

To the Reader

⁴This book was written in good faith, reader. It warns you from the outset that in it I have set myself no goal but a domestic and private one. I have had no thought of serving either you or my own glory. My powers are inadequate for such a purpose. I have dedicated it to the private convenience of my relatives and friends, so that when they have lost me (as soon they must), they may recover here some features of my habits and temperament, and by this means keep the knowledge they have had of me more complete and alive.

If I had written to seek the world's favor, I should have bedecked myself better, and should present myself in a studied posture. I want to be seen here in my simple, natural, ordinary fashion, without straining or artifice; for it is myself that I portray. My defects will here be read to the life, and also my natural form, as far as respect for the public has allowed. Had I been placed among those nations which are said to live still in the sweet freedom of nature's first laws, I assure you I should very gladly have portrayed myself here entire and wholly naked.

Thus, reader, I am myself the matter of my book; you would be unreasonable to spend your leisure on so frivolous and vain a subject.

So farewell. Montaigne, this first day of March, fifteen hundred and eighty.

X

Thank you

wordery

I WAS born in the year 1632, in the city of York, of a good family, tho' not of that country, my father being a foreigner of Bremen, who settled first at Hull. He got a good estate by merchandise, and leaving off his trade lived afterward at York, from whence he had married my mother, whose relations were named Robinson, a very good family in that country, and from whom I was called Robinson Kreutznaer; but by the usual corruption of words in England, we are now called, nay, we call our selves and write our name, Crusoe, and so my companions always called me.

I had two elder brothers, one of which was lieutenant colonel to an English regiment of foot in Flanders, formerly commanded by the famous Coll. Lockhart, and was killed at the battle near Dunkirk against the Spaniards. What became of my second brother I never knew any more than my father or mother did know what was become of me.

Being the third son of the family and not bred to any trade, my head began to be filled very early with rambling thoughts. My father, who was very ancient, had given me a competent share of learning, as far as house-education and a country free-school generally goes, and designed me for the law; but I would be satisfied with nothing but going to sea, and my inclination to this led me so strongly against the will, nay, the commands of my father, and against all the entreaties and perswasions of my mother and other friends, that there seemed to be something fatal in that propensity of nature tending directly to the life of misery which was to befall me.

My father, a wise and grave man, gave me serious and excellent counsel against what he foresaw was my design. He called me one morning into his chamber, where he was confined by the gout, and expostulated very warmly with me upon this subject. He asked me what reasons more than a meer wandering inclination I had for leaving my father's house and my native country, where I might be well introduced, and had a prospect of raising my fortune by application and industry, with a life of ease and

FIN

[1] SOME DETACHED REFLECTIONS OR THOUGHTS THAT I HAVE NOT PUT IN MY WORKS.

[2] These are ideas that I have not delved into deeply, and that I am putting aside in order to think about them as the occasion allows.

[3] I will be very careful not to answer for all the thoughts that are here. I have put most of them here only because I have not had time to reflect on them, but I will think about them when I make use of them.

[4] Devotion arises from a desire to play some role in the world, whatever the cost.¹

[5] My son,¹ you have enough good fortune not to have to either blush or swell with pride because of your birth.²

{My birth is proportionate to my fortune³ in such a way that I would be disturbed if one or the other were greater.}

You will be a man of the robe⁴ or the sword. Since you will be responsible for your status, it is up to you to choose. In the robe, you will find more independence and freedom; in the sword camp, grander hopes.

You are permitted to want to rise to the more eminent posts, because every citizen is permitted to want to be in a position to render greater services to his Country. Moreover, noble ambition is a sentiment useful to society when it is well directed.

[It is a great workman who has made our being and has given our souls certain tendencies and certain pendants,]

[4]

1. On devotion, see *pensées* 445, 594, 1140, and 1405.

[5]

1. Jean-Baptiste de Secondat (February 10, 1716–June 17, 1795), Montesquieu's only son. He was a man of neither robe (i.e., the magistracy) nor sword nobility. Raised in Paris, he engaged in scientific research at the Jesuit *collège* (secondary school) of Louis-le-Grand. On August 30, 1740, he married Marie-Thérèse de Mons in Bordeaux.

2. By his father, Jacques de Secondat, and his paternal uncle, Jean-Baptiste de Secondat, Montesquieu belonged to a family of sword and of robe; by his mother, Marie-Françoise de Pesnel, he descended from the noble house of La Lande, which from the end of the eleventh century was established on the territory of La Brède.

3. See *pensée* 1183 for a reworking of this thought.

4. *Robe*, magistracy, legal profession, so called because of the long gown worn by its members; often contrasted with *épée*, or sword, as being two types of nobility. See also *pensée* 30.—HC

Just as the physical world continues to exist only because each part of matter tends to move away from the center, so too the political world is maintained by that restless inner desire possessed by everyone to leave the situation in which he is placed.⁵ It is in vain that an austere morality would efface the features that the greatest of all workmen has imprinted on our souls. It is up to morality, which would work on man's heart, to regulate his sentiments, not destroy them.

[6] Our moral authors are almost all extremists; they speak to the pure understanding, not to that soul which in its unity is newly modified by means of the senses and the imagination.

[7] It is always adventurers who do great things, not the sovereigns of great empires.

[8] The invention of the postal service has created politics; we don't polittick with the Mughal.¹

[9] Does this art of politics make our histories more splendid than those of the Greeks and Romans?

[10] There are few events in the world that do not depend on so many circumstances that it would take a worldly eternity for them to occur a second time.

[11] If the Jesuits had come before Luther and Calvin, they would have been masters of the world.

[12] Perhaps one could say that the reason why most peoples give themselves such an ancient lineage is that, the creation being incomprehensible to human understanding, they think the world itself has existed forever.

[13] Nice book by one André cited by Athenaeus: *De Isis quae falso creditur* [*On those things that are wrongly believed*].²

5. First version: "by a certain tendency to leave the situation in which he is placed."

[8]

1. See also *pensées* 145 and 2207. "Politicking" (*politiquer*) means to engage in conversation over politics; the term was colloquial in Montesquieu's time and soon passed out of use.—H.C.

[13]

1. Athenaeus of Naucratis, Greek grammarian and rhetorician (fl. A.D. 200), author of a work in thirty books, the *Banquet of the Learned*, of which Montesquieu possessed the 1657 Latin edition (*Catalogue*, 1821). In the *Catalogue*, the notice is followed by this autographed note from Montesquieu: "The author is bad, but his work is precious—because of the innumerable particular facts one finds only there, the knowledge he gives us of the private life of the Greeks, and the fragments of the works of poets that we no longer have. When will we have the translation, the restorations and the notes of M. Adam?" In the *Spicilege*, 561, Montesquieu notes: "finish reading Athenaeus."

2. In the 1612 Lyon edition of Athenaeus, VII, 90, p. 312, one reads: "*Andreas libro De Isis qui falso*

[14] When one wants to abase a general, one says that he is lucky. But it is fine that his good fortune makes the public fortune.

[15] A courtier is like those plants made for creeping, which attach themselves to everything they find.

[16] What an obscure mystery is generation! The microscope, which revealed larvae in the seed of fertile animals but not in infertile ones like the mule, gave currency to the notion of the larvae, which has its difficulties. For (1) the larva must carry its placenta with it, for if the placenta were in the egg, how would one conceive of the larva attaching itself to this [umbilical] cord, which would pierce it in the navel in order to establish a vascular continuity; (2) it is difficult to conceive of how it is—given a million larvae, two tubes, and two ovaries—that children are not normally born as twins: thus, it must be that in each female, there is always only one egg fit to be fertilized. [*Journal des Savants*, March 21, 1690, there are many curious things on these matters.]¹

It is very difficult to say why mules do not procreate and why a mare which has conceived from a donkey can no longer conceive from a horse. {Countess Borromée² had a mule that procreated.}

[17] England is in virtually the most flourishing condition it could be in. Yet she owes fifty-three to fifty-four million sterling, that is to say, as much as she could owe at the height of her greatness without losing her credit. Thus, this high point of greatness has become a necessary condition for her; she cannot fall from it without being ruined.

creduntur, eos mentiri scribit qui aiunt Murænam in latulentam maris oram progredientem cum vipera misceri, quae in coenosis non versatur, sed nemorum solitudinem amat." [Andreas, in his book *On those things that are wrongly believed*, writes that those men lie who say that the eel, in approaching the muddy shore of the sea, mates with the snake, which does not live in a muddy place but loves the solitude of the woods.]

[16]

1. The book reviewed in the *Journal of the Learned* is *Introduction à la philosophie des Anciens. Par un amateur de la vérité* [Introduction to the philosophy of the ancients. By a truth lover] (Paris: Thibouaut, 1689).

2. Clélia del Grillo of Geno (1684-1777) married Count Jean Benoit Borromée in 1707. Montesquieu met her in Milan in September 1728; he had been recommended to her by abbé Conti. Montesquieu wrote to Conti on September 29, 1728 (*OC*, 3:914). "Countess Borromée greeted me as if I had descended from Mount Parnassus. . . I am astonished by her prodigious erudition." See also the *Voyages* (*OC*, 2:1025). At home, she had founded the Academia di "Vigilanti," and her palace had become the gathering place for the learned, and the center of the rebellion against Austria in favor of restoring the Spanish regime in Milan. She lent Montesquieu books on architecture and other subjects (*OC*, 3:918).

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MY OWN LIFE!

It is difficult for a man to speak long of himself without vanity; therefore, I shall be short. It may be thought an instance of vanity that I pretend at all to write my life; but this Narrative shall contain little more than the History of my Writings; as, indeed, almost all my life has been spent in literary pursuits and occupations. The first success of most of my writings was not such as to be an object of vanity.

I was born the 26th of April 1711, old style, at Edinburgh. I was of a good family, both by father and mother: my father's family is a branch of the Earl of Home's, or Home's; and my ancestors had been proprietors of the estate, which my brother possesses, for several generations. My mother was daughter of Sir David Falconer, President of the College of Justice: the title of Lord Halkerton came by succession to her brother.

My family, however, was not rich, and being myself a younger brother, my patrimony, according to the mode of my country, was of course very slender. My father, who passed for a man of parts, died when I was an infant, leaving me, with an elder brother and a sister, under the care of our mother, a woman of singular merit, who, though young and handsome, devoted herself entirely to the rearing and educating of her children. I passed through the ordinary course of education with success, and was seized very early with a passion for literature, which has been the ruling passion of my life, and the great source of my enjoyments. My studious

[For the circumstances attending the publication of this autobiography, see p. 80.—Ed.]

D. Hume

disposition, my sobriety, and my industry, gave my family a notion that the law was a proper profession for me; but I found an unsurmountable aversion to every thing but the pursuits of philosophy and general learning; and while they fancied I was poring upon Voet and Vinnius, Cicero and Virgil were the authors which I was secretly devouring.

My very slender fortune, however, being unsuitable to this plan of life, and my health being a little broken by my ardent application, I was tempted, or rather forced, to make a very feeble trial for entering into a more active scene of life. In 1734, I went to Bristol, with some recommendations to eminent merchants, but in a few months found that scene totally unsuitable to me. I went over to France, with a view of prosecuting my studies in a country retreat; and I there laid that plan of life, which I have steadily and successfully pursued. I resolved to make a very rigid frugality supply my deficiency of fortune, to maintain unimpaired my independence, and to regard every object as contemptible, except the improvement of my talents in literature.

During my retreat in France, first at Reims, but chiefly at La Fleche, in Anjou, I composed my *Treatise of Human Nature*. After passing three years very agreeably in that country, I came over to London in 1737. In the end of 1738, I published my *Treatise*, and immediately went down to my mother and my brother, who lived at his country house, and was employing himself very judiciously and successfully in the improvement of his fortune.

Never literary attempt was more unfortunate than my *Treatise of Human Nature*. It fell *dead-born from the press*, without reaching such distinction, as even to excite a murmur among the zealots. But being naturally of a cheerful and sanguine temper, I very soon recovered the blow, and prosecuted with great ardour my studies in the country. In 1742¹ I printed at Edinburgh the first part of my *Essays*: the work was favourably received, and soon made me entirely forget my former disappointment. I continued with my mother and brother in the country, and in that time recovered the knowledge of the Greek language, which I had too much neglected in my early youth.

In 1745, I received a letter from the Marquis of Annandale, inviting me to come and live with him in England; I found

¹ [Vols. i. and ii., in 1738. Vol. iii. in 1740.—Ed.] ² [Vol. i. in 1741.—Ed.]

also, that the friends and family of that young nobleman were desirous of putting him under my care and direction, for the state of his mind and health required it. I lived with him a twelvemonth. My appointments during that time made a considerable accession to my small fortune. I then received an invitation from General St. Clair to attend him as a secretary to his expedition, which was at first meant against Canada, but ended in an incursion on the coast of France. Next year, to wit, 1747, I received an invitation from the General to attend him in the same station in his military embassy to the courts of Vienna and Turin. I then wore the uniform of an officer, and was introduced at these courts as aide-de-camp to the general, along with Sir Harry Erskine and Captain Grant, now General Grant. These two years were almost the only interruptions which my studies have received during the course of my life: I passed them agreeably and in good company; and my appointments, with my frugality, had made me reach a fortune, which I called independent, though most of my friends were inclined to smile when I said so; in short, I was now master of near a thousand pounds.

I had always entertained a notion, that my want of success in publishing the *Treatise of Human Nature*, had proceeded more from the manner than the matter, and that I had been guilty of a very usual indiscretion, in going to the press too early. I, therefore, cast the first part of that work anew in the Enquiry concerning Human Understanding, which was published while I was at Turin.¹ But this piece was at first little more successful than the *Treatise of Human Nature*. On my return from Italy, I had the mortification to find all England in a ferment, on account of Dr. Middleton's Free Enquiry, while my performance was entirely overlooked and neglected. A new edition, which had been published at London, of my *Essays*, moral and political, met not with a much better reception.²

Such is the force of natural temper, that these disappointments made little or no impression on me. I went down in 1749, and lived two years with my brother at his country house, for my mother was now dead. I there composed the second part of my *Essays*, which I called *Political Discourses*, and also my Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals,

¹ [In April, before starting for Turin.—Ed.] ² [In November.—Ed.]

which is another part of my treatise that I cast anew. Meanwhile, my bookseller, A. Millar, informed me, that my former publications (all but the unfortunate Treatise) were beginning to be the subject of conversation; that the sale of them was gradually increasing, and that new editions were demanded. Answers by Reverends, and Right Reverends, came out two or three in a year; and I found, by Dr. Warburton's railing, that the books were beginning to be esteemed in good company. However, I had fixed a resolution, which I inflexibly maintained, never to reply to anybody; and not being very irascible in my temper, I have easily kept myself clear of all literary squabbles. These symptoms of a rising reputation gave me encouragement, as I was ever more disposed to see the favourable than unfavourable side of things; a turn of mind which it is more happy to possess, than to be born to an estate of ten thousand a year.

In 1751, I removed from the country to the town, the true scene for a man of letters. In 1752, were published at Edinburgh, where I then lived, my Political Discourses, the only work of mine that was successful on the first publication. It was well received abroad and at home. In the same year¹ was published at London, my Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals; which, in my own opinion (who ought not to judge on that subject), is of all my writings, historical, philosophical, or literary, incomparably the best. It came unnoticed and unobserved into the world.

In 1752, the Faculty of Advocates chose me their Librarian, an office from which I received little or no emolument, but which gave me the command of a large library. I then formed the plan of writing the History of England; but being frightened with the notion of continuing a narrative through a period of 1700 years, I commenced with the accession of the House of Stuart, an epoch when, I thought, the misrepresentations of faction began chiefly to take place. I was, I own, sanguine in my expectations of the success of this work. I thought that I was the only historian, that had at once neglected present power, interest, and authority, and the cry of popular prejudices; and as the subject was suited to every capacity, I expected proportional applause. But miserable was my disappointment: I was assailed by one cry of reproach, disapprobation, and even detestation; English, Scotch,

¹ [In 1751.—Ed.]

and Irish, Whig and Tory, churchman and sectary, free-thinker and religionist, patriot and courtier, united in their rage against the man, who had presumed to shed a generous tear for the fate of Charles I. and the Earl of Strafford; and after the first ebullitions of their fury were over, what was still more mortifying, the book seemed to sink into oblivion. Mr. Millar told me, that in a twelvemonth he sold only forty-five copies of it. I scarcely, indeed, heard of one man in the three kingdoms, considerable for rank or letters, that could endure the book. I must only except the primate of England, Dr. Herring, and the primate of Ireland, Dr. Stone, which seem two odd exceptions. These dignified prelates separately sent me messages not to be discouraged.

I was, however, I confess, discouraged; and had not the war been at that time breaking out between France and England, I had certainly retired to some provincial town of the former kingdom, have changed my name, and never more have returned to my native country. But as this scheme was not now practicable, and the subsequent volume was considerably advanced, I resolved to pick up courage and to persevere.

In this interval, I published at London my Natural History of Religion, along with some other small pieces: its public entry was rather obscure, except only that Dr. Hurd wrote a pamphlet against it, with all the illiberal petulance, arrogance, and scurrility which distinguish the Warburtonian school. This pamphlet gave me some consolation for the otherwise indifferent reception of my performance.²

In 1756, two years after the fall of the first volume, was published the second volume of my History, containing the period from the death of Charles I. till the Revolution. This performance happened to give less displeasure to the Whigs, and was better received. It not only rose itself, but helped to buoy up its unfortunate brother.

But though I had been taught by experience, that the Whig party were in possession of bestowing all places, both in the state and in literature, I was so little inclined to yield to their senseless clamour, that in about a hundred alterations, which farther study, reading, or reflection engaged me to make in the reigns of the first two Stuarts, I have made all of them invariably to the Tory side. It is ridiculous to

¹ In 1757.

² [See p. 62.—Ed.]

consider the English constitution before that period as a regular plan of liberty.

In 1759, I published my History of the House of Tudor. The clamour against this performance was almost equal to that against the History of the two first Stuarts. The reign of Elizabeth was particularly obnoxious. But I was now callous against the impressions of public folly, and continued very peaceably and contentedly in my retreat at Edinburgh, to finish, in two volumes, the more early part of the English History, which I gave to the public in 1761, with tolerable, and but tolerable success.

But, notwithstanding this variety of winds and seasons, to which my writings had been exposed, they had still been making such advances, that the copy-money given me by the booksellers, much exceeded any thing formerly known in England; I was become not only independent, but opulent. I retired to my native country of Scotland, determined never more to set my foot out of it; and retaining the satisfaction of never having preferred a request to one great man, or even making advances of friendship to any of them. As I was now turned of fifty, I thought of passing all the rest of my life in this philosophical manner, when I received, in 1763, an invitation from the Earl of Hertford, with whom I was not in the least acquainted, to attend him on his embassy to Paris, with a near prospect of being appointed secretary to the embassy; and, in the meanwhile, of performing the functions of that office. This offer, however inviting, I at first declined, both because I was reluctant to begin connexions with the great, and because I was afraid that the civilities and gay company of Paris, would prove disagreeable to a person of my age and humour: but on his lordship's repeating the invitation, I accepted of it. I have every reason, both of pleasure and interest, to think myself happy in my connexions with that nobleman, as well as afterwards with his brother, General Conway.

Those who have not seen the strange effects of modes, will never imagine the reception I met with at Paris, from men and women of all ranks and stations. The more I resiled from their excessive civilities, the more I was loaded with them. There is, however, a real satisfaction in living at Paris, from the great number of sensible, knowing, and polite company with which that city abounds above all

places in the universe. I thought once of settling there for life.

I was appointed secretary to the embassy; and in summer 1765, Lord Hertford left me, being appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. I was *chargé d'affaires* till the arrival of the Duke of Richmond, towards the end of the year. In the beginning of 1766, I left Paris, and next summer went to Edinburgh, with the same view as formerly, of burying myself in a philosophical retreat. I returned to that place, not richer, but with much more money, and a much larger income, by means of Lord Hertford's friendship, than I left it; and I was desirous of trying what superfluity could produce, as I had formerly made an experiment of a competency. But in 1767, I received from Mr. Conway an invitation to be Under-secretary; and this invitation, both the character of the person, and my connexions with Lord Hertford, prevented me from declining. I returned to Edinburgh in 1769, very opulent (for I possessed a revenue of 1,000*l.* a year), healthy, and though somewhat stricken in years, with the prospect of enjoying long my ease, and of seeing the increase of my reputation.

In spring 1775, I was struck with a disorder in my bowels, which at first gave me no alarm, but has since, as I apprehend it, become mortal and incurable. I now reckon upon a speedy dissolution. I have suffered very little pain from my disorder; and what is more strange, have, notwithstanding the great decline of my person, never suffered a moment's abatement of my spirits; insomuch, that were I to name the period of my life, which I should most choose to pass over again, I might be tempted to point to this latter period. I possess the same ardour as ever in study, and the same gaiety in company. I consider, besides, that a man of sixty-five, by dying, cuts off only a few years of infirmities; and though I see many symptoms of my literary reputation's breaking out at last with additional lustre, I knew that I could have but few years to enjoy it. It is difficult to be more detached from life than I am at present.

To conclude historically with my own character. I am, or rather was (for that is the style I must now use in speaking of myself, which emboldens me the more to speak my sentiments); I was, I say, a man of mild dispositions, of command of temper, of an open, social, and cheerful humour, capable of

attachment, but little susceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my passions. Even my love of literary fame, my ruling passion, never soured my temper, notwithstanding my frequent disappointments. My company was not unacceptable to the young and careless, as well as to the studious and literary; and as I took a particular pleasure in the company of modest women, I had no reason to be displeas'd with the reception I met with from them. In a word, though most men anywise eminent, have found reason to complain of calumny, I never was touch'd, or even attack'd by her baleful tooth: and though, I wantonly exposed myself to the rage of both civil and religious factions, they seem'd to be disarm'd in my behalf of their wonted fury. My friends never had occasion to vindicate any one circumstance of my character and conduct: not but that the zealots, we may well suppose, would have been glad to invent and propagate any story to my disadvantage, but they could never find any which they thought would wear the face of probability. I cannot say there is no vanity in making this funeral oration of myself, but I hope it is not a misplaced one; and this is a matter of fact which is easily cleared and ascertained.

APRIL 18, 1776.

DEAR SIR,—It is with a real pleasure, that I sit down to this behaviour of our late excellent last illness.

Though, in his own judgment incurable, yet he allow'd him the entreaty of his friends, to of a long journey. A few days that account of his own life, & papers, he has left to your care begin where his ends.

He set out for London to Morpeth met with Mr. John I come down from London on to have found him at Edinburgh him, and attend'd him during land, with that care and after from a temper so perfectly fr had written to my mother the land, I was under the necessity His disease seem'd to yield t and when he arriv'd in London better health than when he le

WILLIAM ST.

LETTER FROM AI

[For the circumstances attending th

V. J. Ransome

BOOK ONE

1712-1719 I have resolved on an enterprise which has no precedent, and which, once complete, will have no imitator. My purpose is to display to my kind a portrait in every way true to nature, and the man I shall portray will be myself.

Simply myself. I know my own heart and understand my fellow man. But I am made unlike any one I have ever met: I will even venture to say that I am like no one in the whole world. I may be no better, but at least I am different. Whether Nature did well or ill in breaking the mould in which she formed me, is a question which can only be resolved after the reading of my book.

Let the last trump sound when it will, I shall come forward with this work in my hand, to present myself before my Sovereign Judge, and proclaim aloud: "Here is what I have done, and if by chance I have used some immaterial embellishment it has been only to fill a void due to a defect of memory. I may have taken for fact what was no more than probability, but I have never put down as true what I knew to be false. I have displayed myself as I was, as vile and despicable when my behaviour was such, as good, generous, and noble when I was so. I have bared my secret soul as Thou thyself hast seen it, Eternal Being! So let the numberless legion of my fellow men gather round me, and hear my confessions. Let them groan at my depravities, and blush for my misdeeds. But let each one of them reveal his heart at the foot of Thy throne with equal sincerity, and may any man who dares, say "I was a better man than he."

I was born at Geneva in 1712, the son of Isaac Rousseau, a citizen of that town, and Susanne Bernard, his wife. My father's inheritance, being a fifteenth part only of a very small property which had been divided among as many children, was almost nothing, and he relied for his living entirely on his trade of watchmaker, at which he was very highly skilled. My mother was the daughter of a minister of religion and rather better-off. She had besides both intelligence and beauty, and my father had not found it easy to win her. Their love had begun almost with their birth; at eight or nine they would walk together every evening along La Trelle, and at ten they were inseparable. Sympathy and mental affinity strengthened in them a feeling first

formed by habit. Both, being affectionate and sensitive by nature, were only waiting for the moment when they would find similar qualities in another; or rather the moment was waiting for them, and both threw their affections at the first heart that opened to receive them. Fate, by appearing to oppose their passion, only strengthened it. Unable to obtain his mistress, the young lover ate out his heart with grief, and she counselled him to travel and forget her. He travelled in vain, and returned more in love than ever, to find her he loved still faithful and fond. After such a proof, it was inevitable that they should love one another for all their lives. They swore to do so, and Heaven smiled on their vows.

Gabriel Bernard, one of my mother's brothers, fell in love with one of my father's sisters, and she refused to marry him unless her brother could marry my mother at the same time. Love overcame all obstacles, and the two pairs were wedded on the same day. So it was that my uncle married my aunt, and their children became my double first cousins. Within a year both couples had a child, but at the end of that time each of them was forced to separate.

My uncle Bernard, who was an engineer, went to serve in the Empire and Hungary under Prince Eugène, and distinguished himself at the siege and battle of Belgrade. My father, after the birth of my only brother, left for Constantinople, where he had been called to become watchmaker to the Sultan's Seraglio. While he was away my mother's beauty, wit, and talents* brought her admirers, one of the most pressing of whom was M. de la Closure, the French Resident in the city. His feelings must have been very strong, for thirty years later I have seen him moved when merely speaking to me about her. But my mother had more than her virtue with which to defend herself; she

* She had talents much above her station. For her father the minister, who adored her, had taken great pains with her education. She drew, sang, and played accompaniments on the lute; she was well read and wrote very fair verses. Here is an inpromptu which she composed as she was walking with her sister-in-law and their two children, apropos some remark made about her absent husband and brother:

Ces deux messieurs qui sont absens

Nous sont chers de bien des manières:

Ce sont nos amis, nos amans,

Et les pères de ces enfans.

[These two absent gentlemen are dear to us in many ways. They are our friends and our lovers, they are our husbands and our brothers, and they are these children's fathers.]

deeply loved my father, and urged him to come back. He threw up everything to do so, and I was the unhappy fruit of his return. For ten months later I was born, a poor and sickly child, and cost my mother her life. So my birth was the first of my misfortunes.

I never knew how my father stood up to his loss, but I know that he never got over it. He seemed to see her again in me, but could never forget that I had robbed him of her; he never kissed me that I did not know by his sighs and his convulsive embrace that there was a bitter grief mingled with his affection, a grief which nevertheless intensified his feeling for me. When he said to me, 'Jean-Jacques, let us talk of your mother,' I would reply: 'Very well, father, but we are sure to cry.' 'Ah,' he would say with a groan; 'Give her back to me, console me for her, fill the void she has left in my heart! Should I love you so if you were not more to me than a son?' Forty years after he lost her he died in the arms of a second wife, but with his first wife's name on his lips, and her picture imprinted upon his heart.

Such were my parents. And of all the gifts with which Heaven endowed them, they left me but one, a sensitive heart. It had been the making of their happiness, but for me it has been the cause of all the misfortunes in my life.

I was almost born dead, and they had little hope of saving me. I brought with me the seed of a disorder which has grown stronger with the years, and now gives me only occasional intervals of relief in which to suffer more painfully in some other way. But one of my father's sisters, a nice sensible woman, bestowed such care on me that I survived; and now, as I write this, she is still alive at the age of eighty, nursing a husband rather younger than herself but ruined by drink. My dear aunt, I pardon you for causing me to live, and I deeply regret that I cannot repay you in the evening of your days all the care and affection you lavished on me at the dawn of mine. My nurse Jacqueline is still alive too, and healthy and strong. Indeed the fingers that opened my eyes at birth may well close them at my death.

I felt before I thought: which is the common lot of man, though more pronounced in my case than in another's. I know nothing of myself till I was five or six. I do not know how I learnt to read. I only remember my first books and their effect upon me; it is from my earliest reading that I date the unbroken consciousness of my own existence. My mother had possessed some novels, and my father and I began to read them after our supper. At first it was only to give me some practice in reading. But soon my interest in this entertaining literature became so

strong that we read by turns continuously, and spent whole nights so engaged. For we could never leave off till the end of the book. Sometimes my father would say with shame as we heard the morning larks: 'Come, let us go to bed. I am more of a child than you are.'

In a short time I acquired by this dangerous method, not only an extreme facility in reading and expressing myself, but a singular insight for my age into the passions. I had no idea of the facts, but I was already familiar with every feeling. I had grasped nothing; I had sensed everything. These confused emotions which I experienced one after another, did not warp my reasoning powers in any way, for as yet I had none. But they shaped them after a special pattern, giving me the strangest and most romantic notions about human life, which neither experience nor reflection has ever succeeded in curing me of.

1719-1723

The novels gave out in the summer of 1719, and that winter we changed our reading. Having exhausted my mother's library, we turned to that portion of her father's which had fallen to us. Fortunately it contained some good books, as it could hardly fail to do, for the collection had been formed by a minister, who deserved the title, a man of learning, after the fashion of his day, but of taste and good sense as well. Lesueur's *History of Church and Empire*, Bossuet's *Discourse upon Universal History*, Plutarch's *Lives*, Nani's *History of Venice*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, La Bruyère, Fontenelle's *Worlds* and his *Dialogues with the Dead*, and some volumes of Molière were transported to my father's workshop, where I read them to him every day while he worked.

Thus I acquired a sound taste, which was perhaps unique for my years. Plutarch, of them all, was my especial favourite, and the pleasure I took in reading and re-reading him did something to cure me of my passion for novels. Soon indeed I came to prefer Agesilaus, Brutus, and Aristides to Orondates, Artamenes, and Juba. It was this enthralling reading, and the discussions it gave rise to between my father and myself, that created in me that proud and intractable spirit, that impatience with the yoke of servitude, which has afflicted me throughout my life, in those situations least fitted to afford it scope. Continuously preoccupied with Rome and Athens, living as one might say with their great men, myself born the citizen of a republic and the son of a father whose patriotism was his strongest passion, I took fire by his example and pictured myself as a Greek or a Roman. I became indeed that

character whose life I was reading; the recital of his constancy or his daring deeds so carrying me away that my eyes sparkled and my voice rang. One day when I was reading the story of Scaevola over table, I frightened them all by putting out my hand and grasping a chafing-dish in imitation of that hero.

I had one brother seven years older than myself, who was learning my father's trade. The extraordinary affection lavished upon me led to his being somewhat neglected, which I consider very wrong. Moreover his education had suffered by this neglect, and he was acquiring low habits even before he arrived at an age at which he could in fact indulge them. He was apprenticed to another master, with whom he took the same liberties as he had taken at home. I hardly ever saw him. Indeed, I can hardly say that I ever knew him, but I did not cease to love him dearly, and he loved me as well as a scoundrel can love. I remember once when my father was correcting him severely and angrily, throwing myself impetuously between them, and clasping my arms tightly around him. Thus I covered him with my body, and received the blows intended for him. So obstinately did I maintain my hold that, either as a result of my tearful cries or so as not to hurt me more than him, my father let him off his punishment. In the end my brother became so bad that he ran away and completely disappeared. We heard some time later that he was in Germany. But he did not write at all, and we had no more news of him after that. So it was that I became an only son.

But if that poor lad's upbringing was neglected, it was a different matter with his brother. No royal child could be more scrupulously cared for than I was in my early years. I was idolized by everyone around me and, what is rarer, always treated as a beloved son, never as a spoiled child. Never once, until I left my father's house, was I allowed to run out alone into the road with the other children. They never had to repress or to indulge in me any of those wayward humours that are usually attributed to Nature, but which are all the product of education alone. I had the faults of my years. I was a chatterer, I was greedy, and sometimes I lied. I would have stolen fruit or sweets or any kind of eatable; but I never took delight in being naughty or destructive, or in accusing other people or torturing poor animals. However, I do remember once having made water in one of our neighbour's cooking-pots while she was at church; her name was Mme Clot. I will even admit that the thought of it still makes me laugh, because Mme Clot, although a good woman on the whole, was the grumpiest old body I

He advised me to keep a journal of my life, fair and undisguised. He said it would be a very good exercise, and would yield me infinite satisfaction when the ideas were faded from my remembrance. I told him that I had done so ever since I left Scotland. He said he was very happy that I pursued so good a plan. And now, O my journal! art thou not highly dignified? Shalt thou not flourish tenfold? No former solicitations or censures could tempt me to lay thee aside; and now is there any argument which can outweigh the sanction of Mr. Samuel Johnson? He said indeed that I should keep it private, and that I might surely have a friend who would burn it in case of my death. For my own part, I have at present such an affection for this my journal that it shocks me to think of burning it. I rather encourage the idea of having it carefully laid up among the archives of Auchinleck. However, I cannot judge fairly of it now. Some years hence I may. I told Mr. Johnson that I put down all sorts of little incidents in it. "Sir," said he, "there is nothing too little for so little a creature as man. It is by studying little things that we attain the great knowledge of having as little misery and as much happiness as possible." [16 JULY 1763]

Journal from the time of my
leaving Scotland 15 Nov. 1762.

Introduction
The ancient philosopher certainly
gave a wise counsel when he said
"Know thyself." For surely this knowledge is
of all the most important. I might enlarge upon this.
But grave and serious declamation is not what I intend at present.
A man cannot know himself better than by attending to the feelings
of his heart and to his external actions, from which he may with tolerable cer-
tainty judge "what manner of person he is."¹ I have therefore
determined to keep a daily journal in which I shall set down my
various sentiments and my various conduct, which will be not only
useful but very agreeable. It will give me a habit of application and
improve me in expression; and knowing that I am to record my
transactions will make me more careful to do well. Or if I should
go wrong, it will assist me in resolutions of doing better. I shall
here put down my thoughts on different subjects at different times,
the whims that may seize me and the sallies of my luxuriant imagi-
nation. I shall mark the anecdotes and the stories that I hear, the
instructive or amusing conversations that I am present at, and the
various adventures that I may have.

I was observing to my friend Erskine² that a plan of this kind
was dangerous, as a man might in the openness of his heart say
many things and discover many facts that might do him great
harm if the journal should fall into the hands of my³ enemies.

¹ James 1.24. ² See above, pp. 8, 29.

³ Read "his." Boswell shifts his construction in the middle of a sentence, prob-
ably because he began a new page with "should."

SATURDAY 1 JANUARY.

DIALOGUE AT CHILD'S.

1 CITIZEN. Pray, Sir, have you read Mr. Warton's *Essay on the Life and Writings of Pope*? He will not allow him to be a poet. He says he had good sense and good versification, but wants the warm imagination and brilliancy of expression that constitute the true poetical genius. He tries him by a rule prescribed by Longinus, which is to take the words out of their metrical order and then see if they have the sparks of poetry. Don't you remember this?

2 CITIZEN. I don't agree with him.

1 CITIZEN. Nor I, neither. He is fond of Thomson. He says he has great force.

2 CITIZEN. He has great faults.

1 CITIZEN. Ay, but great force, too.

2 CITIZEN. I have eat beefsteaks with him.

3 CITIZEN. So have I.

I received for a suit of old clothes 11s., which came to me in good time. I went to Louisa at one. "Madam, I have been thinking seriously." "Well, Sir, I hope you are of my way of thinking." "I hope, Madam, you are of mine. I have considered this matter most seriously. The week is now elapsed, and I hope you will not be so cruel as to keep me in misery." (I then began to take some liberties.) "Nay, Sir—now—but do consider—" "Ah, Madam!" "Nay, but you are an encroaching creature!" (Upon this I advanced to the greatest freedom by a sweet elevation of the charming petticoat.) "Good heaven, Sir!" "Madam, I cannot help it. I adore you. Do you like me?" (She answered me with a warm kiss, and pressing me to her bosom, sighed, "O Mr. Boswell!") "But, my dear Madam! Permit me, I beseech you." "Lord, Sir, the people may

come in." "How then can I be happy? What time? Do tell me." "Why, Sir, on Sunday afternoon my landlady, of whom I am most afraid, goes to church, so you may come here a little after three." "Madam, I thank you a thousand times." "Now, Sir, I have but one favour to ask of you. Whenever you cease to regard me, pray don't use me ill, nor treat me coldly. But inform me by a letter or any other way that it is over." "Pray, Madam, don't talk of such a thing. Indeed, we cannot answer for our affections. But you may depend on my behaving with civility and politeness."

I drank tea at Lady Betty's. The Dempsters were there. Jocularly and loud mirth went round. After the elegant scene of galantry which I had just been solacing my romantic imagination with, and after the high-relished ideas with which my fancy had been heated, I could consider the common style of company and conversation but as low and insipid. But the Fife tongue and the Niddry's Wynd address were quite hideous.⁶ After the tender respect with which I had been treated by the adorable Louisa I could not brook the not-ill-meant though coarse gibes of this *hamely* company. I was hurt, but seemed easy. I left them at nine o'clock and went home.

SUNDAY 2 JANUARY. I had George Home at breakfast with me. He is a good honest fellow and applies well to his business as a merchant. He had seen me all giddiness at his father's, and was astonished to find me settled on so prudent a plan. As I have made it a rule to dine every Sunday at home, and have got my landlady to give us regularly on that day a piece of good roast beef with a warm apple-pie, I was a little diffculted today, as our time of dining is three o'clock, just my hour of assignation. However, I got dinner to be at two, and at three I hastened to my charmer.

Here a little speculation on the human mind may well come in.

⁶ Niddry's Wynd was an alley in the Old Town of Edinburgh, extending from the High Street (near the Tron Church) to the Cowgate. The Musical Society of Edinburgh, in which the Earl of Kellie was a prominent member, held its concerts there. "Niddry's Wynd address" therefore probably means "Edinburgh society manners."

For here was I, a young man full of vigour and vivacity, the favourite lover of a handsome actress and going to enjoy the full possession of my warmest wishes. And yet melancholy threw a cloud over my mind. I could relish nothing. I felt dispirited and languid. I approached Louisa with a kind of an uneasy tremor. I sat down. I toyed with her. Yet I was not inspired by Venus. I felt rather a delicate sensation of love than a violent amorous inclination for her. I was very miserable. I thought myself feeble as a gallant, although I had experienced the reverse many a time. Louisa knew not my powers. She might imagine me impotent. I sweated almost with anxiety, which made me worse. She behaved extremely well; did not seem to remember the occasion of our meeting at all. I told her I was very dull. Said she, "People cannot always command their spirits." The time of church was almost elapsed when I began to feel that I was still a man. I fanned the flame by pressing her alabaster breasts and kissing her delicious lips. I then barred the door of her dining-room, led her all fluttering into her bedchamber, and was just making a triumphal entry when we heard her landlady coming up. "O Fortune why did it happen thus?" would have been the exclamation of a Roman bard. We were stopped most suddenly and cruelly from the fruition of each other. She ran out and stopped the landlady from coming up. Then returned to me in the dining-room. We fell into each other's arms, sighing and panting, "O dear, how hard this is." "O Madam, see what you can contrive for me." "Lord, Sir, I am so frightened."

Her brother then came in. I recollected that I had been at no place of worship today. I begged pardon for a little and went to Covent Garden Church, where there is evening service between five and six. I heard a few prayers and then returned and drank tea. She entertained us with her adventures when travelling through the country. Some of them were excellent. I told her she might make a novel. She said if I would put them together that she would give me material. I went home at seven. I was unhappy at being prevented from the completion of my wishes, and yet I thought that I had saved my credit for prowess, that I might through anxiety

Drury Lane, of which I had some change to receive.⁷ I went to him and got 5s. and 6d., which gave me no small consolation. Elated with this new acquisition of pecuniary property, I instantly resolved to eat, drink, and be merry. I therefore hired me to a beer-house; called for some bread and cheese and a pint of porter.

Close by the fire sat an old man whose countenance was furrowed with distress. He said his name was Michael Cholmondeley, that he was a day-labourer but out of work, that he had laid out a penny for some beer, and had picked up a bit of bread in the street which he was eating with it. I immediately ordered such a portion of victuals and drink for him as I took for myself. He then told me he was a sad dog in his youth, run off from his friends to London, wrought here some time, and at last, wanting money, he had sold himself for a slave to the Plantations for seven years. "Upon my word," said I, "you are a most extraordinary genius. How much did you get?" CHOLMONDELEY. "Twenty pounds." BOSWELL. "And pray, what sort of a life had you there?" CHOLMONDELEY. "O, Sir, a very good life. We had plenty of meat and drink, and wrought but five hours a day." He said he then came back, and afterwards made voyages in lighters both to France and Spain. Poor creature! He had got falls and was sorely bruised, and often, even in severe weather, has been obliged to lie in the streets. I paid for his meal and gave him a penny. Why such a wretched being subsists is to me a strange thing. But I am a weak creature. I submit to God's will, I hope to know the reason of it some time.

I then bethought me of a place to which Louisa and I might safely go. I went to my good friend Hayward's at the Black Lion, told him that I had married, and that I and my wife, who was to be in town on Saturday, would sleep in his house till I got a lodging for her. The King of Prussia says in one of his poems that gallantry comprises every vice.⁸ That of lying it certainly does, without

⁷ Perhaps he had left a deposit to pay for books sent to his lodgings, or to be sent after to him to Scotland?

⁸ Perhaps *Épître VIII, A Chasot (Sur la modération dans l'amour)*, though no lines in that poem correspond exactly to Boswell's paraphrase.

have not acted a vigorous part; and that we might contrive a meeting where I could love with ease and freedom.

MONDAY 3 JANUARY. I begged Louisa to invent some method by which we might meet in security. I insisted that she should go and pass the night with me somewhere. She begged time to think of it.

Webster and I dined at Gould's. The Colonel was not at home, being upon guard. A Mrs. Douglas was there, lady to Captain Douglas of the Guards, a mighty pretty, agreeable creature. She asked me how long I had been from Scotland. If my name was Mr. James Boswell, and if I remembered her at Moffat. She said if I did not recollect her name then, she would not tell me. "Madam," said I, "did it not begin with M?" She said it did. She proved to be a Miss Mackay with whom I was deeply in love at thirteen, a passion which Mr. Joseph Fergusson, then my tutor, ridiculed most roughly by setting his teeth together and giving hard thumps on the knees of his breeches. However, I certainly at that time felt all the pleasing anguish of a genuine flame. I told Mrs. Gould, "This, Madam, is a lady whom I was most desperately in love with." "Sir," said Mrs. Douglas, "I never knew it." "No, Madam, I never declared my hopeless passion." I diverted them by expatiating on this affair, and we were very cheerful. She hoped to see me, she said, at her house. Webster appeared in a poor light today. He seemed very young. He was lively, but it was the liveliness of a boy.

TUESDAY 4 JANUARY. Louisa told me that she would go with me to pass the night when she was sure that she would not be wanted at the playhouse next day; and she mentioned Saturday as most convenient, being followed by Sunday, on which nothing is done. "But, Sir," said she, "may not this be attended with expense? I hope you'll excuse me." There was something so kind and so delicate in this hint that it charmed me. "No, Madam, it cannot be a great expense, and I can save on other articles to have money for this."

I recollected that when I was in London two years ago I had left a guinea with Mr. Meighan, a Roman-Catholic bookseller in

which intrigue can never be carried on. But as the proverb says, in love and war all is fair. I who am a lover and hope to be a soldier think so. In this instance we could not be admitted to any decent house except as man and wife. Indeed, we are so if union of hearts be the principal requisite. We are so, at least for a time. How cleverly this can be done here. In Scotland it is impossible. We should be married with a vengeance.⁹ I went home and dined. I thought my slender diet weakened me. I resolved to live hearty and be stout. This afternoon I became very low-spirited. I sat in close. I hated all things. I almost hated London. O miserable absurdity! I could see nothing in a good light. I just submitted and hoped to get the better of this.

WEDNESDAY 5 JANUARY. I was agreeably surprised at breakfast with the arrival of my brother John in good health and spirits, although he had been for three months lately in a most terrible way. I walked with him in the Park. He talked sensibly and well.¹

⁹ Because in Scotland no more was necessary for a legal marriage than for a marriageable couple to acknowledge themselves man and wife in the presence of two witnesses. I am told, however, that Boswell shows himself either weak in law or troubled in conscience in assuming that this escapade would have made him a married man against his will if it had happened in Scotland. For a marriage of this kind to be held valid by a court in case of any question arising, the court would have had to be satisfied that the parties truly intended to contract marriage. In this case, the assumption of false names (see below, pp. 137-138) belied any such intent.

¹ John Boswell was at this time a lieutenant in the Thirty-first Regiment of Foot. Boswell had heard on 26 October 1762 that he was "ill" at Plymouth, and was "really hurt a great deal," no doubt because the illness was mental. On 8 February he wrote to Johnston, "My brother John was very bad this winter at Plymouth. He was confined by a severe disorder. He was quite delirious. Good God, how alarming! But it was occasioned by a fall from a stair. He is now quite well, is in London, and goes to Scotland this week. . . . If you hear the story of his illness mentioned, pray let the fall be known." John suffered periodically from insanity all the rest of his life. He retired from active service in 1764 but remained on the half-pay list until 1798, which was probably the year of his death. Boswell's unflinching kindness to his sullen and at times dangerous brother is one of the most attractive features of his journal.

I then went to Lady Betty's. I was rather in the low-spirited humour still. She was by herself. I talked of my schemes. I owned my unsettled views, which indeed are only so at times, as I have preserved almost an uninterrupted constancy to the Guards. She asked me to dine. I told her I now had money to support me till Friday, was not obliged by a dinner, and therefore would come. I went and had some elegant conversation with Louisa; told her all was fixed for Saturday. She sweetly acquiesced. I like her better and better every day.

I was very hearty at dinner, but was too ridiculous. This is what I ought most to guard against. People in company applaud a man for it very much, but behind his back hold him very cheap. I have a strange knack at inventing odd phrases. We were talking of Mr. Garrick's power of making plays run. "Ay," said I, "he never takes a calf by the tail but he makes it run." This we made a common byword of. I had this morning sent a letter to Lord Eglinton as follows:

My Lord:—Your Lordship's card, which came safe, was received by me with different feelings.² At first I talked very cava-

² Eglinton had made a riposte to Boswell's stately note of 22 December (above, p. 102), but Boswell had omitted to enter it in his journal or even to record its receipt, probably because of chagrin at having come off so badly in the interchange. After thinking the matter over, he has allowed his natural candour to assert itself. Eglinton's card was as follows: "Lord Eglinton presents his compliments to Mr. Boswell, and returns him a great many thanks for being so good as to teach him good breeding.—He did not know he had been upon ceremony with Mr. Boswell, otherwise he would have done himself the honour to have waited on Mr. Boswell sooner.—Lord Eglinton may be mistaken, and submits it to Mr. Boswell's better judgment, but he always looked on ceremony to be certain rules for the conduct of those who had not sense to guide them, and never to be used by a man of true nobleness but to keep impertinence at a distance.—As to the message sent Mr. Boswell being wrote *by his secretary*, as he is pleased to call it, Lord Eglinton begs leave to assure Mr. Boswell it was not from want of respect; but as the Duc de Nivernois, the Duke of Kingston, &c., &c., generally send messages to him wrote by the footman or the porter, he thought he might

called at Gould's. Mrs. Gould chid me for not being oftener there, and said jestingly that if she did not see me more, she would write to my father that I was idle. I then walked into the City. I took a whim that between St. Paul's and the Exchange and back again, taking the different sides of the street, I would eat a penny Twelfth-cake at every shop where I could get it. This I performed most faithfully.

I then dined comfortably at Dolly's Beefsteak-house. I regretted much my not being acquainted in some good opulent City family where I might participate in the hearty sociality over the ancient ceremony of the Twelfth-cake. I hope to have this snug advantage by this time next year.

I drank tea at Dempster's. Erskine and Lady Anne were there. We laughed a good deal.

FRIDAY 7 JANUARY. Captain Maxwell and my brother breakfasted with me. I then waited on Louisa. She informed me that Saturday could not be the hoped-for time to bestow perfect felicity upon me. "Not," said she, "that I have changed my mind. But it cannot be." In short, I understood that Nature's periodical effects on the human, or more properly female, constitution forbade it. I was a little uneasy at this, though it could not be helped. It kept me longer anxious till my ability was known. I have, together with my vivacity and good-humour, a great anxiety of temper which often renders me uneasy. My grandfather had it in a very strong degree.

I dined at Dr. Pringle's, where was a Scotch company, none of whom were of much note. We had however a kind of cordiality of conversation that did very well. I drank tea at Douglas's, and then, though very indolent, went home and dressed, and went to the private party at Lady Northumberland's. I was not there last Friday, and as my Lady knows I have nothing very important to take me up, it would look ill not to be often there, since she has been so kind as to ask me there.

Indeed, as I do not play, I am at a disadvantage, as people get much easier acquainted when set round a card-table and mixing a

little chat while the cards are dealt. But I am under a promise to Sheridan not to play for five years. He relieved me from game mistress when he was at Edinburgh by lending me five guineas. Happy is it for me that I am thus tied up; for with my warmth and impetuosity of temper, I might go to the greatest lengths and soon involve myself in ruin and misery. There is no setting bounds to gaming when one engages keenly in it; and it is more genteel to say you never play than to refuse playing for whatever sums the company choose. The acquaintances made in this way are very slight. One made by a man who does not play is worth a hundred of them. Because in the one case it is only for the respect due to his money that he is known. In the other it is for the respect due to himself. This night I was badly off, I being the only person in the room who was not engaged at play. So that I was a little awkward and uneasy.

SATURDAY 8 JANUARY. I forgot to mention that upon Thursday I went to Michael Cholmondeley and gave him four shillings, three from the Kellie family and one of my own. The creature did not seem so thankful as I could wish. An old woman who stood by (for I gave him it in a little court) grumbled that I might have bestowed my charity better, and presently a young one said that people who had both been worthless and would be idle should not be encouraged. Michael's cholera rose, he raged in blackguard exclamation. The young jade said he had fifty wives or thereabouts, and such as encouraged him would choose to have the like. By this time a number of miscreants was gathered round us. I was sorely beset, and stood like the unhappy stag at bay, considering how it should come about that I should be thus rendered uneasy when in the exercise of that most Christian grace, charity. A Scotch Seceder or an English Methodist would make out many mystical conjectures on this subject. They would affirm that it was a temptation of Satan in order to try my steadfastness, and if possible drive me from the practice of goodness. Or perhaps that Providence had permitted the infernal enemy of souls to assault me, on purpose to teach me that I should be more judicious and less whimsical in the exercise

of my benevolence. I endeavored to expostulate with the two incensed females in terms mild and gentle. "You see," said I, "this poor old man. We shall not dispute whether his conduct has been good. But you see him ragged, hungry, and cold; and surely I did right in trying to relieve a fellow-creature in such circumstances." I then stole away slowly from them. Their malevolence and hardness of heart I detested, yet I imagine the creature Cholmondeley must have been worthless. I asked a decent tradesman before whose shop we stood what character he had. "Sir," said he, with a kind of waggy, "he is a very honest man from head to foot."

This day I was rather late at Child's. There was nobody almost there, and no dialogue. So this day must want that garnish, as I am resolved to adhere strictly to fair truth in this my journal. Indeed it vexes me a little to be put out of my regular plan, for which I have a most rooted affection. I do think my love of form for its own sake is an excellent qualification for a gentleman of the Army, where there is such a deal of form and variety of attitude.

I dined at Gould's. Mrs. Douglas was there. She and I chatted away with much vivacity. I feel myself now quite easy at Colonel Gould's. He is a most amiable man. I like him much for his great degree of indolence. He loves to lie abed dearly, and gently grumbles at the thoughts of undergoing the fatigue of dressing. This is a pretty sort of account of my good friend. But I believe I have already mentioned his being a man of good sense, good temper, and regular conduct. I wish I could do him any good. He and I are growing better together every day. I asked him if he was severe upon the men. "No," said he, "I have too great an aversion at trouble myself to give them any." Mrs. Gould is a most agreeable woman, quite of the first fashion, yet kind and affectionate. I am sure I have good reason to say so. She is excessively good to me, wants me to be much at her house, is anxious that I should get my favourite commission, yet soothes me to patience and keeps up my spirits. She is also to introduce me to some good families where I can pop in now and then easily. This to so quiet a fellow as me who

have no love for riot, no ambition to be a buck, is of very great consequence.

Young Buckley, the son, takes me by the hand as his friend and there we talk away most intimately and most keenly. Miss Fanny runs smiling to me, sets her chair close by mine, directs her lively prattle with a most engaging vehemence to me, asks me many questions, and has a great respect for my opinion. And then we will read together a little tale, or a fable of Gay's, and sing some smart lively song. She is a very fine child, and will probably be one of the first beauties and clever women in England. She has a grandmother who may give her a very handsome fortune, and in that case she will be a most elegant match for a man of spirit. I call her sometimes Mrs. Boswell. She is very angry, to be sure; crests up her little head and tells me I am very impertinent. Then by and by takes me by the hand and throws out a sparkling sally of life. Were many people to read this leaf of my journal, they would hold me in great contempt as a very trifling fellow. But surely what Mr. Churchill calls *the grave triflers*¹ are neither so wise nor so happy as he who can give his time and attention now and then to the rising sprouts of humanity and derive simplicity of feeling and gaiety of heart from children.

Mrs. Gould cautioned me against Mrs. Cholmondeley. I insinuated that if she was a woman of intrigue, why not have that amusement with her? She did not answer that, but said she had the character of a jilt, that she had given encouragement to a certain lord, got many presents from him, at last consented to an assignation, and when he attempted to use freedoms, her husband came in. My Lord swore it must have been concerted between them, damned her for a jilting bitch, and flung out of the room. I told her she need not be afraid of me.

Mrs. Gould and Mrs. Douglas and I went in the Colonel's char-

¹ "What the grave triflers on this busy scene,
When they make use of this word REASON, mean,
I know not."—*The Apology*, ll. 410-12.

iot to the Haymarket. As we drove along and spoke good English, I was full of rich imagination of London, ideas suggested by the Spectator and such as I could not explain to most people, but which I strongly feel and am ravished with. My blood glows and my mind is agitated with felicity. My friend Temple feels this greatly, so does Johnstone in some measure, also so does McQuhae. I am a good deal disappointed at the want of Temple here this winter. He and I were great friends in youth. We have yet the same dispositions and the same turn to fancy and whim. I have not yet learned where he is. I hope to have his company in London next winter, when we shall be very happy.

In this pleasing humour I was set down at the foot of the Haymarket and went straight home and sat in well pleased all the evening.

SUNDAY 9 JANUARY. I heard an excellent sermon at St. Martin's Church by Mr. Sumner, Master of Harrow School. His text was, "My yoke is easy." He showed that although religion might in some respects be called a yoke, as it laid some restraint upon the inclinations and passions of men, yet to a mind properly trained it was easy, nay delightful. The happiness of genuine piety he displayed in elegant language enforced by just and animated action.

After church I went in sober yet gay humour to Louisa and got her to fix Wednesday without fail as the happy night. I then called for Mr. Craufurd of Auchenames in Ayrshire and Errol in Fife, who received me with uncommon kindness, told me that he heard I was wanting to get into the Guards, and if he could do me any service, I might command him. That he knew Lord Rothes well, who commands the Third Regiment, and that he would introduce me to him. These professions would have looked like deceit from most people, but Craufurd is a very honest and a very generous man. He saved my Lord Rothes's estate by advancing a large sum of money. Consequently he has a good deal to say with him.

I dined at home and drank tea with my brother. We were very merry talking over the days when we were boys, the characters of

Mr. Dun, Mr. Fergusson, Mr. McQuhae, and Mr. Gordon² and the servants who were then in the family. In short, an infinite number of little circumstances which to ourselves were vastly entertaining.

MONDAY 10 JANUARY. I waited on Lady Northumberland and expressed my joy at hearing that the Marquis of Granby was in a fair way of recovery, and would soon be over.³ "I hope, Madam," said I, "you will not forget me." "No, Sir," said she, "you may be sure I will not." As I hope to have the honour of a forenoon's conversation with her Ladyship every week, I shall enrich my journal with it in the form of the original dialogue.

LADY NORTHUMBERLAND. There was a gentleman presented yesterday on his getting a commission in the Guards. I thought of you, Mr. Boswell.

BOSWELL. Ay, the Guards, Madam; that is the thing. Really, I have been thinking on the subject since I saw you, and must tell your Ladyship that the Guards is the particular thing that I have always been fond of, just like the woman that a man is in love with. At the same time I mentioned the Blues, as to be sure I should rather choose to serve there than not at all. But I beg leave to speak plain and let your Ladyship know exactly what my views are, that in case you did me the honour to put me into the Blues, you might not be surprised or think me an odd changeable fellow if after half a year I should beg to have it changed for a commission in the Guards.

LADY NORTHUMBERLAND. Why, Sir, I wish we may get you into the Guards.

BOSWELL. Indeed, Madam, I should be sorry that you had to say, "This man does not know what he would be at. I got him into the Blues, which he was very desirous of, and now he is discontent and wants to change." The thing is this, that I am anxious to live in London, and besides the exercise of the Horse would be disagree-

² The domestic tutor who succeeded Mr. McQuhae in Lord Auchinleck's household. See above, p. 2.

³ He had long been dangerously ill of a fever.

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LADY NORTHUMBERLAND. He will present you to the Queen.⁵ But one of the Lords of the Bedchamber must do it to the King. Your friend Lord Eglinton will do that.

BOSWELL. I shall certainly go there.

LADY NORTHUMBERLAND. You should.

BOSWELL. Do you know, Madam, that Lord Eglinton really used me ill? He encouraged me much in my scheme of the Guards; and when I applied to him, put me off in a most shameful manner. Now, Madam, I would upon no account ask his interest.

LADY NORTHUMBERLAND. To be sure, Sir. Pray is your house in the country finished?

BOSWELL. It is, Madam.

LADY NORTHUMBERLAND. It is a very good house; and then the Old Castle is very fine.

BOSWELL. Indeed, Madam, there are more romantic beauties there than at any place I know. (Rising.) Your Ladyship's most obedient. You are very good to me. I hope you won't give the porter orders to deny you.

LADY NORTHUMBERLAND. Sir, I gave him particular orders to let you in.

BOSWELL. Madam, your most obedient. (Shutting the door.) You won't forget me?

LADY NORTHUMBERLAND. No, Sir.

This is the substance of our conversation today, I dare say I was half an hour with her. Her kindness made me very happy. I dined at home. One Faucit a singer was with us. We had some good songs.

At night I went to Drury Lane pit and saw the Second Part of *King Henry IV*, where Mr. Garrick in the pathetic scene between the old King and his son drew tears from my eyes. The entertainment was *The Witches*, a pantomime by Love. It is but a dull thing.

TUESDAY 11 JANUARY. I am amazed how I have neglected
⁵ Lord Northumberland was Lord Chamberlain to the Queen.

last Friday to mention a circumstance so very material to me as the payment of my allowance, which indeed elevated me to a most extraordinary pitch. Many a time did I lay the lovely shining pieces upon my table, count them over, put them in rank and file like the Guards, and place them in many different sorts of figures. In short, a boy at school could not be more childishly fond of sugar plums than I was of golden guineas.

This day I had some agreeable conversation with my dear Louisa. All was now agreed upon. I had been at Hayward's on Saturday morning and told that we could not be there that night, as my wife was not come to town. But that we would be there next week and take our chance for a bed. And here a hint or two of Louisa's history may well come in. She was born of very creditable parents in London. But being too strictly confined, she ran off and married heedlessly. She was obliged for subsistence to go upon the stage, and travelled in different companies. Her husband proved a harsh, disagreeable creature, with whom she led a terrible life; at last, as it was discovered that they were illegally married, they parted by consent, and she got into Covent Garden Theatre.

I dined with Couttis in the Strand, my banker, a jolly, plentiful dinner with a Scotch company, and free, easy conversation. I drank tea with my brother and then went home cool and serene, looking forward with joy to next day.

WEDNESDAY 12 JANUARY. Louisa and I agreed that at eight at night she would meet me in the Piazzas of Covent Garden. I was quite elevated, and felt myself able and undaunted to engage in the wars of the Paphian Queen.

I dined at Sheridan's very heartily. He showed to my conviction that Garrick did not play the great scene in the Second Part of *King Henry* with propriety. "People," said he, "in this age know when particular lines or even speeches are well spoke; but they do not study character, which is a matter of the utmost moment, as people of different characters feel and express their feelings very differently. For want of a knowledge of this, Mr. Barry acted the

distress of Othello, the Moorish warrior whose stubborn soul was hard to bend, and that of Castalio, the gentle lover who was all tenderness,⁶ in the self-same way. Now Mr. Garrick in that famous scene whines most piteously when he ought to upbraid. Shakespeare has discovered there a most intimate knowledge of human nature. He shows you the King worn out with sickness and so weak that he faints. He had usurped the crown by the force of arms and was convinced that it must be held with spirit. He saw his son given up to low debauchery. He was anxious and vexed to think of the anarchy that would ensue at his death. Upon discovering that the Prince had taken the crown from his pillow, and concluding him desirous of his death, he is fired with rage. He starts up. He cries, 'Go chide him hither! His anger animates him so much that he throws aside his distemper. Nature furnishes all her strength for one last effort. He is for a moment renewed. He is for a moment the spirited Henry the Fourth. He upbraids him with bitter sarcasm and bold figures. And then what a beautiful variety is there, when, upon young Harry's contrition, he falls on his neck and melts into parental tenderness.'

I yielded this point to Sheridan candidly. But upon his attacking Garrick as a tragedian in his usual way, I opposed him keenly, and declared he was prejudiced; because the world thought him a good tragic actor. "So do I, Sir," said he; "I think him the best I ever saw." BOSWELL. "Except yourself, Mr. Sheridan. But come, we shall take this for granted. The world then think him near equal or as good as you in what you excel in." SHERIDAN. "Sir, I am not a bit prejudiced. I don't value acting. I shall suppose that I was the greatest actor that ever lived and universally acknowledged so, I' would not choose that it should be remembered. I would have it erased out of the anecdotes of my life. Acting is a poor thing in the present state of the stage. For my own part, I engaged in it merely as a step to something greater, a just notion of

⁶ In Otway's *The Orphan*.

⁷ Probably a shift of construction from "I shall suppose" to "Suppose." A page ends with "so."

eloquence." This was in a good measure true. But he certainly talked too extravagantly.

An old Irish maid, or rather an Irish old maid (O most hideous character!) dined with us. She was indeed a terrible Joy.⁸ She was a woman of knowledge and criticism and correct taste. But there came to tea a Miss Mowat who played once on the stage here for a winter or two, a lovely girl. Many an amorous glance did I exchange with her. I was this day quite flashy with love. We often addressed our discourse to each other. I hope to see her again; and yet what have I to do with anybody but dear Louisa?

At the appointed hour of eight I went to the Piazzas, where I sauntered up and down for a while in a sort of trembling suspense, I knew not why. At last my charming companion appeared, and I immediately conducted her to a hackney-coach which I had ready waiting, pulled up the blinds, and away we drove to the destined scene of delight. We contrived to seem as if we had come off a journey, and carried in a bundle our night-clothes, handkerchiefs, and other little things. We also had with us some almond biscuits, or as they call them in London, macaroons, which looked like provision on the road. On our arrival at Hayward's we were shown into the parlour, in the same manner that any decent couple would be. I here thought proper to conceal my own name (which the people of the house had never heard), and assumed the name of Mr. Digges. We were shown up to the very room where he slept. I said my cousin, as I called him, was very well. That Ceres and Bacchus might in moderation lend their assistance to Venus, I ordered a genteel supper and some wine.

Louisa told me she had two aunts who carried her over to France when she was a girl, and that she could once speak French as fluently as English. We talked a little in it, and agreed that we would improve ourselves by reading and speaking it every day. I

⁸ "The use of the word joy [as a term of friendly address] . . . is so common among the lower classes of the Irish that the words 'dear joy' are often used by way of derision to signify an Irishman" (Joseph Wright, *English Dialect Dictionary*). Scots "jo" is the same word.

asked her if we did not just look like man and wife. "No," said she, "we are too fond for married people." No wonder that she may have a bad idea of that union, considering how bad it was for her. She has contrived a pretty device for a seal. A heart is gently warmed by Cupid's flame, and Hymen comes with his rude torch and extinguishes it. She said she found herself quite in a flutter. "Why, really," said I, "reason sometimes has no power. We have no occasion to be frightened, and yet we are both a little so. Indeed, I preserve a tolerable presence of mind." I rose and kissed her, and conscious that I had no occasion to doubt my qualifications as a gallant, I joked about it: "How curious would it be if I should be so frightened that we should rise as we lay down." She reproved my wanton language by a look of modesty. The bells of St. Bride's church rung their merry chimes hard by. I said that the bells in Cupid's court would be this night set a-ringing for joy at our union.

We supped cheerfully and agreeably and drank a few glasses, and then the maid came and put the sheets, well aired, upon the bed. I now contemplated my fair prize. Louisa is just twenty-four, of a tall rather than short figure, finely made in person, with a handsome face and an enchanting languish in her eyes. She dresses with taste. She has sense, good humour, and vivacity, and looks quite a woman in genteel life. As I mused on this elevating subject, I could not help being somehow pleasingly confounded to think that so fine a woman was at this moment in my possession, that without any motives of interest she had come with me to an inn, agreed to be my intimate companion, as to be my bedfellow all night, and to permit me the full enjoyment of her person.

When the servant left the room, I embraced her warmly and begged that she would not now delay my felicity. She declined to undress before me, and begged I would retire and send her one of the maids. I did so, gravely desiring the girl to go up to Mrs. Digges. I then took a candle in my hand and walked out to the yard. The night was very dark and very cold. I experienced for some minutes the rigours of the season, and called into my mind

many terrible ideas of hardships, that I might make a transition from such dreary thoughts to the most gay and delicious feelings. I then caused make a bowl of negus, very rich of the fruit, which I caused be set in the room as a reviving cordial.

I came softly into the room, and in a sweet delirium slipped into bed and was immediately clasped in her snowy arms and pressed to her milk-white bosom. Good heavens, what a loose did we give to amorous dalliance! The friendly curtain of darkness concealed our blushes. In a moment I felt myself animated with the strongest powers of love, and, from my dearest creature's kindness, had a most luscious feast. Proud of my godlike vigour, I soon resumed the noble game. I was in full glow of health. Sobriety had preserved me from effeminacy and weakness, and my bounding blood beat quick and high alarms. A more voluptuous night I never enjoyed. Five times was I fairly lost in supreme rapture. Louisa was madly fond of me; she declared I was a prodigy, and asked me if this was not extraordinary for human nature. I said twice as much might be, but this was not, although in my own mind I was somewhat proud of my performance. She said it was what there was no just reason to be proud of. But I told her I could not help it. She said it was what we had in common with the beasts. I said no. For we had it highly improved by the pleasures of sentiment. I asked her what she thought enough. She gently chid me for asking such questions, but said two times. I mentioned the Sunday's assignation, when I was in such bad spirits, told her in what agony of mind I was, and asked her if she would not have despised me for my imbecility. She declared she would not, as it was what people had not in their own power.

She often insisted that we should compose ourselves to sleep before I would consent to it. At last I sunk to rest in her arms and she in mine. I found the negus, which had a fine flavour, very refreshing to me. Louisa had an exquisite mixture of delicacy and wantonness that made me enjoy her with more relish. Indeed I could not help roving in fancy to the embraces of some other ladies which my lively imagination strongly pictured. I don't know if

that was altogether fair. However, Louisa had all the advantage. She said she was quite fatigued and could neither stir leg nor arm. She begged I would not despise her, and hoped my love would not be altogether transient. I have painted this night as well as I could. The description is faint; but I surely may be styled a Man of Pleasure.

THURSDAY 13 JANUARY. We awaked from sweet repose after the luscious fatigues of the night. I got up between nine and ten and walked out till Louisa should rise. I patrolled up and down Fleet Street, thinking on London, the seat of Parliament and the seat of pleasure, and seeming to myself as one of the wits in King Charles the Second's time. I then came in and we had an agreeable breakfast, after which we left Hayward's, who said he was sorry he had not more of our company, and calling a hackney-coach, drove to Soho Square, where Louisa had some visits to pay. So we parted. Thus was this conquest completed to my highest satisfaction. I can with pleasure trace the progress of this intrigue to its completion. I am now at ease on that head, having my fair one fixed as my own. As Captain Plume says, the best security for a woman's mind is her body.⁹ I really conducted this affair with a manliness and prudence that pleased me very much. The whole expense was just eighteen shillings.

I called at Louisa's and seemed to be surprised that she was abroad. I then went and called at Drury Lane Playhouse for Mr. Garrick. I had called for him at his house, but had never found him.¹ He met me with great civility and even kindness; told me that he had bowed to me in the House of Lords when I had not

⁹ "SILVIA [disguised as a man]. . . So, before I list, I must be certified that this girl is a virgin.

¹ PLUME. Mr. Wilful, I can't tell you how you can be certified in that point till you try; but, upon my honour, she may be a vestal for aught that I know to the contrary. I gained her heart, indeed, by some trifling presents and promises, and, knowing that the best security for a woman's soul is her body, I would have made myself master of that too, had not the jealousy of my impertinent landlady interposed" (George Farquhar, *The Recruiting Officer*, IV.i). ¹ Boswell had made his acquaintance in 1760.

observed him; said he would be glad to contribute to my happiness, and asked me if I was come to stay. I told him that I hoped to get into the Guards. "To be sure," said he, "it is a most genteel thing, and I think, Sir, you ought to be a soldier. The law requires a sad deal of plodding. But," said he, "has your father got over the pangs of your forsaking his scheme?" I told him he was pretty well reconciled. I told him I wanted much to pass some time with him. He said he always breakfasted at nine and would be glad to see me whenever I chose to come and let Mrs. Garrick make tea for me. He then carried me to see the paintings of Mr. Zoffany in the Piazzas, where Mr. Garrick is shown in several different ways.² "Take care, Zoffany," said he, "you have made one of these heads for me *longer* than the other, and I would not willingly have it shortened." In the theatre there was a fine large dog chained. "This," said he, "is Johnston's (the boxkeeper's) bear, though I don't know which of 'em is the greatest bear."

I dined nowhere, but drank tea at Love's, and at night went to Covent Garden gallery and saw *The Jovial Crew*.³ My frame still thrilled with pleasure, and my want of so much rest last night gave me an agreeable languor. The songs revived in my mind many gay ideas, and recalled in the most lively colours to my imagination the time when I was first in London, when all was new to me, when I felt the warm glow of youthful feeling and was full of curiosity and wonder. I then had at times a degree of ecstasy of feeling that the experience which I have since had has in some measure cooled and abated. But then my ignorance at that time is infinitely excelled by the knowledge and moderation and government of myself which I have now acquired. After the play I came home, eat a Bath cake⁴ and a sweet orange, and went comfortably to bed.

FRIDAY 14 JANUARY. I drank tea with Louisa. There was one

² That is, in several of his dramatic rôles.

³ By Richard Brome, first produced in 1652; altered to a very successful comic opera by additional songs and brought again on the stage in 1731.

⁴ So named from the city of Bath: a large fruit bun with sugared top.

of the least men I ever saw at tea with us, on whom Louisa threw out many diverting jokes. At night I went to Lady Northumberland's. There was a very full meeting, and many people of my acquaintance, so that I was at my ease and had plenty of conversation. I strutted up and down, considering myself as a valiant man who could gratify a lady's loving desires five times in a night; and I satisfied my pride by considering that if this and all my other great qualities were known, all the women almost in the room would be making love to me. This evening I was accosted by a lady of quality whom I was a little acquainted with, and to whom I shall give the name of Lady Mirabel.⁵ Thus went our conversation:

LADY MIRABEL. You don't play, Mr. Boswell.

BOSWELL. No, Madam, I never do; and yet I am very well amused here. I can have a great deal of entertainment just by looking around me. A man, Madam, who can be happy thus must either be very stupid or more clever than ordinary.

LADY MIRABEL. Indeed, Sir, he must be extremely clever.

BOSWELL. Well, Madam, I think I have made out what I wanted very well. But pray don't you think the meetings here of people of fashion very dull? There seems to be no communication between men and women. They seldom speak to each other.

LADY MIRABEL. True, but when they do speak, they speak to the purpose.

BOSWELL. Bravo! Indeed they do that. But they want sentiment.

⁵ Not certainly identified; the memoranda (which are missing for this date) also employ the pseudonym. From various hints too minute to detail here, I think it possible that she was Lady Mary Coke, daughter of the second Duke of Argyll, born in 1726 and since 1753 widow of Edward, Viscount Coke, son of the Earl of Leicester. She was a countrywoman of Boswell's, was a friend of Lord Eglinton, and was intimate with the Duke of York, to whom she afterwards tried to persuade people she had been secretly married. She kept a voluminous and useful diary, of which only a part has been printed. The published diary does not mention Boswell, but she no doubt was much less conscious of him than he was of her.

LADY MIRABEL. And therefore it is that their connections last only for a winter. It is very different abroad.

BOSWELL. You must know, Madam, I run up and down this town just like a wild colt.

LADY MIRABEL. Why, Sir, then, don't you stray into my stable, amongst others?

BOSWELL. Madam, I shall certainly have that pleasure.

From this conversation and Lady Mirabel's looks, I entertained some notion that an intrigue would not be disagreeable to her Ladyship. Lady Mirabel is a widow of middle age, has a jointure sufficient to live genteelly upon; although not pretty she has a fine air and is very agreeable. In short, whether I succeed or not, this may be an amusing pursuit.

Sir Harry Erskine⁶ bowed often and spoke much to me this night, in expectation, as I supposed, that I would pay court to him and ask his interest for my commission. Instead of that I pushed him much, or rather represented strongly to him, that my friend and his cousin Erskine should have a company. "I wish, Sir," said he, "that it was in *my* power to get him a company." He no doubt imagined that I would have said, "If it is not in *your* power, Sir Harry, who can do such things?" But I was resolved to beat him in a smart way, so replied, "Um, I don't know, Sir Harry. You may help." He bowed and smiled more than once and withdrew (as I thought) like my inferior.

Lord Eglinton really paid court to me. He asked me how I had been this long time, and hoped that I heard of his being at my door several times. He insisted that I should sup with him. He said he had several very clever fellows, amongst whom was Erskine. But I told him that I never was abroad at night, for that I was in love with a fine woman and wanted to keep myself healthy, stout, and strong. I asked him if Erskine had spoke more to him yet. He said, "No. But he must be forced to it. For a man has no more a

⁶ Lord Bute's favourite, or at least considered to be so. He was a major-general in the Army.

right not to furnish his share of conversation than not to pay his club." I went home in good time and in good spirits.

SATURDAY 15 JANUARY. I breakfasted with Dempster in exceeding lively spirits. I then hied me to the City, blithe and gay. As I passed Water Lane, I superstitiously took off my hat and bowed to the Black Lion.

DIALOGUE AT CHILD'S.

PHYSICIAN. Do, Sir, stand a little to one side that we may see the fire.

1 CITIZEN. Sir! I think I make atonement for my error by leaving it.

PHYSICIAN. Have not you observed a certain gentleman with a broad backside who frequents this coffee-house, have not you seen him clap his backside to the fire, so as to cover it from us and almost to burn his own clothes, if not called to?

2 CITIZEN. Why the devil is he called to? Why not let him burn his clothes?

PHYSICIAN. That would be uncharitable.

I then called at Louisa's, and begged to be allowed what I most desired. She would not consent today, as everybody was at home, but said that next day at one her landlady would be abroad, and I might come then. I begged to know if she had any intrigues since she parted with her husband. She confessed that she had one, but that it was now over, and the gentleman was not in Britain. My being afraid of a rival was a sure sign of a sincere passion.

I dined at Mrs. Douglas's, where I met Mr. and Mrs. Gould and young Webster. Hunger was my predominant inclination this day, and a most hearty dinner I did eat. In the afternoon some strangers came to tea. I disliked them. I went home soon, but, I don't know how, had got into bad humour.

SUNDAY 16 JANUARY. I heard service and sermon in the New Church in the Strand,⁷ which insensibly relieved me from

⁷ St. Mary Le Strand.

my cloudy spirits. I had not been at Lady Betty's since Thursday sennight, as I wanted to have nothing but English ideas, and to be as manly as I possibly could. However, I thought they might take amiss my being absent for so long a time without being able to assign them any rational reason for it. I therefore went there after church and found them at breakfast. They were glad to see me, and very kind. I hoped they were not angry at me for running through London whimsically so long without ever calling on them. They said, by no means. For they had now got a method to account for all my actions, which was just to say, "It is part of his plan"; and that they would always be glad to see me. I said I valued them much more after being some time absent from them. I really liked them this day better than ever.

I then went to Louisa and was permitted the rites of love with great complacency; yet I felt my passion for Louisa much gone. I felt a degree of coldness for her and I observed an affectation about her which disgusted me. I had a strong proof of my own inconstancy of disposition, and I considered that any woman who married me must be miserable. Here I argued wrong. For as a licentious love is merely the child of passion, it has no sure ground to hope for a long continuance, as passion may be extinguished with the most sudden and trifling breath of wind; but rational esteem founded on just motives must in all probability endure, especially when the opinion of the world and many other considerations contribute to strengthen and preserve it. Louisa and I began this day to read French. Our book was a little light piece of French gallantry entitled *Journal Amoureux*. She pronounced best and I translated best. Between us we did very well.

MONDAY 17 JANUARY. Louisa and I continued our study of French, which was useful as it gave us some employment and prevented us from tiring on account of conversation becoming insipid from a sameness that must necessarily happen when only two people are much together. I this day again had full fruition of her charms. I still, though, found that the warm enthusiasm of love was over. Yet I continued to mention my fears of her having some

other favourite. I first said that I would watch her carefully, and would come at different times and by surprise if possible, that I might find out the truth. But I recovered myself and said I was sure I had no reason, so would not anxiously inquire. "Indeed, Sir," said she, "it is better not. For it is a maxim with me, where there is no confidence, there is no breach of trust."

I dined at Lady Betty's. Erskine was not there. We were very happy and in a better style than I ever knew us in. We were in a composed and sensible and at the same time a lively style. We talked of happiness, as we then owned that we were much so. I said that of making money was certainly great, as it lasted for ever, and as you had always something to show. I lamented that the happiness of the mind was so very transient, and that you had nothing left. For that a man may have a great quantity of happiness today, and tomorrow it is all gone, and what a man had avails him nothing. "True," said Lady Betty, "but you must consider, though you are thus a bankrupt, yet you may quickly again be worth ten thousand pound."

We then fell upon political topics, and all agreed in our love of the Royal Family of Stuart and regret at their being driven from Britain. I maintained that their encroachments were not of so bad consequence as their being expelled the throne. In short, the substance of our conversation was that the family of Stuart, although unfortunate, did nothing worthy of being driven from the throne. That their little encroachments were but trifles in comparison of what Oliver Cromwell did, who overturned the whole Constitution and threw all into anarchy; and that in a future period King William, who came over the defender of our liberties, became a most domineering monarch and stretched his prerogative farther than any Stuart ever did. That by the Revolution we got a shabby family to reign over us, and that the German War, a consequence of having a German sovereign, was the most destructive thing this nation ever saw. That by the many changes and popular confusions the minds of the people were confused and thrown loose from ties of loyalty, so that public spirit and national principle were in a great

measure destroyed. This was a bold and rash way of talking; but it had justice, and it pleased me.⁸

I liked the Kellie family vastly this day. I considered that I was happy in the intimate acquaintance of ladies of quality of a good family, genteel and ingenious. They were now talking of going for Scotland in a fortnight. This made them appear more valuable. I told them I would dine with them every day while they stayed. They made me welcome with that easy kindness which cannot be feigned. "Indeed," said Macfarlane, "you are welcome on your own account. But suppose that was not the case, I owe your father as many dinners." I drank tea there.

TUESDAY 18 JANUARY. Lord Eglinton sent me the following card: "Lord Eglinton presents his compliments to Mr. Boswell (I believe I should only have said Boswell, for, as the Gascon said to Monsieur Tallard,⁹ nobody ever said Mr. Horace), and takes the liberty to acquaint his Poetship that he has called twice and lives in Queen Street, Mayfair."

I wrote for answer: "To the Earl of Eglinton, one of the Lords of his Majesty's Bedchamber, Boswell the Poet, sole Lord of his own, sends such compliments as men of the world generally send to each other. The honour that Lord Eglinton has done him in calling twice is most properly felt; and he begs leave to acknowledge himself much out of his duty in not paying his respects in Queen Street before now; although between the ladies celestial and terrestrial he has for some time past been kept in pretty good

⁸ The Kellie family came by its "love of the Royal Family of Stuart" somewhat more legitimately than Boswell. The fifth Earl of Kellie, father of Boswell's friends, joined the Rebellion of '45 as a colonel of the Jacobite army, and was detained in the Castle of Edinburgh for three years after the uprising was put down. He escaped worse punishment, it is said, only because his fortune was small and his understanding suspect. His wife was daughter of Dr. Archibald Pitcairne, the celebrated Jacobite physician and poet. ⁹ Eglinton's card actually reads, "Marchall Tallard." The reference is probably to the Maréchal Tallard, a French general defeated and captured by the Duke of Marlborough at the Battle of Blenheim, but the source of the anecdote which Eglinton is quoting has not yet been found.

employment both of mind (which I mention first as the most exalted part of our nature) and body; which, let metaphysicians talk as they may, has no small share in human felicity. Boswell will very soon wait of Lord Eglinton.¹

This way of corresponding that the Earl and I have got into is something very clever and entertaining.

This day being the Queen's birthday, I was amused by seeing multitudes of rich-dressed people driving in their splendid equipages to Court. Really, it must be confessed that a court is a fine thing. It is the cause of so much show and splendour that people are kept gay and spirited. I recollected all the stories of the old Scottish magnificence when our monarchs resided at Holyroodhouse, and I wished to see such days again. In short, I had more pleasing ideas tramping along the pavement than those who rattled by me in gilded chariots.

I went and waited on Lady Margaret Macdonald. Amongst other subjects we talked of her brother, Lord Eglinton. She said he was ruined by having never had a fixed plan in life. I mentioned to her his usage of me. "Sir," said she, "don't you be at the trouble to take it amiss from him, for I can assure you that he has used me as ill. He insisted that I should bring up my two youngest sons, and made the strongest promises of regard—nay, went so far as to say that if he did not do more for them than all their friends in Scotland put together, he would refund the expense of their education. They were accordingly brought up, and yet he never once minded them nor did anything for them." This indeed is the strongest proof that I ever heard of Lord Eglinton's want of firmness, just owing to his sad dissipation.

I told Lady Margaret that I believed I took his behaviour to me in too serious a light, and by being pretty much angry and keeping at a distance, I lost a great deal of pleasure from his agreeable company. "Indeed, Sir," said she, "you are wrong. Have no dependence upon him, but go to his house often, just as you would to a play." This was a most candid and a most sensible advice. For I lose a deal

¹ A. Scotticism.

of satisfaction, and the thoughtless Earl does not much mind my stateliness; although it must be owned that I have made him very attentive to me of late and made myself of more consequence in his opinion.

I then called for Lady Mirabel. She seemed to like me a good deal. I was lively, and I looked like the game.² As it was my first visit, I was very quiet. However, it was agreed that I should visit her often. This elated me, as it afforded a fine, snug, and agreeable prospect of gallantry. Yet I could not think of being unfaithful to Louisa. But, then, I thought Louisa was only in the mean time, till I got into genteel life, and that a woman of fashion was the only proper object for such a man as me. At last delicate honour prevailed, and I resolved for some time at least to keep alive my affection for Louisa.

I this day began to feel an unaccountable alarm of unexpected evil: a little heat in the members of my body sacred to Cupid, very like a symptom of that distemper with which Venus, when cross, takes it into her head to plague her votaries. But then I had run no risks. I had been with no woman but Louisa; and sure she could not have such a thing. Away then with such idle fears, such groundless, uneasy apprehensions! When I came to Louisa's, I felt myself stout and well, and most courageously did I plunge into the fount of love, and had vast pleasure as I enjoyed her as an actress who had played many a fine lady's part. She was remarkably fond of me

² Amorous sport or play, quoting Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, IV, v. 62:

Fie, fie upon her!

There's a language in her eye, her cheek, her lip,
Nay, her foot speaks; her wanton spirits look out
At every joint and motive of her body.

O these encounterers, so glib of tongue,
That give a coasting welcome ere it comes,
And wide unclasp the tables of their thoughts
To every tickling reader! Set them down
For sluttish spoils of opportunity
And daughters of the game.

today, and sighing said, "What will become of me if I lose you now?"

I dined at Lady Betty's. I said I sometimes contracted my plan. Says Erskine, "You should contract nothing but debt." To which Macfarlane added, "And marriage." We were very merry. They declared their hearty joy at this scheme of dining every day chancing to become part of my plan.

At five I left them for an hour and went to Sheridan's. In order to explain my errand there, I must give a narration of several sentences. Mrs. Sheridan some weeks ago asked me to write a prologue to her new comedy. She said there were very few good poets in this age; and she said that if they had been in good terms with Johnson, she would have asked him. Her applying to me after this no doubt flattered me a good deal. She said there were few who had sense and temper enough to allow a fair criticism on their verses, as they were too much attached to their favourite productions. But I told her she need be under no apprehension of making me angry, for that I was perfectly easy in that respect. Indeed, my ease proceeds not from the good sense it might be imputed to, but from a carelessness of fame and a happy indifference, from a thorough conviction of the vanity of all things. As I had written no verses for some months, the task appeared very formidable. However, I wrote one which she said had good lines but was too general. I therefore wrote another, which she said was near the mark, and with a little polishing would do.³ The thing now pleased me exceedingly. I thought it fine to have my lines spoken by Mr. Garrick and resounding through Drury Lane. I mentioned it to the Kellies and the Dempsters, and walked about elated, but would not let them hear it. To get a definite answer about this prologue was now my errand to Sheridan's. I must observe that from the first Sheridan himself never seemed hearty in the thing. I bid Mrs. Sheridan not show it him, as he was a severe critic. After sitting a little, he said, "Why, Sir, you

³ Both versions are preserved in the large manuscript collection of Boswell's verses now in the Bodleian Library, but they are not of enough general interest to warrant publication in this edition.

don't ask about your prologue?" "Indeed," said I, "I am too indifferent."

SHERIDAN. Well, but prepare your utmost philosophy.

BOSWELL. How so?

SHERIDAN. It is weighed in the balances and found light.

BOSWELL. What, is not good?

SHERIDAN. Indeed, I think it is very bad.

BOSWELL. Pray, Mrs. Sheridan, what is the meaning of this?

MRS. SHERIDAN. Mr. Sheridan, Sir, does not like it, and he has insisted upon me to write one which he thinks will do.

"Oho!" thought I, "is this it?" I then desired to hear the faults of mine. Sheridan pointed them out with an insolent bitterness and a clumsy ridicule that hurt me much, and when I answered them, bore down my words with a boisterous vociferation. It is incredible with what seeming good humour I behaved. I declared that I must either be a man of the finest temper or the nicest art. He then read Mrs. Sheridan's, which was much duller, as I thought.⁴

We disputed about poems. Sheridan said that a man should not be a poet except he was very excellent; for that to be a *mediocris poeta*⁵ was but a poor thing. I said I differed from him. For the greatest part of those who read poetry have a mediocre taste; consequently one may please a great many. Besides, to write poems is very agreeable, and one has always people enough to call them good; so that a man of a tolerable genius rather gains than loses.

I returned to Lady Betty's at six really a good deal mortified, and in that sort of humour that made me consider writing as a dangerous thing and wish that I had never wrote and think I would not write again. I really have still a great degree of imbecility of mind; I am easily persuaded by what other people say, and cannot have a firm enough judgment. I told them my lamentable story.

⁴ It is surprising that he does not add (as he could have) that Mrs. Sheridan's prologue not only borrowed its ideas from his but also lifted one of his couplets.

⁵ Horace, *Ars Poetica*, l. 372. ("Middling poets were never tolerated by gods, by men, or by booksellers.")

They were really angry, and sympathized with my vexation. I repeated my prologue, which they thought very good; and I repeated Sheridan's criticisms, which they thought puerile and stupid, and declared they always thought him a dull fellow. This had a most pleasing effect and put me again into good humour, although a little of my former uneasiness still remained.

Now did I ponder most seriously with myself how to behave to Sheridan. I was certainly used ungentlely. Yet to take notice of it was low, and made him triumph in having been able to vex me. So is human nature constituted that I now had an aversion at Sheridan. I saw his bad taste, his insolence, his falsehood, his malevolence in the strongest light. I was sorry that I had been so much with him, and I resolved to take an opportunity of breaking off acquaintance and then lashing him for a presumptuous dunce, like as my friend Erskine and other people do in great abundance. But then I thought I was entertained in his company, so had better keep in with him. I just resolved that I would be upon a sort of indifferent footing. Be diverted with him, and not care a straw how he thought of me.

WEDNESDAY 19 JANUARY. This was a day eagerly expected by Dempster, Erskine, and I, as it was fixed as the period of our gratifying a whim proposed by me: which was that on the first day of the new tragedy called *Elvira's* being acted, we three should walk from the one end of London to the other, dine at Dolly's, and be in the theatre at night; and as the play would probably be bad, and as Mr. David Malloch, the author, who has changed his name to David Mallet, Esq., was an arrant puppy, we determined to exert ourselves in damning it.⁶ I this morning felt stronger symptoms

⁶ David Mallet enjoyed general and deserved unpopularity for having accepted a large sum of money from the Duchess of Marlborough to write a life of the Duke, of which he never penned a line; for being the author of a discreditable party pamphlet against the unfortunate Admiral Byng; and for having courted Pope with fulsome flattery, and then having attacked him after he was dead. He was also a sceptic whose public declaimings against Christianity Hume thought indecent. His chief offenses in the eyes of Scotsmen were that he had changed his distinctively Scots name of Malloch, and

of the sad distemper, yet I was unwilling to imagine such a thing. However, the severe exercise of today, joined with hearty eating and drinking, I was sure would confirm or remove my suspicions.

We walked up to Hyde Park Corner, from whence we set out at ten. Our spirits were high with the notion of the adventure, and the variety that we met with as we went along is amazing. As the Spectator observes, one end of London is like a different country from the other in look and in manners. We eat an excellent breakfast at the Somerset Coffee-house. We turned down Gracechurch Street and went upon the top of London Bridge, from whence we viewed with a pleasing horror the rude and terrible appearance of the river, partly froze up, partly covered with enormous shoals of floating ice which often crashed against each other. Dempster said of this excursion from the road that our Epic Poem would be somewhat dull if it were not enlivened by such episodes. As we went along, I felt the symptoms increase, which was very confounding and very distressing to me. I thought the best thing I could do was not to keep it secret, which would be difficult and troublesome, but fairly to own it to Dempster and Erskine and ask their advice and sympathy. They really sympathized, and yet they could not help smiling a little at my catching a tartar so very unexpectedly, when I imagined myself quite safe, and had been vaunting most heroically of my felicity in having the possession of a fine woman, to whom I ascribed so many endearing qualities that they really

that he had learned to speak English so well that even Johnson (who despised him) had to admit that he had never caught him in a Scotch accent. Boswell, Erskine, and Dempster also felt that his arrogant manners were not becoming in one who was the son of a tenant farmer, and who had served for a time in his youth as janitor in the High School of Edinburgh.

⁷ "The frost here has been quite intense for some time past. It is likely to be a most severe winter, which is very hard on the poor people" (Boswell to John Johnston, written this same day). "In London the severity of the cold has been such that two soldiers were frozen to death on their duty; and in other parts several that have lost their way in the night have been found frozen to death in the morning" (20 January 1763 in the Historical Chronicle of the *Gentleman's Magazine*).

doubted of her existence, and used to call her my *ideal lady*. We went half a mile beyond the turnpike at Whitechapel, which completed our course, and went into a little public house and drank some warm white wine with aromatic spices, pepper and cinnamon. We were pleased with the neat houses upon the road.

We met a coach loaded with passengers both within and without. Said I, "I defy all the philosophers in the world to tell me why this is."⁸ "Because," said Erskine, "the people wanted a quick carriage from one place to another." So very easily are the most of the speculations which I often perplex myself with refuted. And yet if some such clever answerer is not at hand, I may puzzle and confound my brain for a good time upon many occasions. To be sure this instance is too ludicrous. But surely, I and many more speculative men have been thrown into deep and serious thought about matters very little more serious. Yet the mind will take its own way, do what we will. So that we may be rendered uneasy by such cloudy reveries when we have no intention to be in such a humour. The best relief in such a case is mirth and gentle amusement.

We had a room to ourselves, and a jolly profusion of smoking juicy beefsteaks. I eat like a very Turk, or rather indeed like a very John Bull, whose supreme joy is good beef. We had some port, and drank damnation to the play and eternal remorse to the author. We then went to the Bedford Coffee-house and had coffee and tea; and just as the doors opened at four o'clock, we sallied into the house, planted ourselves in the middle of the pit, and with oaken cudgels in our hands and shrill-sounding catcalls in our pockets, sat ready prepared, with a generous resentment in our breasts against dullness and impudence, to be the swift ministers of vengeance.⁹ About five the house began to be pretty well filled. As is usual on first nights, some of us called to the music to play *Roast Beef*.¹ But they did not comply with our request and we were not numerous enough to turn that request into a command, which in a London theatre

⁸ Boswell found it hard to understand why passengers were riding outside in such cold weather? ⁹ See above, p. 25.

¹ A popular patriotic song from Henry Fielding's *Grub-Street Opera*.

is quite a different sort of public speech. This was but a bad omen for our party. It resembled a party's being worsted in the choice of praeses² and clerk, at an election in a Scotch county.

However, we kept a good spirit, and hoped the best. The prologue was politically stupid. We hissed it and had several to join us. That we might not be known, we went by borrowed names. Dempster was Clarke; Erskine, Smith; and I, Johnston. We did what we could during the first act, but found that the audience had lost their original fire and spirit and were disposed to let it pass. Our project was therefore disconcerted, our impetuosity damped. As we knew it would be needless to oppose that furious many-headed monster, the multitude, as it has been very well painted,³ we were obliged to lay aside our laudable undertaking in the cause of genius and the cause of modesty.

After the play we went to Lady Betty's, and as they were not disposed to eat and we were very hungry after our fatigues, we were set down in the parlour by ourselves to an excellent warm supper. We were in high glee, and after supper threw out so many excellent sallies of humour and wit and satire on Malloch and his play that we determined to have a joint sixpenny cut,⁴ and fixed next day for throwing our sallies into order. The evening was passed most cheerfully. When I got home, though, then came sorrow. Too, too plain was Signor Gonorrhoea. Yet I could scarce believe it, and determined to go to friend Douglas next day.

THURSDAY 20 JANUARY. I rose very disconsolate, having rested very ill by the poisonous infection raging in my veins and anxiety and vexation boiling in my breast. I could scarcely credit my own senses. What! thought I, can this beautiful, this sensible, and this agreeable woman be so sadly defiled? Can corruption lodge

² Presiding officer, moderator.

³ It was Pope (*Satires*, V. 305) who spoke of the "many-headed monster of the pit."

⁴ Apparently "a jointly written sixpenny pamphlet intended to wound Mallet's feelings deeply." "Cut" in this sense is perfectly plausible (see Boswell's use of the word below, p. 298), but the Oxford English Dictionary gives no exactly parallel examples.

beneath so fair a form? Can she who professed delicacy of sentiment and sincere regard for me, use me so very basely and so very cruelly? No, it is impossible. I have just got a gleet by irritating the parts too much with excessive ventry. And yet these damned twinges, that scalding heat, and that deep-tinged loathsome matter are the strongest proofs of an infection. But she certainly must think that I would soon discover her falsehood. But perhaps she was ignorant of her being ill. A pretty conjecture indeed! No, she could not be ignorant. Yes, yes, she intended to make the most of me. And now I recollect that the day we went to Hayward's, she showed me a bill of thirty shillings about which she was in some uneasiness, and no doubt expected that I would pay it. But I was too cautious, and she had not effrontery enough to try my generosity in direct terms so soon after my letting her have two guineas. And am I then taken in? Am I, who have had safe and elegant intrigues with fine women, become the dupe of a strumpet? Am I now to be laid up for many weeks to suffer extreme pain and full confinement, and to be debarred all the comforts and pleasures of life? And then must I have my poor pocket drained by the unavoidable expense of it? And shall I no more (for a long time at least) take my walk, healthful and spirited, round the Park before breakfast, view the brilliant Guards on the Parade, and enjoy all my pleasing amusements? And then am I prevented from making love to Lady Mirabel, or any other woman of fashion? O dear, O dear! What a cursed thing this is! What a miserable creature am I!

In this woeful manner did I melancholy ruminate. I thought of applying to a quack who would cure me quickly and cheaply. But then the horrors of being imperfectly cured and having the distemper thrown into my blood terrified me exceedingly. I therefore pursued my resolution of last night to go to my friend Douglas, whom I knew to be skillful and careful; and although it should cost me more, yet to get sound health was a matter of great importance, and I might save upon other articles. I accordingly went and breakfasted with him.

Mrs. Douglas, who has a prodigious memory and knows a

thousand anecdotes, especially of scandal, told me that Congreve the poet lived in the family of old Lord Godolphin, who is yet alive, and that Lady Godolphin was notoriously fond of him. In so much that her lord having gone abroad upon an embassy for two years, on his return she presented him with a fine girl by the author of *Love For Love*, which he was so indulgent as to accept of; nay, after Congreve's death, he joined with her in grief, and allowed her to have an image of him in wax daily set at table and nightly in her bedchamber, to which she spoke, believing it through heat of fancy, or believing it in appearance, to be Congreve himself. The young lady was most tenderly educated, and it is a certain fact that she was never suffered to see the moon for fear she should cry for it. She is now Duchess of Leeds, and has turned out extremely well.⁵

After breakfast Mrs. Douglas withdrew, and I opened my sad case to Douglas, who upon examining the parts, declared I had got an evident infection and that the woman who gave it me could not but know of it. I joked with my friend about the expense, asked him if he would take a draught on my arrears,⁶ and bid him visit me seldom that I might have the less to pay. To these jokes he seemed to give little heed, but talked seriously in the way of his business. And here let me make a just and true observation, which is that the same man as a friend and as a surgeon exhibits two very opposite characters. Douglas as a friend is most kind, most anxious

⁵ Lady Godolphin was eldest daughter of the great Duke of Marlborough, at whose death she became Duchess of Marlborough in her own right. She was certainly fond of Congreve to the point of insanity, and built a monument for him in Westminster Abbey with an inscription of her own composing. In it she commemorated "the happiness and honour she enjoyed in the sincere friendship" of Congreve. The "scandal" did not originate with Mrs. Douglas. Pope characterizes the Duchess in very blunt terms ("Chaste to her husband, frank to all beside, A teeming mistress, but a barren bride. . . . In another fit She sins with poets through pure love of wit?"), and Horace Walpole preserves a story that the old Duchess (Sarah Jennings), misquoting her daughter's epitaph for Congreve, said, "I know not what *pleasure* she might have in his company, but I am sure it was no *honour*."

⁶ "Take my note for what I was unable to pay."

for my interest, made me live ten days in his house, and suggested every plan of economy. But Douglas as a surgeon will be as ready to keep me long under his hands, and as desirous to lay hold of my money, as any man. In short, his views alter quite. I have to do not with him but his profession.

As Lady Northumberland was to have a great rout next day, I delayed beginning my course of medicine till Friday night. Enraged at the perfidy of Louisa, I resolved to go and upbraid her most severely; but this I thought was not acting with dignity enough. So I would talk to her coolly and make her feel her own unworthiness. But hearing the Duke of Queensberry was in town, I thought I would go and have one more brush at him and hear what he had to say.

When I entered, he looked somewhat abashed and timid, which encouraged me. "My Lord," said I, "I got your Grace's letter, and was sorry for the contents. Your Grace was pleased to mention my following a civil life. I should be glad to know what. The law I am not able for. If indeed I could be put upon the civil list for about a thousand a year, as Sir Francis Wronghead⁷ says, I should like it very well." At this he laughed. He then talked of the difficulty of getting a commission. "Certainly," said I, "my Lord Duke, it is very difficult. But your Grace has never yet mentioned me to Lord Ligonier. I should be sorry to give your Grace a great deal of trouble, but I should think that it would not be much to mention the thing once, so as I might be put upon Lord Ligonier's list." He promised to me that he would mention it. In short, I find that indolence was the matter with him, and that he must be pushed, although I have but little hopes from him.

I then went to Louisa. With excellent address did I carry on this interview, as the following scene, I trust, will make appear.

LOUISA. My dear Sir! I hope you are well today.

BOSWELL. Excessively well, I thank you. I hope I find you so.

⁷ A simple country gentleman in *The Provok'd Husband*, a comedy by Vanbrugh and Cibber.

LOUISA. No, really, Sir. I am distressed with a thousand things. (Cunning jade, her circumstances!) I really don't know what to do.

BOSWELL. Do you know that I have been very unhappy since I saw you?

LOUISA. How so, Sir?

BOSWELL. Why, I am afraid that you don't love me so well, nor have not such a regard for me, as I thought you had.

LOUISA. Nay, dear Sir! (Seeming unconcerned.)

BOSWELL. Pray, Madam, have I no reason?

LOUISA. No, indeed, Sir, you have not.

BOSWELL. Have I no reason, Madam? Pray think.

LOUISA. Sir!

BOSWELL. Pray, Madam, in what state of health have you been in for some time?

LOUISA. Sir, you amaze me.

BOSWELL. I have but too strong, too plain reason to doubt of your regard. I have for some days observed the symptoms of disease, but was unwilling to believe you so very ungenerous. But now, Madam, I am thoroughly convinced.

LOUISA. Sir, you have terrified me. I protest I know nothing of the matter.

BOSWELL. Madam, I have had no connection with any woman but you these two months. I was with my surgeon this morning, who declared I had got a strong infection, and that she from whom I had it could not be ignorant of it. Madam, such a thing in this case is worse than from a woman of the town, as from her you may expect it. You have used me very ill. I did not deserve it. You know you said where there was no confidence, there was no breach of trust. But surely I placed some confidence in you. I am sorry that I was mistaken.

LOUISA. Sir, I will confess to you that about three years ago I was very bad. But for these fifteen months I have been quite well. I appeal to God Almighty that I am speaking true; and for these six months I have had to do with no man but yourself.

Thus ended my intrigue with the fair Louisa, which I flattered myself so much with, and from which I expected at least a winter's safe copulation. It is indeed very hard. I cannot say, like young fellows who get themselves clapped in a bawdy-house, that I will take better care again. For I really did take care. However, since I am fairly trapped, let me make the best of it. I have not got it from imprudence. It is merely the chance of war.

I then called at Drury Lane for Mr. Garrick. He was vastly good to me. "Sir," said he, "you will be a very great man. And when you are so, remember the year 1763. I want to contribute my part towards saving you. And pray, will you fix a day when I shall have the pleasure of treating you with tea?" I fixed next day. "Then, Sir," said he, "the cups shall dance and the saucers skip."

What he meant by my being a great man I can understand. For really, to speak seriously, I think there is a blossom about me of something more distinguished than the generality of mankind. But I am much afraid that this blossom will never swell into fruit, but will be nipped and destroyed by many a blighting heat and chilling frost. Indeed, I sometimes indulge noble reveries of having a regiment, of getting into Parliament, making a figure, and becoming a man of consequence in the state. But these are checked by dispiriting reflections on my melancholy temper and imbecility of mind. Yet I may probably become sounder and stronger as I grow up. Heaven knows. I am resigned. I trust to Providence. I was quite in raptures with Garrick's kindness—the man whom from a boy I used to adore and look upon as a heathen god—to find him paying me so much respect! How amiable is he in comparison of Sheridan! I was this day with him what the French call *un étourdi*. I gave free vent to my feelings. Love was by, to whom I cried, "This, Sir, is the real scene." And taking Mr. Garrick cordially by the hand, "Thou greatest of men," said I, "I cannot express how happy you make me." This, upon my soul, was no flattery. He saw it was not. And the dear great man was truly pleased with it. This scene gave me a charming flutter of spirits and dispelled my former gloom.

I dined at Lady Betty's, as I resolved to live well these two days,

BOSWELL. But by G—d, Madam, I have been with none but you, and here am I very bad.

LOUISA. Well, Sir, by the same solemn oath I protest that I was ignorant of it.

BOSWELL. Madam, I wish much to believe you. But I own I cannot upon this occasion believe a miracle.

LOUISA. Sir, I cannot say more to you. But you will leave me in the greatest misery. I shall lose your esteem. I shall be hurt in the opinion of everybody, and in my circumstances.

BOSWELL (to himself). What the devil does the confounded jilt mean by being hurt in her circumstances? This is the grossest cunning. But I won't take notice of that at all.—Madam, as to the opinion of everybody, you need not be afraid. I was going to joke and say that I never boast of a lady's *favours*. But I give you my word of honour that you shall not be discovered.

LOUISA. Sir, this is being more generous than I could expect.

BOSWELL. I hope, Madam, you will own that since I have been with you I have always behaved like a man of honour.

LOUISA. You have indeed, Sir.

BOSWELL (rising). Madam, your most obedient servant.

During all this conversation I really behaved with a manly composure and polite dignity that could not fail to inspire an awe, and she was pale as ashes and trembled and faltered. Thrice did she insist on my staying a little longer, as it was probably the last time that I should be with her. She could say nothing to the purpose. And I sat silent. As I was going, said she, "I hope, Sir, you will give me leave to inquire after your health." "Madam," said I, archly, "I fancy it will be needless for some weeks." She again renewed her request. But unwilling to be plagued any more with her, I put her off by saying I might perhaps go to the country, and left her. I was really confounded at her behaviour. There is scarcely a possibility that she could be innocent of the crime of horrid imposition. And yet her positive asseverations really stunned me. She is in all probability a most consummate dissembling whore.