spent together, you showed me wit; and that is needed for what I have to propose to you; and, if you accept it, the need I shall have for you will then enable you to find, in my fortune, the resources you require, and on which you would count in vain otherwise. Justine wished to reply to the levity of this opening, but Saint-Florent, imposing silence upon her, continued: “Let us leave the past behind,” he said to her; “it is the story of passions, and my principles lead me to believe that no restraint should curb their ardour: when they speak, one must serve them; I know of no other law. When I was captured by the robbers, in whose company I found you, did you see me complain of my fate? To console oneself and act with resourcefulness if one is the weaker; to enjoy all one’s rights if one is the stronger—that is my system. You were young and pretty, Justine; you were my niece; we found ourselves deep in a forest; there is no pleasure in the world that stirs my senses as much as the rape of a virgin; you possessed that flower which I value so highly; I withered it, I raped you; I would have done far worse, had my initial assaults not ensured my triumph, and had you been able to offer me any resistance. But, you may ask me, why leave you without resources... in the middle of the night... on a dangerous road! Ah! Justine, I would reveal these motives to you in vain; you would not understand them; only those who know the heart of man... who have studied its recesses... and searched its most impenetrable corners, could explain this series of follies to you. You had compelled me, Justine; you had helped me break my bonds; you had earned my gratitude; you belonged to me, in a word; did a soul like mine need anything more to drive me to every imaginable crime against you?” — “Oh! Sir, can such horrors, as you say, be understood?” — “Yes indeed, Justine; yes indeed; everything is understandable in the soul of a libertine; in

him, all transgressions follow one another, and, as soon as one has unravelled the first, all the others are easily guessed. You saw it; having just raped you, having beaten you (for I did beat you, Justine), well! Twenty paces away, thinking of the state in which I had left you, I immediately found, in those thoughts, the strength for fresh outrages, which I might never have inflicted upon you otherwise; you had only been fucked in the cunt; I came back specifically to sodomise you: had you had a thousand virginities, I would have plucked them all, one after the other. It is therefore true that, in certain souls, pleasure can arise from the very heart of crime... what am I saying? It is therefore true that crime alone awakens and determines it, and that there is not a single pleasure in the world that it does not inflame and enhance. — “Oh! Sir, what an atrocity!” — “Could I not have committed a greater one? I could have murdered you, Justine; I make no secret of the fact that I had a great desire to do so; you must have heard me rushing after you with that intention; you would have been dead, had I found you. I consoled myself for not having been able to catch up with you by the certainty I had that, reduced to the very last extremes, life would become for you a state crueller than death. But let us leave that, my child, and turn to the matter that made me wish to see you.

“This incredible craving I have for both a little girl’s virginity has never left me, Justine,” continued Saint-Florent. “It is like all other excesses of lust: the older one gets, the stronger they become. New desires spring from past transgressions, and new crimes are born of these desires. All this would be nothing, were it not for the fact that the means we employ to achieve our ends are themselves highly culpable; but since the craving for evil is the primary motive behind our whims, the more criminal the means that drive us, the more aroused we become. Having reached this point, we complain only of the mediocrity of the means; the more their atrocity spreads, the more our pleasure becomes piquant; and thus we sink deeper into the mire, without the slightest desire to emerge. This is my story, Justine; every

day two young children are required for my sacrifices: have I enjoyed myself? Not only do I never see again the objects that have just served me; but it even becomes essential to the complete satisfaction of my fancies that these objects leave the city at once. I would take little pleasure in the delights of the following day if I imagined that the victims of the previous night were still breathing the same air as I: the means of ridding myself of them is easy. Would you believe it, Justine, it is my debauchery that populates Languedoc and Provence with the multitude of objects of licentiousness that their bosoms contain.⁸ An hour after these young girls have served me, trusted emissaries take them away and sell them to the brothels of Nîmes, Montpellier, Toulouse, Aix and Marseille. This trade, on which I make a two-thirds profit, more than compensates me for what the girls cost me, and thus I satisfy two of my dearest passions... my lust and my greed. But the discoveries, the seductions, cause me pain. Moreover, the sort of subjects matters immensely to my lust; I want them all to be taken from these havens of misery, where the need to survive and the impossibility of succeeding there—sapping courage, pride and dignity, and finally enervating the soul—compels them, in the hope of securing the indispensable means of subsistence, to do whatever seems likely to ensure it. I have all these hideouts searched without mercy: one cannot imagine what they yield to me. I go further, Justine; activity, industry, a little comfort, by resisting my bribes, would rob me of a great many subjects. I counter these pitfalls with the credit I enjoy in this city; I stir up fluctuations in trade, or high prices for foodstuffs, which, by multiplying the ranks of the poor, depriving them on the one hand of the means to work, and making it

⁸ This is no fable: this individual existed in Lyon; what is said here of his practices is accurate; he cost more than twenty thousand young girls their honor. Once his operation was completed, they were put aboard boats on the Rhône; and for thirty years the provinces in question were supplied with objects of debauchery only by the victims of this libertine.

difficult for them on the other to sustain their lives, increase in equal measure the number of subjects that misery delivers to me. The trick is well known, my child; these shortages of timber, grain, and other foodstuffs, from which Paris has suffered for so many years, have no other purpose than those which drive me. Avarice and debauchery—these are the passions which, from within gilded panelling, cast a multitude of nets over the humble roof of the poor. But however skilfully I may press on one side, if deft hands do not nimbly remove the burden on the other, I am left with nothing to show for my efforts, and the scheme goes just as badly as if I had not exhausted my imagination in devising resources, and my credit in carrying out operations. I therefore need a nimble, young, intelligent woman who, having herself walked the thorny paths of poverty, knows better than anyone else how to lure those who are there; a woman whose penetrating eyes can discern adversity in its darkest corners, and whose seductive mind persuades its victims to free themselves from oppression along the paths I have smoothed; a woman of wit, at last, as unscrupulous as she is merciless, who spares no effort to succeed... even going so far as to cut off the meagre resources which, still sustaining the hope of these unfortunate women, prevent them from making up their minds. I had an excellent and reliable one; she has just died. One cannot imagine the extent to which this delightful creature took her audacity: not only did she isolate these victims, to the point of forcing them to come and beg her on their knees; but, if these means did not succeed quickly enough to hasten their downfall, the villainess went so far as to rob these wretches: it was a treasure trove. I need only two subjects a day; she would have given me ten, had I wanted them. The result was that I made better choices and that the abundance of raw material for my operations compensated me for the labour. It is this woman who must be replaced, my dear; you shall have four at your command, and two thousand écus in allowances. I have spoken, replied Justine. And

above all, let not fancies prevent you from accepting your happiness, when chance and my hand offer it to you.”

“Oh, sir,” replied Justine to this dishonourable man, shuddering at his discourse, “is it possible that you can conceive such pleasures, and that you dare propose to me to serve them? What horrors you have just made me hear! Cruel man, if you were unhappy for only two days, you would soon see how these systems of inhumanity would vanish from your heart; it is prosperity that blinds and hardens you; you ground yourself upon the spectacle of sufferings from which you believe yourself exempt; and because you hope never to feel them, you suppose yourself entitled to inflict them. May happiness never approach me, if it can corrupt one to such a degree! Just Heaven! not content with abusing misfortune... to carry audacity and ferocity so far as to increase it... to prolong it for the sole satisfaction of one’s desires! What cruelty, sir! the fiercest beasts do not offer us examples of such barbarity!” — “You are mistaken, Justine,” said Saint-Florent; “there are no stratagems the wolf will not devise to lure the lamb into its snares; such ruses are in nature, and beneficence is not; it is only a trait of weakness, extolled by the slave to soften his master and dispose him to greater gentleness; it appears in man only in two cases—when he is the weaker, or when he fears becoming so; the proof that this supposed virtue is not in nature is that it is unknown to the man closest to it. The savage, despising it, kills his fellow without pity, whether from vengeance or from greed... would he not respect this virtue if it were written in his heart? But it has never appeared there. Civilization, in refining individuals, in distinguishing ranks, in setting the poor before the eyes of the rich, and in causing the latter to fear a change of condition that might cast him into the nothingness of the former, at once instilled in his mind the desire to relieve misfortune, in order to be relieved in his turn if he should lose his wealth. Then beneficence was born, the fruit of civilization and of fear; it is therefore only a virtue of circumstance, and by no means a sentiment of nature, which has placed in us no other

desire than that of satisfying ourselves, at whatever cost. It is by thus confounding all sentiments, by never analysing anything, that one is above all deceived, and deprives oneself of every enjoyment.” — “Ah, sir,” said Justine warmly, “can there be a sweeter one than that of relieving misfortune? Let us set aside the fear of suffering ourselves. Is there a truer satisfaction than that of doing good—of enjoying the tears of gratitude, of sharing the well-being one has just spread among the unhappy who, like yourself, lacked the very things you count among your first needs; of hearing them sing your praises and call you their father; of restoring serenity to faces darkened by exhaustion, abandonment, and despair? No, sir, no pleasure in the world can equal that; it is that of the divinity itself; and the happiness it promises to those who have served it on earth will be nothing other than the possibility of seeing or making others happy in heaven. All the virtues spring from this one, sir; one is a better father, a better son, a better husband, when one knows the charm of alleviating misfortune. Like the rays of the sun, one would say that the presence of the charitable man spreads over all that surrounds him fertility, gentleness, and joy; and the miracle of nature, after that source of celestial light, is the honest, delicate, and sensitive soul whose supreme happiness is to labour for that of others.”

“Fine talk, all that, Justine,” replied Saint-Florent, “the pleasures of man are in proportion to the kind of organs he has received from nature; those of the weaker individual, and consequently of all women, must incline toward moral pleasures, more stimulating for such beings than those which would affect only a physical constitution entirely devoid of energy. The contrary is the case with strong souls, who, far more delighted by the vigorous shocks they impart to what surrounds them than by the delicate impressions felt by those same beings existing near them, inevitably prefer, by virtue of this constitution, what affects others painfully to what would touch them more gently: such is the sole difference between cruel men and mild ones; both are endowed with sensibility, but each in his own way. I do not deny

that there are pleasures in either class; but I maintain, with many philosophers, that those of the individual organized in the most vigorous manner will incontestably be more intense than all those of his counterpart; and these principles established, there may—and indeed must—be a certain kind of men who find as much pleasure in whatever cruelty inspires as others do in beneficence; but the latter are gentle pleasures, and the former very vivid ones. The former will doubtless be the most certain, the most genuine, since they characterize the inclinations of all men still in the cradle of nature, and even of children before they have known the sway of civilization; the others are only the effect of that civilization, and consequently deceptive pleasures without any savor. In any case, my child, since we are here less to philosophize than to settle a decision, be so good as to give me your final answer... do you accept or not the arrangement I propose to you?" — "I most certainly refuse it, sir," replied Justine, rising; "I am very poor—oh yes, very poor, sir; yet, richer in the sentiments of my heart than in all the gifts of fortune, I shall never sacrifice the former to possess the latter; I shall know how to die in poverty, but I will not outrage virtue." — "Leave," said that detestable man coldly, "and take care above all that I have no cause to fear indiscretions from you; you would soon be placed where I should no longer have to dread them."

Nothing encourages virtue so much as the fears of vice. Less timid than she would have believed herself, Justine, while assuring this scoundrel that he had nothing to fear from her, reminded him that he ought at least to return the money he had stolen from her. "You must surely feel, sir," she said to him, "that this money is indispensable to me in the situation in which I find myself, and I believe you too just to refuse it." But the monster replied harshly that it depended only on her to earn it, and that since she did not choose to do so, he was in no way obliged to assist her. "No, sir," she answered firmly, "no, I repeat it, I would perish a thousand times rather than preserve my life at such a price." — "And I likewise," said Saint-Florent, "prefer anything

to the vexation of giving my money without its being earned. Nevertheless, despite the insolence of your refusal, I will still remain a quarter of an hour with you; go into that boudoir, and a few moments of compliance will put your finances in better order.” — “I have no more desire to serve your debaucheries in one way than in another, sir,” replied Justine coldly; “it is not charity that I ask of you, nor do I procure you that pleasure; what I claim is what is owed to me... what you have stolen from me in the most outrageous manner: keep it, cruel man, keep it, if you will; behold my tears without pity; hear, if you can without being moved, the sad accents of need; but remember that if you permit yourself this new infamy, I shall, at the cost it imposes upon me, have purchased the right to despise you forever.”

Justine ought here to have remembered that virtue served her no better when she adopted its language than when she followed its precepts. Saint-Florent rings; his valet-de-chambre appears: “Here,” says the scoundrel to this agent of his debaucheries, “is a little creature who once stole from me; I would have her hanged if I were to carry out my duty; I am willing, however, to spare her life; but as it is essential to rid society of her, seize her and have her shut up at once in that secure room we have upstairs; it shall be her prison for ten years, if she behaves well—her eternal coffin, if we have cause to complain of her.”

Lafleur at once seized Justine and prepared to drag her away, when she uttered cries sharp enough to threaten a scene. Saint-Florent, enraged, twisted a cloth around her head and had her hands bound; then, assisting his servant himself, the two of them carried the wretched girl up to the garret and threw her into a room so well secured that there was nothing to fear either from her cries or from her escape.

It had not been an hour that Justine had been there when Saint-Florent appeared; Lafleur accompanied him. “Well,” said this monster of debauchery, “will you still dare to withdraw yourself from my wishes?” — “The desire is the same,” Justine replied proudly, “only the power is no longer so.” — “So much

the better," answered Saint-Florent; "it will therefore be against your will that I act, and that condition is indispensable to the fulfillment of my desires; have this woman undressed..." — "Ah, ah," he added, upon perceiving a certain mark, "it seems my dear niece has not always been as virtuous as she would have us believe, and here are signs that sufficiently reveal her conduct." — "Indeed, sir," said Lafleur, "this wretch could compromise you; once you have finished with her, I advise you to have her confined somewhere where she will never again be heard of." — "Sir, sir," interrupted Justine impatiently, "deign to hear me before condemning me," and the poor girl then explained the whole of the mystery. But whatever air of truth she gave to the account of her unhappy story, Saint-Florent, incredulous, only redoubled his sarcasms; insults and humiliations were no less lavishly poured out by this monster upon that angelic creature, and one far more worthy than he in the eyes of the Supreme Being. Justine, stripped, was brutally treated by the two men; forced to submit to their advances and degrading attentions... her revulsion, her resistance... all proved useless—she was compelled to yield. — "Tell me," said the master to his confidant, "have I a young girl there below?" — "That must be so, sir; the hour has struck, and you know the punctuality of those who serve you." — "Go and fetch her." — And while the valet carries out his order, one scarcely imagines to what this infamous libertine amuses himself: melancholy effects of moral derangement! it seems that man entirely abandons his reason when he becomes the slave of his passions, and between him and the madman the difference is then truly imperceptible. The villain, more out of a desire to humiliate this charming creature than out of any sort of lecherous sensation... could he really be capable of such depravity!... The scoundrel, I say, spat in the middle of the room and forced Justine to clean the spot with her tongue. She refuses; a few words on her part still reveal a vestige of pride. Saint-Florent seizes her and, forcing her compliance, says, "Miserable creature, how can you think of resisting my wishes? far too happy to

submit to them, should you not even anticipate them? You will be forced to do worse presently when my victim stands before you..."—and the announced victim appears:

She was an eight-year-old girl in such a state of utter misery and emaciation that pity seemed to be the only feeling she could possibly inspire. "Undress this little girl yourself," said Saint-Florent to the sorrowful Justine; "it is from your hand that I wish to receive her. Lafleur — wank my cock at this sight;" and the lecherous man fondled his confidant's buttocks, whilst the latter pleased him as best he could. "Prepare the way for me," said the libertine to our heroine, "moisten this child's cunt with your mouth, leave plenty of saliva there." Guided by his valet, Saint-Florent stepped forward; in an instant, the place was taken; screams, resistance, tears, complaints, scratches—nothing surprises him; on the contrary, he wants to be insulted, and it is with this intention that he allows his victim every liberty; but the same cannot be said of our poor orphan, who is to serve as a shield during the celebration of the sacrifice. Lafleur lies down on the bed; he pulls Justine on top of him, traps her, holds her in his arms, and, by this posture, exposes our adventuress's bottom to Saint-Florent's assaults; armed with a long steel needle, the barbarian, whilst fucking, whilst tearing the little girl apart, amuses himself by pricking the beautiful flesh presented to him; each prick of the needle makes blood spurt forth, and it is finally when the scoundrel sees it flowing down the thighs of this unfortunate woman, and onto the face of the young girl he is raping, that he thinks of changing hands. "Let's fuck her," he says to Lafleur, "sodomise Justine in the same position; I'll just turn mine round." The little girl, first and foremost, is ordered to present her arse to Justine, who in turn is to moisten it for her, just as she did the front. Saint-Florent sodomises, Lafleur fucks, and there is Justine's cunt offered to the fatal needle — "Ah! Fuck," cries Saint-Florent in ecstasy, "what a pleasure to pierce a cunt whilst fucking a backside!... The bitch!... What do you say, Lafleur?... I'd lard her up like a chicken;" and all the parts Justine

offered to her tormentor were soon treated just as the others had been... blood was streaming everywhere. "This is the state in which I wish to do her the honour of fucking her once more," said Saint-Florent, leaving his virgin's arse to thrust into the cunt he had just violated. "Ah!" he said, pressing himself against his victim, "this is how I love to enjoy a woman; nothing pleases me more than when my thighs are soaked in the blood my fury makes flow;" and as he brought his climax to a head, he thereby dislodged his servant's cock and replaced it in Justine's arse; "Crawl beneath her," he says to Lafleur, "and come and take your revenge on my arse for the disturbance I've caused you; do you think my anus is not worth that of a whore?"... Everything is carried out, and it is now the little girl's buttocks that the fatal sting is tearing apart. Meanwhile Saint-Florent is getting worked up, his semen is ready to spurt; he's sodomising, he's being sodomised, he's tormenting: what delightful episodes for a libertine of this sort! "Ahe!... ahe!... ahe!..." he cries out (it is his passion that we are depicting here from life)... "ahe!... ah!... give me knives... daggers... pistols... let me kill... let me slaughter... let me tear apart... let me murder everything around me;" and the semen, finally spurting from the shameless balls of this monster of lust, restoring a little peace, gives the victims time to recover.

"Justine," said Saint-Florent after a moment of calm, "I have told you how important it is to my new pleasures that the object of the former ones should disappear as soon as I have been satisfied with it. Do you swear to leave Lyon at once? On that condition alone will I restore your liberty: if in two hours you are still in the city, you may be sure that an eternal prison will punish your disobedience." — "Oh, sir, I shall no longer be here... I will obey, sir; be quite certain of it... open the doors to me; you shall never see me again." — And the poor girl, dressing herself at once, hastily passed back through the house where she had been treated so cruelly, left it, rushed to her inn, from which she departed a few hours later to go and spend the night beyond the Rhône. — "Oh, heaven!" she cried as she fled, "what depravity!

what horror! It is in the midst of tears and misfortune that the monster kindles his passions... Misfortune—misfortune a hundred times over to the depraved being who can suspect pleasures upon a breast consumed by need... who gathers kisses from a mouth dried by hunger, and which opens only to curse him. Let us flee.”

Justine was soon outside the city; but it seemed as though misfortunes and adventures were bound to hinder all her steps, and that fate, angered against her, was determined to make her collide with every virtuous plan her noble soul could conceive.

Scarcely has she gone two leagues on foot, as is her custom, with two shirts and a few handkerchiefs in her pockets, when she encounters an old woman, who approaches her with an air of distress and begs her for alms. Far from the hardness of which she has just received such cruel examples, knowing no happiness in the world except that of obliging others, she at once takes out her purse, intending to draw from it a crown and give it to the woman. But the cunning creature, who had assumed the mask of old age only to deceive Justine, nimbly snatches at the purse, seizes it, knocks down the one who holds it with a vigorous blow to the stomach, and disappears into a thicket. Justine, soon back on her feet, rushes after the thief, catches up with her, and falls with her through a trapdoor concealed from every eye by the clump of woods in which it had been contrived.

The fall was considerable, yet so gentle that she scarcely perceived it; she found herself, with her thief, in a vast subterranean chamber, dug more than a hundred *toises* into the bowels of the earth, yet handsome and perfectly furnished. “What is this, Séraphine?” said a large, stout man seated before a good fire; “who is the person you bring into our dwelling?” — “A little dupe,” replied the thief; “I moved her to pity, she gave me alms, I stole her money, she ran after me, and as we both reached the trapdoor at the same instant, we arrived here together; Captain, this girl will be useful to us, and I am not displeased with the encounter.” — “That may indeed suit us,” said the chief, drawing

Justine nearer; “she is not ill; and even if she served only for the amusements of the company, it would still be a post to fill...” Immediately Justine was surrounded by men, women, and children of every age and appearance, whose sinister looks gave her a poor opinion of the society in which she found herself; all pressed about her, admired her, each uttered his remark, and everything she saw and heard confirmed her that she was among the worst of company. “Sir,” she said trembling to the captain, “would it be indiscreet to ask you with what sort of people I find myself? I hear you disposing of me without my consent; do the laws of decency and fairness not govern you here as they do upon the surface of the earth?” — “My dear,” replied the chief, “begin by eating this biscuit and drinking a glass of wine; then listen to us, and you shall learn at once what sort of people you are among, and what role they are preparing for you.” Our heroine, somewhat reassured by this civility, accepted what was offered her, sat down, and listened.

“The individuals among whom your star has placed you,” said the captain, after taking two pinches of snuff, “are what are called mendicants. It is we, my child, who, having turned beggary into an art, succeed, through our secrets and our eloquence, in so moving the compassion of men that we live at their expense all year in luxury and abundance. As there is no virtue more foolish than pity, so there is none easier to kindle in the human heart: a few plaintive tones of voice, a persuasive display of circumstance, feigned sufferings, counterfeit wounds, a disgusting costume—such are the tricks that set the springs of the soul in motion and ensure us perpetual ease in idleness and sloth. We are about a hundred in this underground; a third is always at work while the rest drink, eat, amuse themselves, and make merry. Cast your eyes over this heap of crutches, humps, and bandages that disguise us, these herbs that disfigure us,⁹ these

⁹ The purge plant, or the common spurge—popularly known as ‘wake-up,’ and which grows abundantly in the woods around Paris—is the herb these scoundrels use to disfigure themselves by pressing its

children we use to stir open mothers' hearts—there are our funds, our goods, our estates, the sure foundation of our income. Our methods, though nearly always the same, vary according to circumstances: humble and languishing when we are the weaker, insolent, cheats and thieves as soon as strength is on our side.” — “But you do not kill, at least, gentlemen?” interrupted the compassionate Justine, with that tender effusion of heart so natural to her noble soul. “Certainly, my dear,” replied the chief; “we make no difficulty of it if we are resisted and can be persuaded that a stab or a pistol shot will secure our victory. Murder is not of sufficient consequence for us to forgo the means it affords when those means serve our interests; you will often see individuals arrive here by the same path that brought us, only to lose their lives within it. After making a considerable seizure upon someone, do you suppose us foolish enough to leave him free to complain and betray us? We are not, however, thieves or murderers by profession; our sole trade is begging: we solicit alms, and thereafter follow the course of circumstances; our object is to seize the property of others, and provided we succeed, it matters little by what means. The money comes into the underground; whether given willingly or taken by force is a point on which we never trouble those who bring it. With such a morality and such a profession, you must imagine, my child, that every species of vice triumphs among us, and indeed you would not be mistaken: gluttony, drunkenness, deceit, falsehood, hypocrisy, impiety, and above all lust and cruelty reign here as in their empire, and our particular laws, far from repressing these excesses, nourish and sustain them. It is certain, first of all, my dear girl, that your age and your pretty face will oblige you to satisfy indiscriminately all the caprices and fantasies of our companions, of whatever sex, age, or disposition they may be; these first passions appeased, we shall assign you a role: if we find in you aptitude and talent, you shall be placed in the foremost ranks; if you recoil from our customs—if our trade does not suit you—you

juice onto their faces. This milky sap is also classed among poisons.

shall not leave this underground: reduced then to the mere service of the interior, you will be useful in the house, and you will serve our passions.”

The whole troop applauded this speech. The chief, having assembled those of note who were present, these decisions instantly acquired the force of law; and the young lady Justine was ordered to strip herself at once, so that, after the examination to be made of her, she should first satisfy the passions of the chief... of the notables, and then of all those in the band—men or women—who might desire her. No sooner has the unfortunate Justine heard this sentence than she throws herself in tears at the feet of her judges, begging them not to subject her to infamies that cost her so dearly... Violent bursts of laughter are the only reply she receives.

“Modest child,” said the chief, “how could you imagine that people who amuse themselves by stirring pity in others would be weak enough to feel it themselves? Learn this, little one: our hearts are as hard as the rocks that shelter us. How could the countless crimes we commit every day leave us with any trace of compassion? Obey, girl—obey; it could be dangerous to make me repeat the order.” Justine can find no reply. Her petticoats are quickly torn away, and the eager assembly soon feasts its eyes on one of the finest female bodies it has seen in a long time. Curiosity draws both men and women to her; she is examined, handled, and kissed on all sides. Then one of them—the chief’s son—spots the fatal mark and immediately shows it to the others. “What is this, girl?” says one of the elders. “Marked like that, you hardly seem destined to be ruined—and since you already bear the same signs as we do, you should not have played the modest prude so convincingly.” Justine tells her story, but she is no more believed here than she was with Saint-Florent. They assure her the mark will not harm her standing among them, yet urge her to abandon any pretence of modesty. “That kind of contradiction,” they tell her, “will only irritate us, not win our sympathy.” — “My child,” the chief adds, baring a shoulder

where a similar inscription can clearly be seen, “you see we are alike. So do not blush at what makes you resemble your leader. These marks are not brands of shame—they are the laurels of our calling. Kiss mine, and I will kiss yours. There are thirty of us here in the same condition—and yet we are the very people to whom you give alms, the ones who know how to move you to pity and coax coins from your purse in the name of a God we mock. Come, follow us, my pretty angel,” he continues, drawing her into a separate cellar. “I and these elders—my companions—will begin by testing the ground. We will report back to the others, and then yield them the place if it proves worth their while.”

The six attackers, all men in their sixties, close in on Justine. The cellar they lead her into is lit by ever-burning lamps, and mattresses spread across the floor make it relatively comfortable; it serves as their private retreat. “Justine,” says one of the old men, “you must first submit to our chief; the rest of us will follow in order of age. And since it is our custom to indulge our pleasures in one another’s presence, do not be frightened, my child, to have us watch while you obey.”

Gaspard takes Justine; but, too worn out to enjoy it, he settles for a little foreplay; and, after jerking off for fifteen minutes, he cums all over her breasts.

Next up is Raimond, who’s seen it all; he’s an old-school hustler from the Parisian back alleys; his jaded desires demand more: he licks up the cum his partner has just shot out, lets Justine finger his arse, and finally cums in her mouth.

Gareau was once a priest; his tastes have become more refined and sophisticated; he has retained the inclinations of the Jesuit order where he spent his youth; and, since he still gets a fine hard-on, the sodomite fucks from behind and screams like a devil as he cums. Ribert was born fierce; his passions bear the hue of his soul: Justine must jerk him off while he slaps her; he turns her cheeks bright red, and finally loses his strength over a

cunt, which he has neither the will nor the power to enjoy in any other way.

Vernol, just as wicked as his comrade, expresses his rage in a different way; he torments others by pulling their ears; and it is through the pain he inflicts that this villain derives his pleasure.

Maugin licks her arsehole; he bites her buttocks while masturbating; he would like to imitate Gareau; both share the same vices; yet their strengths are not alike. Maugin, deceived by his desires, loses his own in the presence of his idol, and the howls he lets out express both his regret and his lust.

“Come, children,” said the chief to the rest of the troop as he returned with his aides, “the creature is worth the trouble... keep things in order... with some politeness; above all, let each take his turn. Men and women, mix together; I do not forbid your pleasures, but I want a little decency in them.”

As there were eight or ten men there who saw nothing but boys, and five or six women who worshipped Venus only in the guise of Sappho, our heroine had to deal with no more than thirty people of both sexes: everything proceeded in an orderly fashion; yet she was no less exasperated. Forced to lend by turns her vagina, her arse, often her mouth and her armpits... compelled to defile men and women... to receive a thousand kisses, each more disgusting than the last; sometimes beaten, flogged, slapped, bitten, pinched—we leave it to the reader to imagine the state in which the unfortunate woman must have emerged from this lustful orgy: there was not even a child who did not subject her to their whims; and Justine, ever compliant, ever a slave and ever unhappy, submits to everything with a resignation whose source lies far from her heart.

Once the assaults were over, she was led to a tub where she was allowed to cleanse herself; and, as it was mealtime, Justine, brought back into the large cellar, sat down at table with the whole troop. The conversation turned only on the pleasures that had just been enjoyed; the women spoke with the same freedom—the same indecency—as the men, and it was then that the

unfortunate Justine could say that, even among the monks of Sainte-Marie, she had never found herself in company more indecent.

The dinner, moreover, was excellent; everything that could contribute to making it both refined and abundant was present in profusion. In a cellar adjoining the one where the company dined there was a large underground room, stocked with meats and game, where a man and three women worked daily at the cooking. As a great deal of wine had been drunk, a siesta followed; at that moment the former Jesuit Gareau approached Justine. "You have, my child," he said to her softly, "the finest arse in the world; I scarcely had time to admire it. Get up and follow me; once they are all asleep, we shall go and chat in a corner."

Abandoned as she was, could Justine fail to feel fortunate at seeing someone take an interest in her fate? She casts her eyes on the man who speaks to her, and, finding him more decent in appearance than the others, with a fairly handsome face and some wit, she is careful not to reject him. It is in a small cell, near the place where the wine is kept, that this new lover of our heroine leads her in order to converse with her; and, the two of them seated there on a sort of tub, the conversation that occupies them is roughly as follows:

"From the moment I saw you, my child," said Gareau, "you cannot imagine the interest you inspired in me; your charming face suggests intelligence, your bearing shows good upbringing, your speech reveals an honourable birth; and I, for my part, am quite convinced that the mark you bear is only the result of misfortune, not of misconduct. I will not hide from you, my angel, that it was with regret I saw you among us; for one does not leave this place as one enters it. You cannot be unaware of it: if you refuse to adopt the same profession as these people, I fear they will either keep you captive or kill you as soon as they tire of you. In this dreadful situation, I see only one course for you: to attach yourself to me, and rely on my care to obtain for you, one day, the means of escape." — "But, sir," said Justine, "if you

took a liking to me, how likely is it that you would put me in a position to flee from you?" — "I would follow you, Justine; do you think I am made for this life? Avarice, idleness, and lust—those are the chains that bind me: I like to earn money without any trouble beyond asking for it. But surely you see a difference between myself and these people; sooner or later I must leave them. Bound to me, you will follow me then, and together we shall lead a life, if not more virtuous, at least less dangerous; moreover, by publicly declaring that you consent to live with me, this association will spare you the cruel necessity in which you now find yourself of submitting daily to all these scoundrels... as you see Seraphine and Ribert do." — "Ribert, sir? But it seems to me he was one of the first to satisfy himself upon me." — "He, certainly; nothing binds us—we are not subject to the marriage bond; but his wife, you will never see her prostituted." — "His wife!... the one who robbed me?" — "Yes." — "But, sir, she too amused herself with me." — "Well, yes—but willingly... What I mean is that you have not seen, and never will see, any man force her to pleasures against her will. You will be like her, free to indulge yourself if it pleases you, but equally free to refuse if it disgusts you. These are our laws, and we never break them." — "Very well, sir, I accept," said Justine; "I give myself to you from this moment: however dreadful your tastes may be, I submit to them, on your formal promise that I shall never be forced to give myself to anyone." — "I swear it," said Gareau; "I will seal my oath upon your beautiful backside." Justine would have wished to enjoy the privilege without paying so dearly for it. But how could she preserve her virtue with a thieving, sodomitic priest? She therefore submits, sighing, and the cunning Jesuit proceeds with the precautions and gentleness of which a disciple of Ignatius is always capable.

"Let us go back," said the seducer, once he had satisfied himself; "a longer absence might arouse suspicion, and when one intends to do wrong, one must take care not to do it badly."

Our libertines, now awake, were telling stories; Justine and Gareau took their places by the fire, and as soon as supper was served, our heroine declared that, among all those among whom fate had placed her, Gareau was the only one who inspired her with confidence and affection, and that she wished to inform the company of her intention to attach herself to him. The chief asked Gareau whether this arrangement suited him. Having answered in the affirmative, Justine, from that moment respected as the companion of one of the notables, was spared the advances which the libertines of the troop seemed only too eager to renew; and it was beside her new protector that the unfortunate girl passed the night.

But Gareau, whilst pledging both his hand and his protection to Justine, had not sworn her a vow of fidelity; and from that very first night, the faithless man convinced his companion that she was not the only one with a claim to his affections. One of the young men of the troupe, no more than twenty-five years of age, was waiting for the married couple, and cavalierly stepped between them. "What is this?" said Justine. "Is this, then, what you promised me?" — "My misfortune," said Gareau, "is, I see, that I am seldom heard by my lovely wife; I told Justine, and I repeat it to her, that she would find in me, in return for her favours, protection, help, advice and comfort; but I did not tell her that I was committing myself to continence; from the tastes she must have observed in me, she has deduced, it seems to me, that young men could not be excluded from my pleasures, and I beg her to deem it acceptable that they should very often be present as a third party." Such speech was a command to the unfortunate Justine, and submission became her sole lot. When it came to the act, Justine realised that it was not merely a matter of consenting, but that she must also play along: whilst the former Jesuit sodomised the young man, he demanded that Justine suck the young man's cock; if it was her he was dealing with, then the young man had to perform cunnilingus on the sodo-

mised woman. Thus, by turns the leading actress and the supporting one, it was in every form and in every way that her compliance was put to the test.

A few days passed without incident, and Justine, still held in high regard, seemed to be gaining her new husband's trust more and more; but, lacking the skill needed to unravel his character and guide him, it was she, on the contrary, who was seduced and won over.

"Soon," her protector said to her one day, "the third of our people who are out in the field will return; the detachment will be renewed, and I shall be part of it. Ask to follow me, and have yourself given the training necessary to ensure the success of this plan: once we are out of this dreadful place, we shall never set foot in it again. I have some means; we shall make use of them. An isolated village will shelter us, and there we shall end our days with far more peace than in the midst of these scoundrels among whom our ill fortune has placed us"

"Oh! how I love this plan," said Justine with enthusiasm. "Take me away—get me out of this abyss, sir, and I promise you I will never abandon you as long as I live." — "I promise to get you out of here, Justine; I give you my most solemn oath—but I require one condition." — "What is it?" — "That we steal the cashbox as we leave, and then have all these scoundrels arrested." — "Could we do that, sir, after having imitated them? Steal the money if you wish—but do not betray them; let us deprive them, if possible, of the means to do harm... but to have them punished!... oh God, God! I will never consent to that." — "Very well," said Gareau, "we shall simply rob them; they will become what they may. Declare your intention to follow me, have yourself given a few lessons, and we shall soon be ready to depart."

Our desire always to present our heroine's character to our readers as pure as it has consistently appeared compels us here to explain her motives. Far from sincerely accepting the plan to rob these unfortunate people, this virtuous girl could not in good

faith adopt such a scheme: however criminally their money had been acquired, it was still theirs, and that alone was more than enough for the scrupulous Justine to refrain from harming their property. But she longed to be free, and this freedom was offered to her only on condition of committing that crime. She therefore considered how she might reconcile the two—to escape this abyss without stealing from those who sheltered her. A simple idea presented itself: to confess to the chief the crime she was being urged to commit, but to reveal nothing without first securing a promise of pardon for the guilty party and her own liberty. Once resolved on this plan, she waited only for the moment when Gareau would announce the imminent departure to put it into effect. Meanwhile, as she had been told that instruction was necessary in order to join the detachment, she asked for a teacher; and Raimond, one of the notables we have already had occasion to mention, was the instructor the chief of the band assigned to her.

“The children you see among us,” this worthy instructor said to her one day, “are, as you may well imagine, Justine, poor little wretches carried off during our raids, whom we use to move women to pity, since their tender and timid hearts open more readily to compassion. By placing in the innocent mouths of these small creatures both the tale of our miseries and the pleas to soften them, we are almost always sure of success. We will give you one of these little beings; you will lead him by the hand and claim to be his mother; all hearts will be touched by the plaintive tones of your gentle voice, and you will never meet with refusal. But your dress, still too fine, will necessarily be changed here for another; and, however great your repugnance for vermin, you must be covered with them. Above all, let the name of God be used at almost every moment in your speech; one cannot imagine the advantage rogues know how to draw from that illusion.

“Besides, neither your figure nor your pretty face will be spoiled; no cauterizations, no erysipelas, no ulcers. You will be content with a few spasms, which you will pass off as nervous

attacks brought on by the betrayal of a husband you adored. We will teach you to feign these ailments, to contort yourself in such a way that you will be taken for someone possessed. But before you leave, before you go begging in the streets of Grenoble, Valence, and Lyon, you will wander for a time in the vicinity of La Trappe, and you will draw in, just as Séraphine did with you, all those who seem worth the trouble. Above all, remember that we favour the wealthy, pretty young women, and children; aim your snares at such people if you wish to please the company.

“Once you are set loose in the towns, do everything you can to swindle people when you cannot get anything from them by other means. You go along the shops, seize the moment when no one is looking, and a quick snatch does the trick: one must be nimble in our trade... brazen... always ready to deny—even an act a witness has just seen.

“If, despite your apparent infirmities... despite the role of mother we shall have you play, you encounter libertines who desire you (there are many who, out of whim or depravity, prefer women of our sort), yield to them; but take advantage of the man’s weakness and extract as much as you can from him. We shall provide you with sleeping draughts and poisons, which you will use when necessary, always guided by this principle: that the health and the fortune of others are nothing whenever it is a question of enriching oneself. While you stir pity in others, remember that your duties forbid you ever to feel any yourself; your heart must be like steel, and the only word that should resound within you is money.

“You are permitted to sell the child entrusted to you, provided you obtain a good price for it and bring us the proceeds.

“Whether to do them good or harm, an infinite number of people buy these children from us: some to raise them, others to seduce and amuse themselves with them; and others—would you believe it, Justine? — others to eat them... yes, to eat them. There are beings depraved enough to carry debauchery to such lengths, and we encounter them every day. Accustomed as we

are to every horror, none can surprise us; and we must lend ourselves to all that are proposed to us—above all when we are paid for them.”

“Have tears at your command; let stories, inventions, and lies cost you nothing: there is no trade in the world in which one must impose upon others with greater shamelessness, or feign with more boldness misfortunes and hardships farthest removed from oneself.

“Above all, discern the character of those you address; let your methods be adapted to their sensitivity. With a weak and timid person, it is enough simply to appear—our very presence moves them at once. It takes more skill, a more deliberate performance, with those souls hardened by age or by debauchery. Our profession is despised; certainly, that is unjust: there is none that requires a more complete knowledge of the human heart, none that demands greater flexibility, intelligence, and wit; none, in short, that must be practiced with more energy, study, and care; not one that calls for a greater reserve of falsehood, malice, depravity, and cunning.

“Do not allow real beggars to mingle among you; above all, never assist them; on the contrary, treat them harshly; threaten to have them beaten by your companions if they dare interfere with your trade; be as hard toward them as the wealthy are toward us.

“When you make your rounds in the countryside and the peasants offer you hospitality, take advantage of it to rob them, to seduce or carry off their children. If they refuse you... if they treat you badly, burn their barn, poison their livestock. Everything is permitted in such cases; revenge is the first of the pleasures left to us by the wickedness of men; one must enjoy it.”

These lessons in practice and morality having been well instilled, Justine was given a new instructor in performance, and within a few days she was deemed fit to play a role in the celebrated band of beggars of the Lyonnais.

Her training was scarcely finished when one of the members of the detachment out in the field returned to announce that his comrades were coming back laden with riches wrested from the charity of fools; at once the rest of the company assembled, and replacements were appointed. Gareau was unanimously given command of the small band; whereupon Justine, once everything had been arranged, asked the chief for the honour of speaking with him privately for a moment.

Admitted to a private audience, she revealed to Gaspard things he knew far better than she. "Too trusting a girl," said this superior, "how could you imagine that, in an association such as ours, espionage would not be one of the branches we cultivate with the greatest care? Gareau has deceived you, and you have fallen like a fool into the trap laid for your simplicity. Our associate proposed three things to you: to rob us, to betray us, and to flee. You confess the theft, you refused the betrayal, but you accepted the flight; is that not more than enough for you to be placed under guard at once? You do not like our trade—we are certain you will never practice it; therefore we can keep you here only as our prostitute or our slave, and in either capacity, unbreakable chains must hold you." — "Oh, sir!" cried Justine, "what! that monster..." — "He betrayed you; he did his duty." — "But he spoke of love... and of delicacy..." — "How could you believe such sentiments could arise in the soul of a man of our profession—and above all in a priest? Gareau amused himself at your expense, my child; he wished to discern your way of thinking... to draw out your secret and reveal it to us. Let this serve you as a lesson for another time; meanwhile submit to the fate your virtuous candour has prepared for you."

SérAPHINE was immediately summoned; Justine was placed in her hands. "You will not lock her up," said the chief, "but you will not lose sight of her, and you will answer for her with your head."

This SérAPHINE, of whom it is now time to give the reader some idea, was a very pretty woman of about thirty, with fine

hair, very dark and very wanton eyes... extremely clever (as one will recall from the way she had deceived Justine), playing to perfection all the roles assigned to her, and possessed of a corruption of morals beyond anything one can imagine. The confidence she inspired in the members of this association was so great that she now rarely left the house—only a few excursions in the vicinity of La Trappe—but she managed most of the internal affairs, and was, moreover, on excellent terms with the leaders, of whom she was so worthy by her conduct and her talents.

Gareau, seeing Justine pass by again with her guard, burst out laughing. “What do you think of this fool,” he said to Séraphine, “who imagines that by lending me her backside she has freed herself from the punishment her stupidity has earned?” — “She is still inexperienced,” replied Séraphine, “her good faith must be forgiven.” — “What!” continued Gareau, “will she not be put to death?” — “Ah, wretch!” cried Justine, “so that was your aim? Thirsting for my blood, it was only to see it shed that you betrayed every feeling of honour and love.” — “Love, love!” said Gareau. “Séraphine, what do you say to this girl who imagines she is owed love because her backside has been used? Learn, slut, that one takes what one can from a creature like you—but one does not love her; one grows disgusted with her, and one sacrifices her: women, that is your lot... Be that as it may, she is spared.” — “Yes,” said Séraphine, “she is in my care, and I answer that I will not let her out of my sight.” — “I would rather see her in the charnel vault,” said the monster, as he resumed his activity with a young boy he was holding at that moment.

From then on, Justine was consigned to the most menial tasks. Completely subservient to Séraphine, she became, in a sense, her servant; and as Gareau withdrew his protection from her, she became the target of public debauchery. A notice was posted in the underground passage stating that, as Justine was no longer Gareau’s mistress, she would give herself indiscriminately to anyone who desired her, and that the slightest refusal on her

part would be severely punished. What is most amusing is that Gareau was the first to present himself. "Come on, you little minx," he said to her, "even though I want to humiliate you, I still love your arse; come here so I can sodomise you one last time before I leave;" Gareau was in full swing; he had gathered four young lads, and Séraphine was there too; Maugin—whose tastes the reader will recall—Maugin who, like Gareau, cherished the arse prodigiously, but whose strength so often failed to match his desires, had also just joined them; the orgies were in full swing. There were moments when our unfortunate adventures, the object of Séraphine's lust and that of the two libertines just mentioned, had a tongue in her cunt, a cock in her arse, and another in her mouth, all whilst each of her hands was defiling a young boy, and Séraphine was being sodomised. The next moment, two cocks were ploughing her vagina; Séraphine, still being sodomised, was rimming her anus, and she was wanking a cock against her tribade's clitoris. Twenty other positions followed one after another, and Justine could finally flatter herself that she had, in the course of that day, received a more comprehensive lesson in debauchery than any she had been subjected to since she had entered society.

At last, the change took place. Gareau departed with his henchmen, and the detachment returned; so many new figures presented themselves to the unfortunate Justine, and soon subjected her to the excesses of their treacherous lewdness. The leader of this new band was the one who tormented our virtuous creature the most. Roger, the most villainous of men, cruel by nature, brutal by temperament, had certain sexual habits which, as we shall see, were not exactly designed to seduce: the wretch would defecate in the middle of a room, and the woman, naked, would have to cavort for an hour around his turd. Armed with an enormous whip, he lashed her all over her body during that time; then, as soon as he uttered the words, "Eat it, you slut", the poor victim had to swallow the turd on the floor and

promptly go and make one in his mouth; then Roger, sufficiently aroused, would release his semen; but in thrusting the object of his lust so cruelly from him, that the unfortunate woman, hurled fifteen or twenty feet from him, usually only hit the mark at the cost of a few fountains of blood from her head, or a few broken limbs. “Ah! Goddamn it,” Roger cried out at once, gazing at the results of his fury, “why hasn’t the bitch fallen a hundred feet underground, and why haven’t I killed her? Is there anything in the world more dreadful than the presence of a woman who has cost us our cum!”

Meanwhile, the accounts of the new detachment were settled; Gaspard, who still commanded within, announced that six months of expeditions had brought in to the common fund nearly seven hundred thousand livres—entirely from alms. “By God!” he cried, after displaying the statement, “long live Christian charity! What wit he had who first elevated that sublime act into a virtue! You see the use it is to us: let us continue, my friends, let us continue to pay preachers to inflame zeal for it in the hearts of men—we could never invest our money better.”¹⁰

Aside from a great deal of baseness, debauchery, irreligion, intemperance, and blasphemy, Justine had not yet seen crime in all its full force, when a rather singular incident came to lay bare before her the truly atrocious soul of these scoundrels.

All at once the trapdoor fell open and disgorged into the dwelling a man of about forty, very well dressed... but so stunned by his fall that it took him a moment to explain the misfortune that had brought him there. This was not the result of one of Séraphine’s tricks; the traveller had indeed seen a woman wandering near the spot where the ground had given way beneath his feet, and it was to hide from her that, driven by a natural need, he had taken refuge in the thicket. His horse, laden with a valise full of gold, must be only a few steps from

¹⁰ It is said that this is one of the tricks of these rogues: they pay village priests to preach sermons on pity, on charity, on benevolence—in short, on all the weaknesses that serve their purposes.

the opening, though out of Séraphine's sight; and if, he said, his fate had cast him among a band of thieves, they must hurry to seize his treasure before the first passerby did, or else quickly lift it back to the surface if they meant him no harm. — "Lift you up?" said Roger at once, stepping toward the man, pistol in hand... "Ah, scoundrel, never again shall your eyes see the sun." — "What do I see, great God!" cried the traveller. "Is it truly you, Roger, whom chance places before my astonished eyes?... you, my brother... you whom I raised, so to speak, in my bosom... you, my friend, whose life I saved twice... you, in a word, who owe me everything! Oh, how I thank heaven to find you in this dark place; whoever these people may be, you will serve as my protector here... and surely I have nothing more to fear now that my fate rests in your hands!" — "May I be struck dead," cried Roger, "if there is any circumstance in the world that could soften me toward your fate; had you saved my life a thousand times, I have you now, scoundrel, and your death will secure us your fortune. Is it to men like us that you come talking of brotherly ties or gratitude? Learn, wretch, that interest stifles in our hearts every feeling but avarice, greed, and thirst for blood or riches; and even if you had rendered me a thousand times more services than you boast of here, you would be no less our victim." Two pistol shots, fired by the cruel Roger, instantly stretched his brother upon the floor; scarcely had he fallen when Séraphine appeared with the traveller's baggage; she had discovered the horse, and not knowing what had become of its master, the wretch brought the valise at all events. "This is an excellent stroke," said Gaspard, showing his companions that the haul amounted to more than a hundred thousand francs. "A man like that is to blame—having such wealth, he should never have let his younger brother fall into so vile a profession." — "He knew nothing of it," replied Roger; "he believed me these past four years to be in America; after what I have just done, it is not for me to praise him; but he did not deceive you, and nothing is

more certain than the services he rendered me all my life. Debauchery alone binds me to our condition, and I would not practice it if I had profited from his lessons, his advice, and the sums his generosity so often gave me; no matter! I do not repent—my act will prove to you, my comrades, that your interests are dearer to me than all the ties of nature, and that I will always sacrifice everything when it comes to serving you.”

Roger’s fratricide found many supporters in the troop, but not a single opponent. The unfortunate Justine was ordered to go and bury the corpse; and one may well imagine how much both what had just occurred and what she was continually forced to endure deepened the profound hatred she felt for the new monsters among whom chance had placed her.

Meanwhile, the joy caused by this latest haul was such that, by evening, no one thought of anything but amusement; the revels were complete. It was required that all the women and girls of the troop, as well as all the young boys, attend the supper naked. Justine, in the same condition, was forced to serve them.

At dessert, Gaspard remarked that Séraphine had long promised them the story of her life; and as the invitation was repeated, this beautiful woman began to speak in roughly the following terms:

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Story of Séraphine. — How Justine Leaves the Beggars. — A New Act of Charity, and Its Outcome.
— Who Roland Is. — Her Stay with Him.

“I was born in Paris, to a man and a woman whose rather dubious reputation gave little hope that the fruit of their union would possess much morality. My father was the porter of the Capuchins of the Marais; my mother, a very pretty hussy of the neighborhood, whom Father Siméon—the author of my birth—kept with money from the convent in a house not far from it. I had a brother a year older than I, the result of the same intrigue, and whom Pauline, my mother, raised along with me in rather neglected principles. This little brother, called de l’Aigle, after my father’s name, was at once the most handsome child and perhaps the most notorious libertine in all Paris. The most vicious inclinations showed themselves in him from his earliest years, and the little rogue had nothing more at heart than to instil them all in me. Barely ten years old, he was already debauched, a drunkard, a thief, and cruel—and he inspired me with all these vices, recommending them to me with a force of mind and reasoning quite extraordinary for his age. It was he who revealed to me the secrets of our birth, awakening in me the deepest contempt for those from whom we sprang. Yet de l’Aigle loved his mother; he even desired her—it was plain to see. ‘I am only ten, Séraphine,’ he would sometimes say to me, ‘but I would lie with my mother just as Siméon does; I am quite sure I could do as much as he... I have seen them... I know everything, and I will teach you whenever you wish.’ Unfortunately, as I have

told you, Pauline encouraged all these bad tendencies; she idolized my brother; she had him sleep with her; and de l'Aigle was not long in confessing to me that it was from this incestuous mother that he learned much of what he was so eager to teach me. Such excess might be excused by my mother's youth—for having borne my brother at thirteen, she was scarcely twenty-three. Full of ardour and beautiful as an angel, the wretch, excused by nature, listened far more to its voice than to that of reason. From the advice she gave me, it was easy to see that her morals were extremely lax. But, not yet having enough understanding to interpret her motives, I took for tenderness what was in fact nothing but complete corruption.

Such were, in short, the reasons why our education was neglected: reading and writing were about all we were taught—no accomplishments, no morality, no religion. Siméon, the most impious and libertine of men, had expressly forbidden that we should ever be spoken to about God. 'It would be well,' he said, 'if the first man who ever uttered that name had been slaughtered. Let us preserve the youth from this dangerous knowledge; so many more souls will have escaped error; may all fathers act in the same way, and philosophy will soon reign supreme amongst men.'

"You will perhaps tell me that this is a great deal of wit for a Capuchin; but my father had a great deal of it. He was also very libertine; so true is it that this defect is almost always that of great men, and that rarely is one who possesses intelligence free from atheism or immorality.

"Although Siméon's liaison with my respectable mother had lasted thirteen years—since he had deflowered her at ten, and she herself was the result of an earlier affair of this reverend father with a shopkeeper of the neighbourhood, so that Pauline, at once his daughter and his mistress, had a double claim on his affections—although, I say, this arrangement had endured for thirteen years, their attachment had not cooled in the least. My mother's complete compliance, her extreme docility toward the

capuchin's irregular whims—in short, the combination of all these factors made Pauline's company precious to him, and there was not a day when he did not spend five or six hours with her. The superior of the convent, Father Ives, who on his side kept a very pretty girl of eighteen named Luce, joined this pair with his mistress. In each household there was also a very pretty servant who usually took part in these gatherings; and there, generally after an ample meal, they offered to Venus indecent rites, whose arrangement and details could belong only to the imaginations of monks.

“The merry band had just gathered one day when my brother came to find me in a hurry: ‘Séraphine,’ he said, ‘are you curious to know how these good monks spend their time?’ — ‘Of course.’ — ‘But, my dear little sister, I have one condition before I let you enjoy this spectacle.’ — ‘What is it?’ — ‘Will you let me do with you what we’ll see them doing amongst themselves?’ — ‘And what do they do amongst themselves?’ — ‘You’ll see, my sister...’ — ‘Well then! Do you agree?’ — And the little rascal backed up his proposal with a kiss so hot on my lips that the first signs of the fiery temperament nature had endowed me with immediately manifested themselves within me: I came in my brother’s arms. The little rascal, already well-versed in such matters, took advantage of my weakness, threw me onto a bed, lifted my skirt, spread my thighs, and eagerly gathered into his mouth the unmistakable signs of the pleasure he had just aroused: ‘You’re losing your cum, my sister,’ said *de l’Aigle*... ‘Yes, my Love; that’s what you’ve just done... You’re more advanced than I am; I can’t do the same yet. No matter how much my mother jerks me off or sucks me, nothing happens; she says it will come... that I have to wait until I’m fourteen, but I enjoy it just the same. Here,’ continued my brother, taking my hand and placing it on a small member, already very stiff and of a rather handsome size, ‘Jerk it off, my sister; you’ll see how I’ll come... Or else, wait; I’ll arrange things for you just as Mum positions me with her.’ And the rascal, saying this, stripped me of

my petticoats, took off his breeches; and, having laid me down on the bed, he stretched out, facing the opposite way, on top of me, so that he could place his cock in my mouth, and his lips on my cunt. I sucked him, he returned the favour; we remained like that for nearly an hour, swooning with pleasure, without changing position. Finally, the noise coming from the next room, catching our attention, warns us that we must switch roles, and that from being actors, we must become spectators.

“This first scene of debauchery, which my brother arranged for me to witness, is too fascinating not to be described to you in detail; and I shall, without fear of displeasing you, recount even the slightest of its details. The expressions I ought to use, I feel, should be as pure as the age I was then; but my account would lose something if conveyed to you under such veils; and I must, to be more precise, use the terms I would employ if I were to describe this very scene today. Let us begin with the characters.

“My mother, as you know, was twenty-three years old; she was as beautiful as an angel; with chestnut hair, a full yet slender and graceful figure, firm skin of great freshness, and superb eyes, though her face was somewhat flushed from all too frequent indulgence in the table’s excesses... a sort of vice into which she had been led by the desire to please her lover, who never enjoyed her as voluptuously as when the excess of wine and spirits had caused him to lose his reason.

“Luce, mistress of Father Ives, the prior of the convent and my father’s friend, was eighteen years old, as I have just said; she was blonde, with beautiful blue eyes of the greatest charm, the finest skin imaginable, a bosom... sublime buttocks, and one of the tightest pussies, according to our lechers, that could possibly be given to Capuchin monks to fuck.

“The two maids were sisters, deflowered by our two libertines from the age of ten, and in their service ever since. The elder, called Martine, was perhaps sixteen; Léonarde, the younger,

was barely fifteen; pretty faces, a fine figure, and a fresh complexion—these were the qualities which, without exaggeration, placed both girls among the prettiest village girls in France.

“As for our monks, they were roughly the same age. My father, however, appeared to be the eldest; he might have been forty, built like a satyr, with a blue beard, black eyes, astonishing vigour, a fiery imagination, and one of the finest cocks in Europe, after Father Ives’s, which nevertheless far surpassed it, since it was eleven inches long, with a head of eight inches in circumference. Ives was only thirty-eight; his features were less pleasing than my father’s; small eyes, a long nose, but strongly chiselled, and even more of a libertine.

“The whole company had just risen from the table when we jumped down from the bed, where we had just been behaving wildly, to press our eyes against the cracks of a partition that separated the room we were in from the one where the orgies were about to take place.

“From the flushed state in which we saw their faces, it seemed to us that the rites they were preparing to perform would bear the mark of those they had just celebrated at the table of good cheer. My father, above all, appeared to me completely drunk. ‘Ives,’ he said to his colleague, ‘let’s have these bitches stripped; the one who’s naked first will be fucked first... the laziest one, on the other hand, will receive fifty lashes from each of us.’ — ‘I agree,’ replied Ives; ‘I’m just as keen to whip as I am to fuck; it’s not that I don’t think the first is infinitely better than the second; but, as I’m very hard today, I need to release some semen, and I never waste it as well as when I’m fucking.’ The bastard, as he spoke these words, backed up his argument with a muscular cock, whose scarlet head threatened the sky. ‘Good God,’ said my father, coming over to grab hold of that member... ‘Oh! Goddamn it, my friend, what a hard-on you’ve got... You must admit, Pauline, that this is what you call a superb tool. Look, I’ll admit it, my dear; I’ll always take greater pleasure in seeing you fucked by a cock like that than in fucking you

myself. If I'd been married, I'd have had no greater pleasure than to see myself cuckolded by a cock of this sort.' — 'You vile libertine,' replied Father Ives, unbuttoning his colleague's breeches—which were already down to his ankles — 'admit that there's still one place where you'd rather see that cock than in your mistress's cunt? — 'Where then?' — 'In your arse, my friend; in your arse!' — 'That's true,' said Simeon; 'look at this arse you're talking about; see how beautiful it is; give it a good seeing-to for a moment, before you go into my whore's cunt.' — 'There you go, you cum-head, now you're happy,' said Father Ives, laying Siméon down on a sofa and thrusting his stiff cock into his arse. — 'Ah! Cum!... cum!' cried my father, playing the whore and wriggling like an eel; 'Yes, by God, that's what I wanted.' And the lecher, immediately sliding one of the young maids beneath him, fucks her whilst being sodomised; but as these encounters were merely preludes, both withdrew without spilling a drop; and a little more order was brought to the lewd scene. Despite this brief preliminary episode, our monks had not lost track; they had noticed very well that young Martine had been the last to undress, and my mother, the first to be naked. 'Let's carry out the sentence,' said Siméon; 'Pauline, fetch us the rods; and you, Father Ives, seize this little whore, bind her hands with your cord, bend her over your knees; I'll teach her a lesson for being lazy; once I've made her bleed, you'll take my place.' The poor little girl is seized; she may scream and struggle, but no one listens to her. Simeon, holding her in place with his left arm, which he wraps around her waist, delivers such a forceful spanking with his right hand that in fewer than twenty strokes her bottom is all red. 'Come and kneel before this instrument, Léonarde,' he says to the other little girl, 'and wank it against your little tits; you, Luce, whilst I whip, you should defile my arse, still raw from the beating it has just received; you see how it offers itself to you entirely; tickle it, my dear; and you, Pauline, come and let my colleague give you a good seeing-to, to console you a little for the trouble he takes in restraining this little slut...

Well! Did I not tell you that this would make the prettiest group in the world; look in this mirror at how interesting it is. Come on, let's swap, Father Ives, come take my place, I'll take yours; finish whipping that arse of mine, so that it feels it for at least a fortnight.' Ives wastes no time, and poor Martine emerges from his hands covered in blood. 'Come now,' says Siméon, 'we have punished, let us reward. Pauline was the first to be naked; you know what we promised for this act of obedience: take her, Father Ives; I shall serve as your pimp, on condition that afterwards you take my place as a whore.' — 'I agree,' said Father Ives; 'for a long time now, following Caesar's example, I have greatly enjoyed being the husband of all women, and the wife of all husbands.' My mother takes her place; the bitch was so aroused that she was already coming. Siméon guides his cock himself, he positions it, he thrusts it in. 'Ah! Fuck,' cries my mother, as soon as she feels it... 'what a monstrous tool... I'm coming.' No sooner are they together than Siméon seizes the arse of the man who's cuckolding him; he thrusts his cock in without lubricating it, and finds himself almost as quickly at the bottom of his rival's arse as the latter is at the bottom of Pauline's... Both of them are cumming... both of them are writhing... they are the waves of the sea churned up by the north wind, swelling them up. But they need some variety: 'Martine,' says my father, 'come and straddle Ives's back; I want to fuck your arse whilst I sodomise the arse of the man who's fucking my mistress; and you, Martine, position yourself the same way, straddling Pauline's breast; you'll place your cunt on her mouth; the tribade will suck you; she loves to go down on a woman whilst she's being fucked, and Father Ives will fuck your arse:' it's sometimes necessary to fuck an arse whilst you're fucking a vagina; it's the antidote. 'And me,' said Luce, 'what shall I do?' — 'Whip me,' said Siméon, 'and, from time to time, let me fuck both your mouth and your arse; then you'll dance around us, like David before the ark, and you'll piss and shit as you move about; that filth will amuse us.' When it

comes to orgies, one must try everything; the filthier one's imagination, the better one's erection. To hell with nonsense without debauchery; all vices lend a hand to one another; they link together, they impart strength to one another; one must practise them all whilst fucking. 'She must also bring us something to drink,' said Father Ives; 'I like to get drunk whilst indulging in lust; and I agree with you, my friend, that all vices give strength to this one, and that one can never have too many of them at the moment when one wants to lose one's load... Everything is delightful when one's got a hard-on; and the more things one does then, the more one is vividly titillated.' — 'Come on, unload... unload,' replied my father, for the semen clouds your thoughts, and soon you'll no longer know what you're saying.' — 'Well then! Fuck it, I'll at least prove to you that I know what I'm doing; for, so as not to father a child by your whore, I'll unload my load onto her belly.' — 'No, no,' said Siméon, opposing his colleague's virtuous impulse, 'don't hold back over that; there's plenty in our garden; keep on fucking, my dear, and when the whore swells up, I'll take care of putting things right.' Ives, encouraged, redoubled his efforts with ardour; my father's movements finished setting him ablaze; both savour supreme pleasure at the same time; and both, marvellously served by the acolytes, simultaneously spurt into the vessel that receives them the thick cum that makes their heads spin. But both, too libertine to stop there, merely switch their pleasures. Ives sodomises Siméon, who, in turn, fucks his friend's mistress; the two young girls have their arses fucked, and Pauline is tasked with the lustful manoeuvres. She performs them with such artistry, she satisfies so well, in turn, the various needs of nature, that she hastens the ecstasy of our fuckers, whose second ejaculation promptly crowns the frenzy.

"'Ah! this time, let us rest,' said my father; 'I cannot perform unless I have drunk at least six bottles of champagne.'

“Let us take advantage of this moment to recount what had been happening between my brother and me during this remarkable spectacle.

“Often, l’Aigle had stepped out of the role of spectator to take on that of agent; and, as the position I was in made it rather difficult for him to enjoy my front, the little libertine made up for it from behind: he had lifted my chemise up beneath my corset; and, having gained access to my arse through my posture, he devoured it with the most ardent kisses; no novice at all, the rascal spread it apart, thrusting his tongue... his finger into it; and towards the end of the scene, having bent over my lower back, he had managed to slip his little shaft into the entrance of my cunt. Encouraged by these preliminaries, ‘Get ready, my sister,’ he had said to me, as soon as he saw our actors at the table... ‘stay in the same position; just lean forward a little, and you’ll see that I’ll enter.’ Highly aroused by what I was seeing, I leaned heavily against the partition, presenting my behind to de l’Aigle as best I could... But, good heavens! What a turn of events! The plank, poorly secured, came loose and fell on Martine’s head with such force and in such a dangerous manner that it knocked her unconscious, making a gash in her head from which blood gushed out in great spurts. Meanwhile, our two monks, greatly astonished to see us rolling along the floor beside this plank, both in a posture and state that leaves nothing to their imagination, do not know which of us to rush to first; shall they rescue Martine? Shall they come to us? Here, lust prevails over pity, just as it must in the soul of a true libertine. Both, singularly aroused by the nakedness in which they see us, lift us up, run their hands over our charms, scold us in turn, and let the women tend to the injured woman, who is in such a state that she must be put to bed. That wretched plank had caused such a mess that the table upon which it had also been placed had been destroyed, dragging with it the dishes and bottles, the shards of which littered the room. ‘Clean this up, then,’ said Siméon, pulling Léonarde from the care she was giving her companion, and showing, by

this harshness, that he was far more concerned with the scene of his pleasures than with the care due to the unfortunate victim of this mishap... ‘Well then! She’s injured,’ he continued... ‘So be it, we’ll see what it is...’ — ‘But, Father,’ said Léonarde, ‘she’s covered in blood.’ — ‘Just staunch the bleeding; we’ll see the rest once we’ve finished...’ And during this exchange... while I was being handled by my father, and my brother likewise by Father Ives, our cruel libertines, without the least concern for the condition of poor Martine, seemed moved only by the pleasures they expected from two new gratifications they had scarcely anticipated. ‘Just look,’ said Siméon to Father Ives, ‘how that little minx already has a bosom!... And her little mound, how it swells!... Yet it was I who brought her into the world!... Do you know that in six months’ time she’ll be ready for the taking?’ — ‘Why not right now,’ said Father Ives? ‘What need is there to wait six months? Look,’ he continued, pointing to my brother’s arse, ‘see how well-formed it already is! Come on... come on, since chance has given them to us, let’s make the most of it, and not be so squeamish.’

“However, de l’Aigle and I, filled with shame, dared not object to the plans being laid out for us. My mother had taken hold of my brother, and kissing him passionately, ‘Charming Cupid,’ she said to him as she stroked his little cock, ‘do not resist your father; it is your happiness he desires; if he can take a liking to you, your fortune is made... Come... come into my arms, you little rascal; come and place your cock in the very place that gave you life; the pleasure you’ll feel from this enjoyment may perhaps ease the torments of the deflowering they’re preparing for you.’ — ‘Ah! What an excellent idea,’ said Siméon; I’m going to fuck my son whilst he’s shagging his mother: what a sight for you, Father Ives!’ — ‘Do you think,’ replied the latter, ‘that I’ll watch it with a cool head? I’m going to deflower your daughter whilst that’s going on’. — ‘No, for God’s sake,’ said Siméon, ‘they’re both my children, and I want to fuck them both. Look

here, my friend, there is a pleasure here as piquant as it is voluptuous to be had; for I feel quite clearly that, at the sight of such immorality, one must become very impure and very dissolute oneself: sodomise Martine, who has just had her head smashed in... she's suffering like a wretch; your cock will torment her terribly; and from this double crisis of pain, there will necessarily result, as you can imagine, an immense amount of pleasure; for, you know, my friend, how much the pain inflicted on the object of one's pleasure yields to our senses! — 'Ah! Fuck, the idea is as novel as it is excellent,' cries Father Ives, already threatening the poor little wounded girl's buttocks with his enormous cock... 'Come on, you whore, come and offer up your arse.' — 'But, Father, I'm in terrible pain.' — 'All the better, that's just what I need.' — 'Father Ives,' says Siméon, 'have that handkerchief removed, so you can see the wound... Everything is done, despite the natural resistance necessitated by the disproportion between Father Ives's enormous member and young Martine's dainty arse.' The assault begins; Luce helps her lover... fucks him... excites him, whilst he is at it. The unfortunate victim, tormented both by the pain of the blow she has received and by the unnatural intrusion of the cock piercing her, lets out inhuman screams; and Siméon, with this fascinating scene before his eyes, soon sets to work. Already Pauline had taken my brother's very hard little tool inside her; already the little rascal was fucking his mother, when Siméon, seeing his son's arse well within his reach, presents himself at the opening as a conqueror. Countless difficulties accompany the undertaking; but Siméon is not a man to be put off by any of them. Léonarde holds the child; she spreads his buttocks; the monk wets his cock... he presents it... two furious thrusts, accompanied by enormous blasphemies, already swallow the head: Siméon redoubles his efforts; my mother holds and caresses her son; the child cries; the pleasures he is given from the front do not compensate him for the pain he feels from behind; but little heed is paid to what he is feeling. A second series of thrusts finally seals the victory; the lecher is deep

inside, and fresh curses precede his triumph: Léonarde is at his mercy; he fondles her, he caresses her, whilst sodomising his son; and, to make the incest even more pronounced, the lecher wants to kiss my buttocks, whilst he sodomises my brother; I am consequently positioned on the back of his reverend's filial sodomite, and the sodomite takes his pleasure. Meanwhile, and still under my father's gaze, Ives delivers the most painful blows to Martine's arse, whilst his mistress sodomises him herself with a dildo. 'Ives,' says Siméon, 'are you hard like me?' — 'Yes, for fuck's sake,' replies the other, withdrawing—to prove it to him—his cock, covered in shit, from the arse he is sodomising, and thrusting it back in straight away, which renews the poor wounded girl's pain so much that she is ready to faint... 'You can see I'm hard.' — 'Well then!' Siméon exclaimed, 'if that's the case, make this whore suffer;' and the unfortunate woman, against whom such cowardly plots had been hatched, flooded the room with her blood. 'Damn it twice over,' continued the scoundrel, 'poke the hole she's made in her head, since you're hard, and make another one next to it, whilst tearing that one open.' This new curse is carried out; the ferocious Father Ives drags the wounded woman to her knees... thrusts his cock into the wound, drives it in, and cums, whilst smashing the other healthy part of the unfortunate woman's skull with blows from his cane. 'That's what it is,' says Siméon, as he cums in my brother's arse, whilst biting my buttocks; 'yes, that's what it is; I love horrors, I do... I never cum as well as when I commit them, when I see them, or when I make others commit them.' — 'Wait,' continued my father, 'to get me going again, I'm going to flog this bitch.' — 'Oh, for fuck's sake,' said Father Ives... 'she's in such a state she can't take any more.' — 'You're taking the piss,' said Simeon; 'until a whore kicks the bucket, she's capable of withstanding anything.' The wretch seized her as he spoke; bending her under his left arm, he wrapped one of his legs around both of hers, and lashed her with his right hand with such violence that, in fewer than sixty strokes, her thighs were drenched in the blood oozing from her

backside: nothing stopped him; he carried on. Ives decides to return the favour to his colleague; the latter's arse, completely bare, was well within his reach. A new scene unfolds immediately. Siméon wants Léonarde to suck his cock whilst he flogs Martine: raised up on the bed, he's still fucking mine, and Luce continues to work on Father Ives's arse with a dildo, whilst he, whipping his friend, roughly touches my mother's nipples. 'Let's not come like this,' says Siméon, 'it's not worth it; it's better to fuck: here, sodomise my son once more in his mother's arms; as for me, I'll place my daughter astride her mother's breasts; I'll fuck her, whilst she presses her mother's face with her arse; Léonarde and Martine will whip us during that time, and Luce will let us fuck her arse.'

"I shall not describe to you the pain I felt at the loss of my virginity; my father's penis was monstrous, and he showed me no mercy: a new torment awaited me; my mother, in her frenzy, no longer knowing what she was doing, seized a piece of my buttocks with her teeth—which, as you know, were resting on her face; I let out a cry, thrusting my hips vigorously against the monstrous cock piercing me; this movement hastens my father's ecstasy... he comes; his companion follows suit; the position breaks, and a few moments of calm refresh both the senses and the spirits of our libertines.

"'Let's drink,' said my father, 'only excesses at the table produce good cum, and you'll never see a true libertine who isn't a drunkard and a glutton.' — 'Bring the best wine we have,' Father Ives said to Luce; 'we still have work to do.' — 'Wait,' said Siméon, 'while we stuff ourselves with food, these two children must keep wanking us... and complete freedom during the meal... we shall eat, we shall drink, we shall piss, we shall fart, we shall shit, we shall come... we shall indulge in all of nature's needs at once.' — 'Yes, fuck... yes, by God,' said Father Ives, already staggering, 'that is the only delightful thing in the world; when one goes to such lengths to celebrate orgies, everything must be depraved... filthy and swinish, like the God we worship there; one

must wallow in filth, like swine, and cherish, like them, only the mire and infamy.' Martine, though bathed in her own blood, is placed on the table; her bloodied buttocks serve as a base for the dishes; and, by the second course, the libertines are eating piping hot omelettes right on top of her. After an hour of this cruel feast, there is talk of fucking me in the arse; I had lost only one of my virginities, it was time to tackle the other. 'We must place her between us,' says Father Ives, 'I shall fuck her cunt whilst you fuck her arse; Pauline will fit her son's cock into your arse, and whip you whilst she does so; Luce will do the same for me; Léonarde will gallop round us, pissing and shitting in the room, and at every turn, now a slap, now a smack, or even a punch to the very interesting Martine, who will no doubt die in the process.'

"Everything is arranged. But, good heavens! If I had suffered during the first of these penetrations, what must I have felt during the second! I thought Simeon's cock would split me in two; it felt as though a red-hot bar were being thrust into my insides; and yet, however young I was, I felt, amidst all this, faint sparks of pleasure, sure signs of the pleasure I would one day receive from this voluptuous way of fucking: a final spurt crowned the act; I felt both emissions, shot into me, flowing out at once, both from the front and from behind; and, collapsing, utterly spent, between my two athletes, it took me more than a quarter of an hour to recover from the shock that such assaults had just dealt to my constitution.

Finally, the time for retreat at the convent brought the meeting to a swift close. We parted ways. Martine was sent to hospital, where she died eight days later. We continued to stay at my mother's house. A few days later, the same scene was repeated; and Pauline, who no longer hid herself, took her revenge in our arms for the forced abstinence her lover had imposed upon her. We took turns sleeping with her, and often both of us together. Then de l'Aigle and I performed before her eyes a thousand positions, each more lewd than the last; and the minx, directing

our lusts, immediately passed on to us all the lessons she received from her lover; she instilled her principles in us, and neglected nothing that might most swiftly corrupt our minds and hearts.

“When we were thirteen or fourteen years old, our dear mother did not stop there. That vile creature dared to take us to a house where two libertines took pleasure in her and in us at the same time. One hundred louis was the reward for this prostitution; she gave us ten each, under the strictest secrecy; and if, she continued, we were careful not to reveal anything, she would procure many more such adventures for us. We complied; and, within less than six months, the good lady had thus sold us both to more than eighty people, when de l’Aigle, one day, out of sheer malice, revealed everything to my father. Siméon, furious, beat my mother with such terrible force that she fell ill, and after eight days found herself at death’s door. ‘Let’s not stay here,’ my brother said to me; ‘that wretch is going to die, and Siméon will either keep us for his own pleasure—which won’t bring us much—or have us put in a workhouse, which would be even worse: you’re pretty enough to make a fortune on your own, and as for me, my sister, I’ve found a man who’ll shower me with gold if I’ll go with him to Russia; I’m leaving.’ — ‘But what about that poor woman in her bed?’ — ‘If her plight moves you so deeply, we’ll just have to strangle her; she won’t suffer any more.’ — ‘Scoundrel, I said with a smile, and seemingly hardly revolted by such a plan, ‘do you really want to get us broken on the wheel?’ — ‘Séraphine,’ my brother said to me, ‘we’re very close to committing a crime when the only thing holding us back is the scaffold.’ — ‘I swear to you that fear means very little to me.’ — ‘Well then! Let’s do it. By Jove, I’m in; I’ve never much liked that bitch.’ And heeding nothing but our fury... our desire to be free, and to enrich ourselves with the spoils of this wretch, we burst into her room like two madmen... she was resting; we threw ourselves upon her and strangled her. ‘Let’s quickly divide the safe,’ my brother said to me. We found twenty thousand francs in it, and just as much in jewellery; and, having divided it

fairly, the doors closed, and we made our escape. We went to dine in the Bois de Boulogne; and, after exchanging the most tender farewells and promising each other the strictest secrecy, we parted ways. My brother followed the man who was to take him away, and I went to find one of the libertines whom my mother had introduced to me, and on whom I was counting, based on certain promises he had made to me. ‘My child,’ said this man as soon as I was at his house, ‘it was not of myself that I spoke to you; I see many girls, but keep none: the man for whom I have destined you is far better; but you will be compelled, I must warn you, to the most blind submission; I shall send for him; you will come to an arrangement.’ This man arrived: he was a sixty-five-year-old, very wealthy, still sprightly, and who, after thanking his colleague for the good fortune he had brought him, led me into his friend’s boudoir, where we had a talk.

“This man, known as Fercour, took a particular pleasure in watching his mistress get her cunt fucked right in front of him by a young man whom he was rimming in the arse at the same time; but he did not come in the young man’s arse; he would pull out mid-stroke, shove his filthy cock into the woman’s mouth whilst the young man was pounding her; and as soon as he saw her arse bleeding, the lecher would sodomise her; the Ganymede would then whip him and sodomise him after a few minutes. Unsatisfied with these preliminaries, the woman lay on her back on a vast sofa, and there, whilst pins were being thrust into his arse and balls, he stuck over a hundred of them into his mistress’s nipples. An old governess, who only appeared then, made him cum by shitting in his mouth.

“However harsh these proposals must have seemed to me, necessity made me accept them. Little by little I alone won all of Fercour’s confidence; after two years, I took advantage of it to remove from him every witness who inconvenienced me. One day, as my Croesus amused himself before my eyes by counting his riches, they tempted me. My reflections were soon made: one

passes quickly to a second crime when one has felt no remorse for the first. I slipped into his chocolate six *grès* of arsenic, bought to kill rats and imprudently entrusted to my keeping. The wretch burst within twenty-four hours; I robbed him and immediately departed for Spain.

For two years I travelled through the largest cities of that country, practicing everywhere the trade of a courtesan, with as much charm as profit. Oh, my friends, it was there—in those beautiful provinces—that I recognized the passions of man a thousand times more exalted than in any other country in Europe! It was there I saw them carried to results of which one has no notion elsewhere on earth. It seems that the excessive heat of the sun and the force of superstition give them a degree of energy unknown to other men; it is truly only there that the piquant pleasures of blasphemy and sacrilege mingle deliciously with those of libertinage. Only there does the mutual force they lend each other raise them to the highest pitch of delirium and frenzy. Ah! if you knew what it is to couple at the foot of a Madonna... at the back of a confessional, or on the edge of an altar, as happened to me every day. No—nothing in the world is as delightful as the existence of those restraints created solely for the pleasure of breaking them. How divine it is thus to make all heaven witness one's excesses! Oh, believe me, the Spaniards are the people on earth who reason best about their pleasures... the only ones who know how to refine all their details. I was at last the richest and happiest rogue in the world when a dreadful adventure stopped me at Toledo in the midst of my brilliant career. The Duke of Cortès, having acquired a fairly deep knowledge of my character and flattering himself that I might be useful to him in the horrible parricide he was planning, had me installed in his father's house as housekeeper. The blow was ready to fall; an income of five hundred thousand livres was to become the young duke's reward for his crime; four thousand *pistoles* were to pay for its execution. An unfortunate valet discovered the secret and seized the poison on me; the duke fled... I was arrested.

After eighteen months of a dreadful imprisonment, I was finally about to stand trial, when your companion Gaspard—whom you see here, himself detained for similar crimes—offered that we attempt an escape together. We succeeded. There is a God for great criminals; only the small ones never escape. We crossed the mountains together; and after begging for nearly a year, we finally found your band. You know, my comrades, how I have conducted myself since I have had the honour of being admitted among you. That is all I had to tell you: this account, as I warned you, not very rich in events, did not deserve the attention of people who, like you, have passed your lives from one adventure to another; nevertheless, I have obeyed you and thus proved that I shall always rank submission among my first duties with you.”

Seraphine’s story had nevertheless kindled a few sparks of lust in the hearts of these libertines; Fercour’s particular passion above all found imitators. O unfortunate Justine! your lovely bosom served as a target for the two villains who wished to copy that mania; and as soon as you were stretched upon your wretched pallet, the tears that the injustice of men had so often forced from you began again to flow in greater abundance... Unhappy girl, you complained to heaven, not suspecting that this very heaven was already preparing for you the dawn of that fair day which was to remove you from this cruel situation... not to put an end to your miseries, but at least to change their nature.

Despite the degraded state in which this unfortunate girl was kept in the underground cell, Séraphine nonetheless continued to protect her; and, as she often employed her in her private pleasures, she procured for her from time to time a few small comforts. “My angel,” she said to her one day, “having already been cruelly deceived by one of my companions, I fear I may not inspire in you a full measure of confidence; yet I swear to deceive you in nothing, and that the pure truth will be offered you here by my lips—but discretion, or my vengeance would be terrible. I am asked in Lyon for a pretty girl for an old merchant

whose tastes are strange, it is true, but who pays for them generously enough to compensate for the pains or disgust they may inspire. If they suit you, I will undertake to secure your freedom: it is a matter of profanation; the man I speak of is an impious wretch; he will handle you while Mass is being said before him; at the elevation he will take from a small box a host as fully consecrated as the one raised before you; he will violate you with that host, while the celebrant will in turn take you with the one he has just consecrated.” — “What horror!” cried Justine. — “Yes, I felt that with your principles such a proposal would repel you... But is it better to remain here?” — “No, certainly not.” — “Well then, decide.” — “I have decided,” said Justine with some remorse; “do with me what you will—I surrender myself.” Séraphine hastened to Gaspard; she represented to him that Justine’s punishment had been long enough, that the band should not be deprived any longer of the services such a girl could render outside, that she required her assistance in her various operations and would answer for her both on the surface of the earth and in its depths. The pardon was granted; Justine’s lessons were renewed; she was subjected to an examination; and after five months in that abominable den, she at last obtained permission to leave it and to follow her protectress to Lyon. “Great God!” said Justine to herself on seeing the sun again, “an act of pity has buried me alive for five months; the promise of a crime breaks my chains. O Providence! explain to me your incomprehensible decrees, if you do not wish my heart to revolt.”

Our two travelers stopped at an inn to breakfast. Justine said not a word, yet she was no less forming her plan for freedom. “Madam,” she cried, addressing the mistress of the house, a very gentle and rather pretty woman, “oh, madam, I beg you to grant me your help and protection. The creature with whom you see me against my will has made me swear to follow her to a place where my honor would be compromised; I did so only to escape a band of villains among whom I had the misfortune to be her fellow prisoner; it is not my intention to accompany her any

longer. I beg you to persuade her to renounce the claims she believes she has upon my person, to urge her to continue on her way, and to keep me here with you until tomorrow, when, separated from her, I shall take, on my own account, a road... so opposite to hers that we shall never meet again in our lives." — "Wretch," said Séraphine, furious, "at least pay me if you wish to leave me." — "I call heaven to witness," said Justine, "that I owe her nothing... let her not force me to explain myself more clearly." Séraphine, frightened, disappeared with curses; and Justine, caressed and comforted by the hostess—the most honest and amiable of women—spent forty-eight hours in that house, with the prudence never, in recounting her adventures, to say anything that might compromise the unfortunate people she had just left. On the morning of the third day she set out again, laden with the gifts and kindness of Madame Delisle, and directed her steps toward Vienne, resolved to sell what remained to her in order to reach Grenoble, where her presentiments never ceased to tell her she would find happiness. We shall see how she succeeded, after first recounting the new misfortunes that awaited her before she could arrive at that capital of Dauphiné.

Justine walked on sadly, still making her way toward the city of Vienne, when she caught sight, in a field to the right of the road, of two horsemen trampling a man beneath their horses' hooves; and, after leaving him as if dead, they fled at full gallop. This dreadful sight moved her to tears. "Alas!" she said, "there is a man more to be pitied than I; I at least still have my health and my strength—I can earn my living; but if this unfortunate wretch is not wealthy, what will become of him in the state to which those scoundrels have just reduced him?"

However much Justine ought to have guarded herself against the impulses of compassion, however disastrous it had always been for her to yield to them, she could not overcome the intense desire she felt to draw near this man and lavish her aid upon him. She hastened to his side, made him inhale a few drops

of spirits, and at last enjoyed all the gratitude of the unfortunate man she was relieving. The more her care succeeded, the more she redoubled it: one of the only effects she had left—a shirt—she tore to pieces to staunch the wounded man's blood; these first duties fulfilled, she gave him a few drops of that same spirituous liquor to drink. Seeing him quite restored, she observed that, though on foot and dressed with some lightness, the man did not appear to be of the common sort; he had with him several valuable items—rings, a watch, boxes—but all of it much damaged by his mishap. "Who is it," he said as soon as he could speak, "who is the beneficent angel that comes to my aid? And what can I do to show him all my gratitude?" Still possessing the simplicity to imagine that a soul bound by gratitude must belong to her entirely, the innocent Justine believes she may enjoy the sweet pleasure of sharing her tears with one who has just shed them in her arms; she tells him of her misfortunes, he listens with interest, and when she has finished recounting the last catastrophe that has just befallen her: "How happy I am," cried the adventurer, "to be able at last to repay all that you have just done for me!... listen... listen, mademoiselle, and share in the pleasure I feel in convincing you that it may perhaps be possible for me to acquit myself toward you.

"My name is Roland; I possess a very fine château in the mountains some fifteen leagues from here; I invite you to follow me there; and, so that this proposal may not alarm your delicacy, I shall explain at once how you may be of use to me. I am unmarried, but I have a sister whom I love passionately, who has devoted herself to my solitude and shares it with me; I am in need of someone to serve her; we have just lost the one who filled that position; I offer you her place." Justine, after thanking her protector, asked him by what chance a man like himself exposed himself to travel without attendants and thus, as had just happened to him, to be set upon by rogues. — "Somewhat stout, young, and vigorous, I have for several years," said Roland, "been in the habit of coming from my home to Vienne in this manner.

My health and my purse both profit from it; not that I am in a position to be concerned with expense, for I am rich—you shall soon see proof of it if you will do me the kindness of coming to my house—but economy never does any harm. As for the two men who have just insulted me, they are two petty gentlemen of the district, from whom I won a hundred louis last week in a house at Vienne. I was content with their word; I meet them today; I ask them for what they owe me—and that is how the scoundrels pay me.”

Our compassionate traveller continued to pity this unfortunate man for the double misfortune of which he was the victim, when the adventurer proposed that they set out again. “Thanks to your care, I feel somewhat better,” he said to her; “Night is falling,” he added. “Let us make for an inn some two leagues away; tomorrow we shall take horses there and reach my house by evening.”

Firmly resolved to take advantage of the help that heaven seemed to send her, Justine assisted Roland in setting out again; she supported him, and indeed found, two leagues farther on, the inn he had mentioned. They supped there together in a decent manner. After the meal, Roland commended her to the care of the landlady; and the next day, mounted on two hired mules and escorted by a servant from the inn, our travelers reached the frontier of the Dauphiné, continuing always toward the mountains. As the journey was too long to be completed in a single day, they stopped at Virieu, where Justine received the same attentions and consideration from her patron; and on the following day they resumed their route, still in the same direction. Toward four in the afternoon, they arrived at the foot of the mountains; there, the path becoming almost impassable, Roland instructed the muleteer not to leave Justine, and the three of them entered the gorges. Our heroine, who had been made to wind, climb, and descend for more than four hours, and who could no longer discern any trace of a proper road, could not help showing some uneasiness. Roland perceived it, but said nothing: such

silence only increased the poor girl's fear, when at last she caught sight of a château perched on the crest of a mountain, at the edge of a dreadful precipice into which it seemed ready to plunge. No road appeared to lead to it; the one they followed, scarcely more than a goat track and strewn with stones on every side, nevertheless reached this terrifying lair, which looked far more like a bandits' refuge than the dwelling of honest people.

"Here is my house," said Roland, as soon as he thought the château had caught Justine's eye; and when she expressed her astonishment at seeing him live in such solitude, "That is precisely what suits me," he replied brusquely. This answer, as one may easily imagine, only increased the fears of our unfortunate heroine. Nothing escapes one in misfortune: a word, a remark, more or less marked in those on whom one depends, stifles or revives hope; but, no longer in a position to choose another course, Justine restrained herself. At last, after many windings, the ancient ruin suddenly stood before them. Roland dismounted; at his command Justine did the same; and, having handed over the mules to the servant, he paid and dismissed him. This new proceeding displeased her still more; Roland perceived it. "What troubles you, Justine?" he asked, with a certain gentleness, as they advanced toward the house; "you are not outside France; this place lies on the frontier of Dauphiné; it belongs to Grenoble." — "Be that as it may, sir... but how did it ever occur to you to settle in such a cutthroat place?" — "Because those who inhabit it are not very honest people," said Roland; "it is quite possible you will not be edified by their occupations." — "Ah, sir, you make me shudder! where are you taking me?" — "I am taking you to serve counterfeiters, of whom I am the chief," said Roland, seizing Justine's arm and forcing her across a small bridge, which lowered and rose again at once. "Do you see that pit?" he continued, once they had entered, pointing to a large, deep cavern at the bottom of the courtyard, where four women, naked and chained, were turning a wheel. "There are your companions—and there is your work. Provided you labour ten hours a

day at turning that wheel, and satisfy, like those women, every caprice to which I may choose to subject you, you shall be granted six ounces of black bread and a dish of beans each day. As for your freedom—renounce it; you shall never have it. When you die of toil, you will be thrown into the hole you see beside that pit, with two hundred other wretches of your kind who await you there, and you will be replaced by another.” — “Oh, great God!” cried Justine, throwing herself at Roland’s feet, “deign to remember, sir, that I saved your life... that, for a moment moved by gratitude, you seemed to offer me happiness—and that it is by plunging me into an eternal abyss of misery that you repay my services. Is what you are doing just? And does not remorse already avenge me in the depths of your heart?” — “What do you mean,” replied Roland, “by this sentiment of gratitude with which you imagine you have bound me? Reason better, wretched creature: what were you doing when you came to my aid? Between the possibility of continuing on your way and that of coming to me, did you not choose the latter, prompted by your own heart? You were therefore indulging yourself. By what devil’s logic do you pretend I am obliged to reward you for pleasures you gave yourself? And how could it ever have entered your mind that a man who, like me, swims in gold and opulence would stoop to owe anything to a miserable creature of your sort? Even had you given me life, I should owe you nothing, since you acted only for yourself. To work, slave, to work! Learn that civilization, though it overturns the principles of nature, does not strip it of its rights: in the beginning it created strong beings and weak ones, with the intention that the latter should always be subordinate to the former; human skill and intelligence altered the condition of individuals: it was no longer physical strength that determined rank, but wealth. The richest man became the strongest, the poorest the weakest; and, aside from the motives that founded power, the primacy of the strong has always been in the laws of nature, to which it is indifferent whether the chain that binds the weak be held by the richest or

the most vigorous, and whether it crush the weakest or the poorest. But these movements of gratitude with which you would bind me—nature knows nothing of them, Justine; it was never among her laws that the pleasure one takes in obliging should become a reason for the one who receives to relax his rights over the other. Do you see, among the animals that serve us, examples of such sentiments as you claim? When I dominate you by my wealth or my strength, is it natural that I should surrender my rights, either because you found pleasure in obliging me, or because, being unhappy, you imagined you might gain something by your conduct? Even were the service rendered between equals, the pride of a lofty soul will never bend under gratitude: is not he who receives always humiliated? and does not that humiliation sufficiently repay the benefactor, who thereby finds himself above the other? Is it not a pleasure to pride to rise above one's fellow? does he who obliges require any other? And if obligation, by humiliating the receiver, becomes a burden to him, by what right constrain him to keep it? Why should I consent to be humiliated each time the gaze of the one who has obliged me falls upon me? Ingratitude, far from being a vice, is therefore the virtue of proud souls, just as surely as gratitude is only that of weak ones. Let others oblige me as much as they please if they find pleasure in it—but let them demand nothing for having enjoyed it.”

At these words—without giving Justine time to reply—Roland ordered two servants to seize her; they stripped her, had her body examined by their master, who handled it roughly, then chained her with the others, whom she was forced to assist immediately, without even being allowed a moment's rest from the exhausting journey she had just made. Roland then approached her again; he once more laid his hands upon her thighs, her breasts, and her hips, kneading harshly those tender, delicate parts, overwhelming her with sarcasms and coarse mockery as he noticed the degrading mark with which the cruel Rombeau had once branded the unfortunate girl; then, taking up a whip

of ox-hide kept always at hand, he struck her sixty blows across the back, swelling and bruising the flesh until her cries echoed beneath the vaults that enclosed her. "This is how you shall be treated, wretch," said the villain, "whenever you fail in your duty; I do not give you this sample for any fault already committed, but only to show you how I deal with those who commit them." Justine's cries redoubled; she struggled in her chains, and the anguished expressions of her suffering served only to amuse her tormentor. "Ah, I shall show you far worse than this," he continued brutally, "you are far from the end of your trials, and I intend you to learn here the most barbarous refinements of misery." Then he left her.

Six dark recesses, situated beneath a grotto around that vast pit and closing like dungeons, served at night as a refuge for the unfortunate women of whom we have just spoken. As soon as night fell, Justine and her companions were unchained and shut into these cells, after being given the meagre supper Roland had described.

Scarcely was our heroine alone than she abandoned herself entirely to the horror of her situation. "Is it possible," she said to herself, "that there are men hard enough to stifle within themselves all sense of gratitude?... That virtue to which I would surrender with such delight, if ever any honest souls placed me in a position to feel it—can it truly be unknown to certain beings? And must those who suppress it with such inhumanity be anything other than monsters?"¹¹

¹¹ Here Justine reasons as an egoist; it is impossible to disguise it: she is unhappy, and therefore astonished to be repulsed; but will not the happy man, reasoning from the same principles, likewise say: why should I—who suffer nothing, who can satisfy all my desires without needing anyone—either coldly earn the gratitude of others or expose myself, through my benefactions, to finding nothing but ingratitude? Apathy, indifference, stoicism, the solitude of self—such is the pitch to which one must necessarily raise one's soul if one wishes to be happy on earth.

Justine was absorbed in these reflections when she suddenly heard the door of her cell open—it was Roland. The villain had come to complete her outrage by forcing her to serve his odious whims... And what whims, just heavens! One easily supposes they must have been as savage as his conduct, and that the pleasures of love in such a man necessarily bore the stamp of his detestable character. But how can we abuse the patience of our readers by depicting these new atrocities? Have we not already too greatly sullied their imagination with infamous accounts? Must we venture still further? “Venture... venture,” replies the philosopher here; “one cannot imagine how necessary such scenes are to the development of the soul; we are still so ignorant in this science only because of the foolish restraint of those who have written on these matters: bound by absurd fears, they speak to us only of those puerilities known to every fool, and do not dare, by plunging a bold hand into the human heart, to lay before our eyes its gigantic aberrations.” Let us obey, then, since philosophy urges us to it, and, reassured by its celestial voice, let us no longer fear to present vice laid bare.

Roland—whom it is essential to portray before bringing him into action—was a short, thickset man of thirty-five, of incomprehensible vigour, hairy as a bear, with a sombre countenance and a savage gaze; very dark, with strongly marked, masculine features, a long nose, a beard reaching almost to his eyes, thick black eyebrows, and a member of such length and disproportionate size that nothing like it had ever yet met Justine’s eyes. To this somewhat repellent physique, our maker of counterfeit louis added all the vices that may result from a fiery temperament, a vivid imagination, and a fortune always too considerable not to have plunged him into excess. Roland was completing his wealth; his father, who had begun it, had left him very rich, and, by that means, this young man had already lived a great deal: jaded by ordinary pleasures, he had recourse only to horrors; they alone could revive desires exhausted by too many indulgences; the women who served him were all employed in his

secret debaucheries, and, to satisfy certain pleasures somewhat less shameful—yet in which this libertine could still find the spice of crime that delighted him above all—Roland kept his own sister as his mistress; it was with her that he finished extinguishing the passions he had just inflamed with the others.

He was almost naked when he entered; his face, highly flushed, bore at once the marks of the excesses of the table in which he had just indulged and of the abominable lust that consumed him. For a moment he fixed his eyes on Justine in a way that made her shudder. “Take off those clothes,” he said, tearing away himself the garments she had resumed to cover herself during the night... “yes, take all that off and follow me; I have already shown you what you risk by giving yourself up to idleness. But if it should occur to you to betray us, since the crime would be far greater, the punishment would have to be proportioned to it: come and see what sort it would be.” Seizing her at once by the arm, the libertine dragged her along: he led her with his right hand; in his left he held a small lantern, whose faint light scarcely illuminated their path. After several turnings, the door of a cellar appeared; Roland opened it, and, making Justine go in first, told her to descend while he shut it behind them. After a hundred steps they came to a second door, which opened and closed in the same manner; but beyond it there was no longer any staircase—only a narrow passage cut into the rock, full of windings and of a very steep descent. Roland said not a word; this terrifying silence only increased Justine’s fear, and, being entirely naked, she felt all the more keenly the dreadful dampness of these subterranean passages. To the right and left of the path she followed were several niches in which could be seen chests containing the riches of these criminals. At last, a final bronze door appeared; it lay more than eight hundred feet in the bowels of the earth: Roland opened it, and she who followed him fell backward at the sight of the dreadful place into which she was being led. Seeing her falter, Roland raised her and roughly pushed her into the middle of a round vault, whose walls, hung

with funeral cloth, were adorned only with the most lugubrious objects: skeletons of every age and sex, intertwined with crossed bones, skulls, serpents, toads, bundles of rods, scourges, sabres, daggers, pistols, and weapons altogether unknown—such were the horrors displayed upon the walls, dimly lit by a lamp with three wicks suspended from one corner of the vault. From the arch hung a long rope reaching to within eight feet of the ground, placed there, as will soon be seen, for dreadful purposes. To the right stood a coffin, half-opened by the spectre of Death armed with a threatening scythe; beside it was a kneeler: on a table a little beyond could be seen a crucifix between two black candles, a dagger with three hooked blades, a pistol fully primed, and a cup filled with poison. To the left, the still-fresh body of a beautiful woman was fastened to a cross; she was placed upon it face down, so that her back and hips were exposed... cruelly mistreated; long pins were still stuck into the flesh, and drops of dark, clotted blood formed crusts along her thighs: she had the most beautiful hair in the world; her lovely head, turned toward us, seemed to implore mercy. Death had not disfigured this sublime creature, and the delicacy of her features, less altered by decay than by suffering, still offered the affecting spectacle of beauty in despair. The back of the vault was occupied by a vast black couch, upon which the full extent of the atrocities of this place was laid bare to the eye.

“This is where you will perish, Justine,” said Roland, “if you ever entertain the fatal idea of leaving this house; yes, it is here that I myself will come to kill you... that I will make you suffer the torments of death in every way I can think of.” As he uttered this threat, Roland grew frenzied; his agitation and wildness made him resemble a tiger ready to devour its prey. It was then that he exposed the fearsome member with which he was endowed. “Have you ever seen anything like this?” he says, making Justine grasp it. “Just as it is,” continued this faun, “it will nevertheless have to enter the narrowest part of your body, even if I have to split you in two. My sister, much younger than you, holds

it in that very same part; I never take pleasure in women any other way; so it will have to tear you apart as well; and to leave no doubt as to the place he meant, he inserted three fingers armed with sharp nails, saying: "Yes, that's there, that's where I'll thrust, in a moment, this member that frightens you; it will enter you to its full length; it will tear your anus; it will draw blood, and I will be in a frenzy. He was foaming at the mouth as he spoke these words, interspersed with oaths and odious blasphemies. The hand with which he brushes the temple he seems intent on attacking then wanders over all the adjacent areas; he pinches them, he scratches them, he does the same to her throat, and bruises it so badly that Justine suffered from horrible pains for fifteen days; he then places her on the sofa, rubs alcohol all over the hair of her mound, sets it on fire, and burns it completely; his fingers seize the clitoris; they crush it roughly; he inserts them from there into the interior; and his nails assault the membrane lining it. No longer able to restrain himself, he tells Justine that since he has her in his lair, it is just as well that she never leave it, for that will spare him the trouble of coming back down... Our unfortunate girl throws herself at his knees; she dares to remind him once more of the services she has rendered him, and soon realizes that she is only irritating him further by speaking of the rights she assumes to his mercy. "Shut up," says this monster, knocking her down with a vigorous knee to the pit of her stomach... "Come on," he continues, pulling her up by the hair, "come on, get ready, you slut; I'm certainly going to sacrifice you." — "Oh! Sir." — "No, no, you must perish; I no longer want to hear you reproach me with your petty favors; I don't want to owe anything to anyone; it's up to others to get everything from me. You're going to die, I tell you; lie down in this coffin, let me see if you can fit in it; he lays her down in it... he locks her in, and leaves the crypt. Justine believed herself lost; never had death approached her in a more certain and hideous form. However, Roland reappears, he pulls her out of the coffin; you'll be better off in there, he tells her; it seems this bier was

made for you; but to let you die peacefully in there would be too good a death; I'm going to let you taste one of a different kind, and one that still has its pleasures: Come on, beg your damn God, you whore; pray to him to come running to avenge you, if he truly has the power... The unfortunate woman throws herself onto the *prie-dieu*; and while she pours out her heart to the Eternal One in a loud voice, Roland redoubles his torments and tortures on the rear parts she exposes to him; he lashed those parts with all his strength using a whip armed with steel spikes, each blow of which sent blood spurting up to the vaulted ceiling.

"Well then!" he continued, blaspheming, "your God does not come to your aid; he lets virtue suffer thus; he abandons it to the hands of villainy! Ah, what a God, Justine—what a vile, contemptible God! How I despise and mock him with all my heart!" Then, addressing her again: "Come—your prayer must be finished; does it take so long to address a detestable God who listens so poorly?" And, as he spoke, he placed her on the edge of the couch that stood at the back of that sepulchral place. "I have told you, Justine," he went on, "you must die." He seized her arms and bound them behind her back; then he passed around the victim's neck a cord of black silk, the two ends of which, held in his hands, could, tightened at his will, compress her breathing and send her into the next world in more or less time as he pleased.

"This torment is gentler than you think, Justine," said Roland; "you will feel death only through inexpressible sensations of pleasure; the compression this cord exerts upon the mass of your nerves will inflame the organs of delight—it is a certain effect. If all those condemned to this punishment knew the intoxication in which it makes one die, less frightened of such a penalty for their crimes, they would commit them more often and with far greater assurance. What being would hesitate to enrich himself at the expense of others, when, alongside the near certainty of not being discovered, he would have, as his only fear

in case he were, the complete assurance of the most delicious of deaths? This charming operation," Roland continued, "by compressing in the same way the place where I am about to act, will likewise double my pleasures"; yet his efforts were at first in vain—despite all his attempts to prepare, open, and moisten the passage, his disproportion rendered success difficult, and he was repeatedly repulsed. Then his fury knew no bounds; his nails, his hands, his feet avenged the resistance opposed to him by nature. He made a new attempt; with a violent thrust he forced his way partway in; Justine uttered a terrible cry; enraged at his mistake, he withdrew, then struck again with such force that he succeeded in tearing through. Seizing the advantage of that first success, his efforts grew more violent, and he gained ground; as he advanced, the fatal cord around Justine's neck tightened; she gave forth dreadful screams, which only amused the ferocious Roland and urged him to redouble his actions. Certain of their futility and master of stopping them at will, he grew inflamed by their shrill sound; meanwhile his own frenzy rose, and the tightening of the cord followed the degrees of his pleasure. Little by little the strength of the unfortunate girl ebbed; the constriction became so severe that her senses weakened, though she did not entirely lose consciousness. Violently shaken, she felt herself overwhelmed by his convulsions and heard his cries as he reached his climax. A moment of stupor followed; then, gradually released, her eyes reopened to the light, and her faculties seemed to return. "Well then, Justine," said her tormentor, "I wager that, if you are truthful, you felt nothing but pleasure." For a moment she wished to deny it; but Roland, seeing the physical evidence before him, scoffed at her protest. "What does it matter to me?" he added; "you must know me well enough to be certain that your sensations concern me far less than my own in what I undertake with you—and that pleasure I seek was so vivid that I intend to enjoy it again."

"It is now up to you," said Roland; "it is on you alone, Justine, that your life depends." He then passed around the unfortunate

girl's neck the rope that hung from the ceiling; once it was firmly secured, he tied to the stool on which she stood a cord whose end he held, then seated himself in a chair opposite her. In one of the victim's hands he placed a very sharp billhook, with which she was to cut the rope at the moment when, by means of the cord he held, he would pull the stool from beneath her feet. "You see, my girl," he added, "if you miss your stroke, I shall not miss mine; so, I am right to say that your life depends on you." The scoundrel is masturbating; it is at the moment of his climax that he must pull the stool away, leaving Justine hanging from the ceiling; he does everything he can to feign this moment; he would be overjoyed if Justine were to lack dexterity. But no matter what he does, she guesses it; the intensity of his ecstasy betrays him; Justine seizes the moment, the stool slips away, she cuts the rope, and falls to the ground, completely free... There, believe it or not, though more than twelve feet from the libertine, she is drenched by the jets of cum that Roland spews out while blaspheming.

Any woman other than Justine would no doubt have taken advantage of the weapon in her hand to throw herself at that monster at once. What would such an act of courage have availed her? Without the keys to those underground passages, ignorant of their twists and turns, she would have died before managing to escape; besides, Roland was on his guard. She therefore rose, leaving the weapon on the ground, so that he might not even conceive the slightest suspicion of her. He had none; and, more satisfied with the gentleness and submission of his victim than with her skill, he signalled to her to leave, and the two of them went back up to the château.

The next day Justine more carefully examined what surrounded her. Her four companions were women between twenty-five and thirty; though brutalized by misery and deformed by excessive labour, they still retained striking traces of beauty. Their figures were fine; and the youngest, called Suzanne, with charming eyes, still possessed delicate features. Roland had

taken her at Lyon; and, after carrying her off from her family under a promise of marriage, he had brought her to his dreadful house. She had been there three years and was, even more than the others, the object of this monster's cruelties. Through repeated blows of the ox-hide whip, her body had been hardened and disfigured; she suffered from a cancer in her left breast and an abscess in the womb, which caused her unimagined pain. All this was the work of the perfidious Roland; each of these horrors was the fruit of his excesses. It was from her that Justine learned that this scoundrel was on the verge of going to Venice, provided that the considerable sums he had recently sent into Spain brought him the bills of exchange he was expecting for use in Italy, since he did not wish to carry his gold across the mountains. He never sent it directly; it was always into a country different from the one where he intended to live that he circulated his counterfeit coin. By this means, possessing in the place where he wished to settle only paper drawn on another region, his frauds could never easily be detected; but all might collapse in an instant, and the retreat he planned depended entirely on this final negotiation, in which the greater part of his fortune was at stake. If Cádiz accepted his counterfeit piastres, sequins, and louis, and sent him in return bills on Venice, Roland would be secure for the rest of his life; if the fraud were discovered, a single day would suffice to bring down the fragile edifice of his wealth.

"Alas!" said Justine, on learning these particulars, "Providence will be just for once; it will not permit the success of such a monster, and we shall all be avenged..." Unfortunate girl! After the lessons that this very Providence—on which you still had the weakness to rely—had already given you, was it for you to reason thus?

Around noon these unfortunate women were allowed two hours of rest, which they used—always separately—to breathe a little and dine in their cells. At two o'clock they were chained again and made to work until night, never being permitted to

enter the château; if they were kept naked, it was so they might be better exposed to the blows Roland inflicted upon them, always finding pretexts and never lacking in strength. In winter they were given a vest and trousers cut away across the back, so that their bodies were no less, in any season, exposed to the lashes of the villain, whose sole pleasure was to beat them.

Eight days passed without Roland appearing. On the ninth he came to the worksite, and, claiming that Suzanne and Justine were turning the wheel too sluggishly, he gave each of them fifty strokes with an ox-hide whip, from the middle of the back down to the calves of their legs.

In the middle of the night that followed that same day, the vile man entered Justine's room; he wanted to gaze upon the bruises on the poor girl's beautiful arse; the scoundrel kissed them; and soon aroused by these preliminaries, he thrust his cock into her arse; he pinched her throat as he sodomized her, and took pleasure in uttering horrors that made nature shudder. When he had completely ejaculated, Justine wanted to take advantage of this moment of calm to beg him to ease her plight. The poor creature did not know that while, in such souls, the moment of frenzy intensifies their inclination toward cruelty, calm does not restore them to the gentle virtues of an honest man; it is a fire more or less fanned by the fuel with which it is fed, but which always smoulders beneath the ashes.

"And by what right," replied Roland, "do you pretend that I should lighten your chains? Is it because of the fancies I choose to indulge with you? Do I go to your feet to beg favours, the granting of which might entitle you to some compensation? I ask nothing of you; I take—and I do not see that, because I exercise one right over you, I must refrain from claiming another. There is no love in my conduct: love is a chivalrous sentiment that I sovereignly despise and which my heart has never felt. I use a woman out of necessity, as I would a chamber pot: I employ the latter when the need arises, and the former when desire urges me; but never in my life have I valued one more than the

other. Granting neither esteem nor tenderness to the woman whom my money and authority subject to my desires, owing what I take only to myself, and requiring from her nothing but submission, I cannot, on that account, be obliged to grant her any gratitude. I ask those who would compel me to it whether a thief who snatches a purse from a man in the woods, because he is stronger than he, owes any gratitude to that man for the harm he has done him? It is the same with the outrage done to a woman; it may be a reason to commit a second, but never a sufficient reason to grant her compensation.” — “Oh, sir,” said Justine, “to what a pitch you carry wickedness!” — “To the highest degree,” replied Roland; “there is not a single excess in the world to which I have not given myself; not a crime I have not committed, and not one that my principles do not excuse or justify. I have always felt in wrongdoing a kind of attraction that turns to the profit of pleasure. Crime inflames my desire; the more horrible it is, the more it excites me; I burn in projecting it, I climax in executing it; and its sweet memories, reviving my spirits, make it only with a view to a new one that desire returns. See for yourself, Justine: I have firmly resolved to kill you—that is why I am aroused; in cutting your throat the release will come in torrents, and new horrors will soon restore all its force. There is nothing but crime in the world that can excite a libertine; all that is not criminal is insipid, and it is only in the midst of infamy that desire is born.” — “What you say is dreadful,” replied Justine; “but unfortunately I have seen examples of it.” — “There are a thousand, my child: do not imagine that it is a woman’s beauty that most excites a libertine; it is rather the kind of crime that civil or religious laws attach to her possession: the proof is that the more criminal that possession, the more it inflames us. The man who enjoys a wife stolen from her husband, or a girl taken from her parents, is far more delighted than the husband who possesses his own wife; and the more respectable the bonds that are broken, the greater the pleasure. If it is his mother, his son, his sister, his daughter whom he violates, new attractions are

added to the pleasure experienced. Once one has tasted all that, one would wish the barriers to increase still further, to give greater charm to breaking them. Now, if crime seasons a pleasure, detached from that pleasure it can itself produce one; there is therefore a certain pleasure in crime alone. For it is impossible that what lends savour should not itself possess it in abundance. Thus, I suppose, the abduction of a girl for one's own account gives a very keen pleasure; but the abduction for another gives all the pleasure with which that enjoyment was enhanced; the theft of a watch, a purse, and so on gives the same; and if I have accustomed my senses to be stirred by the abduction of a girl, insofar as it is abduction, that same pleasure will be found in stealing the watch, the purse, and so forth. And that explains the fancy of so many respectable men who steal without need. From that moment, nothing is simpler than to take the greatest pleasure in whatever is criminal, and to render, by every means one can imagine, even the simplest enjoyments as criminal as possible: one merely adds to them the necessary spice without which happiness cannot be perfected. These systems lead far, I know; perhaps I shall soon prove it to you, Justine; but what does it matter, so long as one is delighted? Was there, for example, my dear girl, anything more natural than for me to take pleasure in you? But you resist; you show me that I abuse my rights; that I become a monster of ingratitude in violating you—thus the mass of crime is increased: I heed nothing; I break all the ties that bind fools; I subject you to the basest desires; and from the simplest, the most monotonous pleasure, I make one truly delicious. Submit then, wretch; submit; and if ever you return to the world in the position of the stronger, abuse your rights in the same way, and you will know the most vivid and delicious of all pleasures." At these words Roland passed around Justine's neck a cord he had brought, and, tightening it so violently that she lost consciousness, carried out his brutality; having satisfied himself, the villain withdrew with perfect calm, without troubling himself in the least about what might follow.

It was six months since our heroine had been in that house, from time to time serving the vile debaucheries of that scoundrel, when one evening she saw him enter her cell with Suzanne. "Come, Justine," said the monster; "it seems to me it has been a long time since I took you down into that vault which so frightened you; follow me there, both of you—but do not expect to return in the same way: I must leave one of you behind; we shall see upon whom the lot will fall." Justine rose; she cast anxious glances at her companion and saw her in tears... The executioner moved on—it had to be followed.

As soon as they entered the underground chamber, Roland examined them both with ferocious looks; he took pleasure in repeating their sentence to them and in convincing each of them, at every moment, that one of the two would certainly remain there. "Come," he said, sitting down and making them stand upright before him, "each of you in turn set to work at restoring vigor to this cripple, and woe to the one who succeeds." — "That is unjust," said Suzanne; "the one who excites you most ought to be the one granted mercy." — "Not at all," replied Roland; "once it is proven that she is the one who excites me most, it becomes clear that it is her death that will give me the greatest pleasure, and I aim only at the highest degree of delight; besides, if I were to grant mercy to the one who puts me in that state the quickest, you would both proceed with such ardor that you might bring me to climax before I had killed one of you—and that is what I do not want." — "That is to desire evil for its own sake, sir," said the terrified Justine; "the completion of your pleasure should be the only thing you seek, and if you can attain it without crime, what need is there to commit one?" — "Because I shall only experience pleasure fully in that way, and it is solely to kill one of you that I have come down into this vault: I know very well that I could succeed without it; but I have the delicious wickedness of requiring it in order to succeed." And, having chosen Justine to begin, he forced her to stimulate him while he freely handled every part of her body.

“There is still a long way to go, Justine,” said Roland, pressing her hips, “before these lovely forms reach the state of hardness... of insensibility in which Suzanne’s already are: hers could be burned without her feeling it; but you, Justine... you are still roses intertwined with lilies... We shall come to that... we shall come to that.”

One cannot imagine how much this threat reassured Justine; Roland no doubt did not suspect, in uttering it, the calm he restored to her. For was it not certain, indeed, that since he intended to subject her to further cruelties, he had no immediate desire to sacrifice her? Everything weighs heavily in misfortune; Justine took comfort. Another increase of hope: she produced no effect, and that massive organ, slack and folded upon itself, resisted all efforts. Suzanne, in the same posture, was handled in the same places; but as her flesh was far more hardened, Roland treated her with much less restraint. Yet Suzanne was the younger of the two.

“I am convinced,” said the libertine, “that even the most terrifying whips could not now draw a single drop of blood from that arse.” He bends them both; and by this inclination, opening up to him the four paths of pleasure, his tongue wriggles in the two narrowest, while the villain spits into the others. He takes them from the front, makes them kneel between his thighs, so that both throats are level with his cock. “Oh! As for the nipples,” said Roland, addressing Justine, “you must yield them to Suzanne; that part has never been so beautiful in you: here, see how full they are; and as he said this, he squeezed poor Suzanne’s breast until it bruised beneath his fingers; it was she who was stroking him then: no sooner had this change of hands taken place than the shaft, springing from its quiver, already threatened everything around it. “Poor Suzanne,” cried Roland, “here are terrifying results; this is your death... this is the sentence of your death, you little minx,” he continued, pinching and scratching the tips of her breasts; as for Justine’s, he merely sucked and nibbled at them. He finally places Suzanne on her knees at the edge

of the sofa; he makes her bow her head, and sodomizes her in this position. Tormented by new pains, Suzanne struggles; and Roland, who only wants to skirmish, content with a few thrusts, takes refuge in Justine's asshole, while he never ceases to grope and molest the other woman. "Here's a wench who turns me on incredibly," he says, driving a large pin into the nipple of her left breast; "I don't know what I'd like to do to her." "Oh! Sir," says Justine, "have mercy on her; her pain couldn't possibly be any sharper." "They could be much worse," said the scoundrel. "Ah! If I had here that famous Emperor Kié, one of the greatest monsters China has ever seen on its throne, we would do quite something else, truly;¹² he and his wife sacrificed victims every day: both of them, it is said, made them live in the most terrible anguish, and in such a state of pain, that they were always ready to give up the ghost, without being able to succeed, due to the cruel care of these barbarians, who, making them float from relief to torment, would bring them back to the light at one moment only to offer them death the next... "I am too gentle, Justine," continued this bull, ever gnawing, ever tearing at Suzanne's breast... oh! Yes, I am too gentle... I understand nothing of all this... I am but a schoolboy. After a brief encounter, Roland finally withdraws, without completing the act, and causes Justine more pain with this hasty retreat than he did by entering her. He throws himself, still aroused, into Suzanne's arms; and adding sarcasm to the insult, "My dear creature," he says to her, "how

¹² The Chinese emperor Kié had a wife as cruel and as debauched as himself: they spared no blood, and for their sole pleasure shed it in torrents each day. Within their palace they had a secret chamber where victims were sacrificed before their eyes while they indulged themselves. Théo, one of this prince's successors, likewise had a very cruel wife: together they had devised a brazen column, which they heated red-hot and to which they bound unfortunate victims in their presence. "The princess," says the historian from whom we borrow these details, "took infinite delight in the contortions and cries of these wretched victims; she was not satisfied unless her husband frequently afforded her this spectacle." *Hist. des Conj.*, p. 43, vol. 7.

delightfully I recall the first moments of our union! Never has a woman given me more vivid pleasures! Never have I loved one as I love you!... Let us kiss, Suzanne; we may be parted for a very long time.” “Tiger,” replies the unfortunate woman, pushing away with horror the one who speaks such cruel words to her, “stay away; do not add to the torments you inflict upon me the despair of hearing myself so insulted. Monster, satisfy your rage; but at least respect my misfortunes.” Roland, furious, seizes her; he lays her down on the couch, her thighs wide open, her vagina gaping, and well within his reach. Then, continuing his unworthy sarcasm: “Temple of my former pleasures,” cries this vile man, “you who gave me such delight when I plucked your first roses, I must now bid you farewell as well...” The vile man... he thrusts his fingernails inside her, and, probing with them for several minutes, during which Suzanne screamed at the top of her lungs, he withdraws them only when they are covered in blood. Not believing he has done enough harm, he thrusts a large needle inside her, driving it all the way to her womb. Blood gushed forth in streams; he let it flow over his penis, and wanted Justine to come and kiss that penis, drenched in her companion’s blood. Sated with these horrors, and feeling well that he could no longer restrain himself: “Come on,” he said, “come on, dear Justine, let’s settle all this with a little game of rope-cutting;¹³

¹³ This game, which has been described above, was much practiced among the Celts, from whom we descend (see the *History of the Celts* by Peloutier). Nearly all the excesses of debauchery, the singular passions of libertinism described in Justine’s story—and which once so ridiculously attracted the attention of the law—were, in more ancient times, either games of our ancestors, legal customs, or religious ceremonies. In how many pious rites of the pagans, for example, was flagellation employed? Several peoples used these same torments in the initiation of their warriors: this was called *huscanavar* (see the religious ceremonies of all the peoples of the earth). These amusements, whose only inconvenience is, at most, the death of a prostitute, were capital crimes in the last century and in the first eighty years of this one; but enlightenment advances, and, thanks to philosophy, an honest man will no longer be sacrificed for a streetwalker. Placing these wretched

such was the name of that fatal prank we mentioned earlier. Our orphan climbs onto the tripod; the villain ties the rope around her neck and stands opposite her; Suzanne, though in a dreadful state, urges him on with her hands. After a moment, he pulls the stool away; but, armed with the sickle, Justine cuts the rope and falls to the ground, unharmed. “Good,” said Roland, “good; now it’s your turn, Suzanne; remember that I’ll spare you if you manage to get out of this with as much skill.”

Suzanne takes Justine’s place; but she is deceived about the weapon entrusted to her; it is a broom that does not cut; Roland takes pleasure in watching her for a moment in this state; he touches her, fondles her all over, kisses her arse with delight, and goes to sit across from her; Justine jerks him off. Suddenly the stool slips; but Suzanne’s movements are in vain; the most hideous contortions distort the muscles of her face, her tongue stretches out; Roland stands up... he takes extraordinary pleasure in watching this girl like this. Would you believe it? He sucks with relish on that tongue stretched out by pain. “Oh! Justine,” he cries out, “what pleasure! There she hangs, the bitch, there she lies dead... Oh! Damn God twice over, never has there been a more delightful sight for me... Let’s bring her back down... let’s lay her on this sofa; I want to fuck her in the arse in this state; they say it’s the only way to take women and find them tight. He does so; Suzanne is unconscious, and yet the monster enjoys it. Let’s tie her up again, he says, she isn’t dead; she must die; and it is you, Justine, whom I want to sodomize while murdering her. There is Suzanne, suspended once more; and the wretch, thrusting into Justine’s arse—whom he had had placed right in front of him—ejaculates, while strangling his mistress. He opens a stone that concealed an even deeper crypt, hurls the corpse into it, and exits with Justine. “Sweet girl,” he says to her on the way, “you saw what just happened; remember well that

creatures in their “proper” station, people are beginning to feel that, made solely to serve as victims of our passions, it is only their disobedience that should be punished, and not our whims.

you will never enter that vault again, lest it be your turn.” — “Whenever you wish, sir,” replied Justine; “I prefer death to the dreadful existence you leave me: can life still be dear to wretches like us?” And Roland, without answering, locks her in her dungeon.

The next day, Justine’s companions asked her what had become of Suzanne; she told them, and did not astonish them; all expected the same fate, and all, like Justine, seeing the end of their sufferings, desired that death with eagerness.

A year passed in this manner, during which two of the women whom Justine had found on her arrival were treated like the unfortunate Suzanne and replaced by new ones; a third likewise disappeared. But what was Justine’s astonishment when she saw who was to take the place of this latest victim!... It was Madame Delisle, the kindly hostess with whom Justine had parted after escaping the infamous creature who had only taken her from the beggars’ den to prostitute her in Lyon. “Oh, madam!” cried Justine at the sight of her, “you whom nature created so gentle and so good—into what a fate you are reduced! Is this how heaven rewards prudence, hospitality, benevolence, and all the virtues that bring happiness to mankind?”

Madame Delisle’s charms had so inflamed Roland that he had her taken down into the vault the very evening of her arrival. One may easily imagine that she was no more spared than Justine; she returned from it in a dreadful state, and it was some consolation for them both to be able at least to weep over their misfortune together. “Oh, my dear lady,” Justine replied to the account Delisle gave of the horrors she had just endured, “what would I not give to repay all the kindness you have shown me! but, alas! unhappy myself, of what use can I be to you? ah! if I could break my chains, how quickly I would hasten to break yours! I would take more pleasure in setting you free than in gaining my own freedom... Oh, God! vain hope—we shall never leave this place.” — “The wretch,” replied Delisle, “treated me thus only because he owes me. For three years he has spent

considerable sums in my house without ever paying. Lately he persuaded me to take a walk; I had the weakness to consent: two of his men were waiting for me at the edge of a wood; they bound me, nearly suffocated me, and brought me here behind a mule, wrapped in a cloak.” — “And your family?” — “I have only a young child; my husband died last year, and I am alone; the monster knew all these circumstances well, and that is why he believed he could abuse my situation. What will become of my poor little girl? without help, without protection, left in the care of a servant who awaits me... what will become of all this? I begged that dishonourable man to let me write at least... he refused me... I am a lost woman...” And tears flowed abundantly from the beautiful eyes of that touching creature. “And his abuses,” asked our compassionate comforter, “have they outraged you as they have all who fall victim to him?” At these words the modest woman, in answer, showed Justine the marks of the violence she had suffered. “Alas!” she said, “you see what he has done to me—I am bruised, torn, and wounded all over... Oh, of what vices has nature fashioned that vile soul!”

Such was the state of affairs when it was announced at the château that Roland’s wishes had been fulfilled; that not only was he receiving for Venice the immense quantity of paper he had desired, but that he was even being asked for ten million more in counterfeit coin, for which funds would be placed at his disposal for Italy. It was impossible for this scoundrel to make a more splendid fortune; he was departing with more than two million livres in income, without counting the prospects that still lay before him. Such was the new example Providence prepared for Justine; such was the new way in which it sought once again to convince her that happiness belonged only to crime, and misfortune to virtue.

It was then that Roland came to fetch Justine to go down into the cellar for a third time; the poor girl shuddered as she recalled the threats he had made to her the last time they had gone down there... “Don’t worry,” he said to her, “you have

nothing to fear; it's about something that concerns only me... a singular pleasure I wish to enjoy, and which will put you in no danger." Justine follows... "As soon as all the doors are locked, my dear girl," said Roland, "there is no one in the house but you to whom I dare confide what this is about; I needed a very virtuous woman; I did consider Delisle, but as wise as I suppose her to be, I believe her to be vindictive... and as for my sister, I confess, I prefer you to her..." Full of surprise, Justine urges Roland to explain himself. — "Listen to me, replies this rogue: my fortune is made; but whatever favours I have received from fate, it may abandon me at any moment; I may be lying in wait... seized while I am in the process of transferring my wealth, and if this misfortune befalls me, what awaits me, Justine, is the noose; it is the very punishment with which I compose my pleasures with women that will become my own; I am convinced, as much as one can be, that this death is infinitely sweet; but since the women to whom I first made this agony known have never wished to be true to me, it is upon my own person that I desire to experience this sensation; I want to know, through my own experience, whether it is not very certain that this compression triggers in the one who experiences it the nerve that leads to ejaculation: once convinced that this death is but a game, I shall face it far more courageously; for it is not the end of my existence that frightens me; my principles are based on this, and being fully convinced that matter can never become anything but matter again, I fear hell no more than I look forward to paradise, but I dread the torments of a cruel death; like all sensual people, I fear pain; I would not want to suffer while dying." — "Oh! sir," said Justine, "yet you do enjoy tormenting others." — "Oh yes, indeed, that is precisely why I do not want to be tormented myself. Let's try it, then; you'll do to me everything I've done to you; I'll strip naked, I'll climb onto the stool, you'll tie the rope, I'll jerk off for a moment, then, as soon as you see me get hard, you'll pull the stool out from under me, and I'll be left hanging; you'll leave me there until you see either signs of pain or my

cum gushing out in waves; in the first case, you'll cut the rope immediately; in the other, you'll let nature take its course, and you'll only untie me after I've come. Well then, Justine, as you can see, I am placing my life in your hands; your freedom, your fortune—such will be the reward for your good behaviour.” — “Oh, sir,” replied Justine, “there is something extravagant in such a proposal.” — “No, no, I insist,” answered Roland, removing his clothes; “but behave well: see what proof I give you of my confidence.” What use was it for Justine to hesitate for even a moment? Was not Roland her master? Besides, it seemed to her that whatever harm she might be about to do would immediately be repaired by the utmost care she would take to preserve his life; and, whatever Roland's intentions might be, Justine's were always pure.

They made their preparations. Roland aroused himself with some of his usual preliminaries; the conversation turned to Delisle. “That creature is not worth you,” said Roland; “I like her body well enough... it is very fair, well shaped, but less tight than yours... besides, she is not as affecting as you in her tears, and I torment her with less pleasure... she will go, Justine, she will go, you may be sure.” — “So this, sir, is how you repay your debts?” — “Is it not the best of all ways? and is not murder a thousand times more delightful when it carries with it the idea of theft? Come, let me see you submit, Justine, and be very sure that I shall kill Delisle.” And as Roland became aroused at these words, he mounted the stool; Justine bound his hands and secured him; he wished her, during that time, to reproach him with all the horrors of his life: our heroine did so. Soon Roland gave the signal to remove the support... Incredible as it may seem, all occurred as he had imagined; only signs of pleasure appeared upon his face, and almost at the same instant the act was completed. When it was over, without Justine having aided him in any way, she hastened to release him; he fell unconscious, but, through her care, soon recovered his senses. “Oh, Justine,”

he said, opening his eyes, "one cannot conceive such sensations—they surpass all that can be described: let them now do with me what they will, I defy justice itself. You will find me very guilty of ingratitude, Justine," he continued, binding her hands behind her back, "but what would you have, my dear? one does not reform at my age; dear creature, you have just restored me to life, and never have I more strongly conspired against yours; you pitied Suzanne's fate—well then, I shall reunite you with her; I shall cast you alive into the vault where her body lies." In vain did Justine weep and plead; Roland listened no longer; he opened the fatal vault, lowered a lamp so that the unhappy girl might better see the multitude of corpses it contained; he then passed a rope beneath her arms, which were bound behind her back, and by means of it lowered her twenty feet to the bottom. One cannot describe Justine's suffering; it seemed her limbs were being torn from her; and what terror must have seized her!—what a prospect presented itself to her eyes! Piles of dead bodies, amidst which the unfortunate girl was to end her days, and whose stench already suffocated her. Roland ties the rope around a stick fixed across the hole, then, armed with a knife, his eye fixed on the weight hanging from the stick, the villain jerks off. "Come, wretch," he cried, "commend your soul to God; the instant of my frenzy shall be that in which I cast you into this tomb, plunge you into the eternal abyss that awaits you... Ah... ah... ah... fuck, ah! Double-fucking-God, I'm coming," and Justine feels herself flooded with a deluge of semen, without the monster having cut the rope... he pulls it out. "Well," he says to her, "were you really scared?"—"Ah! Sir,"—"That is how you will die, Justine, rest assured of it, and I was quite happy to get you used to it..." They went back up. "Great God!" said Justine to herself, "what a reward for all that I have just done for him!... yet could anything worse have befallen me?... Oh, what a man!"

At last Roland prepared for his departure; he came to see Justine the evening before, at midnight. The unfortunate girl

threw herself at his feet and begged him, with the most urgent entreaties, to restore her liberty and to add a little money so that she might make her way to Grenoble. — “To Grenoble? certainly not—you would denounce us.” — “Well then, sir,” said Justine, bathing the villain’s knees with her tears, “I swear never to go there; and, to convince you of it, deign to take me with you as far as Venice; perhaps I shall not find hearts there as hard as in my own country; and once you have been kind enough to leave me there, I swear I will never trouble you again.”

“I would not grant you a single coin in aid,” replied this notorious scoundrel brutally; “everything that touches on pity, compassion, or gratitude is so far from my heart that, even were I three times richer, no one would ever see me give so much as a crown to a poor man: the spectacle of misfortune irritates me, it amuses me; and when I cannot do harm myself, I take delight in that done by fate; I have principles on this from which I shall never depart. Justine, poverty is in the order of nature; in creating men with unequal strength, nature showed her desire that this inequality should be preserved in the changes our civilization brings to her laws; to relieve the indigent is to annihilate the established order; it is to oppose nature; it is to overturn the equilibrium that forms the basis of her most sublime arrangements; it is to work toward an equality dangerous to society; it is to encourage indolence and idleness; it is to teach the poor to rob the rich man when the latter chooses to refuse alms, through the habit that such aid gives the poor of obtaining without labor.” — “Oh, sir, how harsh these principles are! Would you speak thus if you had not always been rich?” — “The same, assuredly, Justine; ease does not create systems, it only consolidates them; their seed lies in our heart, and that heart, whatever it may be, is always the work of nature.” — “And religion, sir,” cried Justine, “charity and humanity!” — “Are the stumbling blocks of all who aspire to happiness,” said Roland; “if I have secured mine, it is only upon the ruins of all those infamous prejudices of mankind; it is by mocking both divine and human laws; by

always sacrificing the weak when I encountered them; by abusing public trust; by ruining the poor and serving the rich, that I have climbed to the steep temple of the only god I worship. Why did you not imitate me? The narrow path to that temple lay open to you as to me; have the chimerical virtues you preferred consoled you for your sacrifices? It is too late, unfortunate girl, too late; weep for your errors; suffer, and try to find, if you can, in the bosom of the phantoms you revere, what the worship you have given them has cost you." At these words the cruel Roland sprang upon Justine and once more forced her to serve his detestable desires. She believed this time she would be strangled. Suddenly he stopped short without completing his act; this conduct made Justine tremble—she thought she read her doom in it. "I am a fool to restrain myself," said the monster, withdrawing, still inflamed with lust; "is it not time the wench had her turn?" He rose, went out, and locked the cell; one cannot describe the anxiety in which he left the unfortunate girl. A thousand forebodings seized her; she scarcely had the strength to discern which agitated her most. Her cell opened again after a quarter of an hour—it was Roland, accompanied by his sister: it was the first time this beautiful and affecting creature had appeared before Justine. Yes, beautiful she was beyond all expression; affecting too, for, like the others—though with somewhat better treatment—she was the slave of a brother's passions who, despite the love he professed for her, brutalized her daily, even though she was with child by him. "Follow me, both of you," said Roland in a distracted tone; they reached in silence the fatal vault. "All is over for you," declared this dreadful man with terrible firmness; "you shall see the light no more." As he spoke, he seized his sister and, taking up a bundle of rods, beat her for a quarter of an hour over her whole body, especially her belly. "How many months are you with child?" cried the barbarian. "Six," replied the gentle creature, throwing herself at his feet; "if your fury drives you to sacrifice at once your sister, your mistress, your

friend, the mother of your child, let it at least be after this unhappy fruit of your love has seen the light.” — “I should be damned sorry for that,” said Roland; “the earth has enough of one monster like me; I do not wish to leave it my image; besides, you know I do not like progeny; nothing was more ill-judged on your part than to let yourself conceive; you signed your own death warrant with the act that gave it life.” — “Oh, my dear Roland—” — “No, no, you must perish with your child; in an hour there shall be no more talk of mother or infant.” Then, binding his unfortunate sister upon a bench, her limbs forced apart and her body raised upon a cushion, he added: “Do not trouble yourself; as I uproot one tree, I will plant another at once—assist me while I proceed. The abominable monster cuts open his sister’s belly with a scalpel... tears out the fruit himself, tramples it underfoot, and replaces the seed he has destroyed with the frothy semen he makes Justine spew forth. leaving the unfortunate woman still breathing. “Now it’s your turn,” he says to Justine; “but I want to heighten the outrage with a few more barbaric acts: the weight of gratitude is weighing on my tender heart. I must fulfil my duty, I must;” and the wretch began to stir again as he said this. “I will bind you to the bloodstained remains of this interesting sister, and thus lower you into the crypt of the dead; there, abandoned, without help, without food, amidst the toads, rats, and snakes, you will satisfy the hunger of these animals while still alive, as you yourself slowly expire from the torments of this cruel need; excruciatingly goaded by it, you will devour the corpse to which I shall bind you... Oh! you slut, this idea must surely be delightful; for you see the state it puts me in, even though I have just spent my seed. Come, Justine, I must fuck you in the arse one more time before leaving you for good... Ah! What a beautiful arse, you little slut! What a shame to deliver so many charms to the worms so soon! Let me whip you, my angel; let me draw your blood at leisure to better secure my erection;” his sister was still breathing; she was gasping; it is on the stomach

of this dying woman that Roland places Justine, so that the latter's buttocks are perpendicular to the former's two nipples. The operation begins: the executioner strikes simultaneously the throbbing throat of his unfortunate sister and the fleshy buttocks of our heroine, whom he sometimes bends over so that her head sinks into the entrails torn apart by his rage. "Ah! Whore," he says to Justine as he flogs her with all his might, "I'd like to drive you into my sister's belly, sew you in there, lock you in, and make you find your coffin there... Suddenly he paused: "What an oversight! One of your companions still lives in these gloomy places, and it is not in her arms that I sacrifice you? Wait—I will fetch her." The monster hurried out, leaving Justine alone with the dying woman whose cries tore her heart. The compassionate Justine tried to give her what aid she could—but it was too late; the greatest service would have been to end her suffering, and such an act was impossible for her nature; all she did was therefore useless, and she was given no time besides. Roland soon returned with Delisle. "Here, Justine," he said, presenting her, "give thanks to my attentions; I wish your friend to die with you."

A thousand caresses, as was this scoundrel's custom, precede his atrocities. The unfortunate man finally gives in: armed with an iron-tipped rod, Roland prepares to tear apart the beautiful buttocks of the compassionate innkeeper; he reduces them to a bloody mess. Fixing his gaze on the other two women, he sodomizes her, and arranges all three of them so well that he moves alternately from the torn belly of one into the mouth of the other, and from there into the arse of the third; finally, he seizes Delisle, hangs her up, climbs onto her shoulders, and tramples her head with his feet to better shatter the vertebrae of her neck. "Oh! Justine," he says, jerking off with all his might, "I'd treat you the same way if I weren't so incredibly hard at the thought of burying you alive... This torture is awful... my cum is ready to shoot out at the mere thought of seeing you suffer;" as he says this, he grabs the poor woman, ties her tightly to the two corpses,

and binds the whole mass with a thick rope. Then, opening the crypt of the dead, he lets a lamp down into it; then prepares to place the three bodies there as well. "Come on, Justine, it's time," he says, continuing to masturbate, "it's time for us to part forever... yes, forever; Justine, we shall never see each other again. Blind girl," he continued, "here, however, is the fruit of your virtues; consider whether it would not have been better for you never to have helped me when you met me, rather than to give your executioner, through that help, every means to make you die the most dreadful of deaths;" he lowers the bodies as he says this; then, as soon as he feels the weight is on the ground, the villain fires above their heads, and dreadful invectives still accompany the final outbursts of his frenzy. It all ends, and the stone closes.

O unhappy Justine! O most unfortunate girl! There you are, alive among the dead, bound between two corpses, and yourself more dead than those who surround you!

"Just God!" she cried, contemplating the horror of her situation, "is there in nature a being more to be pitied than I? O God whom I implore, do not abandon me, and grant me the strength necessary to preserve me from the despair to which my wretched fate reduces me. Nothing that you do is without purpose; I do not question your decrees—they must be, I know, as incomprehensible as yourself; but of what crime am I guilty to be treated as I am? No matter—you will it, I submit; let your will be done; I was perhaps an instrument of the crime your justice now seeks to break. I abandon to you, O my God, this body worn down by suffering and long dried by the tears of misery and despair; but let this soul return to you as pure as when it pleased you to give it to me, and let your consoling arms at least open to receive an unfortunate creature who has lived only for you."

Justine was lit only by a funeral lamp; she took advantage of the moment while that fatal light still burned to free herself from her bonds: the bodies to which she had been tied no longer

lived, and she had less difficulty disengaging herself; at last she succeeded; her first impulse was to give thanks to the Supreme Being; then she cast a glance of horror upon what surrounded her; it was impossible for her to count the corpses covering the foul ground of that dreadful place; she thought, however, she recognized those of the women who had preceded her; it seemed that the last one brought there, like Justine, had arrived alive and had even suffered the horrors of hunger. Almost upright, leaning against the wall, she still held in her fingers a skull in which the unfortunate creature had doubtless sought the wretched sustenance demanded by nature's imperious law... "Oh God! God! is this then how I shall end?" cried Justine; "are these the torments I am to endure, the agonies that will finish my wretched days here?" She had already spent fifteen hours in that loathsome place, where the lack of air and the infection, by absorbing all her faculties, had until then prevented her from feeling any need. For some time, the lamp had gone out; seated between two corpses, the unfortunate girl waited in silence for the Supreme Being to call her back to Him; and her thoughts, as one may easily imagine, were as gloomy as her situation... when suddenly she heard a noise... She listened; it was no illusion: the doors opened... "There is nothing," said confused voices of men and women she could scarcely distinguish... "You are mistaken!" she cried with all her strength; "an unfortunate victim still breathes in this place of horror; deign to have pity on her and deliver her as soon as possible—she is dying..." They listened; Justine cried out again; they searched for the stone that closed the vault; the prisoner indicated it as best she could... at last she rose. "In Heaven's name, save me from here," said Justine... "What!... Justine?" said a woman's voice. — "Yes, it is she—save her from the cruel fate to which our former master condemned her." — "He no longer rules over us," replied the same woman, whom Justine recognized as one of her former companions; "heaven has delivered us from him... come and share in the prosperity this event brings us all." A ladder was

immediately lowered, and Justine was brought back up into Roland's dreadful chamber; seeing again the vault she had never entered without feeling herself a thousand leagues from the world, she now believed herself already returned to it. Her companion embraced her; the two men with her hastened to tell her that Roland had finally departed, and that the new master of the house was now Delville, a gentle and humane man whose first concern had been to repair all the atrocities of his predecessor. It was by the orders of this honest man that everything was searched with care; it was through his kindness and zeal that calm and order were restored to that place, where crimes sufficiently grave were already committed, said Delville, without the addition of useless horrors that made nature shudder.

Justine returned to the château, filled with hope and joy; she was cared for, restored, and asked to recount her recent adventures; she told them, and that very evening she was settled, like her companions, in very comfortable rooms where they were now employed only in trimming pieces of coin—a task far less exhausting than the one they had performed before—and for which she, like the others, was rewarded with every consideration and excellent food.

After two months, Delville, Roland's successor, informed the whole household of his associate's successful arrival in Venice: he was established there, had secured his fortune, and was enjoying all the rest... all the happiness a man could hope for. It was far from the case, however, that the fate of the one who replaced him would be the same. The unfortunate Delville was honest in his profession—was that not more than enough to ensure he would soon be crushed?

One day, when all was quiet in the house—when, under the rule of this good master, the work, though criminal, was carried on with a certain cheerfulness, and when the unfortunate Justine, somewhat calmer, was gently considering how she might one day leave these people—the doors were suddenly forced in, the walls scaled, and before the inhabitants had time to think of

defending themselves, the château was filled with more than sixty mounted officers of the constabulary; there was no choice but to surrender; all these wretches were chained like beasts, fastened onto horses, and taken to Grenoble. "Well then," said Justine as she entered the city, "is it the scaffold that is to decide my fate in this place where I was foolish enough to believe happiness awaited me?... O forebodings of man, how deceptive you are!"

The trial of the counterfeiter was soon concluded; all were sentenced to be hanged; when the mark with which Justine had been branded was seen, they almost spared themselves the trouble of questioning her, and she was about to be treated like the others, when she finally tried to obtain some attention from the celebrated magistrate—the honour of that tribunal, an upright judge, a cherished citizen, an enlightened philosopher, whose wisdom and benevolence would forever engrave his illustrious name in letters of gold in the temple of Themis. He listened to her; convinced of the good faith of this unfortunate woman and of the truth of her misfortunes, he deigned to give her case more careful examination than his colleagues had given to that of the other accused.

M. S... himself became Justine's advocate; the complaints of this poor girl were heard; the general depositions of the counterfeiter supported the zeal of the man who undertook the defense of virtue in chains, and our unfortunate heroine was unanimously declared to have been misled, innocent, and fully acquitted, with complete freedom to become whatever she wished. Her protector added to this service the proceeds of a collection made on her behalf, which brought her more than fifty louis. At last, Justine saw the dawn of happiness shining before her; she believed herself at the end of her sufferings... heaven seemed just toward her, when it pleased Providence to convince her that its designs upon her would never change, and that she was still far from seeing realized the illusions her deceived mind believed at last within reach.

CHAPITRE XIX.

Unexpected encounter. — Philosophical dissertation.
— A new protector. — The monstrosities of a woman
already known destroy everything. — The strange
passion of a powerful man. — Departure from Gre-
noble.

Upon leaving prison, Justine took lodgings in a fairly good inn situated opposite the bridge over the Isère, on the side of the suburbs. Her intention, following the advice of M. S..., was to remain there for some time, to try to find a position in the city, or to return to Lyon if she did not succeed; and, in that latter case, the advocate-general would give her letters of recommendation. She dined at this inn at what is called the *table d'hôte*, when, on the second day, she noticed that she was being closely observed by a stout lady, very well dressed, who was addressed as baroness. After observing her in turn, Justine thought she recognized her, and both advanced simultaneously toward one another, like two people who have known each other but cannot recall where.

At last, the baroness, drawing Justine aside, said to her: "Mademoiselle, am I mistaken? Are you not the same person whom I saved ten years ago from the Conciergerie—and do you not recognize Dubois?" Little pleased with this discovery, Justine nevertheless responded politely; but, as she was dealing with the most cunning rogue in France, it became impossible for her to escape. The baroness told her she had taken an interest in her fate along with the whole city; that, had she known it concerned

her, there was nothing she would not have done with the magistrates, among whom she claimed to have many friends. Weak as usual, Justine allowed herself to be led into this woman's room and recounted her misfortunes. "My dear friend," replied Dubois after hearing her, "if I wished to see you more closely, it is to tell you that I have followed a very different path from yours... my fortune is made, and all I have is at your disposal. Look," she said, opening caskets full of gold and diamonds, "these are the fruits of my industry; had I worshiped virtue as you have, I should now be imprisoned or hanged." — "Oh, madam," replied Justine, "if you owe all this only to crimes, Providence, ever just, will not allow you to enjoy it for long." — "Error!" replied Dubois, "do not imagine that your fanciful Providence always favours virtue: do not let a brief moment of prosperity blind you so far; it is indifferent to the maintenance of nature's laws whether Paul follows evil while Peter gives himself to good. What this balancing nature requires is an equal sum of both; and the practice of crime, rather than that of virtue, is the thing in the world most indifferent to it. Listen, Justine—listen to me with a little attention," continued the wretch; "you have wit; I would at last convince you."

"It is not, my dear friend, the choice a man makes of virtue that brings him happiness; for virtue is, like crime, only one of the ways of conducting oneself in the world. The question, therefore, is not to follow one of these ways rather than the other: it is only a matter of walking in the general road; he who departs from it is always wrong. In a world entirely virtuous, I would advise you to be virtuous, because, rewards being attached to it, happiness would infallibly follow; in a world totally corrupt, I would advise you never but vice. He who does not follow the path of others inevitably perishes; everything he encounters strikes against him, and, as he is the weaker, he must necessarily be crushed. It is in vain that the laws wish to restore order and bring men back to virtue. Too themselves prevaricating to un-

dertake it, too insufficient to succeed, they may divert for a moment from the beaten path, but they will never make it be abandoned; when the general interest of men inclines them toward corruption, shall the one who refuses to corrupt himself with them struggle against the general interest? And what happiness can await one who continually thwarts the interest of others? Will you tell me that it is vice which thwarts the interest of men? I would grant it in a world composed equally of good and wicked, because then the interest of the one visibly clashes with that of the other. But it is no longer so in a wholly corrupt society; my vices then offending only the vicious man, determine in him other vices which compensate him, and we both find ourselves content; the vibration becomes general; it is a multitude of shocks and mutual injuries, in which each, immediately regaining what he has just lost, finds himself incessantly in a happy position. Vice is dangerous only to virtue, which, weak and timid, never dares to undertake anything. But when it no longer exists upon the earth, when its tedious reign is ended, vice, then offending only the vicious, will give rise to other vices, but will no longer alter any virtues. How could you not have failed a thousand times in your life, Justine, by always taking the opposite direction from that which everyone followed? If you had abandoned yourself to the torrent, you would have reached port as I have. Does the man who wishes to go up a river travel, in a single day, as much ground as the one who goes down it? You always speak to me of Providence; ah! who proves to you that this Providence loves order, and consequently virtue? Does it not constantly give you examples of its injustices and its irregularities? Is it by sending men war, plague, and famine? Is it by having formed a universe vicious in all its parts that it manifests to your eyes its extreme love for the good? Why do you wish that vicious individuals should displease it, since it itself acts only through vices, since everything is vice and corruption in its works, everything crime and disorder in its wills? But from

whom, moreover, do we receive these impulses that carry us toward evil? Is it not its hand that gives them to us? Is there a single one of our sensations that does not come from it, a single one of our desires that is not its work? Is it therefore reasonable to say that it would leave us, or give us, inclinations toward something that would harm it, or that would be useless to it? If, then, vices serve it, why should we wish to resist them? By what right would we labor to destroy them? And whence would we stifle their voice? A little more philosophy in the world would soon restore everything to order, and would show magistrates and legislators that the crimes they blame and punish with so much rigor sometimes have a degree of utility far greater than those virtues they preach without practicing them themselves, and without ever rewarding them.” — “Even if I were weak enough, madam,” replied Justine, “to embrace your dreadful systems, how would you succeed in stifling the remorse they would at every moment give birth to in my heart?” — “Remorse is a chimera,” replied Dubois; “it is, my dear Justine, only the imbecile murmur of a soul too timid to dare to annihilate it.” — “Annihilate it! Is that possible?” — “Nothing easier; one repents only of what one is not in the habit of doing. Renew unceasingly what gives you remorse, and you will easily extinguish it; oppose to it the torch of the passions, the powerful laws of interest, and you will soon have dissipated it. Remorse does not prove the crime; it merely indicates a soul easy to subjugate. Let there come an absurd order forbidding you to leave this room at once, you would not leave it without remorse, however certain it might be that you would do no harm in leaving it. It is therefore not true that only crime gives remorse. By persuading oneself of the nothingness of crimes... of the necessity of such actions in the general plan of nature, it would therefore be possible to overcome just as easily the remorse one would feel after committing them, as it would be to stifle that which would arise from your leaving this room after the illegal order you had received to remain there. One must begin with a complete analysis of all that men call crime;

with convincing oneself that what they so name is only the very just infraction of their absurd social conventions... that what is taxed as crime in France ceases to be so two hundred leagues away: I say more; that the same century often sees honored at its end what it would have punished at its beginning. What better proof of this than the revolution of empires, which, transforming themselves into republics, often crown the regicide whom despotism would have quartered! Persuade yourself then, in a word, Justine, that there is no action that is considered a crime universally in the world... none which, vicious or criminal here, is not praiseworthy and virtuous a few miles away; that everything is a matter of opinion, of geography, and that it is therefore absurd to bind oneself to practice virtues which are only vices elsewhere, and to flee crimes which are excellent actions in other climates. I ask you now whether, after these reflections, you can still retain remorse for having, through pleasure or interest, committed in France a crime which is only a virtue in China; whether I should make myself very unhappy... constrain myself prodigiously, in order to practice in France actions which would have me burned in Siam. Now, if remorse is only in proportion to prohibition; if it is born only from the fragments of restraint, and not at all from the action committed, is it a very wise movement to allow it to subsist within oneself? Is it not absurd not to stifle it as soon as one has succeeded in considering as indifferent the action that has just given rise to remorse, once one has managed to judge it so by the reflective study of the morals and customs of all the nations of the earth? This work done, one must repeat that action, whatever it may be, as often as possible; or better still, commit stronger ones than those one has conceived, in order to accustom oneself better to that one. Habit and reason will soon destroy remorse: those dark movements, sole fruits of ignorance and education, will annihilate themselves at once. One will then feel that, since there is no real crime in anything, there is only extravagance in repenting and in not daring to do all that can be useful or agreeable to us, whatever barriers must

be overthrown to achieve it. I committed my first crime at fourteen, Justine; that one broke all the bonds that constrained me... I made, to the being who had given me life, the gift most contrary to that which I had received from him... do you understand me? The wretch! I still see him breathe his last, and I never think of it without the most piquant sensations of pleasure! Since then I have not ceased to run toward fortune along a career strewn with horrors; there is not one I have not committed... or had committed, and I have never known remorse. I am approaching the end of my aim; two or three more fortunate strokes, and I pass from the state of mediocrity in which I was to end my days to more than a hundred thousand livres of income. I repeat it, dear girl, never along this path, happily traversed, has remorse made me feel its thorns. Should an unforeseen reverse hurl me into the abyss, I would not reproach myself any more; I would complain of men or of my awkwardness, but I would always remain tranquil with my conscience." — "So be it," replied Justine; "but let us reason for a moment, madam, according to your own principles. By what right do you pretend that my conscience is as firm as yours, since it has not been accustomed from childhood to overcome the same prejudices? By what title do you wish that my mind, which is not organized like yours, should adopt the same system? You admit that there is a sum of good and evil in nature, and that consequently there must be a certain number of beings who practice the good, and another who give themselves over to evil. The part I take in adopting the good is therefore in nature; whence comes your requiring that I depart from the rules it prescribes to me? You find, you say, happiness in the career you pursue: well then, madam, whence comes it that I should not find it equally in the one I follow? Do not imagine, moreover, that the vigilance of the laws leaves long in peace the one who breaks them: you have just seen a striking example of it; of fifteen rogues among whom I lived, only one escapes; fourteen perish ignominiously." — "And that, then, is what you call a misfortune!" replied Dubois.

“But what does that ignominy matter to him who has no longer any principles? When everything has been overleaped; when honor, in our eyes, is no more than a prejudice, reputation an indifferent thing, religion a chimera, death a total annihilation, is it not then the same thing to perish on a scaffold or in one’s bed? There are two kinds of scoundrels in the world, Justine; the one whom a powerful fortune, a prodigious credit, shelters from that tragic end, and the one who will not escape it if he is taken. The latter, born without means, should have only one desire, if he has wit: to become rich, at whatever price it may be; if he succeeds, he has what he wanted, he must be content; if he perishes, what will he regret, since he has nothing to lose! The laws are therefore null with respect to all villains, since they do not reach the powerful one, and since it is impossible for the wretched man to fear them, as their sword is his only resource.” — “Ah! do you believe, madam,” replied Justine quickly, “that celestial justice does not await, in another world, the one whom crime has not frightened in this one?” — “I believe,” replied this dangerous woman, “that if there were a God, there would be less evil upon the earth. I believe that if this evil exists, either these disorders are ordained by that God, and then here is a barbarous being, or he is unable to prevent them, and from that moment here is a weak God, and in all cases an abominable being, a being whose thunder I must brave and whose laws I must despise. Ah! Justine, is not atheism better than either of these extremes? and is it not a hundred times more reasonable not to believe in God than to adopt one so dangerous... so frightful, so contrary to common sense and to reason?... No, by God—” And the monster, rising here with indescribable movements of rage and fury, vomited a torrent of blasphemies, more atrocious... more execrable than one another, and at which the innocent Justine shuddered to the point of rising from her seat. “Stop,” cried Dubois, holding her back, “stop, my girl; if I cannot conquer your reason, let me at least captivate your heart. I need you, do not refuse me your assistance; here are a thousand louis, they belong to you as

soon as the deed is done.” Prudent Justine, listening here only to her inclination to do good, at once asked what it was about, in order to prevent, if she could, the crime meditated by this fury. “Here is what I wish to tell you,” replied Dubois; “have you noticed that young merchant from Lyon who has been eating here these four or five days?” — “Dubreuil?” — “Precisely.” — “Well?” — “He is in love with you; he has confided it to me: your modest and gentle air pleases him infinitely; he loves your candor, and your virtue enchants him. This romantic lover has eight hundred thousand francs in gold or in paper in a casket by his bed; let me persuade him that you consent to listen to him; whether that be so or not, what does it matter to you? I will induce him to propose an outing outside the city; I will convince him of the point to which he will advance his affairs with you by means of that excursion. You will amuse him, you will keep him out as long as possible; I will rob him during that interval: but I will not flee; his effects will already be in Piedmont while I shall still be in Grenoble. We will use every art possible to dissuade him from casting his eyes upon us; we will appear to aid him in his search. Meanwhile my departure will be announced; it will not astonish; you will follow me, and the thousand louis will be paid to you upon reaching the frontiers of France.”

“I accept, madam,” replied Justine, fully resolved to warn the young man of the theft intended against him; “but do you reflect,” she continued, the better to deceive that wretch, “that if Dubreuil is in love with me, I may, by forewarning him or yielding myself to him, obtain much more from him than you offer me to betray him?” — “Bravo!” replied Dubois; “that is what I call a good pupil; I begin to believe that heaven has given you more talent than I for crime: well then,” she continued, writing, “here is my note for double; dare now refuse me!” — “I shall take good care not to, madam,” said Justine, taking the note; “but attribute at least only to my weakness and to my poverty the fault I commit in yielding to your seductions.” — “I wished to

make it a merit of your wit," said Dubois; "you prefer that I attribute it to your misfortune; it shall be as you wish: serve me always, and you will be satisfied."

Justine, filled with her plan, begins that very evening to make a little more advance toward Dubreuil; she soon discerns the feelings of this young man for her. Nothing could be more embarrassing than her situation; she was very far, no doubt, from lending herself to the proposed crime, even had it been a matter of a thousand times more gold; but to denounce this woman was another distress for her: it repugned her exceedingly to expose to death a creature to whom she had owed her liberty ten years before; she would have wished to find a means of preventing the crime without punishing it; and, with anyone other than so consummate a villain as Dubois, she would infallibly have succeeded. Such, then, were the results of her resolution, ignorant that the secret maneuvers of this horrible woman would not only derange the whole structure of her honest designs, but would even punish her for having conceived them.

On the appointed day for the excursion, Dubois invites Dubreuil and Justine to dine in her room. The meal finished, the two young people go down to hasten the carriage being prepared for them; Dubois not having followed, Justine finds herself alone with her lover. "Sir," she says to him very quickly, "listen to me attentively; no outcry; above all observe rigorously everything I am about to prescribe to you... Have you a trustworthy friend in this inn?" — "Yes, a young associate on whom I can rely as upon myself." — "Well then, sir, go at once and order him not to leave your room for a single minute during the whole time we shall be out on the excursion." — "But I have the key to that room; what does this additional precaution mean?" — "It is more essential than you think, sir; make use of it, I beg you, or I do not go out with you. The woman with whom we have dined is a rogue; she has arranged the excursion we are about to

make together only in order to rob you more easily. Make haste, sir, she is watching us... she is dangerous; quickly give your key to your friend; let him go and establish himself in your room, and let him not stir from it until we have returned. I will explain everything else as soon as we are in the carriage." Dubreuil understands Justine; he presses her hand to thank her, hastens to give orders in accordance with the warning he has received, and immediately returns. They set out. On the way, Justine reveals the whole affair; she recounts her own adventures, informs her young lover of the unfortunate circumstances that made her acquainted with the execrable Dubois. Dubreuil, honest and sensitive, shows the liveliest gratitude for the service rendered him; he takes an interest in Justine's misfortunes, and proposes to soften them by offering her his hand. — "I am only too happy to be able to repair the wrongs fortune has done you, mademoiselle," he says to her; "I am my own master; I depend on no one; I am going to Geneva to invest the considerable sums your good advice has saved me; you shall follow me there: upon our arrival, I become your husband, and you shall appear in Lyon only under that title; or, if you prefer it, mademoiselle, if you have any mistrust, it shall be only in my own country that I give you my name."

Such an offer flattered Justine too much for her to dare refuse it; but neither did it suit her to accept it without making Dubreuil feel everything that might cause him to repent of it. He was grateful to her for this delicacy, and only pressed her the more insistently. O unfortunate creature! must it be that happiness offers itself to you only in order to make you feel more keenly the sorrow of never being able to seize it!... must it be, then, that no virtue can arise in your heart without preparing torments for you!

They had gone on, still conversing, nearly two leagues from the city, and were about to descend from the carriage to enjoy the coolness of some avenues along the banks of the Isère, where they intended to walk, when suddenly Dubreuil was taken ill...

dreadful vomiting seized him... They return to Grenoble: Dubreuil is in such a state that he must be carried to his room. His condition astonishes his associate. A physician arrives. Just heaven!... the unfortunate young man is poisoned. Justine, terrified, runs to Dubois's apartment: the wretch! she had departed. Our heroine goes to her own room... her wardrobe has been broken open; the few clothes she possesses have been taken from her. Dubois, they tell her, has been hastening, these three hours past, toward Turin; there is no doubt that she is the author of this multitude of crimes: she had presented herself at Dubreuil's; piqued at finding people there, she had taken revenge on Justine, and had poisoned the young man at dinner, so that, upon their return, if she had succeeded in robbing him, the wretch, more occupied with his life than with pursuing the one who was stealing his fortune, would let her escape in safety; and so that, his death occurring, so to speak, in Justine's arms, this poor girl might be more legitimately suspected than she.

Our unhappy orphan returns to Dubreuil's; she is not allowed to approach him; she complains of the refusal; they tell her the reason for it: the unfortunate man is now occupied with nothing but God, and is breathing his last; however, he has cleared the one he loves of blame; he forbids that she be pursued; he dies. Scarcely has he closed his eyes when his young friend hastens to Justine, recounts all these circumstances to her, and endeavors to calm her... Alas! can this be? must she not weep bitterly for the loss of a man who had so generously offered to rescue her from poverty? can she fail to deplore a theft that plunges her once more into the misery from which she had scarcely emerged? "Dangerous woman!" she cries, "if that is where your dreadful principles lead, must one be surprised that they are abhorred, and that honest people punish them?" But Justine reasoned as one injured, and Dubois, who saw only her own happiness... her own interest in what she had undertaken, no doubt concluded very differently.

Justine confided everything to Valbois, Dubreuil's associate—both what had been contrived against the man he had lost, and what had happened to herself. He pitied her, sincerely regretted Dubreuil, and reproached Justine for the excess of delicacy that had prevented her from going at once to lodge a complaint as soon as she had been informed of Dubois's plans; together they concluded that this monster, who needed only four hours to reach a place of safety, would be there before anyone had thought to have her pursued... that it would involve considerable expense... that the innkeeper, seriously compromised in the complaint that would be made, and defending himself vigorously, might perhaps end by crushing Justine herself... she who seemed to breathe at Grenoble only by having escaped the gallows. These reasons persuaded and convinced her so completely that she resolved to depart without even taking leave of her protector. Valbois approves this course; he does not conceal from our heroine that if this affair should be revived, the depositions he himself would be obliged to make would infallibly harm her, both because of her connections with Dubois and by reason of the last excursion she made with his friend; that he therefore advised her, on these grounds, to leave at once, without seeing anyone, quite assured that for his part he would never act against her, whom he believed innocent, and whom he could accuse only of weakness in all that had just taken place.

Upon reflecting on Valbois's advice, Justine believed she recognized that it was all the better, as it seemed as certain that she appeared guilty as it was evident that she was not; that the only thing that spoke in her favor (the warning given to Dubreuil at the moment of the excursion), poorly explained by him, it was said, at the point of death, would no longer become as strong a proof as she had been able to imagine. These considerations decide her at once; she communicates them to Valbois, who continues to approve them. "I wish," he said to her, "that Dubreuil had entrusted me with some arrangements favorable to you; I would carry them out with the greatest pleasure; I even wish

that he had told me it was to you that he owed the advice to have me guard his room; but he has done nothing of the sort. I am therefore constrained to limit myself to the sole execution of his orders; the misfortunes you have suffered on his account would incline me to do something of my own accord, if I could, mademoiselle, but I am beginning in trade, I am young, my fortune is limited, I am obliged at once to render Dubreuil's accounts to his family; permit me then to restrict myself to the small service which I beg you to accept; here are five louis, and here is an honest tradeswoman from Châlons-sur-Saône, my native town; she is returning there, after having stopped twenty-four hours at Lyon, where some business calls her. I entrust you to her care. Madame Bertrand," continued Valbois, presenting Justine to this woman, "here is the young person of whom I spoke to you; I recommend her to you; she desires to find a position; I beg you, with the same urgency as if it concerned my own sister, to exert all possible efforts to find her, in our town, something suited to her person, to her birth... to her education... let it cost her nothing until then; I will reimburse you for everything at first meeting. Farewell, mademoiselle," continued Valbois, asking Justine's permission to embrace her; "Madame Bertrand leaves tomorrow at daybreak, follow her, and may a little more happiness accompany you in a town where I may perhaps have the satisfaction of seeing you again soon."

The honesty of this young man drew tears from Justine; kind treatment is very sweet, when one has experienced for so long only odious ones; she accepts everything, protesting that she will concern herself only with being able one day to repay it. "Alas!" she said as she withdrew, "if the exercise of a new virtue has just plunged me into misfortune, at least, for the first time in my life, does the hope of consolation offer itself to me in that frightful abyss of evils into which virtue again casts me."

It was early; the need to breathe had led Justine down to the quay of the Isère, with the intention of walking there for a few

moments, and, as almost always happens in such cases, her reflections carried her far away. An isolated grove attracts her; she sits down there to dream more at her ease; meanwhile night falls without her thinking of withdrawing, when she suddenly feels herself seized by three men; one places a hand over her mouth; the other two throw her precipitately into a carriage, get in with her, and they cut through the air for three long hours, without any of these brigands deigning to say a word to her, or to answer any of her questions.

Although it was night, the shutters were lowered, and Justine could absolutely see nothing; at last the carriage arrives at a house; doors open and close immediately; her guides carry her and thus make her pass through several very dark apartments; they finally leave her in one, near which is a room where she perceives a light. "Stay there," one of her abductors says to her harshly as he withdraws with his companions, "you will soon see people you know;" and the rogues disappear, carefully closing all the doors; another opens almost at the same moment, and Justine sees a woman come toward her with a candle in her hand... God! who is this woman?... will it be believed? it is Dubois, Dubois herself, that dreadful monster, no doubt devoured by the most ardent desire for revenge. — "Come, charming girl," she says arrogantly, "come receive the reward for the virtues to which you have given yourself at my expense... Ah! you jade, I will teach you to betray me." — "I have never betrayed you, madam," Justine replies precipitately, "no, never, inquire into it; I have made not the slightest complaint that could give you uneasiness; I have not said a word that could compromise you." — "Did you not oppose the crime I was meditating? did you not prevent it, unworthy creature? and is that not to cause me the most mortal of all vexations, to arrest the impulse of my crimes? You must be punished for it, slut, you must," and she squeezed her hand so violently as she spoke that she thought she would break her fingers. They enter an apartment as sumptuous as it is

well lit; it was that of the country house of the bishop of Grenoble, who himself, half reclined upon an ottoman, received these ladies in a violet taffeta dressing gown. We shall soon return to the portrait of this libertine. "Monseigneur," Dubois says to him, presenting Justine, "here is the young person you desired, she in whom all Grenoble has taken an interest as you have, the famous Justine, in a word, condemned to be hanged with counterfeiters, and afterward released on account of her innocence and her virtue; you saw her at her interrogation, you desired her... 'If she is to be hanged,' you said to me, 'I give a thousand louis to enjoy her beforehand'; she is saved: does she have less value in your eyes?" — "Much less," said the prelate, rubbing himself over his shirt, "infinitely less, no doubt. The pleasure of that was to amuse oneself with her and to have her hanged afterward; I had done everything possible to make her fall into that snare, and that damned S..., with his Gothic equity, came to disturb all my arrangements." — "What does it matter, here she is; are you not master of doing with her today whatever you please?" — "Yes, madam, yes, I know it well; but I repeat to you that it is not the same thing; it is so delightful to make use of the sword of the laws to immolate such creatures! Well then, monseigneur," said Dubois, "we shall give this one the piquancy she lacks, by joining to Justine that pretty boarder from the convent of the Benedictines of Lyon, whose family you had the skill to ruin in order to make the girl fall into your hands." — "What! is it done?" — "Yes, monseigneur; completely deprived of resources, the unhappy girl arrives this evening to implore your assistance; that one has her physical and moral virtue; this one has only that of sentiment, but it forms part of her existence; and nowhere will you find a creature more full of candor and honesty: both are yours, monseigneur, and you will dispatch them both this evening, or one today, the other tomorrow; as for me, I take my leave. The kindnesses you have shown me have engaged me to inform you of my affair... a man dead... monseigneur, a man dead, I flee..." — "Ah! no, no, charming woman,"

cried the pastor, “no, stay, and fear nothing when I protect you... a man dead, you say?... were there twenty, I would save you from it... stay, I tell you, you are the soul of my pleasures; you alone possess the great art of exciting them and satisfying them; and the more you redouble your crimes... the more you wallow in the mire of infamy, the more my head is inflamed for you... But she is pretty, this Justine...” Then, addressing her: “How old are you, my child?” — “Twenty-six years, monseigneur, and a great deal of sorrow.” — “Yes, sorrows... misfortunes, not so many as I should have wished, however; for I do not conceal it from you, my dear, I did everything possible to have you hanged; but what I could not have carried out in one way, perhaps I shall accomplish myself in another; and I assure you you will lose nothing by it... You have misfortunes, you claim? Very well! we shall end them all, my angel; I assure you that in twenty-four hours you will no longer be unhappy”—(and with frightful bursts of laughter)—“is it not true, Dubois, that I have a sure means of ending the reverses of a young girl?” — “Assuredly,” said that odious creature; “and if Justine were not one of my friends, I would not have brought her to you; but it is right that I reward her for what she has done for me: you would never imagine how useful this dear girl has been to me in my last enterprise at Grenoble. You are kind enough to take charge of my gratitude, and I beg you to acquit me amply.”

The darkness of these words, the even more hideous ones from the accursed prelate... that young girl who had been announced... all of this instantly fills Justine’s imagination with a turmoil that would be difficult to describe. A cold sweat breaks out on her skin; she is on the verge of fainting; such is the moment when the lecher’s tactics finally succeed in arousing him: he draws her close to him, begins with two or three kisses in which their mouths are forced to unite; he draws Justine’s tongue toward him; he sucks it, thrusts his own deep into the throat of our beautiful adventuress, and seems to draw out even her breath; he forces her to rest her head on his chest; and lifting her

hair, he carefully examines the nape of her neck. "Oh! It's delightful," he exclaims, pressing hard on that spot; "I've never seen anything so well-formed; it will be divine to make it burst; this last remark dispels all of Justine's doubts once and for all; and the unfortunate woman realizes full well that she is once again in the hands of one of those libertines with cruel passions, whose most intense pleasures consist in taking delight in the pain or death of the wretched victims procured for them by force of money, and that she is on the verge of losing her life.

At that moment there is a knock at the door; Dubois goes out, and immediately brings back the young woman from Lyon of whom mention had just been made.

Let us now attempt to sketch the two new personages with whom we are about to see Justine.

Monseigneur the bishop of Grenoble, with whom it is proper to begin, was a man of fifty years, slender, thin, but powerfully built. Muscles, almost always swollen, rising on his arms covered with coarse black hair, announced in him strength along with health; his face was full of fire; his eyes small, black, and wicked; his teeth fine, and wit in all his features. His stature, well proportioned, was above the average; and the goad of lust, of a size indeed quite rare, joined to the length of a foot more than eight inches in circumference. This instrument, dry, sinewy, always foaming, remained erect during the five or six hours that the session lasted, without lowering for a single minute. There existed no man so hairy; one would have said it was one of those fauns that fable depicts; his dry and hard hands were ended by fingers whose strength was that of a vise; his character was abrupt, wicked, cruel; his mind inclined to a kind of sarcasm and teasing, suited to redouble the sufferings one could well see a poor girl must expect with such a man.

As for Eulalie, one need only look at her to judge her birth and virtue; nothing could match the villainy the bishop had committed to lure her into his trap; she possessed, along with an enchanting candour and naivety, one of the most delightful faces

it was possible to see. Eulalie, barely sixteen years old, had the face of a virgin; her innocence and modesty made her even more beautiful; she had little colour, but this only made her more interesting; and the sparkle in her beautiful dark eyes restored to her pretty face all the fire that her pallor seemed to deprive her of at first; her mouth, a little large, was set with the most beautiful teeth; her throat, already well-formed, seemed whiter than her complexion; her waist was delightful; her curves were round and full; all her flesh firm, soft, and plump. It was impossible to see such a beautiful bottom; a light down of hair shaded the front; superb blond hair, floating over all her charms, made them even more alluring; and to complete her masterpiece, nature, which seemed to have fashioned her at will, had endowed her with the sweetest and most sensitive character. Tender and delicate flower, were you meant to beautify the earth for but a moment, only to wither so soon!

“Oh! Your Lordship,” cried the beautiful girl, recognising her tormentor, “is this how you have deceived me? You said I was to regain my estate... all my rights; yet these scoundrels who have come to drag me from my retreat are bringing me to your house only to be dishonoured there.” — “Eh? Yes, it is awful, isn’t it, my angel? It is a betrayal... a barbarity;” and as he said this, the treacherous man abruptly drew her towards him and was already beginning his lecherous kisses, whilst he allowed himself to be gently defiled by Justine. Eulalie tried to defend herself; but Dubois, pressing her against this libertine, deprived her of any means of escape. These preliminaries were protracted; the fresher the flower, the more the lecher relished sucking her: these repeated suctions were followed by the examination of her vagina: it was then that Justine could perceive the incredible effect this inspection had on him; his cock, as he did so, swelled with such force that our charming orphan could no longer grasp it even with both hands... “Come now,” said His Lordship, “here are two victims who will give me great pleasure; you shall be richly rewarded, Dubois, for I am well served. Let us go into my boudoir;

follow us, dear woman; follow us," he continued, leading this shrew away, "you shall leave tonight; but I need you for my expedition. Nothing leads to crime like the sight of a monster; and you are one, my child, one of the most strongly marked that nature has vomited forth in a long time. Oh! how precious you are to me for that!... Come." Dubois resigns herself, and they pass into the cabinet of pleasures of this debauchee, where the women, upon arriving, immediately receive the order to strip themselves naked.

Before describing the horrors committed in this frightful place, we believe it necessary to depict its decoration; and, while the dresses are being removed, we shall sketch it as best we can.

This vast cabinet was pentagonal in shape, filled by five mirrored alcoves, in the middle of each of which was a sofa of black satin; the angles of each alcove were vaulted, and contained within them a small altar, having at its centre a stucco group representing a naked young woman beneath the hand of an executioner. Each torture being different, there were consequently ten kinds of them to be seen. Once inside this room, it became impossible to know by which way one had entered, since the door was concealed by the mirrors of the alcoves. The ceiling of this cabinet was of glasswork; the light reached it only from above. Curtains of sky-blue taffeta fell around this glass dome, and formed, for the night, a delightful ceiling, from the middle of which then appeared a sun with eight rays, by whose light the boudoir found itself infinitely better illuminated than in broad daylight. The centre of this voluptuous chamber was occupied by a vast round basin. From the middle rose a small scaffold upon which stood a machine sufficiently singular to merit a description. Behind the machine was a chair placed upon the scaffold and intended for the person who wished to set in motion the spring of the infernal crank, whose details are as follows.

Upon a plank of ebony wood was firmly bound the object one wished to sacrifice; beside it stood the mannequin of a horrible man holding an enormous sabre. The executioner, seated

in the chair, had at the level of his face the buttocks of the captive object; if he wished to enjoy that backside while remaining standing, he could do so easily. Near his right hand was a silk cord which he could move at will; if he shook it violently, the spectre holding the sabre cleanly and very swiftly severed the head offered to its blows; if he drew the cord gently, the sabre slashed, and tore only slowly through the ligaments of the neck, which equally fulfilled the purpose, but in such a way as to make the unfortunate victim suffer only by degrees, while her blood flowed into the round basin surrounding the scaffold, as we have just said.

The deepest silence reigned throughout that part of the house, and any attempt to make oneself heard there would have been in vain. When the women entered with the prelate, they found seated in that room a stout abbot of forty-five, whose face was hideous and whose build was gigantic. He was reading *La Philosophie dans le boudoir*¹⁴ on a sofa. "Look," said the bishop, "at the two lovely victims that Dubois has brought me this evening; look at those sublime buttocks, you who love them, abbot; examine them, libertine, and tell me what you think."

Justine and Eulalie, urged on by Madame Dubois, were then forced to go and present their behinds to the abbot, who, still holding the book in his hand, felt them up and examined them with complete composure, saying casually... "Yes, that's not too bad... it's worth getting worked up about." Turning then to Madame Dubois, whose buttocks he also touched... "Have you urged obedience... the most exact submission? Do these creatures know that they are here in the holiest sanctuary of despotism and tyranny?"... "Yes, sir," replies Dubois, bowing to better present her buttocks to the abbot; "I have spoken to them at length of Monseigneur's immense power, his prodigious wealth, his eminent standing, and I believe them all ready to humble

¹⁴ It has seemed to us that this work, by the same hand as the present one, ought on that account—and perhaps even on many others—to lay claim to the esteem of the curious. (*Editor's note.*)

themselves before his greatness..." — "Let them prove it, then," said the abbot, "by appearing here only on their knees, until they are permitted to rise." And the two young women, immediately bowing, seemed to await the orders the prelate might deign to give them. This libertine, himself almost naked, went, as was his custom, to gaze at himself in every mirror, whilst having himself masturbated by Dubois before each of them. Both of them contemplated the representations of the tortures and seemed to threaten the two unfortunate girls with them; they, still on their knees, could only shudder and lower their eyes, while the phlegmatic abbé continued his reading, without appearing to take the slightest part in the scene. Having made his rounds, the bishop went to try out the executioner's chair; he sat down in it, set the spring in motion, and ordered the two patients to observe with what lightness and speed his mannequin could sever heads. He stepped down: "Dubois," he said, "order these hags to come, one after the other, to pay me homage." Justine appears first; she sucks the prelate's mouth, has her arse kissed, sucks his cock, and, on Dubois's orders, thrusts her tongue as far as she can into the old libertine's anus... "If I shat in your mouth," says the bishop, "would you swallow it?"... "By God, Your Grace," remarks the abbot at these words, "it would be a great honour for this little wench, and you may be sure she would not dream of refusing..." — "And you?" asks the bishop, addressing Eulalie. "Oh! Good heavens!" replied the beautiful girl in tears, "do not take advantage of my misfortune; since I am in your power, do with me as you will, but respect my plight; I am entitled to ask this of you..." — "That is a most insolent reply," said the abbot, "and one which clearly proves that this young girl is not sufficiently imbued with all that she owes to the important person in whose company she has the honour of being..." — "What is the penance," asked Dubois, "which Your Grace ordains for such an incongruous reply?"... "I want," said the prelate, "her to lick the abbot's arsehole... to suck his cock... and then to come to me to receive a dozen slaps, as many pinches on her bottom." No

sooner had the sentence been pronounced than the monstrous clergyman masterfully exposed the most disgusting behind it was possible to see... a detestable arse, which poor Eulalie was forced to suck lovingly. What a contrast! She likewise takes, between her rose-petal lips, the limp, slobbery cock of this debauchee; then, drawing closer to the prelate, she goes to humbly endure the mortifications imposed upon her. Meanwhile, the vile abbot, catching on to what these preliminaries mean, has Dubois wank him off, whilst fondling Justine's buttocks, as the bishop torments Eulalie... "Abbé," said the master of the house, finishing this operation, "I have a tremendous erection; I can see I shall do a great deal of harm today." — "Is not Monseigneur the master? Is not everything that inhabits these premises subject to him? He need only make a gesture, and all will humble themselves before him." The bishop, who revelled in this despotism, and in whose mind one could see that such flattery met with the greatest success, signalled to Justine, who, approaching at once, was ordered to lie flat on her stomach on a sofa, so as to offer her behind to the bishop's member; but it is not without incredible difficulty that his monstrous beam manages to penetrate such a small orifice: at last it is nestled there. Eulalie, led by the abbot, is at the same time stretched out on Justine's back, her legs in the air and her head down, so that Justine's arse-fucker could fuck Eulalie's mouth, whose open thighs offered the chaplain a pretty little virgin pussy, which he slurped at, whilst Dubois, kneeling before her arse, returned the favour to her arsehole.

However, Justine, horribly tormented by the cock sodomising her, does everything she can to break free, and eventually succeeds. "Oh! double-fucked God," said the bishop angrily, "never yet has any woman dared fail me to such a degree. Abbé, what do you say to such stupidity?..." — "There is no punishment severe enough to avenge it, monseigneur," replied the chaplain; "if this slut did not still have a few moments in which to serve your caprices, I would beg you to have her put to death on the spot: but, since your need of her is unfortunately only

too real, I think we must content ourselves with delivering her over to me, so that I may thrash her before you in the bloodiest manner..." — "Yes," said the bishop, "but I wish it to be upon the breasts; you know my horror for that part of a woman's body: let Justine kneel before you then, abbé; and tear her breasts with these rods, with all the strength of your arm." The sentence is no sooner pronounced than it is executed; the savage abbé strikes with such violence that Justine is on the point of fainting... "That is enough," said the bishop; "she is bleeding, that is all I wanted; let her now be presented once more to my blows, and let her persuade herself well that I shall immolate her the moment she takes it into her head to play me such a trick again." The posture is resumed; our heroine is worked over for nearly half an hour continuously, and new pleasures come to occupy the prelate.

"Father," he said, pointing at Eulalie, "you must deflower this little girl before I sodomise her; I wouldn't willingly sodomise her if someone else's cock hadn't already poked around in her cunt beforehand. "For God's sake, Your Grace," said the abbot, "you're giving me a task which, as you well know, is not really to my taste; it's not at all certain that I'll be able to get a hard-on, having only a cunt to look at. Let us try all the same, to please you." La Dubois holds the child; Justine prepares the abbot's member, and the prelate, a *lognette* in hand, examines everything with the most scrupulous attention. It is indeed not without difficulty that the rascal manages to get himself ready; several times even, during the operation, Madame Dubois, to arouse him better, is forced to turn the coin over; and, as she observes that the erectile nerve bends every time the child is laid on her back, it is unanimously decided that Eulalie shall only be deflowered in the doggy-style position. The operation begins: Justine and Dubois assist her; and since the abbot, however monstrous he might be in stature, was not a colossus in terms of physical prowess, his member soon disappeared; the blood heralds his victory. "Good, good," cries the bishop, coming himself to spur his man on to

battle; “tear that slut apart, cut her down, dear abbot; I wish your cock were made of iron at this very moment, to torment the victim all the better.” — “My word, Your Grace,” said the priest, withdrawing his cock, covered in blood, “that is truly all I can do in your service; for as for cum, on my honour, I shall not waste any in a cunt.” — “Very well!” said the bishop, “fuck Dubois in the arse, whilst I go and sodomise these two little whores in turn in one of my alcoves.” Everything was carried out; and, this new bout over, without a drop of semen having been spilled; the bishop seized Eulalie and groped her in such a way as to make it clear that his head was getting terribly hot at molesting this little girl. It was then that he put into practice, with her, a form of torture for which the annals of the most depraved debauchery would surely offer no example. He wrapped a waxed thread around her breasts; then, tightening the thread prodigiously, he made her nipples swell until they turned purple; he bit into this swollen mass, causing blood to spurt into his mouth: Justine was wanking him during this time, and Dubois was whipping him. “I detest breasts,” cried the bishop, “and have no greater delight in the world than molesting them.” Shortly afterwards, he passes a new thread through the tips of her breasts, and compresses this delicate part so violently that blood spurted onto one of the mirrors; the vile man brings his mouth to the wound; he delights in sucking the wound: the victim is presented to him, whose screams and agony cannot be described; she is placed before him in a completely opposite position. Now it is only her buttocks that she exposes to her tormentor. Here the abbot is tasked with pinching off bits of flesh with his fingertips, which is very difficult on a bottom so firm... so plump: as soon as he has managed to stretch the skin taut, the bishop passes his thread round the pinched piece and tightens it: often the flesh slips away; sometimes the operation succeeds. In the latter case, His Grace does not forget to bite down with all his might on the compressed pinch of flesh, and to swoon with delight as soon as he sees the blood. “I do not know,” says the fierce

abbot, “why His Grace does not cut off these pieces of flesh?” — “It is because I am being sparing,” replies the prelate, panting with lust; “we shall soon redouble all this”

It is easy here to imagine what Justine’s situation must have been; seeing in all these tortures only the image of those destined for herself, she shuddered: the bishop’s looks announced to her only too clearly her deplorable fate... the unfortunate girl, alas! even had she forgotten it herself, would not everything surrounding her have taken the greatest pleasure in reminding her of it? A new horror is carried out; it is still new, no doubt, in the annals of lubricity.

Eulalie is pinned down, on her knees, against the sides of the vat in the centre of which, as we have said, stood the scaffold; her hands are bound behind her back, and she is stripped of any means of defence; all that remains is her pretty face and her alabaster bosom. The dreadful bishop whips her face, he slaps her, he spits in her face, he gives her hideous slaps, and utterly disfigures, through such atrocities, the charming features of this delightful little creature. She was a sight to make one shudder; it was as though a swarm of honey flies had taken pleasure in swelling up that lovely face; and yet, the insult not yet being grave enough in the eyes of this monster, he has her laid out on the ground, tramples on her body, and shits into her mouth; he calls the abbot, demands that he do the same; Dubois imitated them, and Eulalie’s entire head disappeared beneath the mass of shit that swallowed her up. That is not all; she must swallow it; she is condemned to do so, a dagger pressed to her breast. “Let her be raised,” says the bishop, “I can wait no longer; I must dispatch her... and then you... you,” he says, fixing his gaze on Justine, “and by God, you shall not be treated so gently, I swear it. What you have just seen is but a sample; I promise you many more torments; you have been too highly recommended to me for me to spare you. Come now,” continues this monster of lust as soon as he sees Eulalie cleaned, “let this little girl confess, and let her prepare for death.” The unfortunate girl approaches the abbot,

who, clad in a surplice and holding the Christ figure in his hand, listens attentively to the innocent confessions made to him, whilst Dubois jerks him off and he fondles her bottom with his free hand. "Oh, Father," said this charming girl as she finished, "you see how pure my conscience is; intercede for me, I beg you; I do not deserve to lose my life." But these words, spoken in the sweetest and most flattering tone... these touching words, which would have moved tigers, only served to inflame the bishop's treacherous imagination all the more. Carried by her own confessor, Eulalie is led, almost fainting, to the dreadful scaffold where her life is to end. Lying on the fateful plank, the bishop thrusts his cock into her arse, whilst Dubois whips her, and opposite the scaffold, the abbot, still in his surplice, sodomises Justine: already the fatal cord is in the bishop's hands. "Take it easy! Take it easy!" cries the vile chaplain to him; "make sure she feels herself dying; the longer you prolong the agony, the more intensely you will come." The prelate grows inflamed; the most frightful blasphemies fly energetically from his foaming lips; delirium seizes his senses; the spring is released, but with a perfidious gentleness that tears apart only by degrees the beautiful head offered to its blows... it is at last completely severed; it rolls, amid floods of blood, into the vat destined to receive it.

O culmination of horror and cruelty! nothing remains but the trunk; the ferocious bishop excites himself upon it still; he does not cease to sodomize that bloody corpse; he had nevertheless lost his seed... the execrable mortal pursues his efforts, in order to restore his strength... in order to recover life in a body from which he has just torn it. "Come," he says, withdrawing, "there I am, quite as ready as if I had lost nothing: let Justine be prepared." — "Oh! monseigneur," Dubois here interrupts, "that punishment is too mild for her; have you none more dreadful? I am quite sure that if you were at the head of a government, you would find that death too weak for the villains who had deserved it; now, Justine is in that case; so, find us something better."

“Certainly,” replied the bishop; “although a great criminal myself, I do not conceal from you that I would wish judicial punishments to be multiplied far more than they are, and that they be made more imposing; the reason for this is quite simple... Come,” he continued, descending and lying down upon one of the sofas, “let us analyse this matter a little, while I recover my breath... Reassure yourself, Dubois, your protégée will lose nothing by it.

“You believe, you say, my friends, that the punishments I would institute, were I invested with any authority, would become infinitely more rigorous than those now in use: assuredly, those punishments would be both more dreadful and more numerous, no doubt. Remember well that the submission of the people—that submission so necessary to the sovereign who governs them—is due only to violence and to the extent of punishments.¹⁵ Any leader whatsoever who would wish to govern by clemency will soon be hurled from his throne. The ferocious animal known as the people necessarily needs to be led with an iron rod: you are lost the moment you allow it to perceive its strength. It will never profit from the rays of light you allow to shine before its eyes except to shake off the yoke; and what necessity is there, then, to instruct it? What good does the State derive from the philosophy of the people? The governed individual requires no other virtue than patience and submission; intellect, talents, the sciences are made to be the portion only of the ruler. The greatest misfortunes will always result from the overthrow of these principles. There will cease to be any real authority in any government where each believes himself made to share in it, and all the scourges of anarchy will result from this extravagance. Now, the sole means of avoiding these dangers is to tighten the chain as much as possible, to promulgate the most severe laws, absolutely to refuse instruction to the people, above

¹⁵ “Seeing in what mouth we place such designs of terror and despotism, our readers will not accuse us of intending to make them loved.”

all to oppose that fatal freedom of the press, the source of all the lights that come to dissolve the bonds of the people, and then to terrify them with punishments as severe as they are numerous. There is no animal in the world more dangerous than the people, and any government that does not keep it in the most extreme servitude will soon collapse of itself. The most extreme tyranny alone ensures the safety of states; slacken the rein, the people revolt; accustom them to ease, they will soon become insolent; relieve them, they will insult you; enlighten them, they will massacre you.

“Do not imagine, however, my friends, that by the PEOPLE I mean the caste designated under the name of the THIRD ESTATE—no, certainly not: I call PEOPLE that vile and despicable class which, crudely cast upon our planet like the scum of nature, can live only by dint of toil and sweat... which robs us, which squeezes us, which cheats us whenever it cannot otherwise make us contribute; that is the class I devote to chains and perpetual humiliation, that which I affirm exists in the world only to serve the other; everything that breathes must league itself against this abject class; the entire universe must concur in riveting the fetters of these vile slaves, well assured of being in its turn burdened if it takes pity or relaxes. You, whom I raise up and whose rights I acknowledge, do not hesitate then to submit yourselves to the most despotic government; that alone will maintain your privileges and make them prevail; flattered to see you contribute, as it does, to the enslavement of the only beings it has to fear, it will cede to you, as long as you wish, a portion of its authority in order to secure the other, and the laws it has promulgated will never do more than graze your heads in order to go and mutilate theirs. Is there a country in the world where the great are happier than in Turkey? They fear the cord, I grant it; but that punishment is very rare for them; intended only for certain crimes of state, never do their private offenses, never does their secret despotism run the risk of being repressed; the enjoyment of a thousand delightful crimes is therefore assured to

them, for one or two they have to fear!... Oh! long live, long live forever such governments! I shall always prefer to dwell in the countries they bind; I love the rod that does not strike me, and with which I can terrify others. What does it matter to me if I am called a slave, when I have the right in turn to make slaves? The true slave is he who consents to live under a government whose laws strike equally, because he becomes the slave of those laws, which the other mocks, and the tyranny of the man who strikes only whom he pleases is far sweeter than the law which strikes everyone. Yes, I repeat it with pleasure, the impure blood of the rabble, if I were sovereign, would flow at every moment of my life; I would incessantly terrify it by bloody examples; guilty or not, I would immolate it in order to maintain its dependence; I would deprive it of everything that might give it energy; I would bend it by perpetual labor, and render its subsistence so painful that the mere idea of shaking off its chains would become impossible..." — "They would have to be made into beasts of burden," said the abbé, "whom one would be permitted to kill like the oxen sold in our butcheries; they would have to be crushed with taxes, with levies..." — "Do not doubt, resumed the bishop, "that this vermin wears down the springs of the state by its dangerous rust; let us therefore extirpate it, destroy it at the root, and here are, to achieve this, the principal means I would employ:

"1°. First of all, it is essential not only to permit, but even to authorize infanticide; it is only by this wise means that China has diminished the excessive population that was drying it up, that oppressed it with such violence, and that would doubtless have ended by entirely overturning its constitution. The wise Chinese, courageously destroying the child he cannot nourish, suspects no crime in ridding himself a little sooner or a little later of the matter with which he is overburdened; let us constrain to this law the people we wish to enslave; let us above all beware of erecting any asylum for the fruits of its debauchery; let the woman who bears it, obliged to bring it forth publicly,

be unable to save it through any citizen; let her herself be punished with death if she wishes to preserve this useless fruit, as on the island of Otaheite, where the women of the society of the ARREOÏS are trampled underfoot if they allow their children to see the light[3],¹⁶ or if they do not kill them as soon as they are born.

“2°. It is necessary next that commissioners make regular annual visits to all the peasants, and pitilessly remove whatever each father of a family has in excess; these visits shall be unexpected... imposing; and the executioner who will always accompany those who conduct them shall mercilessly slaughter all the surplus of a household. Each family having more than three children than it needs, it is the excess beyond this number that will fall without pity beneath the exterminating blade of the commissioners. Do not fear, with such precautions, that this peasant will now dare to give existence to more children than the law permits him; burden him heavily with taxes if he infringes it; go further, if he grows accustomed to defy it; massacre his wife before his eyes, and do not forget that all the misfortunes of a government have never had any cause but excess population. Attack, then, vigorously the luxury and ease of this abject class, if you wish to cut the evil at its root. Do you doubt this luxury?... Well then, traverse the haunts of this insolent people, and you will see with what arrogance it dares to display it today! Now, I ask you whether it is not this luxury, softening and degrading it each day, that also makes it so scandalously extend its population; suppress, then, this absurd luxury in it; reduce these rustics to the bare necessities; obliged to labor greatly to procure them, you will see that it will no longer procreate so much. Is this people you pity, whom you cherish so much in Europe, treated the same in Ceylon, where it works like horses without possessing anything of its own? Is it the same in Poland, where it still vegetates only in the most extreme servitude? in Persia and on the banks of the Ganges, where it is killed as we do our hares here? Load it, then,

¹⁶ Consult the *Voyages de Cook*.

with burdens without scruple; its loins are stronger than you think. Persuade yourselves well that nature has made these secondary beings only to serve as playthings for other men: it is her will. The poor man is created only to be useful to the rich, only to be employed for his needs... his caprices, to serve as fascines in sieges, as Mahomet did at Constantinople. Compel him, then, without any scruple; constrain him, by the misery to which you reduce him, to play no other roles upon the surface of the world; oblige him to bring himself the children he has in excess into the cabinet of your pleasures, where you will defile them, where you will immolate them, if it so pleases you. That is the sole means of skimming off this filth with which the springs of the state, if one does not take care, are always sooner or later shaken.

“3°. Another important consideration is to place the people once more under the yoke of servitude from which the cupidity and the bad policy of our kings have withdrawn them; fearing the power of the nobility, they enfranchised the people to maintain the balance, without taking heed of the inequality of the weights... without observing that the nobility they wished to weaken would never be annihilated without dragging the throne down in its fall. If the kings do not wish to return to the lords those peasants who were their property, let them keep them for themselves, I consent to it; but let them not withdraw them from slavery: nothing is so dangerous as the liberty of the people; it is by the most complete oppression of this class—in a word, by its reduction to the harshest slavery, by the diminution of its subsistence, by the total annihilation of its luxury, by the obligation to purchase, at the price of the hardest labors, the scant necessities suited to it—that you will succeed in diminishing the population, a vice destructive of all government, a terrible inconvenience that will always lead it to its ruin; no pity on this point—it would be most fatal. When a tree is weakened by the excessive number of its branches, and the nourishing sap can no longer be distributed equally, one prunes, one cuts, one reduces; the trunk benefits, and the tree is preserved. Henri IV wished

that every peasant might have a chicken in the pot on Sundays; but Henri spoke as a politician, and not as a monarch: having far more reason, given the state of weakness in which he found himself, to make himself loved than to make himself feared, he did as well to speak in that manner as he would have done wrong to carry out such ridiculous promises. Let there be no mistake: the source of the people's ease is that of public misery; and we shall always die of hunger when the peasant is rich. Once again, it is not the branches that must prosper, it is the trunk. What is the cause of the poor yield of large estates? It is the wealth of the people; he never fattens except at the expense of the man at his ease: do not hesitate, then, to take back in your turn that subsistence he has taken from you. If the peasant did not possess these riches, would they not be in your pocket? Why, then, must you deprive yourselves of them, while the poor man, that weak and vile being whom nature has created only to be in chains, enjoys them to your detriment? Reclaim, then, without scruple, what belongs to you: to act otherwise is to overturn all social institutions, to misunderstand all the inspirations of nature; and the toleration of so many gross abuses, be well assured, will bring us only to the most frightful and most imminent upheaval. The degeneration of the species, soon occasioned by the inevitable intermixture in so prodigious a population, becomes another disadvantage likely to hasten the ruin of the state; and from consequences to consequences, from inconveniences to inconveniences, we shall hurl ourselves into an abyss from which nothing will be able to draw us out; and all this, for sentiments of a false pity; as though pity did not consist in maintaining the laws of nature rather than overturning them!... as though true humanity could oblige us to sacrifice the most important class of subjects in order to fatten the other! Far from us such perfidious sentiments; let us rather be inhuman and barbarous, if it is only at that price that we can honour nature and maintain everywhere the sublime order of which she gives us the example. And

who doubts that pity is a weakness when it leads to inconveniences of such magnitude? And what, then, is this false pity that aims to overthrow all the principles of equity and natural law? Would you erect as a praiseworthy sentiment that whose dangers are so manifest? It would be as well to say that a master does a good deed in going without his dinner to give it to his dog. Let us analyse better the true movements of nature. Pity, without any doubt, is a weakness in all cases; but it becomes a real crime—a crime of state—in this one, and he who allows himself to be moved by it becomes truly deserving of punishment.

“4°. Another measure, still more necessary than all that precedes, is the total suppression of your public or private alms: I would have a heavy fine decreed against anyone who dared to indulge in that pernicious practice, once its inconveniences had been demonstrated to him. We complain of beggars, and we lure them by charities. Would we not laugh at a fool who complained of being troubled by flies, and who, to drive them away, surrounded himself with combs of honey? No alms, I repeat; let us beware of encouraging idleness; let us remember that if that scoundrel Jesus preached it, it was because he himself was nothing but a beggar... a vagabond, to whom the Romans, instead of the contempt with which they surrounded him, ought to have decreed the cruellest and most humiliating of punishments. It was proposed, under Louis XIV, to exterminate all the poor, to hang them all without pity. This project, worthy of so wise a reign, would have influenced our century, and we would not today be gnawed by these teeming vermin. Let us dare to return to this sublime project, and let us persuade ourselves well that by carrying it out exactly, we may perhaps prevent many evils. Consider that the state which sacrifices the poor loses nothing and gains much: for what reason, then, would you spare them? Would you blame a man, overburdened with humours, who took a medicine in order to make himself more fit and more healthy? It is absolutely the same thing; and, in order that the vigorous means I demand might have greater effect upon our

nation, infinitely too burdened with this baleful popular excrescence, I would wish that, in public spectacles of bulls or gladiators, swarms of this vile rabble were immolated, as Christians once were in Rome; that they be exposed to wild beasts; that their boys be torn apart... their women disembowelled... their daughters mangled; that the most atrocious and most barbarous punishments be invented for them; that they be reserved, in short, for all that the most deliberate cruelty could devise of the most refined torments. You would see how, by such means, the earth would soon be purged of these excrescences that defile it. One is at first glance frightened, I admit, by these plans for inhuman spectacles. Who doubts, nevertheless, that they would soon be as frequented as your balls and your comedies? who doubts that your delicate ladies, subject to nerves and vapors, would not come incessantly to divert themselves at these public slaughters? The Porcias, the Cornelias wept at the tragedies of Sophocles, and nevertheless went to tickle their clitorises lasciviously at the massacres of Christians in the circus of Rome. Nero played Oedipus superbly, and voluptuously tore at the pretty breasts of Saint Cecilia, or the fine buttocks of Sister Agatha, who had, both of them, the imbecility to believe in Christ. These spectacles, at once magnanimous and piquant... worthy of the genius of a great nation, would be revolting to us only because our eyes are not accustomed to them; one would perhaps shudder at the first; one would crowd to the second. Are not our public squares filled each time that people are judicially put to death?¹⁷ It would be the same here. We would present a fine appearance indeed in affecting reserve over such trifles, while permitting ourselves so many secret atrocities. And who knows whether, by thus giving free rein to the wickedness of men, one

¹⁷ What is very singular is that they are almost always so by women; they therefore have more inclination than we do toward cruelty, and that because they have a more sensitive organization; that is what fools do not understand.

would not dry up the source of their hidden crimes? The celebrated Marshal de Retz might perhaps not have murdered four or five hundred children in order to ejaculate his semen more warmly, if there had been spectacles where his lustful furies might have found an outlet. How satisfied, by this project, would be the hatred that so many honest men bear toward this vile class, of which Saint-Pouanges, archbishop of Toulouse, could not perceive an individual without overwhelming him with insults or blows, or having him beaten to death before his eyes by his servants! As for me, I confess it," continued this libertine warmly, "I would not be the last to attend... what do I say? the extreme horror I have for this unworthy race would perhaps lead me to things still more extreme, and it would be with delight that I myself would invent torments for it, and that my own hands would make it endure them... Let us proceed.

"5°. Add to these first means of depopulation the practice of honouring bachelors, pederasts, tribades, masturbators—in short, all those beings who, sworn enemies of procreation, have no other principles than to rob it of its seeds or to destroy them. Let even the murderer be held in honour in a state; once the object is to diminish that abundant superfluity which undermines a nation, take care not to punish him who, by destroying, most contributes to your aims; honour him, even reward him, and your goal will be achieved.

"6°. To support the means I have just spoken of, it is necessary that all the grain be transported into public storehouses, established in the principal cities of France, and that there it be paid for at its value to the owner, with an injunction to him to keep absolutely only what he needs to live. This pretext gives you the right to establish domiciliary visits, which you carry out with sufficient rigor to remove even from the unfortunate man what you had at first left him for his year; you make him bring back this supposed surplus into the storehouses, assuring him that he will be paid for it. You keep your word; three months later, you tax him at double the amount of the money you know he has

received; you constrain him to pay immediately. There he is then, before winter, both without money and without subsistence; he has scarcely preserved his seed grain. The same procedure the following year. How do you expect that, by renewing this for three or four years, the unfortunate man, completely ruined, will not be obliged to abandon his cottage to go begging... He does so; do not oppose it; only take care not to assist him. Six months later, promulgate the most severe laws against beggars; cut them down, hang them without any pity; and there you have, within ten years, by this very simple procedure, your population diminished by a third. Then declare to what remains that, in order to shelter themselves from such vexation, the best thing the peasant can do is to place himself once more under feudal servitude; that by pledging to his patron all that he may possess in the world, what remains will at least be his, since seigneurial goods are respected. Make him understand that, by means of this engagement, the one with whom he makes it will undertake to protect him, to defend him; that he will maintain him in his little holding, and that from then on he will enjoy it without any danger, and that under the simple condition of a due. Rather than being deceived as he has just been; rather than exposing himself to die of hunger as a cultivator, or to be hanged as a beggar, the unfortunate man will bind himself to everything; and there he is again a serf. But, although in chains, although reduced to the most meagre subsistence, perhaps he will begin again to multiply. Then renew all your restraints; the victim is yours; your means will be much simpler. Promulgate a law on marriages which permits them only at thirty... which forbids them at the slightest appearance of kinship. Continue your suppressions of surplus offspring; let the confiscation of the offender's goods always be for the profit of the master, so that the race may gradually die out and the lord monopolize all property. No more fear of sedition or revolt henceforth; there are your insurgents either under the yoke or under the blade; and, in all cases, reduced by half. Let a despotic government now watch over these operations,

consolidate them by the most violent means, and there is your country tranquil; there is the hydra absorbed, and peace maintained."

"You are aroused, monseigneur," said Dubois. — "That is true," replied the bishop; "these systems inflame my imagination, and I feel that I would be the happiest of men if I could put them into practice." — "There was a time when you could, monseigneur, I know it; and what might you not perhaps have undertaken then?" — "That is true, I abused my authority furiously." — "Who does not abuse it?" — "Fools; they alone keep themselves within bounds unknown to people such as we are... Oh! my dear Dubois, what delightful times you recall to me! how that corrupt court was conducted then! how one abused one's influence there!" And as Dubois perceived that the bishop was pleasuring himself at these agreeable recollections: "Come, monseigneur," she said to him, "there is Justine; do not make her languish any longer; the condition she is in proves to you to what point the expectation of death is dreadful; she can scarcely sustain herself. But whatever her state may be, remember well that you have promised to serve my vengeance; it is the only gratification I ask of you, and you will serve it poorly if you condemn this girl only to the mediocre punishment that has just been employed for Eulalie." — "Very well," said the prelate, feeling the victim, slapping her buttocks with all his might, and strongly compressing her throat, "in that case, the central decoration of this room must be removed. See to it, abbé, that the infernal machine which burns, cuts, and breaks bones all at once is put back in its place; the one we used eight days ago with that young girl, so beautiful, so gentle, and so virtuous." — "I know what monseigneur means," replied the chaplain; "but these preparations are somewhat long." — "Well then, we shall sup in the meantime; are you not of that opinion, Dubois?" — "At your orders in all things, monseigneur; your intentions will always be mine: but I know Justine, and I fear delays." — "I answer for everything; besides, will she cease to be under our eyes?" And

while the abbé prepares the new instruments of torture, they pass into a dining room. What debauchery!... what intemperance! but did Justine have reason to complain of it, since it saved her life? Overcome by wine and food, the bishop and Dubois fall dead drunk amid the remains of their supper. Scarcely does our heroine see them in this state than she seizes the cloak and petticoat just removed by Dubois, in order to be more immodest before her patron, and, taking up a candle, she darts rapidly toward the staircase. The house, stripped of servants, offers nothing to oppose her escape... she is free. The first road that presents itself is the one she chooses; fortunately, it is that of Grenoble. They are still asleep at the inn: Justine slips in secretly and hastens into Valbois's room; he awakens, scarcely recognizes the one who approaches him... "What is this?... what do you want?" — "Alas, sir!" And trembling Justine recounts everything that has happened to her. "You can have Dubois arrested," she continues; "that monster is only two leagues from here; I will indicate the road... the wretch! besides all her crimes, she has also taken my clothes and the five louis you had given me." — "Oh, Justine! you are certainly the most unfortunate girl in the world; but you see, honest creature, in the midst of the misfortunes that overwhelm you, a heavenly hand preserves you; let that always be for you a reason to be virtuous; good actions are never without reward. We shall not pursue Dubois; my reasons for leaving her in peace are the same as those I set before you yesterday; let us merely repair the wrongs she has done you. Here first is the money she took from you." An hour later, a seamstress came to try on two complete outfits for Justine; a linen-woman brought her shirts. "You must leave," Valbois then said to her, "leave this very day; Bertrand expects it; she has been informed; rejoin her... O virtuous young man!" cried Justine, falling at Valbois's feet, "may heaven one day return to you all the good you do me! I shall never cease to implore it for you." — "Go, dear girl," replied this honest man, embracing our unfortunate heroine, "the

happiness you wish for me I already enjoy, since yours is my work. Farewell.”

Thus did Justine leave Grenoble; and if she did not find there all the happiness she had hoped for, at least she did not encounter in any other city so many honest people united to pity or to alleviate her misfortunes.

CHAPITRE XX.

Adventures at Villefranche. — Prison. — What Justine obtains from the friends she sends for. — How her judges treat her. — Escape. — Journey to Paris. — Whom she meets again.

Justine and her companion were travelling in a little cart drawn by a single horse, which they drove from the back of the vehicle. There were Madame Bertrand's wares, together with a little girl of fifteen months whom she was nursing, and for whom the too compassionate Justine soon conceived, to her misfortune, an affection as deep as that which might have been felt by the child's own mother.

This Bertrand was a decidedly disagreeable woman: suspicious, garrulous, meddlesome, tiresome, and narrow-minded; these few words paint her exactly as she was. Every evening they regularly unloaded all the goods at the inn, and slept in the same room. Everything passed well enough as far as Lyon; but during the three days this woman required for her business there, Justine made an encounter she was very far from expecting.

One afternoon she was walking along the Rhône quay with one of the inn's serving girls when she suddenly caught sight of the Reverend Father Antonin of Sainte-Marie-des-Bois, now superior of his order's house established in that city. The monk approached her, and after reproaching her in a low voice, though with some bitterness, for her flight, and making her understand that she ran the gravest risk of being recaptured if he informed the convent in Burgundy, he added, softening his tone, that he

would say nothing if she would come that very moment to visit him at his residence, together with the girl accompanying her, who was sufficiently fresh and pretty, he claimed, to inspire him with certain desires. Then, addressing the girl: "We shall pay you both handsomely," said he, caressing her; "there are ten of us in our house, and I promise you a louis from each, if your complaisance knows no bounds." Justine, as one readily imagines, blushed deeply at such remarks. For a moment she tried to persuade the monk that he was mistaken; failing in this, she attempted by signs to silence him; but nothing imposed upon the insolent creature, whose solicitations only became more ardent. At last, after repeated refusals, the monk limited himself to asking for an address. To rid herself of him, Justine gave false directions; he wrote them down in his memorandum-book and departed, assuring her that she would soon hear of him again.

As she returned to the inn, Justine explained, as best she could, the story of this unhappy encounter to the girl who had accompanied her. But whether what she said was insufficient to satisfy curiosity, or whether the servant girl resented an act of virtue that deprived her of certain profit, she began to gossip. Justine had only too much occasion to perceive it in Bertrand's remarks during the unfortunate catastrophe we are soon to relate. The monk, however, did not reappear, and they departed.

Leaving Lyon, our two travellers were able, on that first day, to lodge no farther than Villefranche; they arrived there about six in the evening and at once withdrew to their chamber, intending to undertake a longer stage the following day. They had not been asleep two hours when they were suddenly awakened by a dreadful smoke. Convinced that the fire could not be far off, they rose in haste: merciful heaven! the progress of the blaze was already only too terrifying. Opening their door half naked, they heard around them nothing but the crash of collapsing walls, the splintering of timbers, and the horrifying shrieks of those falling into the flames. Surrounded by these devouring

fires, they no longer knew where to flee. To escape their violence, they rushed directly into their midst, and thus soon found themselves mingled with the crowd of those seeking safety in flight. Justine then remembered that her companion, more occupied with herself than with her daughter, had forgotten to save the child from death. She darted back into the room where the little creature had been abandoned, through flames that scorched and burned her in several places, seized the child, sprang forward to restore her to her mother, stumbled upon a half-consumed beam, let fall the precious burden she carried, and escaped herself only because a woman stretched out her arms to her and hastened to drag her from the tumult. She was thrown into a post-chaise; her deliverer entered beside her... her deliverer! great God, what a word we are compelled to use! That deliverer was Dubois. "Wretch," said the hag, pressing the muzzle of a pistol against her temple, "ah, slut, I have you at last, and this time you shall not escape me again." — "Oh, madam, you here?" cried Justine. "Everything that has just happened is my doing," replied Dubois; "it was by means of a fire that I once saved your life; it is by means of a fire that you are now going to lose it. I would have pursued you to hell itself if necessary in order to recover you. Monseigneur became furious when he learned of your escape; he threatened me with the whole of his wrath if I did not bring you back. I missed you by only two hours at Lyon; yesterday I arrived at Villefranche one hour after you. I set fire to the inn with the help of some ruffians whom I always keep in my pay. I wished either to burn you or to seize you: I have seized you; I am bringing you back to a house your flight has plunged into turmoil and anxiety, and I restore you there, my child, to be treated with cruel severity. Monseigneur has sworn that no torments shall be terrible enough for you; and we shall not descend from this carriage until we are once more in his hands. Well then, Justine, what do you now think of virtue? Would it not have been a thousand times better to let all the children in the universe burn than to expose yourself to what

now happens to you for wishing to save one... who, unfortunately, was not saved after all?" — "Oh, madam, what I have done, I would do again... You ask my opinion of virtue... I believe that it is often the prey of crime... that it is happy when it triumphs, but that, if the crimes of men succeed in dishonouring it upon earth, it must remain the sole object of God's rewards in heaven." — "You shall not be long, Justine, before discovering whether there truly exists a God who punishes or rewards the actions of men... Ah! if, in the eternal nothingness into which you are about to descend, you were still permitted to think, how bitterly you would regret the fruitless sacrifices your obstinacy has forced you to make to phantoms... that have never repaid you except with misfortunes! There is still time, Justine; will you become my accomplice? I cannot endure seeing you constantly come to grief upon virtue's dangerous paths. Have you not yet been sufficiently punished for your wisdom and your false principles? What misfortunes do you still require to correct you? What examples are necessary to convince you that the course you follow is the worst of all, and that, as I have told you a hundred times, one must expect nothing but reverses when, opposing the multitude, one seeks alone to be virtuous in a wholly corrupted society? You trust in an avenging God! Undeceive yourself, Justine, undeceive yourself; the God you invent is merely a chimera whose foolish existence has never been found except in the heads of madmen. It is a phantom devised by the wickedness of men, solely in order to deceive them or arm them against one another. The greatest service ever rendered mankind would have been to cut the throat, on the spot, of the first impostor who conceived the idea of speaking to them of a God; how much blood a single murder would have spared the universe! Go on, Justine, nature, ever active and ever in motion, has no need whatever of a master to direct her. And if such a master truly existed, after all the defects with which he has filled his works, would he deserve from us anything but contempt and outrage? Ah! if your God exists, Justine, how I hate him! how I

abhor him! Yes, if that existence were true, I confess that the sole pleasure of perpetually provoking the being invested with such power would become the most precious compensation for the necessity under which I should then find myself of granting him some belief... Once more, Justine, will you become my accomplice? A magnificent stroke presents itself; we shall execute it boldly; I will save your life if you undertake it. The prelate to whose house we are going withdraws himself into the sanctuary of his debaucheries; the nature of them, as you know, requires solitude. Only a single valet and the chaplain reside with him there when he retreats for his pleasures. The man running ahead of this carriage, you, and I, Justine — we are three against one. When the libertine is inflamed with his voluptuous passions, I shall seize the weapons with which he cuts short the lives of his victims; you will hold him; we shall kill him; and my courier, meanwhile, will rid us of the two accomplices. There is money hidden in that house, Justine; more than a million, I know it; the venture is worth the effort... Choose, virtuous creature; choose death... or serve me. If you betray me, if you reveal my design to him, I shall accuse you alone; and you cannot doubt that I shall prevail through the confidence he has always placed in me. Reflect carefully before answering: that man is a villain, and therefore in assassinating him we merely serve the laws whose rigor he has deserved. There is not a day, my child, when that scoundrel does not butcher some girl: is it therefore an outrage to virtue to punish crime, and will the reasonable proposal I make you still alarm your savage principles?" — "Do not doubt it, madam," answered Justine, "it is not with the intention of correcting crime that you propose this action to me, but solely with the motive of committing one yourself: there can therefore be nothing but great evil in doing what you suggest, and no appearance whatever of legitimacy. More than that: even were your design solely to avenge humanity for that man's horrors, you would still act wrongly in undertaking it. Such a task does not belong to you; the laws are made to punish the guilty — let us

leave them to act; it is not to our weak hands that the Eternal Being has entrusted their sword, and we should not wield it without offending the laws themselves.” — “Nothing could be cruder than your error, Justine; whenever laws are blind, corrupt, or insufficient, man is permitted to supplement them. Laws are the work of men; man has the right to correct them. The man in question is a despot... a tyrant. Recall the frightful maxims he expounded to us the other day; the villain would destroy an entire people if he dared, and it is a virtue, my child — yes, a virtue — to annihilate tyrants. There would not remain a single one in the world if it were possible for me to cut all their throats. Is this pernicious breed truly necessary for the governance of mankind? But what I abhor even more than them, if such a thing is possible, are their courtiers and flatterers, all those scoundrels seeking only to draw upon themselves the prince’s favors and riches. Thus the poor labor only to fatten that rabble; it is upon their blood, their tears, and their sweat that the insolent luxury of these leeches is nourished, and yet they would have us respect the disgusting idols that engender such cruel abuses. No, no, I devote them all to public hatred and vengeance, these pretended masters of the world who never find in the power intoxicating them anything but means for wickedness and crime.” — “Oh, madam,” replied Justine, “might one not find your maxims more than once in contradiction with your conduct?” — “Never, Justine, never. I desire equality — that alone I preach. If I have corrected the caprices of fortune, it is because, crushed and annihilated beneath the inequality of wealth and rank, seeing among some nothing but vanity and tyranny, among others nothing but baseness and misery, I wished neither to shine beside the arrogant rich man nor to vegetate beside the humiliated poor. I made for myself a condition, a fortune, the sole work of my skill and philosophy. It was through crimes, I admit it, but I do not believe in crime, my dear; there exists no species of action which, in my opinion, can rightly be called such... In short, Justine, we are approaching; decide yourself: will you serve me?” — “No,

madam, never hope it.” — “Then you shall die, unworthy creature,” cried Dubois in a fury, “yes, you shall die; do not flatter yourself that you can escape your fate.” — “What matters it to me? I shall be delivered from all my sufferings; death has nothing that terrifies me. It is the final sleep of life; it is the repose of the unhappy.” And that ferocious beast immediately flung herself upon our unfortunate heroine, overwhelmed her with blows, had the insolence to strip up her skirts and tear with her nails at her thighs, belly, and buttocks, slapped her face, and insulted her in every possible manner, all the while threatening her with the pistol should she dare utter a single cry. Justine dissolved in tears.

Meanwhile they advanced with great speed; the man running ahead had the horses made ready at each posting-station, and they halted nowhere. What was to be done? Justine’s exhaustion and weakness had reduced her to such a condition that she preferred death to the effort of attempting to escape it.

They were about to enter the Dauphiné when six mounted men, galloping full speed behind the carriage, overtook it and forced the postilion to halt. About thirty paces from the road stood a cottage to which the pursuing horsemen ordered the carriage brought. At this point Dubois perceived that they were officers of the mounted police; as soon as she had alighted, she asked them whether she was known to them, and by what right they presumed to treat a woman of her rank in such a manner. Such effrontery succeeded admirably. “We do not have the honour of knowing you, madam,” said the officer, “but we are certain that you have in your carriage the unfortunate creature who yesterday set fire to the principal inn at Villefranche.” Then, fixing his gaze upon Justine: “There is her description, madam; we cannot be mistaken. Be so good as to surrender her to us, and tell us how a person as respectable as you appear to be could have taken charge of such a woman.”

“There is nothing extraordinary in this event,” replied the cunning creature, “and I neither intend to conceal it from you nor to take this girl’s part, once she is guilty of the dreadful crime

of which you speak. Yesterday, like her, I was lodging at that inn in Villefranche. I departed amid the confusion, and as I was entering my carriage, this girl rushed toward me, imploring my compassion and telling me that she had lost everything in the fire. She begged me to take her as far as Lyon, where she hoped to find a position. Listening less to my reason than to my heart, I yielded to her entreaties. Once inside my carriage, she offered to serve me. Again imprudently, I consented to everything, and was bringing her into the Dauphiné, where my property and family are situated. Assuredly, this is a lesson to me: I now fully recognize all the inconveniences of pity, and I shall correct myself of it. There she is, gentlemen, there she is. God preserve me from taking an interest in such a monster; I abandon her to the severity of the laws, and beg you carefully to conceal the misfortune I have had in believing in her for even a moment.”

Justine wished to defend herself; she wished to denounce the true culprit; but her words were treated as nothing more than calumnious recriminations, against which the insolent Dubois deigned to defend herself only with a contemptuous smile. O fatal effects of misery and prejudice, of wealth and audacity! Was it possible that a woman calling herself *Madame la Baronne de Fulconis*, displaying luxury, claiming lands and family connections — was it possible that such a woman could be guilty of a crime in which she appeared to have not the slightest interest? Did not everything, on the contrary, condemn the unfortunate Justine? Poor and without protection, how could she fail to be judged in the wrong?

The officer read to her Bertrand's accusations; it was she who had denounced her. According to that hag, our orphan had set fire to the inn in order to rob her companion more conveniently; she had been robbed down to her last sou; it was Justine who had thrown the child into the flames, so that the despair into which this event would plunge the mother might conceal the rest of her manoeuvres. Moreover, added Bertrand, this Justine was a girl of infamous life, a creature escaped from the gibbet at

Grenoble, and whom she herself had taken charge of only through excessive complaisance toward a young man, supposed lover of the delinquent, who, to crown her impudence, had openly solicited monks at Lyon. In a word, there was nothing from which that vile Bertrand had not profited in order to ruin Justine, nothing that calumny, sharpened by despair, had failed to invent to degrade her. At this woman's insistence a legal inquiry had been conducted on the very site of the disaster; the fire had begun in a hayloft where several persons testified that Justine had entered on the evening of that fatal day — and this indeed was true. Seeking a privy poorly indicated by the servant to whom she had addressed herself, she had entered that garret, and, not finding the place she sought, had remained there long enough to arouse suspicion of the crime imputed to her, or at least to furnish grounds for probability. Thus, however much she defended herself, the officer replied only by preparing irons. "But, monsieur," she nevertheless dared to say, "if I robbed my companion on the road from Villefranche, the money ought to be found upon me; let me be searched." This ingenuous defence provoked only laughter; she was assured that she had not acted alone, and that it was certain she had accomplices to whom the sums had been delivered at the moment of her flight. Then the wicked Dubois, who knew of the brand that this unfortunate girl had once received at Rodin's, feigned compassion for a moment. "Monsieur," said she to the officer, "so many errors are committed every day in affairs of this sort that you will pardon the thought that occurs to me: if this girl is guilty of the act of which she stands accused, assuredly it is not her first crime. One does not arrive in a single day at offenses of this nature. Search her, monsieur, I beg you... If by chance you should find upon her unhappy body..." — "But if nothing accuses her," she continued, "permit me then to defend and protect her." The officer consented to the examination, and it was about to take place. "One moment, monsieur," said Justine, opposing it, "this search is unnecessary; madame knows very well that I bear that dreadful

mark; she knows equally well by what misfortune it was caused. This subterfuge on her part is but an additional horror that will be unveiled, together with the rest, before the tribunal of Themis. Conduct me there, monsieur; here are my hands; cover them with chains. Crime alone blushes to wear them; unfortunate virtue groans beneath them, but does not fear them.” — “In truth, I would not have believed,” said Dubois, “that my idea would succeed so well; but as this creature repays my kindness with insidious accusations, I offer to return with her, if necessary...” — “Such a measure is entirely unnecessary, Madame la Baronne,” replied the officer; “our investigation concerns only this girl; her own admissions, the brand with which she is marked — everything condemns her. We require no one but her, and we beg you a thousand pardons for having detained you so long.” Our orphan, immediately placed in chains, was set behind one of the horsemen, while Dubois re-entered her carriage, completing her insults to the unhappy girl by leaving a few écus in pitiful charity to the guards, to assist the prisoner in the miserable abode she was about to inhabit until her judgment.

“O virtue!” cried Justine, when she saw herself reduced to this dreadful humiliation, “couldst thou receive a crueller outrage? Is it possible that crime should dare confront thee, and overcome thee, with such insolence and impunity?”

Upon arriving at Lyon, Justine was immediately thrown into the dungeon reserved for criminals, where she was registered as an incendiary, a woman of infamous life, a murderess of a child, and a thief.

Seven persons had perished in the burning inn; she herself had nearly shared their fate; she had sought to save a child, and now she was about to die. Yet the woman responsible for all these horrors escaped alike the vigilance of the laws and the justice of heaven; she triumphed, she returned to new crimes, while innocent and unhappy, Justine saw before her nothing but dishonor, infamy, and death.

Dubois gave the bishop an account of all that had occurred; and he, furious at having lost his prey, sought at least to indemnify himself by adding as many charges as possible to the unfortunate girl's trial. He immediately dispatched his chaplain to Lyon furnished with new accusations against her. She was charged with having robbed Monseigneur during the time he had had the goodness to take her into his service; this additional evidence hastened the proceedings, and the inquiry was promptly begun.

For her part, our interesting adventuress, long accustomed to calumny, injustice, and misfortune, habituated from childhood never to surrender herself to a sentiment of virtue without being assured of finding thorns in it, experienced a sorrow more numb than rending; her tears, falling chilled back upon her heart, could no longer moisten her beautiful eyes. Nevertheless, as it is natural for every suffering creature to imagine even the impossible in order to escape the abyss into which misfortune has plunged it, Father Antonin returned to her thoughts. However slight the assistance she expected from him, she could not resist the desire to see him; she requested him, and he appeared. He had not been told by whom he was desired, and affected not to recognize Justine who, to spare the bad impression of this behavior, hastened to tell the jailer that it was very possible this worthy religious should not remember her, having directed her conscience only in the earliest years of her life. "I was scarcely twelve years old," she continued, "when he prepared me for my first communion"; and whatever the case might be, on that ground she requested a private interview with him. Consent was granted on both sides.

As soon as she was alone with the monk: "Oh, my dear," she cried, throwing herself at his feet and bathing them with her tears, "save me, I beg you, from this cruel predicament in which I find myself; then she proved her innocence to him; she did not hide from him that the offensive remarks he had made to her a few days earlier had upset the woman with whom she was travelling, and who was now her accuser. The monk listened very

attentively; "Justine," he said to her afterwards, "do not get carried away as is your habit the moment your accursed prejudices are challenged; you see where they have led you, and you can easily convince yourself now that it is a hundred times better to be a little wayward and happy than wise and in misfortune. Your situation is as bad as it can be; there is no point in trying to hide it from yourself; this Dubois you speak of, having the greatest interest in your downfall, will surely work towards it behind the scenes; Bertrand will press on; all the evidence is against you; and all it takes today is a mere appearance of guilt to secure a death sentence. I know, moreover, that the Bishop of Grenoble is acting surreptitiously, yet vigorously, against you; it is even said that he has just arrived to personally oversee this case; you are therefore a ruined girl, you must expect it; there is but one way to save you: I am on good terms with the Intendant; he has great influence over the judges of this city; I shall tell him that you are my niece, and claim you on that basis; he will quash the entire proceedings; I shall ask to send you back to my family; I shall have you taken away, but it will be to lock you up in our convent in this city, from which you shall never leave in your lifetime... And there, I make no secret of it, Justine, there, a slave enslaved to my whims, you will satisfy them all without distinction; you will likewise give yourself up to those of my colleagues; you will be, in a word, ours, like the most submissive of victims... you hear me... you remember Sainte-Marie des-Bois... the work is hard; you know what the passions of libertines of our sort are; make up your mind, then, and do not keep us waiting for your answer..." — "Go away, Father," replied Justine with horror, "go away, you are a monster, since you allow yourself to abuse my situation so cruelly as to place me between death and infamy; I shall know how to perish, if I must, but at least it will be without remorse." — "As you wish, my fair child," said the monk as he withdrew, "I have never known how to force a woman when it came to making her happy. Virtue has served you so well thus far that you are right to praise its virtues... Farewell; above all,

do not think of asking me for more..." He was leaving; an impetuous movement drew Justine back to her knees; "Tiger," she cried in tears, "open your heart of stone to my dreadful misfortunes, and do not impose, to end them, conditions more terrible than death." Here the violence of her movements had caused the veils covering her breast to fall away... it was bare, her beautiful hair flowing wildly over it; that alabaster breast was drenched in her tears; she inspires abominable desires in this man... unworthy whims which the scoundrel wishes to satisfy at that very moment; he dares to show how much lust torments him; he dares to conceive of pleasures amidst the chains with which this unfortunate woman is bound... He is aroused beneath the sword that is about to strike Justine... She was on her knees; the scoundrel knocks her down, he throws himself with her onto the wretched straw that serves as her bed; she tries to scream, he stuffs a handkerchief into her mouth, he binds her arms; master of her, the libertine undresses her... "Oh! Fuck," he cries, "how her charms have held up!... how beautiful the minx still is!" He spreads her thighs... No more resistance, he fucks her: he is the tiger in a rage upon the tender lamb. After tormenting her for a moment, he sits on the throat of this unfortunate woman, slaps her with his cock, and finally shoves it into her mouth; "I'll choke you if you disturb me," he tells her, "let me flood your throat with cum; only then might I do something for you." But the libertine's desires, as bizarre as they are erratic, soon turn to another temple: Justine's beautiful arse comes back to his mind; he exposes himself to her, and the roughest thrusts swiftly follow the most ardent kisses. Justine, being sodomised, struggles as hard as she can beneath the member that tyrannises her; but she is held so firmly that every movement of hers serves the monk rather than disturbing him; an impetuous stream of semen finally gushes forth, and one knows the character in question well enough to surmise the episodes that accompany this dénouement; it is like lightning striking down the shrub whose tender branches cannot withstand it; he gazes

upon his victim as soon as he has taken his pleasure; in the wake of the fury that drives him, our unfortunate one sees nothing but disgust... nothing but contempt: such is the man.

"Listen," said he, untying her and adjusting his own clothes, "you do not wish me to be of service to you? Very well then; I shall neither help nor harm you — I promise it. But if you dare utter a single word of what has just happened, by charging you with the most enormous crimes I instantly deprive you of every means of defending yourself. Reflect carefully before speaking. They believe me master of your confession... you understand me: we are permitted to reveal everything when a criminal is concerned. Attend therefore very closely to the meaning of what I am about to say to the jailer, or this instant I complete your ruin." He knocked; the turnkey appeared. "Monsieur," said that traitor, "this good girl is mistaken; she wished to speak of a Father Antonin who is at Bordeaux; I do not know her in the least. She begged me to hear her confession; I have done so. I salute you both, and shall always be ready to present myself again whenever my ministry is judged important."

The barbarian departed after pronouncing these words, leaving Justine as overwhelmed by his treachery as revolted by his insolence and libertinism, and consumed by the dreadful remorse of not having killed herself rather than having served — though against her will — as the instrument and target of such atrocious debaucheries.

Nevertheless, her situation was too horrible for her not to make use of every possible resource. Justine remembered Saint-Florent. "It is impossible," said she to herself, "that this man can despise me in regard to the conduct I maintained with him. I rendered him a service important enough, and he treated me with sufficient barbarity, for me to imagine that he will not refuse to repair his wrongs toward me in a circumstance so essential, and to acknowledge, at least insofar as he is able, what I did so honourably for him. The fire of the passions may have blinded him at the two periods when I knew him, but he is my uncle;

and in such a case no sentiment ought to prevent him from aiding me. Will he renew his former proposals? Will he attach the assistance I am about to demand from him to the price of those dreadful services he once described to me? Very well — I shall accept; and once free, I shall easily find the means of escaping the abominable mode of life into which he may basely attempt to draw me.”

Filled with these reflections, Justine wrote to Saint-Florent; she painted her misfortunes to him and begged him to come see her. But she had reflected too little upon the soul of this man when she imagined benevolence capable of penetrating it; she had not sufficiently recalled the infamous maxims of that perverse creature, and her unfortunate weakness, forever leading her to judge others by her own heart, caused her wrongly to suppose that this man would conduct himself toward her as she herself would have conducted herself toward him.

He arrived, and as Justine had requested to see him alone, they were left together. It had been easy for our heroine to perceive, from the marks of respect lavished upon him, what influence he possessed in Lyon. “What! it is you?” said he, casting looks of contempt upon her. “I misunderstood the letter; I believed it came from a woman more honourable than you, and whom I should have served with all my heart. But what do you expect me to do for an idiot of your species? How! you stand guilty of a hundred crimes, each more dreadful than the last, and when one proposes to you a means of earning your livelihood honestly, you refuse it with obstinacy? Folly was never carried further...” — “Oh, monsieur!” cried Justine, “I am not guilty.” — “What then is required to be so?” replied that hard man sharply. “The first time in my life I see you, it is in the midst of a band of thieves wishing to assassinate me; now it is in the prisons of this city, accused of three or four new crimes, and bearing upon your shoulders the certain mark of older ones. If you call that being honourable, teach me then what is necessary in order not to be?” — “Oh, high Heaven! monsieur,” answered Justine,

“can you reproach me with the period of my life when I knew you, and should it not rather be I who ought to make you blush for it? I was there by force, you know it, monsieur, among the bandits who stopped you; they wished to take your life, and I saved it by facilitating your escape... by escaping with you myself. And what did you do, cruel man, to thank me for that service? Is it possible you can recall it without horror? You sought to assassinate me in turn; you stunned me with terrible blows; and profiting from the state to which you had reduced me, despite the ties of blood uniting us, you tore from me what I possessed most dearly. By a refinement of cruelty without example, you robbed me even of the little money I possessed, as though you desired humiliation and misery to complete the ruin of your victim. What have you not attempted since then to perpetuate my misfortunes? You have succeeded very well, barbarous man; assuredly your triumph is complete. It is you who have ruined me; it is you who first opened beneath my feet the abyss into which I have continued to fall ever since that fatal instant. Nevertheless, I forget everything, monsieur — yes, everything is effaced from my memory. I even beg pardon for daring to reproach you with it. But can you conceal from yourself that some reparation is owed me... some acknowledgment on your part? Ah! do not close your heart to it when the veil of death is spreading over my unhappy days. It is not death that I fear — it is ignominy. Save me from the horror of dying as a criminal; all that I ask of you is limited to this single favor. Do not refuse it me, monsieur, do not refuse it me, and both Heaven and my heart will one day reward you for it.”

Justine stood weeping before this ferocious man, and far from reading upon his face the effect she had hoped the shocks of her misfortune might produce upon his soul, she distinguished there only that same distortion of features she had observed when he satisfied his lusts with her. He sat directly facing her; his black and wicked eyes contemplated her in a frightful manner; the scoundrel masturbated before her. “Infamous whore,” said he

with that libertine fury of which the unhappy Justine had so often been the victim, “miserable slut, do you not remember that when you left my house, I expressly forbade you ever to appear in Lyon again?” — “But, monsieur—” — “What do I care for the accident that brings you back here? Here you are, and that is a thousand times more than I need to excite my rage and desire to see you hanged. Listen to me nevertheless: I am still willing to help you. Your entire case is here in the hands of Monsieur de Cardoville, my friend since childhood; your fate depends absolutely upon him, and I shall speak to him. But I warn you that you will obtain nothing without the most servile submission, not only to him, but also to his son and daughter, with whom he ordinarily shares all his scenes of lust. I therefore exhort you to the most complete obedience. He alone can do anything for your trial, and you are lost if you resist. As for me, Justine, I declare to you that I am absolutely disgusted with you and shall not be present; but if my friends, to whom you are unknown, accept you, someone will come for you at nightfall, and you will follow your guards. Once at the feet of your judges, you will wash yourself as best you can, establish your innocence in the most persuasive manner possible, and above all lend yourself to everything proposed to you. That is the sole service I can render you. Farewell. Hold yourself ready for anything, and above all do not make me take useless steps, for you would never find me again in your life.” At these words Saint-Florent, who had not ceased manipulating his cock while speaking, ordered Justine to show him her arse; he landed five or six blows upon it with the full force of his arm, dug murderous fingernails into her flesh, and spilled upon the thighs of that unhappy girl the shameful result of his villainies. He disappeared, leaving orders with the jailer to confine the prisoner more strictly than ever, but nevertheless to surrender her to Cardoville if he should present himself to take her away.

Nothing equalled Justine’s perplexity. Did she not have, in what she had just witnessed, only too many reasons to distrust

both the protector proposed to her and, still more, the means by which she would be obliged to purchase that protection? And yet she could not hesitate. Ought she reject everything that appeared to offer her some assistance? It was a question of prostituting herself; this had been made sufficiently clear to her. So be it. But Justine flattered herself that she might move them, soften them, escape them; besides, her life was at stake, and that consideration acquired such weight that one is surely pardonable for allowing it to prevail over certain other secondary scruples... never those of honour, I grant; but what force undertook against Justine — was that truly at the expense of her honour? Was she responsible for the outrages committed upon her person, and in the eyes of the most scrupulous people, did all the horrors with which she had been stained up to that moment in any way attack the unshakable foundation of her virtue?

Such were the reflections occupying Justine as she dressed herself and prepared to follow those who were soon to come for her. The hour struck; the jailer appeared; Justine trembled. "Follow me," said the Cerberus, "it is on behalf of Monsieur de Cardoville. Think how to profit properly from the favour heaven offers you; there are many here who would desire such a grace, and who shall never obtain it."

Adorned as best she could, Justine followed the turnkey, who delivered her into the hands of two great negroes whose savage appearance filled her with terror. She was thrown into a carriage without a word being spoken; the negroes entered with her; the blinds were lowered; and the only calculation Justine was able to make was that the carriage halted some two or three leagues from Lyon.

The courtyard of a solitary château, surrounded by cypresses, was the only object the moonlight allowed her to perceive. Not a sound was to be heard, and our heroine was conducted into a large dimly lit hall where the negroes, still in silence, surrounded her without speaking a word. At the end of a quarter of an hour an old woman appeared before Justine's eyes, followed by four

very handsome young boys of sixteen to eighteen years of age, each holding a corner of a great black sheet.

“Having reached the final stage of your life,” said the old woman to her, “the garments you wear have become useless to you; remove them all at once, therefore, without excepting a single one.” — “I must also cut the hair from your cunt,” added the duenna, as soon as Justine stood naked; “and now,” she continued, when these first two operations had been completed, “your eyes must be blindfolded, and you must be carried away in this funeral shroud.” Everything was done accordingly; and Justine, thus deprived of sight, was carried into a salon where the old woman, the two negroes, and the four bearers placed her upright in such a posture that her arms, raised above her head and fastened with cords, could be of no more assistance to her than her feet, which were likewise tightly bound to the floorboards. Thus restrained, still veiled, Justine was handled by several hands without knowing to whom she was exposed. At length her eyes were uncovered; and here are the personages she perceived, preparing to amuse themselves with her. We shall include among this description those who had brought her there, although she had already glimpsed them upon arriving.

Dolmus and Cardoville, both aged between forty-five and fifty, appeared to be the two main figures in these scandalous orgies; both held the most prominent positions in Lyon. A young woman named Nicette, aged between eighteen and twenty, very dark-haired and looking exceedingly libertine, was said to be Cardoville’s daughter and one of the figures in the scene to which Justine was also to submit. Brumeton, a strapping lad of twenty-two, fresh as a rose, with the finest figure and the most charming bottom, was Nicette’s brother, of whom Saint-Florent had spoken to our heroine. Zulma, a very pretty blonde, aged twenty-four, with superb skin, shapely features, divine eyes, and lust sparkling in every line of her face, was also introduced as one of the participants in this affair; and Cardoville told Justine that she was Dolmus’s daughter. This young lady also had a

brother, aged twenty-six, ugly, hairy as a bear, and the one in the whole assembly whose expression was the sourest and the most malicious: he was called Volcidor. As for the four young lads who had just brought Justine, they were of the most voluptuous build, and all four seemed destined for the pleasures of the lecherous gang: they were called Julien, Larose, Fleur-d'Amour and Saint-Clair. The two Negroes were about twenty-eight to thirty years old; no monster was as well-endowed as these two Africans; the most famous donkey in Mirebalais would have been but a child compared to them; and one could not believe, upon seeing them, that any creature could ever be in a position to employ such men. We say nothing of the old woman whom Justine never saw again, and who, no doubt, had here only the outward appearance of a member of society.

All the members of this assembly, numbering twelve persons, surrounded Justine as soon as the bandage was torn from her eyes, and each loosed some sarcasm against her. "Cardoville," said Dolmus, "does this whore know she is to die here?" — "How could she hope to escape it?" replied Cardoville. "There are forty-two witnesses against her. What we do here is merely to render her a service; she has shown some reluctance to ending her days upon the public scaffold, so we shall dispatch her in this house instead." At these words, the shameless Nicette, in Saint-Clair's arms and already being ravished by this handsome young man, utters a horrible curse, declaring that in all her days she has never tasted pleasures more intense than that of seeing this creature breathe her last.

"Oh! Double-God!" cried Zulma, with no less cynicism, and jerking off a cock with each hand, "I ask, as a favour, that I be allowed to deliver the final blows." Meanwhile, the two fathers and the two sons were circling round the patient, feeling her up just as butchers do with an ox they are haggling over. "We have not, for a very long time," said Volcidor, "condemned anyone whose crimes are so well established." — "Me, well-established crimes?" asked Justine. "Established or not," said Cardoville,

“you shall be burned, you wretch, roasted over a slow fire; but it is we who shall take charge of this sweet task; how grateful you must be to us!” At this, Nicette nearly swooned with orgasm; she spread her thighs, let out a terrible scream, and swore like a cart driver throughout the orgasmic spasm. Cardoville immediately approached his daughter, knelt between her legs, sucked her cunt, sniffed the cum, and calmly returned to Justine’s side. “Are you mad,” said Dolmus’s lovely daughter, to whom Larose was giving back in full what he received, “tell me, you whore, are you mad to come so quickly?” — “What!” said Nicette, “don’t you want me to come, when my father argues so well?” — “Is that all it takes to make you come too?” asked Dolmus. “Something better, Papa,” replied the libertine; “untie that girl; tell her to have her tongue work my cunt, and you’ll see if the ejaculation of my cum won’t accompany that action.” — “No,” said Dolmus; “she cannot leave this position until she has until she has undergone the torture; and I am quite sure that this spectacle will excite you at least as much as the one you desire.” — “Oh! Yes, yes; provided the slut suffers, I’ll be happy; it’s her pain I want...” And the little minx, no longer able to contain herself, opens her thighs to Larose’s lecherous fingers, presses her lips to Saint-Clair’s mouth, who fucks her and cums copiously. Cardoville, who seems to have a taste for this, repeats what he has just done with his daughter; he kneels, sniffs the semen, and returns to Justine, who, pale, trembling, and disfigured, nevertheless dares to cry out... “Ah! Good heavens! More horrors!...” — “Yes, but violent ones,” says Brumeton, slapping her bottom nervously; “they say you have experienced many in your life, yet I doubt that any stronger have ever assailed you.” — “Oh God! What are you going to do to me?” — “Deliver you,” says Dolmus, “to the most execrable tortures with which the most calculated cruelty has ever defiled the annals of the earth.” — “Father,” said Zulma, whom her brother was now wanking, “remember that you promised to let me suck the marrow from her bones, and to make me swallow his blood from her skull.” — “I promise you

that again," said Dolmus, "and that, whilst your brother and I eat his buttocks." Here Volcidor shows his father that he has a massive hard-on; and Dolmus, presenting his arse, allows himself to be incestuously fucked for a few minutes. Cardoville, taking Volcidor's place, approaches Zulma and alternately sucks her mouth and her clitoris, whilst Nicette, getting back to it with her brother Brumeton, jerks off cocks whilst kissing the arse of a negro. "Well!" said Dolmus, returning to Justine's examination, "wasn't Saint-Florent right to tell us that this slut had a fine arse?" And he bit it as he said that. "Yes, by God," said Cardoville, turning back to his friend; "yes, by God, the whore has the finest arse one could ever see; we must amuse ourselves with this prude at once." — "Here's how," replied Dolmus; "we must all surround her; then each of us shall take charge of a part of her body and molest that part; that is to say, we shall all have a number, and in turn each of us shall make the victim briskly undergo upon the patient the pain with which he is charged. These rounds will be repeated rapidly; we shall imitate the striking of a clock: these will be, I suppose, the twelve strokes of noon, which will be repeated ceaselessly; and by this means, the victim, tugged, pinched and bitten all over her body, will not go half a second without suffering a new pain." — "Oh! Fuck," said Nicette, biting the negro's buttocks, and returning to suck one of the cocks she was wanking, which she saw was close to coming, "oh! Holy-fucking-God, what a divine scene! Let's begin, double-God; let's hurry."

The positions are taken; and here is how they are distributed: Cardoville takes the tip of the right nipple, Brumeton, his son, the base; the left is occupied in the same way by Dolmus and his son; Nicette claims the clitoris, Zulma, the labia; each slave takes a calf; Larose and Julien each have an armpit; Fleur-d'Amour and Saint-Clair take the buttocks.

The tortures were to be carried out in the order in which we have just named the characters, and one could either prick

or pinch the part one was assigned to. Twelve rounds were carried out in succession, after which Cardoville, noticing that the victim was staggering, said she should be allowed to rest for a moment. This interval was filled with vile lust: the fathers fucked their daughters, bugged by their sons, each fondling two female slaves whom the Negroes were whipping before them. Here the women came; the men held back. Justine was untied; the two young girls lying on couches offered her their pussies to suck. As soon as, much against her will, the poor girl had performed this first task, she was forced to do the same with the two fathers, and to lick their assholes, until a fart signaled that her services were no longer needed. Then she was thrown to the ground, and everyone hurled insults at her and trampled her underfoot. More serious games finally began.

Seized by a negro, the unfortunate girl exposes her backside, and each of them comes forward to lay a hundred strokes of ox-sinew upon it. One can scarcely imagine with what ardour the two young girls conducted themselves on this occasion: of the whole assembly, they were the ones who lacerated Justine with the greatest ferocity. As soon as they had finished flogging, they would sprawl upon the carpets and draw toward themselves whichever of the men pleased them most.

From this torture they proceed to the next.

Brumeton says that every girl must be sodomized by her father and fucked in the cunt by her brother; that the Negroes must sodomize the fathers, and that the young men will each have one cock from a catamite in their arse and the other in their hand. This interesting group carries out the act, while Justine is placed on a wheel in full view of the assembly. Everyone comes; it was about time; the victim couldn't take it anymore. She is given an hour to rest, and during that time, wine, ham, and liqueurs are offered to the lecherous assembly, which, having regained its strength from such refreshments, soon turns its attention to new horrors.

“Come on, beautiful Justine,” said Dolmus, “you see these limp cocks—you must bring them back to life.” The group forms a circle; our heroine stands in the middle; she must approach each one in turn; she must suck the cunt, arse, and mouth of the women; the tongue, anus, and cock of the men; and every individual she passes is obliged to inflict a bleeding wound on her. Dolmus rips off her ear; Cardoville makes an incision in her right nipple; Brumeton scratches the left one; Nicette plunges the tip of a pocketknife into her right buttock twice in a row; her sister cuts off a piece of the left one; Volcidor, armed with a ball covered with spikes, tickles the inside of her pussy for quite some time; Larose pricks a vein in her left thigh; Julien bites off a piece of the right one with his teeth; Fleur-d’Amour punches her in the nose, causing blood to spurt out; Saint-Clair plunges an eight-line stiletto into her belly; the first black man cuts her shoulders; the second stabs her jugular; Zulma, drunk with lust, asks to be fucked; Nicette expresses the same desire; the Negroes fuck them both, while they are being sodomized by their brothers, and the fathers fuck catamites before their eyes, which they stroke. “We must, however, enjoy this whore,” said Cardoville. “Yes,” replied Dolmus; “but by tightening her up, I hope.” These words, which Justine did not understand, nevertheless made her shudder. “Zamor,” said Cardoville to the one of his negroes who bore that name, “take this whore and make her tighter for us.” The servant obeyed; he seized Justine, placed her hips on a round stool no more than six inches in diameter; there, with no support whatsoever, her legs fall to one side, her arms to the other; these four limbs are fastened to the ground, spread as wide as possible. The torturer who is to narrow her passages arms himself with a long needle, at the end of which is a waxed thread. But here Zulma’s violent nature takes over. “Oh! Damn-you-to-hell,” she cries out, inflamed by wine and lust, “leave this job to me; it’s my duty to do it; I want to sew up the cunt; my sister will take care of the arse.” — “I’ll sew up her heart if I have to,” says Nicette, “and devour it raw afterward, if you want.” — “Bravo!

Brave children," said Dolmus; "you are worthy of those who brought you into this world, and pity, the basest of all sentiments, no longer has a place in your depraved hearts." — "No, no, fuck, it doesn't have any anymore," said Zulma, approaching the cunt she was about to seal up; and without worrying either about the blood she was about to spill or the pain she would cause, the monster, in front of the scoundrels whom this spectacle inflamed, hermetically sealed the entrance to Justine's vagina with a stitch. Nicette steps forward, and the altar of Sodom barricades itself in the same manner. "That's how I need them," says Cardoville, once Justine has been laid back on her back and he sees the fortress he wishes to invade well within his reach; he thrusts with incredible vigor; Zamor sodomizes her during this time; to sustain his delusion, he wants the two sisters, before his eyes, to be sodomized by their brothers; for Dolmus to sodomize a catamite, while the other negro slips his cock into her arse. The scene takes shape; the stitches burst. The torments of hell do not equal those endured by Justine; the more intense her pain, the more piquant the pleasures of her tormentors appear. Everything finally yields to his efforts; Justine is torn apart. Cardoville's monstrous shaft, forcing its way in violently, reopens the wounds inflicted by Volcidor with his spiked ball; but Cardoville, who is saving his strength for new horrors, is careful not to ejaculate. The victim is turned over; the same obstacles remain: the cruel man watches them while masturbating, and his ferocious hands molest the surrounding area, to be better positioned to seize the spot; he thrusts himself into it. The natural narrowness of the passage makes the attacks far more intense: the fearsome victor has soon broken all restraints; Justine is covered in blood; what does it matter to the triumphant one? Two vigorous thrusts place him in the sanctuary, and the scoundrel finally consummates a sacrifice there, the pain of which the victim could not have endured for a single moment longer without fainting. "To me," says Dolmus, ordering Justine to be untied; "I won't sew her up, the dear girl; but I'll place her on a camp bed, which will quickly restore

all the warmth that her foolish virtue has caused her to lose." One of the negroes immediately brings out of a cabinet a diagonal cross, entirely studded with steel spikes: it is upon this that the notorious libertine wants Justine to be placed; but by what new twist, good heavens! will he enhance his cruel enjoyment? Before tying up the victim, Dolmus himself thrusts a contrived ball into the poor girl's anus: no sooner is it inserted into the patient's bowels than she feels a devouring fire within herself; she screams, they bind her; Dolmus fucks her, pressing her with all his might onto the sharp spikes that tear her apart; one of the Negroes fucks Dolmus in the arse; Nicette and Zulma come to offer their buttocks to the fucker; they jerk off their brothers while this is happening, one of whom whips Cardoville, who sodomizes one of the young men, while the others surround him. All are in ecstasy; only Justine is experiencing pains that are hard to imagine; the more she pushes away those pressing against her, the more they throw her back onto the needles that are lacerating the poor woman. Meanwhile, the ravages of the terrible ball are impossible to describe; the cries of this unfortunate woman would tear the hearts of anyone other than the scoundrels surrounding her; no words could convey what she is experiencing; yet the barbaric Dolmus seems to be enjoying himself immensely; his mouth, pressed against hers, seems to breathe in the pain she feels, to heighten the pleasures that intoxicate his wickedness; but, following his friend's example, feeling his semen ready to spurt forth, he wants to do everything before losing it. Justine is turned over: though her buttocks are all bruised and torn, they still seem sublime to her tormentors. The ball they had withdrawn from her would now produce in the vagina the same burning it had caused in the place it had just left; it rises, it falls, it burns deep into her womb; yet they fasten her no less firmly by the belly to the treacherous cross; and far more delicate parts will be tormented on the sharp points that receive them. Dolmus sodomizes her, while one of the catamites fucks him, himself being sodomized by a Negro; the other African, with

both feet placed on the raised branches of the cross, rubs his buttocks against Justine's face; he shits on her nose... she is forced to swallow it all, while, in a corner, Brumeton fucks his sister. Volcidor, Cardoville, and Brumeton take Dolmus's place, sometimes getting fucked in the arse by the Black men, sometimes by the catamites, while Nicette and Zulma in turn come to piss and shit on the patient's face; as soon as they're done, they position themselves facing the cross and get fucked by the men who are leaving their father's or brother's arse. The frenzy seems to have reached its peak, and the blood of the unfortunate Justine drenches all the sacrificers. "I have a brilliant idea," says Zulma, who is being fucked by Larose and sodomized by Julien; "There are twelve of us; let us form two lines; let each arm himself with a stout switch, and let us make Justine run the gauntlet." — "How many passes shall we condemn her to?" says Brumeton, inflamed by the idea. "Twelve," replies Volcidor.

"We mustn't decide anything," said Nicette; "the wretch must keep going until she collapses." — "No, no," said Cardoville; "I'm saving her for a different kind of torment: let's have some fun with the one that's just been suggested to us; but let's not let this unfortunate woman be led to her death by such a gentle path." — "Well then," replied Zulma, "let's go ahead with my idea." They form a line. Poor Justine, who can barely stand, is forced to walk the length of the line in six minutes; her wretched body is nothing but a wound... Even in this torment, one cannot imagine the extent to which the two young women give vent to their lecherous savagery; it is they who strike the hardest. Justine succumbs; the tigers go to fetch her from the ground, and it is in this dreadful state that they order the negroes to take their pleasure with her. Both of them seize her; whilst one takes his pleasure from the front, the other thrusts into her rear; they switch and switch again ceaselessly: Justine is torn even more by their thickness than she had been by the breaking of the artificial barriers that had just been breached. Meanwhile,

the two fathers sodomise the young girls, ramming their daughters' arses, each one being fucked by her brother. New waves of cum spill forth, when an unexpected turn of events takes place.

Zulma, fiery Zulma, says she wants to be nailed to a cross studded with needles, and that all the men must mount her there; she adds that Justine must be suspended above her head, and that the blood dripping from her limbs must be poured over her. "Ah! Bloody hell, what an idea!" says Nicette; "how I envy the wit of the one who thought it up; I ask to follow my sister." — "We shall all follow her," says Volcidor: "those needles are anything but a torture; they inflame the senses; they irritate the temperament; they produce the same effect as the whip." — "Yes, yes, for God's sake, we'll all have a go," said Brumeton. "All right then," said Zulma; "but I'll always be first in line;" the whore flattens her back against it; they pin her down; all the men fuck her; she's covered in blood. "Oh! How delightful it is," she cries, "turn me round, so I can be sodomised;" and she is obeyed. This fatal whim inflames everyone's minds: men, women, young boys—all take their turn, all have their way with her; and all, armed with a spear, pierce and scratch the unfortunate body suspended above their heads, so as to double upon their own the streams of blood with which these scoundrels love to drench themselves. Justine is finally taken down, but unconscious. Her wretched body is now nothing more than a shapeless mass over which frightful wounds are beginning to scar... she has lost all consciousness. "What shall we do with her now?" says Cardoville. "We must," says Dolmus, "let justice take its course; she will die all the same, and we shall remain beyond suspicion. Let them revive her and take her back to prison." Nicette and Zulma were very far from thinking the same way. Entirely abandoned to their passions, they imperiously demanded the death of their victim; it had been promised to them. They wanted it; their brothers, being more prudent, brought them to reason. "She will die anyway," says Brumeton, "and we shall go and enjoy her final sighs." — "But it will not be we who put her to death." — "Shall we

not have been the cause of it?" — "What difference does it make," says Zulma, "the crime of the laws is no longer ours." — "But we authorize it." — "We do not commit it; we do not stain ourselves with her blood, and the difference is enormous." — "My daughter," says Dolmus, "to commit a crime or to have it committed amounts absolutely to the same thing for the conscience; the titillation one experiences is the same whether one acts oneself or causes another to act. This girl is not guilty — we are certain of it; a single word from us could save her. We deliver her over to absurd laws whose sword lies at our disposal. Be assured that between this crime and that of killing her with our own hands, the distance is very slight indeed. But even if such a distinction did exist, another course of conduct might compromise us; and for one portion of voluptuous pleasure — an imaginary portion — we might ourselves place obstacles in the way of all those pleasures still awaiting us in future. Let us make a few sacrifices to our pleasures; it is solely in their interest that I act, believe me; and if I deprive myself today of some measure of voluptuous enjoyment, you may be quite certain that it is only in order one day to enlarge its sphere."

While Dolmus reasoned thus, Julien, by Cardoville's order, was bringing Justine back to life and bathing her wounds. "Go now," Dolmus says to her, when he sees her sufficiently recovered, "go and make your complaints." — "Oh!" says Cardoville, "prudent Justine is hardly in a position to complain; on the eve of being sacrificed herself, it is prayers we must expect from her, not accusations." — "Let her attempt neither one nor the other," replies Dolmus; "she would accuse us without being heard, she would implore us without moving us." — "But," says Justine, "if nevertheless I were to reveal..." — "It would always come back upon us," says Cardoville, "and the consideration and influence we enjoy in this city would never permit attention to be paid to such contemptible recriminations; your punishment would only become more cruel and more prolonged. You must understand, wretched creature, that we amused ourselves with your person

for the natural and simple reason that strength is inclined to abuse weakness.” — “Justine,” says Volcador, “must realize that she cannot escape her judgment, that it must be undergone, and that she shall undergo it; that it would be useless for her to divulge her removal from prison this night, for she would not be believed; the gaoler, entirely in our hands, would deny it at once. Therefore, this fair and gentle girl, so deeply penetrated by the greatness of God, must offer Him in peace all that she has just suffered and all that still awaits her; they will serve as so many expiations for the dreadful crime that delivers her to the laws. Put your clothes back on, my girl,” continues the monster; “it is not yet daylight; the two men who brought you here will conduct you back to your prison...” Justine wishes to speak; she wishes to throw herself at the knees of these ogres, either to soften them or to ask them for death. They do not so much as listen to her; the girls insult her, the men threaten her; she is dragged away and thrown back into her prison, where the gaoler receives her with the same secrecy with which he had brought her out. “Lie down,” says this Cerberus, thrusting her back into her room, “and if ever you should wish to reveal to anyone what happened to you this night, remember that I would deny it, and that such a useless accusation would not extricate you from your troubles.” — “O Heaven!” cries Justine as soon as she is alone, “what! should I regret leaving the world? should I fear abandoning a universe composed of such monstrous villains? Ah! may the hand of God tear me from it this very instant, in whatever manner He pleases, I shall complain no more! The sole consolation left to the unhappy being born among so many savage beasts is the hope of soon leaving them forever!”

The next day the cruel Saint-Florent came to visit Justine. “Well now,” he says to her, “are you satisfied with the friends I procured for you?” — “Oh, monsieur, they are monsters!” — “But you had to pay for that protection; I warned you to be submissive.” — “I did everything they wished, and they will destroy me.” — “Ah! I understand; you must have made them spill

too much seed, and nothing is worse than the disgust that follows satiety; but tell me... tell me... will they not save you?" — "I am a lost woman!" — "Come then, let us see a little how they treated you"; and as he said this, he lifted her skirts... "Ah, damn! I am no longer surprised; you should not have let them do so much to you. Listen, I am going to speak to you as a friend. I know that, owing to the enormity of your crimes, the plan is to have you burned alive; such is the punishment intended for you. It is no longer a question now of saving you; the thing is to contrive that you be merely hanged instead of burned, as I know is intended." — "Well then, monsieur, what must be done for that?" — "First of all, you must abandon yourself entirely to me; nothing inflames my senses so much as enjoying a woman condemned to death. If I was not with my friends last night, it was because I feared they might save you. Now that I am certain you are going to perish on the scaffold, and that the only question concerns the manner of punishment, you excite me prodigiously; so show me your arse." — "Oh! monsieur..." — "Very well then, you shall be burned..." And the unfortunate girl, to escape that horrible punishment, allows him to do as he pleases almost mechanically. Never had this libertine been so inflamed in his life; one cannot describe all the refinements he employed in order to enjoy more deliciously a girl whom his atrocious plots were sending to her death; he covered her with lubricities. Justine dares for an instant to remind him of the services he had proposed to render her... she accepted them, if only her life might be saved. But Saint-Florent, whose imagination was heated only by the pleasure of sending this creature to death, tells her that it is too late now, and ends the scene with a singular atrocity. He calls the gaoler. "Pierre," he says to him, "take this wretch before me." What good fortune for such a brute! The fellow obeys; Saint-Florent pulls down his breeches to his heels and sodomizes the turnkey, while the latter, with an enormous engine, rends the victim. "That is enough," says Saint-Florent, as soon as he has filled the ugly arse of the man of bolts and locks

with semen; “and now, slut,” he continues, addressing Justine, “do not imagine that I shall make the slightest move in your favour; on the contrary, I shall urge your judges to greater severity in their sentence. You should have accepted what I proposed at the proper time, and above all have taken care never to appear before my eyes. Yes, you shall be burned — be certain of it; I leave you only in order to hasten... to ensure the judgment.” The monster departs, leaving the poor girl in a state of collapse resembling the nothingness of death, whose shadows are soon to envelop her.

The following day Cardoville came to interrogate her; she could not help shuddering when she saw with what cold-blooded assurance this rogue dared to administer justice — he, the most villainous of men, he who, against every principle of that justice with which he cloaked himself, had just abused innocence and misfortune so cruelly, while making them the very safeguard of his own security. She defended herself with all the ardour inspired by a good cause; but the skill of this dishonest man fashioned crimes out of every argument she advanced. When the charges of the trial had been thoroughly established, according to this iniquitous judge, he had the impudence to ask her whether she did not know a wealthy gentleman of this city named Monsieur de Saint-Florent. Justine replied that she knew him. “Good,” says Cardoville, “I need no more than that. This Monsieur de Saint-Florent, whom you admit knowing, knows you equally well; he is among your accusers. He has testified that he saw you in a band of brigands where you were the first to rob him of his money and pocketbook; your accomplices wished to spare his life, but you alone insisted on taking it; nevertheless, he succeeded in escaping. The same Monsieur de Saint-Florent adds that several years later, having recognized you in Lyon, he permitted you to come and speak with him, at your urgent request and chiefly upon your word that your conduct had become exemplary; and that there, while he was admonishing you, while exhorting you to persevere in the path of virtue, you car-

ried the insolence of crime so far as to steal a watch and a hundred louis from his mantelpiece. The Bishop of Grenoble and a Benedictine monk have likewise just accused you of murder... of theft... and of I know not what other horrors..." And Cardoville, taking advantage of the anger into which such atrocious calumnies plunged our unfortunate orphan, ordered the clerk to write that she confessed all these accusations by her silence and by the expression of her face.

Justine, driven to despair, throws herself to the ground; she makes the vault resound with her cries; she strikes her head against the paving stones, hoping to find in them a swifter death; and, finding no words equal to her dreadful anguish: "Villain!" she cries, "I appeal to the just God who will avenge me for your crimes; He will discern innocence and make you repent the infamous abuse you make of your authority." Cardoville rings the bell; he tells the gaoler to take the accused back to her cell, since, troubled alike by fury and remorse, she is not in a condition to continue the interrogation; but that, moreover, the charges are complete, since the guilty woman admits all her crimes... The monster departs in peace!... The thunderbolt does not strike him down!

The affair proceeded rapidly; driven by hatred, vengeance, and lust, Justine was swiftly condemned. "O just Heaven!" she cried, when she saw herself upon the brink of punishment, "under what star was I born, that I have never yet been able to conceive a single honest sentiment which was not instantly followed by every scourge of misfortune? And how can it be that this enlightened Providence, whose justice I delight to adore, should punish me for my virtues while at the same time raising to the pinnacle those who crush me beneath their vices?

"A woman of high rank and a millionaire conspire, in my childhood, against my honour and my virginity; they avenge themselves for their lack of success by entangling me in an affair that leads me to the foot of the scaffold; great riches await them, while I stand upon the brink of hanging. I fall among thieves; I

escape them with a man whose life I save; for my reward he violates me and leaves me crushed beneath his blows. I arrive at the house of a debauched nobleman who wishes to make me stab his mother; the traitor has the skill to make me bear the blame for what he alone committed: I flee, and prosperity crowns him. From there I go to an incestuous and murderous surgeon whose dreadful infanticide I attempt to prevent; the murder is accomplished, and I am branded and marked like a criminal! He is showered with the gifts of fortune, while I sink into the most extreme misery. A man derives pleasure from drowning the children he fathers; I oppose him; seized by him, I am shut up in his towers, where the scoundrel intends to keep me until death. I am urged to introduce a band of thieves into this man's house... to betray one of my companions... I have the weakness to consent... I am set free; happiness smiles upon me because I have just committed an atrocity: it is the promise of a wicked deed that frees me from Bandole's house, while virtue held me captive there. I wish to approach the sacraments, I wish fervently to implore the Supreme Being from whom I nevertheless receive so many evils; the august tribunal where I hope to purify myself in one of our holiest mysteries becomes the bloody theatre of my disgrace: the man who abuses and defiles me rises to the highest honours of his order, while adversity continues to pursue me. I allow myself to be moved by a woman who complains to me of her misfortunes; she leads me into a den of murderers: there, more than at any other moment in my life, I experience to what extent the hand of fate wishes eternally to toss me about; elsewhere I was the object of many crimes without participating in any, but at d'Esterval's, retained solely by the ardent desire to make virtue triumph, I am compelled to share in every crime in order to prevent them. At last a victim escapes through my efforts; it is Bressac — that monster who accused me of stabbing his mother, whom he alone could have murdered. The fruit of my labours is to be conducted by him to another scoundrel, where even the hand of the Furies themselves

could scarcely depict the horrors with which his rage surrounded me. I attempt to save the first wife of this man, whom I find in his house; I do not succeed: at least I wish to help the second escape; fortune rewards this action only by making me risk perishing myself by the slowest of deaths. In the house of this infamous husband I encounter another anthropophagus, who proposes that I distribute poisons; I refuse; he casts me into a stagnant pool. I meet again the man whom my kindness once saved from a band of thieves... who rewarded me by violating me. Plunged into misery, I implore his pity; he offers his services only at the price of the most criminal of negotiations... he wishes me to procure victims for him. Outraged by the proposal, I reject even the very thought of it. The libertine, in revenge, subjects me once more to ignominies. I leave Lyon; the first person I encounter is a woman begging alms; I relieve her distress, and she drags me into an underground cavern where I am swallowed up with her; new abominations present themselves to me, and I am forced to participate in them. There, theft is demanded as the price of my liberty; I refuse; I denounce the guilty man; he prospers, while I alone am punished. The promise of a new crime finally breaks my chains; fortune smiles upon me only when I welcome it. Freed at last from all these villains, I travel toward Grenoble; a fainting man appears before me; I help him; the ingrate forces me to turn a wheel like a beast and hangs me for his amusement; this madman then wishes me to hang him in turn. A second time mistress of his life, I save it once again. In recompense, he shuts me up alive among two hundred corpses; all his wishes are fulfilled... and I am on the verge of dying upon the scaffold for having worked by force in his house. A dreadful woman whom Heaven causes me to encounter once more attempts to seduce me and deprives me of the little I possess because I sought to save the treasures of her victim... A sensitive young man wishes to make me forget all my sorrows, to console me for them by offering me his hand; he expires in my arms before he can do so. His friend seeks to dry my tears, but my

persecutress takes her revenge; the serpents of hell were destined to tear me apart, for I had just been virtuous. I am seized, abducted, conducted to a man whose passion is cutting off heads. I escape this danger; the arms extended toward me still protect me; at last I believe myself safe. A house catches fire; I throw myself into the flames to rescue the child of the woman given to me as protectress. Forever the dupe of my good deeds, it is this very woman whom I served who destroys me. Imprisoned like a criminal, burdened with calumnious accusations, I implore a monk; he compels me to abominations and abandons me without helping me. I appeal to the protection of a man whose fortune and life I once saved; he delivers me over to infamous libertines among whom I endure a thousand times more horrors than I had known in all my days. This multitude of savage beasts united against me hastens my destruction after overwhelming me with outrages; they are showered with the gifts of fortune, while I go to my death.

“Such are the things men have made me endure; such are the lessons taught me by their dangerous commerce. Is it then surprising that my soul, embittered by misfortune, revolted by outrages, and crushed beneath injustices, should now aspire only to break its chains?”

Justine had scarcely finished these melancholy reflections when the gaoler came to speak to her with the utmost secrecy. “Listen to me carefully,” he said to her; “you have inspired me with some interest, and if you can succeed in what I am about to propose, I will save your life.” — “Oh, monsieur, what is it?” — “Do you see over there that stout man, sunk in grief, who, like yourself, awaits only the hour of his punishment? He possesses a pocketbook containing a considerable sum... do you see the corner of it protruding from his pocket?” — “Well, monsieur?” — “Well then! I know that at this moment he is occupied solely with finding means of passing that treasure on to his family; steal it from him, bring it to me, and you are free. But silence — whether you accept or refuse, never open your mouth about

what I reveal to you here... come now, decide." — "O God!" cries Justine, forever suspended between vice and virtue, "must it then be that the road to happiness is never opened to me except by delivering myself over to infamies!... Yes, monsieur, yes, I shall obey you; you propose a crime to me... I shall surrender myself to it... yes, I shall commit it, in order to spare the scoundrels who are putting me to death a far more atrocious crime."

The gaoler withdraws; time presses: already the air resounds with the mournful tones of that bell which announces to the unfortunate condemned that they have but a moment left to live.¹⁸ Our heroine goes and places herself beside her fellow-prisoner; she steals from him the desired object, hands it over to the warder, who, that very instant, by way of reward, opens the gates to her and gives her a *louis* for the road.

"Let us flee, let us flee!" cries this unfortunate creature as soon as she is alone; "let us quickly quit a country where the happiness I hoped to find there recedes from me with such relentless obstinacy." Night falls; the darkness favours her flight, and now she is upon the road to Paris, whither her resolutions lead her, in the hope of rejoining her sister, moving her by the tale of her misfortunes, and finding at least near her some relief from her dreadful misery.

Such were the thoughts that occupied Justine as far as the outskirts of Essonne.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon; she was walking along one of the verges of the road when she perceived a lady of the utmost elegance strolling with four men. "Abbé," said this lady, addressing one of the persons accompanying her, "there is something about that creature's face which strikes me... Made-moiselle, a word, if you please... would you be so kind as to tell me your name... who you are?" — "Oh, madame, the most unfortunate of women!" — "But your name, at last?" — "Justine." — "Justine!... what! can you be the daughter of the banker N...?" — "Yes, madame..." — "My friends, it is my sister... yes,

¹⁸ It is the custom in nearly all the southern provinces.

my sister... whom these rags and tatters disguise from you; such was bound to be her fate — I predicted it to her... she was virtuous; how could she fail to perish? Come, my child, come to my château; I am curious to know by what fatality I find you again..." They return indoors. "What!" says Justine, dazzled by the splendour she sees reigning everywhere, "while I can scarcely sustain my miserable existence, are these then, my sister, the riches that surround you?" — "O timid girl!" replies Juliette, "cease your astonishment; I foretold all this to you. I followed the path of vice, my child, and I have found nothing upon it but roses. Less philosophical than I, your accursed prejudices made you revere chimeras; you see where they have led you! Abbé," continued the celebrated sister of our heroine, "have more decent clothes given to her, and let a place be set for her with us; tomorrow we shall hear the story of her misfortunes."

Refreshed and rested, Justine related on the following day to the whole company the adventures which the reader has just perused. However, cast down this beautiful girl might have been, she pleased everyone, and our libertines, while observing her, could not refrain from praising her. "Yes," said one of them — whom we shall soon see playing a role in the adventures of Justine's sister — "yes, here indeed are the MISFORTUNES OF VIRTUE; and there," he continued, pointing to Juliette, "there, my friends, are the PROSPERITIES OF VICE."

The remainder of the evening was devoted to rest; and the very next day Juliette announced to her friends that she wished to relate her history to her sister, in order, as she said, to make her judge more clearly the powerful manner in which Heaven always protects and rewards vice, while it casts down and afflicts virtue. "Listen to me, Justine; as for you, Noircueil and Chabert, I do not invite you to hear once again details in which you yourselves have too great a share for them not already to be familiar to you. Go and spend a few days in the country; upon your return we shall see what may be done with this girl. But you, Marquis, and you, my dear Chevalier, I beg you to hear

what I have to say, and to persuade yourselves that it is not without reason that Chabert and Noircœur have so often told you that there exist very few women in the world more singular than myself.”

They pass into a delightful salon. The company seats itself upon sofas; Justine takes only a chair; and Juliette, reclining upon an ottoman, begins her narrative in the manner our readers shall see in the volumes that follow.

FIN DU QUATRIÈME VOLUME.