

I WANT to try and establish exactly what this passion is, whose every genuine manifestation is characterized by beauty.

There are four different kinds of love:

1. *Passionate Love*. This was the love of the Portuguese nun, that of Heloïse for Abelard, of the captain of Vésel, and of the gendarme of Cento.

2. *Mannered Love*, which flourished in Paris about 1760, and which is to be found in the memoirs and novels of the period; for example those of Crébillon, Lauzun, Duclos, Marmontel, Chamfort, and Mme d'Epinay . . .

A stylized painting, this, where the rosy hues extend into the shadows, where there is no place for anything at all unpleasant – for that would be a breach of etiquette, of good taste, of delicacy, and so forth. A man of breeding will know in advance all the rituals he must meet and observe in the various stages of this kind of love, which often achieves greater refinement than real love, since there is nothing passionate or unpredictable about it, and it is always witty. It is a cold, pretty miniature as against an oil painting by one of the Carrachi; and while passionate love carries us away against our real interests, mannered love as invariably respects those interests. Admittedly, if you take away vanity, there is very little left of mannered love, and the poor weakened invalid can hardly drag itself along.

3. *Physical Love*. You are hunting; you come across a handsome young peasant girl who takes to her heels through the woods. Everyone knows the love that springs from this kind of pleasure, and however desiccated and miserable you may be, this is where your love-life begins at sixteen.

4. *Vanity-Love*. The great majority of men, especially in France, both desire and possess a fashionable woman, much in the way one might own a fine horse – as a luxury befitting a young man. Vanity, a little flattered and a little piqued, leads to enthusiasm. Sometimes there is physical love, but not always; often even physical pleasure is lacking. 'A duchess is never more than thirty in the eyes of a bourgeois,' said the Duchesse de Chaulnes, and the courtiers of that just king Louis of Holland cheerfully recall even now a pretty woman from The Hague who was quite unable to resist the charms of anyone

who happened to be a duke or a prince. But true to hierarchical principles, as soon as a prince came to court she would send her duke packing. She was rather like an emblem of seniority in the diplomatic corps!

The happiest version of this insipid relationship is where physical pleasure grows with habit. Then memories produce a semblance of love; there is the pricking at your pride and the sadness in satisfaction; the atmosphere of romantic fiction catches you by the throat, and you believe yourself lovesick and melancholy, for vanity will always pretend to be grand passion. One thing is certain though: whichever kind of love produces the pleasures, they only become vivid, and their recollection compelling, from the moment of inspiration. In love, unlike most other passions, the recollection of what you have had and lost is always better than what you can hope for in the future.

Occasionally in vanity-love, habit, or despair of finding something better, results in a friendship of the least attractive sort, which will even boast of its *stability*, and so on.¹

Although physical pleasure, being natural, is known to all, it is only of secondary importance to sensitive, passionate people. If such people are derided in drawing rooms or made unhappy by the intrigues of the worldly, they possess in compensation a knowledge of pleasures utterly inaccessible to those moved only by vanity or money.

Some virtuous and sensitive women are almost unaware of the idea of physical pleasure; they have so rarely, if I may hazard an expression, exposed themselves to it, and in fact the raptures of passionate love have practically effaced the memory of bodily delights.

There are some men who are the victims and instruments of a hellish pride, a pride like that of Alfieri. These men, who are cruel perhaps because like Nero they are always afraid, judge everyone after their own pattern, and can achieve physical pleasure only when they indulge their pride by practising cruelties upon the companion of their pleasures. Hence the horrors of *Justine*. Only in this way can they find a sense of security.

Instead of defining four kinds of love, one might well admit eight or ten distinctions. There are perhaps as many different ways of feeling as there are of seeing, but differences of terminology do not affect the arguments which follow. Every variety of love mentioned henceforth

1. A known conversation between Pont de Veyle and Mme du Deffand, by the fireside.

is born, lives, dies, or attains immortality in accordance with the same laws.¹

CHAPTER 2: *Concerning the Birth of Love*

HERE is what happens in the soul:

I. Admiration.

2. You think, 'How delightful it would be to kiss her, to be kissed by her,' and so on . . .

3. Hope. You observe her perfections, and it is at this moment that a woman really ought to surrender, for the utmost physical pleasure. Even the most reserved women blush to the whites of their eyes at this moment of hope. The passion is so strong, and the pleasure so sharp, that they betray themselves unmistakably.

4. Love is born. To love is to enjoy seeing, touching, and sensing with all the senses, as closely as possible, a lovable object which loves in return.

5. The first crystallization begins. If you are sure that a woman loves you, it is a pleasure to endow her with a thousand perfections and to count your blessings with infinite satisfaction. In the end you overrate wildly, and regard her as something fallen from Heaven, unknown as yet, but certain to be yours.

Leave a lover with his thoughts for twenty-four hours, and this is what will happen:

At the salt mines of Salzburg, they throw a leafless wintry bough into one of the abandoned workings. Two or three months later they haul it out covered with a shining deposit of crystals. The smallest twig, no bigger than a tom-tit's claw, is studded with a galaxy of scintillating diamonds. The original branch is no longer recognizable.

What I have called crystallization is a mental process which draws from everything that happens new proofs of the perfection of the loved one.

You hear a traveller speaking of the cool orange groves beside the

1. This book is freely translated from an Italian manuscript by M. Lisio Visconti, a most distinguished young man, who has just died at his home in Volterra. On the day of his unexpected death he gave the translator permission to publish his essay on Love, if a way could be found of reducing it to a proper form.
Castel Fiorentino, 10th June 1819.

sea at Genoa in the summer heat: Oh, if you could only share that coolness with *her*!

One of your friends goes hunting, and breaks his arm: wouldn't it be wonderful to be looked after by the woman you love! To be with her all the time and to see her loving you . . . a broken arm would be heaven . . . and so your friend's injury provides you with conclusive proof of the angelic kindness of your mistress. In short, no sooner do you think of a virtue than you detect it in your beloved.

The phenomenon that I have called crystallization springs from Nature, which ordains that we shall feel pleasure and send the blood to our heads. It also evolves from the feeling that the degree of pleasure is related to the perfections of the loved one, and from the idea that 'She is mine.' The savage has no time to go beyond the first step. He feels pleasure, but his brain is fully occupied in chasing deer through the forest, so that he can eat, keep up his strength, and avoid his enemy's axe.

At the other end of the scale of civilization, I have no doubt that a sensitive woman can feel physical pleasure only with the man she loves.¹ This is the direct opposite of the savage's condition. But then, in civilized countries, the woman has leisure, while the savage is so taken up with his occupation that he cannot help treating his female as a beast of burden. If the mates of many animals are happier, it is only because the male has less difficulty in obtaining his food.

But let us leave the forest and return to Paris. A man in love sees every perfection in the object of his love, but his attention is still liable to wander after a time because one gets tired of anything uniform, even perfect happiness.²

This is what happens next to fix the attention:

6. Doubt creeps in. First a dozen or so glances, or some other sequence of actions, raise and confirm the lover's hopes. Then, as he recovers from the initial shock, he grows accustomed to his good fortune, or acts on a theory drawn from the common multitude of easily-won women. He asks for more positive proofs of affection and tries to press his suit further.

1. If men do not display this peculiarity, it is because they have no modesty to sacrifice.

2. Which means that the same subtlety of existence can offer only one moment of perfect happiness; but the passionate man's *manner of being* changes ten times a day.

He is met with indifference,¹ coldness, or even anger if he appears too confident. In France there is even a shade of irony which seems to say 'You think you're farther ahead than you really are.' A woman may behave like this either because she is recovering from a moment of intoxication and obeying the dictates of modesty, which she may fear she has offended; or simply for the sake of prudence or coquetry.

The lover begins to be less sure of the good fortune he was anticipating and subjects his grounds for hope to a critical examination.

He tries to recoup by indulging in other pleasures but finds them inane. He is seized by the dread of a frightful calamity and now concentrates fully. Thus begins:

7. The second crystallization, which deposits diamond layers of proof that 'she loves me.'

Every few minutes throughout the night which follows the birth of doubt, the lover has a moment of dreadful misgiving, and then reassures himself, 'she loves me'; and crystallization begins to reveal new charms. Then once again the haggard eye of doubt pierces him and he stops transfixed. He forgets to draw breath and mutters, 'But does she love me?' Torn between doubt and delight, the poor lover convinces himself that she could give him such pleasure as he could find nowhere else on earth.

It is the pre-eminence of this truth, and the road to it, with a fearsome precipice on one hand and a view of perfect happiness on the other, which set the second crystallization so far above the first.

The lover's mind vacillates between three ideas:

1. She is perfect.
2. She loves me.
3. How can I get the strongest possible proofs of her love?

The most heartrending moment of love in its infancy is the realization that you have been mistaken about something, and that a whole framework of crystals has to be destroyed. You begin to feel doubtful about the entire process of crystallization.

1. What the seventeenth-century novelists called the '*coup de foudre*' (or thunderbolt), which determines the destiny of the hero and his mistress, is a movement of the soul which, for all its debasement by a thousand scribblers, is none the less a fact of nature. It comes from the impossibility of performing this defensive manoeuvre. A woman in love finds so much happiness in the feelings she is experiencing that she is unable to pretend; tired of being prudent, she throws caution to the wind and flings herself blindly into the happiness of loving. Where there is mistrust there can be no *coup deoudre*.

CHAPTER 3: *Concerning Hope*

It only needs a very small quantity of hope to beget love. Even when hope gives way to despair after a day or two, love will persist.

In a decisive, bold, and impetuous person, with an imagination whetted by misfortune, the degree of hope can be even smaller and more fleeting, without endangering the love.

If the lover has suffered; if he is sensitive and thoughtful; if he turns from other women in keen admiration of the lady in question, no ordinary pleasure will lure him away from the second crystallization. He will prefer to dream of the slenderest chance of pleasing her, rather than to receive all the favours of any ordinary woman.

It is at this stage, and no later, mark you, that a woman who wishes to crush her lover's hopes should do so cruelly, and heap on his head, in public, insults which will make it quite impossible for him ever to see her again.

Even when the periods between all these stages are prolonged, love can still result.

Cold, prudent, phlegmatic people must hope longer and more deeply before they fall in love, and the same is true of elderly people.

The second crystallization ensures that love will last; for you feel that the only alternatives are to win her love or to die. The very idea of ceasing to love is absurd when your convictions are confirmed moment by moment, until the passing months make love a habit. The stronger your character, the slighter the impulse to inconstancy.

This second crystallization is almost entirely lacking when love is inspired by a woman who yields too soon.

When the two crystallization processes have taken place, and particularly the second, which is far the stronger, the original naked branch is no longer recognizable by indifferent eyes, because it now sparkles with perfections, or diamonds, which they do not see or which they simply do not consider to be perfections.

Del Rosso was talking to a former admirer of his mistress, who described her charms in some detail. Del Rosso saw a particular twinkle in the teller's eye, which at once provided another diamond

for his crystalline branch.¹ An idea like this, conceived in the evening, would keep him dreaming the whole night through.

An impromptu remark gives me² dreams enough to last a whole night through. I see a sensitive, generous, burning spirit – *romantic*³

1. I have called this essay a book of ideology. I intended to convey that although it was about *love*, it was not a novel, and was not entertaining in the way that a novel is. I beg the forgiveness of the philosophers for having chosen the word *ideology*; I certainly had no intention of stealing a title that by rights should belong to someone else. If ideology be a detailed description of ideas and of all the parts into which those ideas can be analysed, this book is a detailed and painstaking description of all the feelings which make up the passion called *love*. I then draw certain conclusions from this description; for instance, the way in which love can be cured. I know of no word derived from Greek that would indicate discourse upon feelings, as ideology indicates discourse upon ideas. I might have had a word invented for me by one of my scholarly friends, but I am already quite annoyed enough at having had to adopt the new word *crystallization*, and it may well be that if this essay wins any readers, they will not forgive me the neologism. I agree that literary talent would have avoided it and I tried to do so, but without any success. In my opinion this word does express the principal process of the madness known as love, a madness which nevertheless provides man with the greatest pleasures the species can know on earth. If I had not used the word *crystallization* I should have had to replace it repeatedly by an awkward periphrasis, and my description of what happens in the head and in the heart of a man in love would have become obscure, heavy, and wearisome even to me, the author. I hesitate to guess what the reader would have thought of it.

I therefore urge anyone who is shocked by the word *crystallization* to shut the book forthwith. It is no part of my desire, fortunately, to have a great number of readers. It would make me very happy to please about thirty or forty people in Paris, whom I shall never see but nevertheless love devotedly without ever having met them: some young Madame Roland, for instance, surreptitiously reading a volume which she thrusts into a drawer at the slightest noise, by the workbench in the back of her father's watch-engraving shop. Someone like Madame Roland will, I hope, forgive me not only the word *crystallization*, which I use to express the impulse of folly that makes us see all beauties and perfections in the woman we are beginning to love, but also many bolder ellipses. The only thing to do is to take a pencil and write in the few missing words between the lines.

2. It is for the sake of *brevity*, and in order to depict experience from the inside, that the author, by using the first person singular, brings together a number of feelings quite alien to him. He has had none of his own which are worth mentioning.

3. At first all these actions seemed to me to have the sublimity that immediately sets a man apart and differentiates him from all others. I thought I saw in his eyes that thirst for more sublime happiness, that unavowed

as it is commonly called – who sets above the happiness of kings the simple pleasure of walking alone with her lover at midnight in a secluded wood.

Del Rosso would say that my mistress is a prude; I think his a harlot.

CHAPTER 4

IN the unattached heart of a girl who is living in a secluded château in the depths of the country the least touch of surprise can lead to a mild admiration. When this is followed by even the slenderest hope, admiration leads to love and crystallization.

This kind of love is rather fun at first.

Surprise and hope are powerfully supported by the need for love and the melancholy which characterize the sixteen-year-old. It is a commonplace that sixteen is an age which thirsts for love and is not excessively particular about what beverage chance may provide.

The seven stages of love, then, are as follows:

1. Admiration.
2. How delightful . . . etc.
3. Hope.
4. The birth of love.
5. First crystallization.
6. Doubt creeps in . . .
7. Second crystallization.

The interval between 1 and 2 may be a year. Between 2 and 3 it may be a month; unless hope follows closely stage 2 is imperceptibly given up, as causing unhappiness; 3 leads to 4 in a twinkling. There is no interval between 4 and 5; only intimacy could possibly come between them.

Depending on the impetuosity and habitual boldness of the individual, several days may elapse between 5 and 6. There is no interval between 6 and 7.

melancholy which aspires to something better than we can know here below, and which, for a romantic soul, however placed by chance or revolution,

. . . Still prompts the celestial sight,

For which we wish to live, or dare to die.

(Ultima lettera di Bianca a sua madre. Forli, 1817.)

CHAPTER 5

MAN is not free to avoid doing what gives him greater pleasure than any other action.¹

Love is like a fever which comes and goes quite independently of the will. It is chiefly in this that mannered love differs from passionate love. The charms of your beloved are not a matter of self-congratulation, except as a stroke of luck.

Finally, there are no age limits for love. Look at Madame du Deffand's infatuation with the churlish Horace Walpole, or the more recent and certainly pleasanter example in Paris itself.

The embarrassing consequences of grand passion are the only proofs I will admit in evidence of its existence. Shyness, for instance, is a proof of love; I do *not* mean the awkward shame of a boy leaving school.

CHAPTER 6: *The Salzburg Bough*

CRYSTALLIZATION goes on throughout love almost without a break. The process is something like this: whenever all is not well between you and your beloved, you crystallize out an *imaginary solution*. Only through imagination can you be sure that your beloved is perfect in any given way. After intimacy, ever-resurgent fears are lulled by more real solutions. Thus happiness never stays the same, except in its origin; every day brings forth a new blossom.

If your beloved gives way to her passion and commits the cardinal error of removing your fear by the intensity of her response,² then crystallization stops for a moment, but what love loses in intensity – its fears, that is – it makes up for by the charm of complete abandon and infinite trust, becoming a gentle habit which softens the hardships of life and gives a new interest to its enjoyment.

If she leaves you, crystallization begins again, and every act of admiration, the sight of every happiness she could give you, and whose existence you had forgotten, ends in the searing reflection: 'I

1. Where crime is concerned, a good education instils remorse; and foreseen remorse acts as a deterrent.

2. Diane de Poitiers, in the *Princesse de Clèves*.

shall never know that joy again, and it is through my fault that I have lost it!¹ It is no use seeking consolation in pleasures of another sort; they turn to dust and ashes. Your imagination can paint a physical picture for you, and take you a-hunting on a swift horse through Devon woods;¹ but you are aware at the same time that you could find no pleasure in it. This is the optical illusion which leads to the fatal pistol shot.

Gambling also has its crystallization process, concerned with the use you will make of the money you hope to win.

The intrigues at court, so much mourned by the nobles under the cloak of Legitimism, were only fascinating because of the crystallization they bred. Not a courtier but envied Luynes and Lauzun their swift ascent to affluence; not an attractive woman but saw herself with a duchy as great as that of Mme de Polignac. No rational form of government can possibly recapture that crystallization. There is nothing quite so anti-imagination as the government of the United States of America. We have already seen that among their neighbours the savages crystallization is almost unknown. The Romans had but a bare idea of it, and then only about physical love.

Hatred, too, has its crystallization; as soon as you see a hope of revenge, your hatred breaks out afresh.

If belief in the absurd or unproven tends to bring the most incongruous people to the top, that is another effect of crystallization. It even exists in mathematics (see the Newtonians in 1740), in minds which could not at any given moment grasp simultaneously all the stages of proof in evidence of their beliefs.

Think of the fate of the great German philosophers, whose immortality, so widely proclaimed, never managed to last more than thirty or forty years.

It is because we can never understand the whys and wherefores of our feelings that even the wisest men are fanatical about such things as music.

It is impossible to justify oneself at will against someone who holds an opposite view.

1. Because, if you could imagine happiness there, crystallization would have claimed for your mistress the exclusive right to give you that happiness.

CHAPTER 7: *Concerning the Different Beginnings of Love for the Two Sexes*

A WOMAN establishes her position by granting favours. Ninety-five per cent of her daydreams are about love, and from the moment of intimacy they revolve about one single theme: she endeavours to justify the extraordinary and decisive step she has taken in defiance of all her habits of modesty. A man has no such concern, but a woman's imagination dwells reminiscently on every enchanting detail.

Since love casts doubt upon what seemed proven before, the woman who was so certain, before intimacy, that her lover was entirely above vulgar promiscuity, no sooner remembers that she has nothing left to refuse him than she trembles lest he has merely been adding another conquest to his list.

Only at this point does the second¹ crystallization begin, and much more strongly, since it is now accompanied by fear.

The woman feels she has demeaned herself from queen to slave, and matters are aggravated by the dizzy intoxication which results from pleasures as keen as they are rare. And then again, a woman at her embroidery – an insipid pastime that occupies only her hands – thinks of nothing but her lover; while he, galloping across the plains with his squadron, would be placed under arrest if he muffed a manoeuvre.

I should imagine, therefore, that the second crystallization is a good deal stronger in women, because fear is more acute; vanity and honour are in pawn and distractions are certainly not so easy.

A woman cannot fall back on the habit of rational thinking that a man like myself is bound to acquire, working six hours a day at a desk on cold rational matters. Women are inclined, and not only in love, to give way to their imaginations, and to become ecstatic; so their lovers' faults are quickly effaced.

Women prefer emotion to reason. It's quite simple: since in our dull way we never give them any business responsibility in the family *they never have occasion to use reason*, and so never regard it as of any use.

1. This second crystallization does not occur in women of easy virtue, who are far removed from such romantic ideas.

Indeed they find reason a positive nuisance, since it descends upon them only to chide them for their enjoyment of yesterday, or to forbid them the enjoyment of tomorrow.

If you were to hand over the administration of two of your estates to your wife, I wager the accounts would be better kept than by yourself; and then . . . well, you would of course have the *right* to feel sorry for yourself, you pitiable despot, since you lack even the talent to excite love.

As soon as women begin to generalize they are making love without knowing it. They pride themselves on being more meticulous in detail than men, and half the trade across counters is carried on by women, who do better at it than their husbands. It is a commonplace that when you talk about business with them, you must always adopt a very serious tone.

The thing is that they are hungry for emotion, anywhere and at any time: think of the pleasures of a Scottish funeral.

CHAPTER 8

This was her favoured fairy realm,
and here she erected her aerial
palaces.

Lammermoor, 1, 70.

A GIRL of eighteen cannot crystallize so well as a woman of twenty-eight, and conceives desires too limited by her narrow experience of life to be able to love passionately.

I was discussing this tonight with an intelligent woman who disagrees with me. 'A girl's imagination,' she said, 'hasn't been frozen by unpleasant experience and the first fire of youth is still in full flame. Quite possibly she will create for herself an entrancing picture of some quite ordinary man. Every time she meets her lover she will enjoy, not the man as he really is, but the wonderful inner vision she has created.'

'Later on, when she has been disillusioned about this lover and about other men, her power to crystallize will have been reduced by stern reality, and mistrust will have clipped the wings of her imagination. However outstanding the man, she can never again fashion so

compelling an image, and will not be able to love so eagerly as when she was younger. And since in love only the illusion appeals, and she cannot at twenty-eight give her image the sublime and dazzling tones she dreamed of at eighteen, her second love will always seem second-rate.'

'On the contrary, madame,' I replied, 'the very fact that there is mistrust, which was not there at sixteen, will give a new colour to this second love. For the very young, love is like a huge river which sweeps everything before it, so that you feel that it is a restless current. Now a sensitive person has acquired some self-knowledge by twenty-eight; she knows that any happiness she can expect from life will come to her through love; hence a terrible struggle develops between love and mistrust. She crystallizes only slowly; but whatever crystals survive her terrible ordeal, where the spirit is moving in the face of the most appalling danger, will be a thousand times more brilliant and durable than those of the sixteen-year-old, whose privileges are simply happiness and joy. Thus the later love will be less gay, but more passionate.'¹

In this conversation (Bologna, 9th March 1820) a point which had seemed to me quite obvious is contradicted, and convinces me more and more that a man is almost incapable of saying anything sensible about what goes on in the inmost heart of a sensitive woman; as for a coquette, that's another matter, for men, too, have senses and vanity.

The dissimilarity between the way love is born for the two sexes corresponds with a difference in the nature of hope for man and woman. One is attacking, the other defending; one asks, the other refuses; one is bold, the other shy.

The man wonders: 'Shall I be able to please her? Will she love me?'

And the woman thinks: 'Perhaps he's only joking when he says he loves me. Is he reliable? Does he really know himself how long his love will last?' This is why many women treat a young man of twenty-three as if he were a child; of course if he has fought half a dozen campaigns it's a different matter and he becomes a young hero.

For a man, hope depends simply on the actions of the woman he loves, and nothing is easier to interpret than these. For a woman, hope must be based on moral considerations which are extremely difficult to assess. Most men seek a proof of love which they consider

1. Epicurus said that discrimination is necessary to the achievement of pleasure.

dispels all doubt; women are not lucky enough to be able to find a like proof. It is one of life's misfortunes that what brings certainty and happiness to one lover brings danger and almost humiliation to the other.

In love, men run the risk of suffering secret torments, while women lay themselves open to public jest; in the first place they are shyer, and besides, public opinion means much more to them because 'to be esteemed' is imperative.¹

They have no sure means of winning public approval by revealing their real selves for a moment.

So they have to be more cautious. Force of habit dictates that all the intellectual processes which constitute the birth of love are gentler, shyer, slower, and more tentative in women; they have a greater disposition to constancy and are undoubtedly less able to halt a crystallization once it has begun.

A woman on seeing her lover reflects swiftly, or surrenders to the joy of loving, but this joy is rudely shattered if he makes the slightest advance, because then defence and not surrender is the order of the day.

The lover's part is much simpler. He just looks into his beloved's eyes; a single smile will give him supreme happiness and he never stops trying to obtain this.² A long siege humiliates a man, but ennobles a woman.

A woman in love is quite capable of speaking no more than a dozen words in a whole year to the man she loves. In the depths of her heart she keeps note of the number of times she has seen him; twice he has taken her to the theatre, twice they have met at dinner, and he has greeted her three times when she was out walking.

One evening at a party he kissed her hand; and you will observe that since then she has been careful, even at the risk of appearing odd, to allow no one else to kiss her hand.

1. Compare the maxim of Beaumarchais: Nature says to a woman, 'If you can, be beautiful; if you like, be wise; but whatever happens, be respected.' In France, no respect means no admiration and therefore no love.

2.

*Quando legemmo il disiato riso
Esser baciato da cotanto amante,
Questi che mai da me non fia diviso,
La bocca mi baciò tutto tremante.
Francesca da Rimini. Dante.*

Léonore used to say that this sort of behaviour in a man was 'feminine love'.

CHAPTER 9

I AM trying extremely hard to be *dry*. My heart thinks it has so much to say, but I try to keep it quiet. I am continually beset by the fear that I may have expressed only a sigh when I thought I was stating a truth.

CHAPTER 10

THE following story will suffice as proof of the crystallization principle.¹

A young woman learns that her cousin Edward, who is about to leave the Army, is a distinguished young man and is in love with her already because of what he has heard of her, even though they have never met; doubtless he wishes to meet her before declaring his love and asking for her hand. She sees a young stranger at church and hears him called Edward. She can think of no one else; she is in love. A week later the real Edward turns up, and he is not the stranger in the church. She turns pale . . . and of course will be utterly miserable for ever if she is made to marry him.

This is what the small-minded call 'one of the follies of love'.

A man shows the greatest kindness and generosity to a girl who is unhappy; he has every virtue and could hardly be more attentive. But he wears a shabby hat, and she notices that he does not ride well. She tells herself with a sigh that she could never marry a man like that.

Another man is paying court to a thoroughly good and honest woman. She finds out that he has suffered from an embarrassing physical misfortune; at once she can no longer stand the sight of him. Not that she ever had the slightest intention of giving herself to him, or that his disabilities detract in any way from his wit and pleasant manners; it is simply that crystallization has become impossible. No matter whether it be in the forest of Arden or at a Coulon ball, you can only enjoy idealizing your beloved if she *appears* perfect in the

1. *Empoli*, June 1879.

first place. Absolute perfection is not essential, but every perceived quality must be perfect. Only after several days of the second crystallization will the beloved appear perfect in all respects. It's quite simple; you only need to think of a perfection to perceive it at once in your beloved.

You see to what extent *beauty* is necessary if love is to be born. Ugliness must not present an obstacle. The lover will soon come to see beauty in his mistress whatever she looks like, without giving a thought to *real beauty*.

If he does see real beauty, one might say that it promises him one unit of happiness, while his mistress's features, whatever they are like, will promise him a thousand.

Before love is born, beauty is necessary as an advertisement; it predisposes to love by evoking praise of the person to be loved. If you admire strongly enough, the least spark of hope will turn it into love.

In mannered love, and perhaps in the first five minutes of passionate love, a woman taking a lover will be more concerned with the way other women see him than with the way she sees him herself.

Herein lies the reason for the success of princes and officers.¹

Even in his old age, the pretty women at court were in love with Louis XIV.

You must be careful not to allow free rein to hope before you are sure that admiration exists. Otherwise you would achieve only an insipid flatness quite incompatible with love, or at least whose only cure would be in a challenge to your self-esteem.

We have no sympathy with stupidity, nor with the smile for each and everyone. Hence the necessity in 'society' for a veneer of sharpness; it is the hallmark of manners. Not even laughter blooms on too vile a plant. We scorn too easy a victory in love and are never inclined to set much value upon what is there for the taking.

1. 'Those who remarked in the countenance of this young hero a dissolute audacity mingled with extreme haughtiness and indifference to the feelings of others, could not yet deny to his countenance that sort of comeliness which belongs to an open set of features, well formed by nature, modelled by art to the usual rules of courtesy, yet so far frank and honest that they seemed as if they disclaimed to conceal the natural working of the soul. Such an expression is often mistaken for *manly frankness*, when in truth it arises from the reckless indifference of a libertine disposition, conscious of *superiority of birth, of wealth*, or of some other adventitious advantage totally unconnected with personal merit.'

Ivanhoe, Volume 1, p. 145.

ONCE crystallization has begun, you delight in each new beauty that you discover in your beloved.

But what is beauty? It is a new potentiality for pleasure.

Each person's pleasures are different, and often radically so, which explains quite clearly why something that is beautiful to one man is ugly to another. (See the conclusive example of Del Rosso and Lisio on 1st January 1820.)

To determine the nature of beauty, we must investigate each individual's idea of pleasure. For instance, Del Rosso insists upon a woman who allows him to risk a gesture or two, and smilingly licenses the most delightful liberties, a woman who keeps him continually aware of physical pleasure and at the same time gives him the opportunity and incentive to display his particular brand of charm.

Apparently for Del Rosso 'love' means physical love, and for Lisio it means passionate love. It is clearly improbable that they will agree about the meaning of the word 'beauty'.¹

Since the beauty a man discovers is a new capacity for arousing his pleasure, and since pleasures vary with the individual, each man's crystallization will be tinged with the colour of his pleasures.

The crystallization about your mistress, that is to say her *beauty*, is nothing but the sum of the fulfilment of all the desires you have been able to formulate about her.

CHAPTER 12: *Crystallization Continued*

WHY does one enjoy and delight in each new beauty discovered in the beloved?

It is because each new beauty gives us the complete fulfilment of a desire. We want her to be sensitive: behold! she *is* sensitive. Then we would have her as proud as Corneille's Emilia and, though the two qualities are probably incompatible, she acquires in a trice the soul of a Roman. This is the reason why, on the moral plane, love is the

1. *Beauty*, as I intend it here, means the promise of a quality useful to my soul, and transcends physical attraction; the latter is only one particular kind. 1815.

strongest of the passions. In all the others, desires have to adapt themselves to cold reality, but in love realities obligingly rearrange themselves to conform with desire. There is therefore more scope for the indulgence of violent desires in love than in any other passion.

There are certain general conditions for happiness which govern the fulfilment of all particular desires:

1. She seems to be your property, because you alone can make her happy.
2. She is the arbiter of your merit. This condition was most important in the chivalric courts of François I and Henri II, and at the elegant court of Louis XV. Under a constitutional and rational government women are entirely deprived of this means of influence.
3. If you have a romantic heart, the more sublime the soul of your beloved the more heavenly will be the pleasure you find in her arms, and the freer from any taint of vulgarity.

Most young Frenchmen of eighteen are disciples of J.-J. Rousseau, and this condition for happiness is important for them.

In the midst of activities so frustrating to the desire for happiness, people lose their heads.

From the moment he falls in love even the wisest man no longer sees anything *as it really is*. He underrates his own qualities, and overrates the least favour bestowed by his beloved. Hopes and fears at once become *romantic* and *WAYWARD*. He no longer admits an element of chance in things and loses his sense of the probable; judging by its effect on his happiness, whatever he imagines becomes reality.¹

An alarming indication that you are losing your head is that you observe some hardly distinguishable object as white, and interpret this as favourable to your love. A moment later you realize that the object is really black, and you now regard this as a good omen for your love.

This is the time when, overwrought by doubt, you feel great need of a friend; but for the lover there can be no friend. That was well known at court. Here is the origin of the only kind of indiscretion that a well-bred woman can forgive.

1. There is a physical cause, an incipient madness, a rush of blood to the brain, a disorder of the nervous system and the cerebral centres; compare the fleeting courage shown by stags and the colour of a soprano's thoughts. In 1922, physiology will provide us with a description of the physical basis of this phenomenon. I recommend it to the attention of Mr Edwards.

CHAPTER 13: *Concerning the First Step, High Society, Misfortunes*

THE most surprising thing of all about love is the first step, the violence of the change that takes place in a man's mind.

Society, with its brilliant parties, helps love by making this *first step* easier.

The beginning is the change from simple admiration to tender admiration. (What a pleasure to kiss her . . . etc.)

A whirling waltz in a drawing-room lit by a thousand candles will set young hearts afire, banish shyness, bring a new awareness of strength, and in the end give *the courage to love*. Because in order to fall in love it is not enough just to see a lovely person; on the contrary, extreme loveliness deters the sensitive. You have to see her, if not in love with you, at least stripped of her dignity.¹

Imagine falling in love with a queen, unless she made the first advances!²

The ideal breeding-ground for love is the boredom of solitude, with the occasional long-awaited ball; wise mothers of daughters are guided accordingly.

Genuine 'high society', such as was to be found at the French court,³ but which I think ceased to exist in 1780,⁴ was hardly propitious to the growth of love, since *solitude* and leisure were almost impossible to obtain there, and both of these are necessary for the crystallization process.

Court life trains you to perceive and express a great number of different *shades of meaning*, and a subtly expressed nuance may be the beginning of admiration and then passion.⁵

1. Hence passions may be of artificial origin; and like that of Benedick and Beatrice (Shakespeare).

2. cf. the Loves of Struenzee in *The Courts of the North*, by Brown, 3 vols. 1819.

3. See the *Letters* of Madame du Deffand and of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, the *Memoirs* of Bezenval, of Lauzun, and of Madame d'Épinay, *le Dictionnaire des Etiquettes* by Madame de Genlis, the *Memoirs* of Dangeau and of Horace Walpole.

4. Unless it be at the court of St Petersburg.

5. See Saint-Simon and *Werther*. However sensitive and fastidious a solitary man may be, he is distraught, and part of his imagination is engaged in anticipating society. Force of character is one of the charms which most appeals to the truly

When love's troubles are mixed with others (those of *vanity*: when your mistress offends your proper pride, your sense of honour or of personal dignity; those of health, money, or political persecution, etc. . .) it is only superficially that love is increased by the difficulties. Since they engage the imagination elsewhere, they prevent the crystallizations of hopeful love and the growth of little doubts in requited love. The sweetness and the madness of love return when these difficulties are removed.

Note that misfortune favours the birth of love in superficial or unfeeling people. Love is also helped by misfortunes which precede it, for the imagination then recoils from the outside world which offers only sad pictures, and throws itself wholeheartedly into the task of crystallization.

CHAPTER 14

MANY people will disagree with what I have to say now, but I shall confine myself to addressing those who have been, shall I say, unhappy enough to love passionately for many years, unrequitedly and against hopeless odds.

The sight of anything extremely beautiful, in Nature or the arts, makes you think instantly of your beloved. This is because, on the principle of the bejewelled bough in the Salzburg mine, everything sublime and beautiful becomes a part of your beloved's beauty and the unexpected reminder of happiness fills your eyes with tears on the instant. In this way a love of the beautiful, and love itself, inspire each other.

One of life's misfortunes is that one cannot remember distinctly the happiness of seeing and speaking to the beloved. Apparently you become too emotionally upset to notice the cause of the circumstances. You are aware only of your own sensations. Perhaps it is because you cannot wear out these pleasures by deliberate recollection that they are so strongly renewed by anything which diverts you from

feminine; hence the success of very serious young officers. Women are very clever at distinguishing between strength of character and the violences of passion, which they themselves feel potentially in their hearts. The finest women are sometimes taken in by a little charlatanism of that kind. This can be used quite safely as soon as crystallization is seen to be well under way.

the sacred inner contemplation of your beloved and recalls her more vividly by some new relevance.¹

A dried-up old architect used to meet Léonore evening after evening in society. In the course of conversation, and without paying much attention to what I was saying,² I one day waxed eloquent in his praise. She laughed at me, and I was too cowardly to tell her it was because he saw *her* every evening.

This feeling is so powerful that it extends even to an old enemy of mine who is often with Léonore. Whenever I see this other woman, however much I want to hate her, I cannot, because she recalls Léonore so strongly to my mind.

You might say that by some strange quirk of the heart, your beloved communicates more charm to her surroundings than she herself possesses. The picture of a distant town³ where you once glimpsed her for a moment throws you into a deeper and sweeter reverie than even her actual presence could evoke. This is because of the hardships you have suffered.

The reverie of love defies all attempts to record it. I find that I can re-read a good novel every three years and enjoy it as much every time. It arouses feelings in me which are related to whatever tender interest is engaging me at the time, or, even if it makes me feel nothing, it gives variety to my thoughts. I can also listen to the same music over and over again, but memory must not play any part here – only imagination. If you enjoy an opera more at the twentieth hearing, it may be that you understand the music better, or simply that it recalls the occasion when it was first heard.

As for the new light which a novel is supposed to throw on human nature . . . well, I am very conscious of my original views and like to come upon the marginal notes which I wrote about them at a previous reading. But this sort of pleasure only holds good for the novel's function of furthering my knowledge of man, and not for its chief function of inducing reverie. This reverie cannot be imprisoned in a marginal note. To do so is to kill it for the present, since one begins to analyse pleasure philosophically. It is also to kill it for the

1. Scents.

2. See note 2 on p. 49.

3. . . . *Nessun maggior dolore
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria*Dante, *Francesca*

future, because nothing paralyses the imagination like an appeal to memory. If I come upon a marginal note describing my feelings as I read *Old Mortality* in Florence three years ago, I immediately plunge into my life story, into a comparison of my happiness then and now, in a word, into deep philosophy; and so a long farewell to the indulgence of tender feelings.

Every great poet with a lively imagination is shy; in other words he is afraid of men because they can interrupt and disturb his exquisite reveries, and he trembles for his ability to concentrate. Men with their coarse pursuits come to drag him from the gardens of Armida, and thrust him into a foetid mire; and they can scarcely make him notice them without irritating him. It is because he is emotionally nourished upon reverie, and because he hates vulgarity, that a great artist is always so close to loving.

The more a man has the gifts of a great artist, the more he should aspire to titles and decorations as a protective rampart against the world.

CHAPTER 15

THERE are moments in violent and unrequited love when you suddenly think you are not in love any more. It is like coming across a spring of fresh water in the middle of the sea. You no longer enjoy thinking of your mistress, and even though you are prostrated by her harshness you think yourself unhappier still to have lost interest in everything. A thoroughly miserable and depressed blankness follows a state of mind which, despite its agitation, nevertheless saw all Nature fraught with novelty, passion, and interest.

What has happened is this: the last time you saw your mistress you were placed in a certain situation from which, on some previous occasion, you had reaped a full harvest of sensation. For instance, after a period of coldness she shows a little more warmth, and you conceive just the same degree of hope, based on precisely the same external symptoms, as on some occasion in the past; she may be quite unaware of all this. The imagination finds its progress barred by the ominous warnings of memory, and crystallization¹ stops dead.

1. I have been advised in the first place to dispense with this word, or, if I cannot do that, to include frequent reminders that by *crystallization* I mean a

CHAPTER 16

*In a little seaside village, whose name
I do not know, not far from Perpignan,
25th February 1822¹*

IT has been borne upon me this evening that perfect music has the same effect on the heart as the presence of the beloved. It gives, in fact, apparently more intense pleasure than anything else on earth.

If everyone reacted to music as I do, nothing would ever induce men to fall in love.

But I noticed last year in Naples that perfect music, like perfect pantomime,² makes me think about whatever is preoccupying me at the moment. It inspires me with excellent ideas . . . At Naples it was how best to arm the Greeks.

Now this evening I must admit that I have the misfortune OF BEING TOO GREAT AN ADMIRER OF MILADY L.

And perhaps the perfect music I have just had the pleasure of hearing after two or three music-starved months, despite nightly visits to the Opéra, has merely had an effect I already knew; that of inspiring livelier thoughts about my preoccupation of the moment.

4th March, a week later

I dare neither strike out nor approve what I have just written. Certainly I wrote it as I read it in my heart. If I seem doubtful about it now, perhaps it is because I have forgotten today what I could see so clearly last week.

The habit of listening to music and the state of reverie connected with it prepare you for falling in love. If you are sensitive and unhappy

certain fever of the imagination which translates a normally commonplace object into something unrecognizable, and makes it an entity apart. Among those who can only achieve happiness through vanity, the man who wishes to excite this fever must take great pains with his cravat and be constantly on the watch over a thousand details, none of which must be neglected. Women in society admit the effect and at the same time deny, or fail to see, the cause.

1. Copied from Lisio's journal.

2. *Othello* and *The Vestal*, ballets by Vigano, danced by La Pallerini and Molinari.

you will get great pleasure from a tender sad melody, not dramatic enough to goad into action, but evocative only of love's reverie. For example, the long clarinet solo at the beginning of the quartet in *Bianca e Faliero*, or la Camporesi's recitative half way through it.

The lover who has won his lady will delight in the famous duet from Rossini's *Armida e Rinaldo*, which illustrates so well the little doubts of happy love, and the moments of joy which follow reconciliations. The orchestral passage in the middle of the duet, when Rinaldo is trying to run away, is strikingly representative of the conflict of passions, and the lover will feel his heart stirred almost physically by its influence. I dare not tell you what I feel when I hear it; Northerners would think me quite mad.

CHAPTER 17: *Beauty Usurped by Love*

IN a box at the theatre, Albéric meets a woman more beautiful than his mistress. Let me express this mathematically. This woman gives promise of three units of happiness as compared with his mistress's two. And let us assume that four units might be promised by perfect beauty.

It is hardly surprising that he should prefer his mistress, whose features, *to him*, offer a hundred units. Even little facial blemishes on other women, such as a smallpox scar, touch the heart of a man in love and inspire a deep reverie; imagine the effect when they are on his mistress's face. The fact is, that pockmark means a thousand things to him, mostly delightful and all extremely interesting. He is forcibly reminded of all these things by the sight of a scar, even on another woman's face.

Thus *ugliness* even begins to be loved and given preference, because in this case it has become beauty.¹ There was once a man passionately in love with a thin pockmarked woman; she died. Three years later, in Rome, he was introduced to two women, one as fair as the dawn, the other thin and pockmarked, and in consequence shall we say un-repossessing. At the end of a week, during which he blotted out her

1. Beauty is only the promise of happiness. The happiness of a Greek differed from the happiness of a Frenchman in 1822. Consider the eyes of the Medici Venus, and compare them with those of the Magdalen of Pordenone (at M. de Sommariva's).

ugliness with his memories, I saw that he was in love with the ugly one. Of course, with pardonable coquetry, she whetted his appetite a little, which helped the whole process along.¹ A man may meet a woman and be shocked by her ugliness. Soon, if she is natural and unaffected, her expression makes him overlook the faults of her features. He begins to find her charming, it enters his head that she might be loved, and a week later he is living in hope. The following week he has been snubbed into despair, and the week afterwards he has gone mad.

CHAPTER 18

SOMETHING of this sort happens in the theatre to actors idolized by the public. The audience ceases to care whether they are ugly or handsome. Le Kain, in spite of his ugliness, aroused the passions of thousands; and so did Garrick. There were several reasons for this, chief among them that one no longer remarked the degree of real beauty in their features and actions, but only saw a product of the imagination, something which had become accepted as theirs in recognition and memory of all the pleasure they had already given. In the same way a comic actor can get a laugh merely by walking on to the stage.

A young woman visiting the Théâtre Français for the first time might easily find Le Kain repulsive throughout the first scene, but he would soon make her tremble or weep, and she would never be able to resist the characters of Tancred² or Orosman. If she were still a little aware of his ugliness, it would soon be eclipsed by the surging enthusiasm of the whole crowd and the nervous tension it produced in her young heart.³ There was nothing left of ugliness except the

1. If one is sure of a woman's love, one looks to see whether she is beautiful or not; if one is doubtful of her heart, there is no time to inspect her face.

2. cf. Mme de Staël, in *Delphine*, I believe. This is the artifice of plain women.

3. It is to this nervous sympathy that I am tempted to attribute the prodigious and unaccountable effect of fashionable music (at Dresden, for Rossini, 1821). As soon as it is out of fashion – and it is none the worse for that – it no longer has any effect on the guileless hearts of young girls. It may have appealed to them because it stirred the emotions of young men.

Mme de Sévigné (Letter 202, 6th May 1672) wrote to her daughter: 'Lully had made a final effort with the whole of the King's orchestra; the lovely

word, and indeed not even that, for one could hear women, fans of Le Kain, shouting 'Isn't he beautiful!'

Let us remember that *beauty* is the visible expression of character, of the moral make-up of a person; it has nothing to do with passion. Now *passion* is what we must have, and beauty can only suggest *probabilities* about a woman and about her self-possession. But the eyes of your pockmarked mistress are a wonderful reality which makes nonsense of all possible probabilities.

CHAPTER 19: *Beauty's Limitations Further Discussed*

SENSITIVE, intelligent women are sometimes shy and mistrustful, and after an evening out will agonizedly go over and over what they may have let slip or implied. For such women a lack of good looks in men doesn't matter for long; they soon get used to it and fall in love in spite of it.

By the same token, if your adored mistress is severe towards you, how beautiful she is no longer matters. You stop crystallizing, and if a well-meaning friend tells you she is not really very pretty, you almost agree, and he thinks he is well on the way to curing you.

My good friend Captain Trab told me tonight what he once felt on seeing Mirabeau.

No one who laid eyes on that great man ever felt an unpleasant sensation, in other words, ever found him ugly. Carried away by his electrifying words one only noticed – and enjoyed noticing – what was beautiful in his face. As practically none of his features could have been called *beautiful* by the standards of the sculptor or painter, what one noticed was beauty of another kind¹ – the beauty of expression.

Miserere was still more augmented, and there was a *Libera* that filled all eyes with tears.²

One can no more doubt the truth of this effect than question Mme de Sévigné's intelligence or subtlety. The Lully music that delighted her would frighten people away nowadays. At that time such music encouraged crystallization, but today it makes crystallization impossible.

1. This is the advantage of being in fashion. Setting aside the facial defects already known which no longer stimulate the imagination, one concentrates on one of the three following kinds of beauty:

1. Among the common people: the idea of wealth;
2. In society: the idea of material or moral elegance;
3. At Court: the idea 'I want to please the ladies.'

Your attention carefully shut out all that was ugly, pictorially speaking, and at the same time concentrated enthusiastically on the smallest tolerable details. His hair, for instance, his abundant, 'beautiful' hair . . . really, if he had had horns on his head you would have found them beautiful.¹

The nightly appearances of a pretty dancer compel the attention of those blasé unimaginative souls who adorn the circle at the Opéra. With her graceful, bold, and strange movements she awakens physical love, and encourages perhaps the only kind of crystallization they can still manage. In this way an ugly woman, who could not attract a glance in the street, especially from the jaded, can succeed in being expensively kept, simply by frequent appearances on stage. Geoffroy used to say the theatre was woman's pedestal. The more celebrated

Almost everywhere there is a mixture of these three ideas. The happiness associated with the idea of wealth combines with the subtle pleasures which derive from the idea of elegance, and the whole is applied to love. In one way or another the imagination reacts enthusiastically to what is new. Thus a woman can become interested in a very ugly man without noticing his ugliness,* and in the long run his ugliness becomes beauty. Madame Vigano, a dancer and the fashionable woman of the day in 1788, was pregnant, and very soon the ladies began to sport little tummies à la Vigano. By the same reasoning in reverse, there is nothing so frightful as an outmoded fashion. Bad taste consists in confusing fashion, which survives by change, with lasting beauty which is the outcome of such and such a government in such and such a climate. A 'fashionable' building is out of date in ten years' time. It will be less displeasing two hundred years later when the fashion has been forgotten. Lovers are quite crazy to think about dressing well; when one meets the beloved there are many things to do besides thinking about her toilette. As Rousseau says, you look at your lover, you don't examine her. If examination does occur, it is no longer a case of passionate love but of mannered love. Beauty which dazzles is almost offensive in the one you love; you are not concerned with her beauty but wish to see her tender and languishing. In love, fine clothes only make a difference in the case of young girls, who, because strictly confined to their fathers' houses, often reach passion only through the eyes.

Remarks by L., 15th September 1820.

* Little Jermyn, in the *Memoirs* of Grammont.

1. Either for their polish, or their size, or their shape. It is in this way, or by the association of feelings (see above, concerning smallpox scars) that a woman in love becomes accustomed to the defects of her lover. The Russian princess C. has become quite used to a man who, to put it bluntly, has no nose. This miracle has been wrought by a mental picture of courage, of a loaded pistol ready for suicide in despair at this misfortune, combined with pity at the depth of the disaster and the idea that he will recover – that, in fact, he had already begun to recover. Berlin, 1807.

and faded a dancer is, the higher she is rated; hence the backstage saying: 'You can sometimes sell what you can't give away.' These women derive part of their passion from their lovers, and are very liable to fall in love *from pique*.

Suppose you watch an actress for a couple of hours every night while she registers noble sentiments; suppose her appearance is in no way unpleasant, and you know nothing of her private life, it is then extremely hard not to associate generous or lovable feelings with her. When you are finally admitted to her presence, her features recall such pleasant associations that her real and often mean surroundings glow with a romantic interest.

'In my early youth,' said my friend the late Baron de Bottmer, 'I was a great admirer of tedious French tragedy.¹ When I was lucky enough to have supper with Mademoiselle Olivier, I kept realizing with surprise that I respected her, and spoke to her as if she were a queen. Bless me if I know now whether I *was* in love with a queen or just with a pretty girl.'

CHAPTER 20

PERHAPS men who cannot love passionately are those who feel the effect of beauty most keenly; at any rate this is the strongest impression women can make on them.

The man whose heart has leapt at the glimpse of his beloved's white satin hat in the distance is surprised at his own indifference to the greatest society beauty. When he sees how much others are moved by the latter, he may even feel a little sorry.

Really lovely women are less startling the second day. This is a pity because it does not encourage crystallization. Since their excellence is visible to all, they are bound to have more fools in their lists of lovers: princes, millionaires, and suchlike.²

1. An unseemly phrase, copied from the *Memoirs* of my good friend the late Baron de Bottmer. It is by the same artifice that Feramorz pleased Lalla-Rookh; see this delightful poem.

2. Clearly the author is neither prince nor millionaire. I did not wish the reader to think of this remark before I did!

CHAPTER 21: Concerning 'First Sight'

EVEN the most ingenuous women,¹ if they have any imagination, are sensitive and *suspicious*. They may be mistrustful without knowing it; after all, life has been full of disillusionment! So everything formal or commonplace in their first encounter with a man scares their imagination, and the likelihood of crystallization is deferred. In a romantic situation, on the other hand, love conquers at first sight.

The process is simple: you are surprised, and as a result you ponder over the event that surprised you. You are already half way to the state of mind in which crystallization takes place.

As an example, take the beginning of Seraphine's love affair in the second volume of *Gil Blas*. Don Fernando is describing his flight from the *shirri* of the Inquisition: 'It was quite dark, and the rain was pelting down; I had crossed several alley-ways and suddenly came upon the open door of a drawing-room. I went in, and at once became aware of the magnificence of the place . . . on one side I saw a door a little ajar. I half opened it and could see a vista of rooms, the last of which was lighted. I wondered what to do next . . . Overcome with curiosity I crept forward through the rooms until I reached the light, which proved to be a candle in a gilt candlestick, standing on a marble table. Then I noticed a bed, whose curtains were partly drawn aside because of the heat, and my attention was riveted by the sight of a young woman who lay asleep, in spite of the thunderclap which had just shaken the house . . . I moved a little closer . . . I felt overpowered . . . While I was standing there, dizzy with the pleasure of looking at her, she awoke . . .

'Imagine her surprise at seeing in her room, at dead of night, a man she had never set eyes on before. She gave a great start, and uttered a cry . . . I tried to reassure her, and went down on one knee. 'Please',

1. Miss Ashton, the Bride of Lammermoor. A man of experience will have more memories of *loves* than he can choose from. But as soon as he wishes to write, he no longer knows which to give as examples. Anecdotes about particular communities in which he has lived are unknown to the public, and it would require a vast number of pages to relate them with the necessary nuances. This is why I quote novels, as being universally known; but the ideas I put before the reader are based on no such empty fictions, which for the most part strive after effect rather than truth.

I said, 'don't be afraid . . .' She called to her maids . . . A little emboldened by the presence of her little serving-maid, she asked me with spirit who I was . . . etc., etc.'

Here is an example of 'first sight' which it is not easy to forget. In contrast, what could be more idiotic than our custom nowadays of introducing a girl to her 'intended', formally and also a trifle sentimentally! Legalized prostitution; a mere mockery of modesty.

Chamfort relates how, on the afternoon of 17th February 1790, he attended a 'family ceremony', as it is called. That is to say, respectable folks, reputedly honest, had gathered together to witness and applaud the happiness of one Mademoiselle de Marille, a lovely, witty, and virtuous young woman, who was being privileged to become the wife of M. R—, an unhealthy, repulsive, doltish, but wealthy old man. She had seen him for the third time that very day at the signing of the contract.

'If anything can be said to characterize this infamous century,' Chamfort continues, 'it is that such a matter should be cause for rejoicing; that joy should be mocked; and, in the long view, that these same people should behave with icy contempt and heartless prudery at the least imprudence of a lovesick young woman.'

Since it is essentially artificial and predetermined, anything which smacks of ceremony or demands *seemly behaviour* paralyses the imagination and allows it to dwell only on the undignified and irrelevant; hence the magical effect of a joke at such a time. The poor girl, painfully shy and modest during the introduction to her future husband, can think only of the part she is playing, and this is another certain way of stifling imagination.

It is a far greater sin against modesty to go to bed with a man only twice seen, after three words of Latin in a church, than to surrender despite oneself to a man adored for two years. But of course I am talking nonsense.

The prolific source of the vice and misery which follow marriage nowadays is Popery. It makes freedom impossible for girls before marriage and divorce impossible afterwards, when they find they have made a mistake — or rather a mistake has been made for them — in the choice of a husband. Look at Germany, that country of happy homes, where that charming princess, Madame la Duchesse de Sagan, has just got most respectably married for the fourth time. What is more, she invited to the wedding her three former husbands, with

whom she remains on the best of terms. This is of course overdoing it; but a single divorce that puts paid to a husband's tyrannies can prevent thousands of unhappy homes. The joke of it all is that Rome is one of the places where divorces are most frequent.

A prerequisite of love is that a man's face, at first sight, should reveal something to be respected, and something to be pitied.

CHAPTER 22: *Concerning Infatuation*

HIGH breeding is often marked by curiosity and prejudice, and these ominous symptoms are generally apparent when the sacred flame — the origin of all the passions — has gone out. Schoolboys entering society for the first time are also a prey to infatuation. In youth and age, too many or too few sensibilities prevent one from perceiving things as they really are, and from experiencing the true sensations which they impart.

Some people, over-fervent, or fervent by starts — loving on credit, if I may put it that way — will hurl themselves upon the experience instead of waiting for it to happen. Before the nature of an object can produce its proper sensation in them, they have blindly invested it from afar with imaginary charm which they conjure up inexhaustibly within themselves. As they come closer they see the experience not as it is, but as they have made it. They take delight in their own selves in the mistaken belief that they are enjoying the experience. But sooner or later they get tired or making the running and discover that the object of their adoration is *not returning the ball*; then their infatuation is dispelled, and the slight to their self-respect makes them react unfairly against the thing they once overrated.

CHAPTER 23: *Concerning 'Thunderbolts'*

THAT ridiculous word ought to be changed — but nevertheless the thing 'love at first sight' does exist. I remember the charming and noble Wilhelmina, despair of the beaux of Berlin; she scorned love and laughed at its follies. Her youth, wit, and beauty dazzled the eye, as did her happiness in every way. Boundless wealth, in giving her full scope to develop her qualities, seemed to conspire with nature

to show the world a rare example of perfect happiness in a person who perfectly deserved it. She was twenty-three, and had been at court long enough to have rejected the homage of the greatest in the realm. She was held up as a paragon of modest but unshakable virtue; even the most eligible began to despair of ever pleasing her, and aspired only to win her friendship. One night she went to a ball at Prince Ferdinand's, and danced for ten minutes with a young captain.

'From that moment,' she wrote later to a friend,¹ 'he was the master of my heart and of myself, to an extent that would have filled me with terror had the joy of seeing Herman left me time to consider anything else. I could think of nothing but whether he would notice me.

'The only consolation I can find today is the illusion that I and my reason were overwhelmed by some superior force. Words cannot begin to express the full extent of the chaos into which my whole being was thrown at the mere sight of him. I blush to think of the surging violence with which I was thrust towards him. If, when he did at last speak to me, his first words had been "Do you adore me?" I should honestly not have had the strength to avoid saying "Yes!" I had no idea that a feeling could affect one so suddenly and so unexpectedly. Things had reached such a pitch that at one time I feared I was being poisoned.

'Unfortunately, my dear, you and the world know that I loved Herman. Well, he was so dear to me after a quarter of an hour that since then he has not, in fact could not, become dearer. I saw all his faults and forgave him everything, provided he would love me.

'Shortly after I had danced with Herman, the king left, and Herman, who was on royal escort duty, was obliged to go with him. As he left, everything in Nature disappeared. I cannot describe the depths of empty boredom to which I dropped the moment I could no longer see him. They were equalled only by the keenness of the desire I felt to be alone with myself.

'At last I was able to leave. No sooner was I in my room, with the door double-locked, than I tried to fight against my passion. I thought I had conquered it. Oh, my dear, I paid dearly that evening and through the days which followed, for the satisfaction of thinking myself virtuous!

What you have just read is the exact account of an event which was

1. Translated literally from *Bottmer's Memoirs*.

the talk of the day, for after a month or two poor Wilhelmina's unhappiness was so great as to betray her feelings. A long series of misfortunes followed, culminating in her untimely and tragic death, poisoned either by her own hand or by that of her lover. We couldn't see much in the young captain ourselves, beyond that he danced well, was gay, self-assured, radiated goodwill, and consorted with wantons. For the rest, his lineage barely passed muster; he was extremely poor and did not frequent the court.

An absence of mistrust is not enough; there must be a weariness of mistrusting, and, as it were, courage must be impatient with the hazards of life. You are unconsciously bored by living without loving, and convinced in spite of yourself by the example of others. You have overcome all life's fears, and are no longer content with the gloomy happiness which pride affords; you have conceived an ideal without knowing it. One day you come across someone not unlike this ideal; crystallization recognizes its theme by the disturbance it creates, and consecrates for ever to the master of your destiny what you have dreamt of for so long.¹

Women who might experience this misfortune are too fine in spirit to love other than passionately. If they could descend to mere gallantry they would escape it.

Since the 'thunderbolt' is the result of a secret weariness of what the catechism calls virtue, and of the boredom which comes from the monotony of perfection, I imagine it falls most often on those whom society labels good-for-nothing. I very much doubt whether the Cato type has ever brought down a thunderbolt.

If, when you fall in love in advance like this, you have the least suspicion of what is happening, there is no thunderbolt, and this is what makes them so rare.

A woman made wary by misfortune will not experience this soul-shaking upheaval.

The likelihood of a thunderbolt is greatly increased if other people, particularly women, praise the man who is to be the object of the passion.

Some of the funniest adventures in love are the result of the pseudo-thunderbolt. An insensitive woman who is bored can believe throughout an evening that she has at last found love for a lifetime. She is filled with pride at the thought that she is now undergoing one of the

1. Several sentences are borrowed from *Crébillon*, Vol. III.

great experiences that her imagination had been craving. But the next day she is hard put to it to hide her confusion and avoid the poor unfortunate fellow whom she adored the night before.

Quick-witted people can recognize these thunderbolts, and so profit by them.

Physical love also has its thunderbolts. Not long ago the prettiest and most accessible woman in Berlin was seen to blush suddenly as we were out riding in her carriage. The handsome Lieutenant Findorff had just gone by. Soon she was deep in thought, and looked worried. That evening, from what she admitted at the theatre, I gathered that she was crazed, delirious, and could think of nothing but Findorff, though she had never even spoken to him. If she had dared, she told me, she would have sent for him. Her pretty face gave every sign of the most violent passion, which persisted through the next day. But after three days Findorff made a fool of himself, and she stopped thinking about him. A month later she couldn't stand the sight of him.

CHAPTER 24: *Journey Into an Unknown Country*

I RECOMMEND most of you, if you were born in the North, to omit this chapter. It is an obscure dissertation concerning certain phenomena relating to the orange-tree, a plant which only grows, or at least only attains full stature, in Italy or Spain. To make myself intelligible elsewhere, I should have had to *prune* the facts.

I would certainly have done so had it ever been my intention to write a generally pleasant book. However, since heaven has denied me literary skill, I have only tried to describe (with all the dourness of science, but also with all its precision) certain facts of which I have been an involuntary witness during my prolonged stay in the country of the orange-tree. Frederick the Great, or some other distinguished Northerner who never had the opportunity of seeing the orange-tree growing in its native soil, would doubtless have disputed, and disputed in good faith, the statements which follow. I have a prodigious respect for good faith; I can see the point of it. Since this sincere declaration may savour of pride I shall interpose an observation:

We each write at random what seems to us to be true, and yet we give the lie to each other. I think of our books as so many lottery tickets; they are really not worth much more. Posterity, in forgetting

some and reprinting others, declares the winning tickets. So those of us who have expressed, as best we can, what we believe to be true, are hardly justified in laughing at our fellows, unless our satire has style, in which case there is every justification, particularly for those who write like M. Courier to Del Furia.

After this preamble I shall proceed boldly to the examination of certain facts of which I feel sure that Paris has seldom seen the like. But then in Paris – which is, of course, a city above all others – there are no flourishing orange-trees as there are at Sorrento. And it was at Sorrento, the birthplace of Tasso, on the gulf of Naples, climbing up a slope above the sea and more picturesque than Naples itself, but where they do not read *le Miroir*, that Lisio Visconti observed and wrote down the following facts:

When you are to meet your beloved in the evening, the anticipation of such immense happiness makes the intervening minutes quite unbearable.

In a consuming fever you try twenty different occupations and as quickly drop them. You are for ever looking at your watch, and you think it's wonderful if you can let ten minutes slip by without a look. At last the hour you have been waiting for strikes – and there, on the doorstep, about to knock, you would be just as glad if she were out. You know you would be sorry later, on reflection; but the fact is that *waiting* to see her gives rise to a disagreeable sensation.

This is the sort of thing that makes ordinary people say that lovers are mad.

What has happened is that the imagination has been violently wrenched from the contemplation of happiness, where every step was new delight, and grim reality now has to be faced.

If you are sensitive you know very well that, in the contest about to begin as soon as you see her, the least negligence, the least lack of attention or of courage will be punished by a snub which would poison your imagination for some time, and indeed would be humiliating outside the realm of passion, if you were tempted to withdraw there. You reproach yourself for lack of wit or boldness; but the only way to show courage would be to love her less.

In early conversations with your beloved, the mere scrap of attentiveness you divert from the crystallization reverie fails to prevent you making the sort of remark which either has no meaning or means the direct opposite of what you feel. Or even worse, you exaggerate

your own feelings and they sound ridiculous, even to you. You are vaguely aware that you are not paying enough attention to what you are saying, and at once impose a mechanical control on your utterance. But you cannot stop, because silence is an agony when you can think about her even less. You therefore bring forth sententiously a medley of words which do not express your feelings, and which you would be at a loss to remember afterwards. You obstinately deny yourself her real presence, in trying to be more closely with her in mind. When I was first in love, this paradox in myself made me wonder if it were love at all.

I understand cowardice and the way that conscripts master their fear by throwing themselves into the thick of the firing. I despair at the thought of how many idiotic remarks I have made in the last two years, just for the sake of saying something.

Here indeed is a clear distinction which women can draw between passionate love and mere gallantries, between the sensitive and the prosaic.¹

At these critical moments the one gains where the other loses; the prosaic soul acquires just that hint of warmth which it usually lacks, while the sensitive soul loses its wits from excess of feeling, and from trying to hide its folly, which is even worse. Wholly occupied in attempting restraint, it has none of the sangfroid required to gain an advantage and is therefore utterly routed where the prosaic person would have made good headway. As soon as the too poignant interests of his passion are at stake, the proud, sensitive person loses the gift of eloquence in the presence of his beloved; failure would hurt too much. The prosaic person calculates the chances of success regardless of the painful risk of defeat, takes a pride in his coarseness and laughs at sensitiveness, which for all its intelligence is always too ill at ease to say the simple things which are bound to succeed.

If you are sensitive, far from being able to snatch anything by force, you must be content to receive nothing but *charity* from your beloved. If she herself is capable of genuine feeling, you will certainly regret having tortured yourself by talking to her of love. You look shamefaced; you look frozen; you would even look untruthful were it not that your passion betrays itself in other ways. To express moment by moment what you feel so strongly is a self-imposed duty which comes from reading novels, for if you behaved naturally you

1. So Léonore used to say.

would never undertake such a painful task. Instead of describing how you felt a quarter of an hour earlier and trying to make this an interesting and coherent story, you have a naive idea of expressing your feelings as they occur. So you do yourself an injury for the sake of a smaller success. What you say lacks the ring of genuine feeling; your memory is in chains, and you say ridiculous and humiliating things under the impression that they are appropriate.

After an hour or so of this confusion you achieve the extremely painful withdrawal from the enchanted gardens of the imagination, so that you can enjoy the presence of your beloved in all simplicity; but by then it is generally time for you to leave.

All this may seem fantastic, but I can go one better. A friend of mine loved a woman beyond idolatry. On goodness knows what pretext of lack of delicacy or something – I never did find out the details – she condemned him to visit her only twice a month. These visits, so rare and so eagerly awaited, were pinnacles of utter madness, and it required all Salviati's force of character to conceal this madness from the outside world.

From the first, the idea that the visit must end mars the pleasure. You talk a lot without noticing what you say, and what you say is often the opposite of what you think. You embark on involved arguments which you have to cut short because they sound silly, as you would recognize if only you could wake up and listen to them. The strain is so great that you give no sign of warmth and love is concealed by its own abundance.

When you were far away from her your imagination was lulled by the thought of entrancing dialogues, and you were in a state of tender ecstasy. So for ten or twelve days you thought you were brave enough to talk to her, but a couple of days before the 'happy' one, fever set in, and grew worse and worse as the awful moment was upon you.

As you enter her drawing-room, you can but clutch at a vow of silence to prevent yourself saying or doing the most unbelievably idiotic things. You can also look at her, in order at least to have some recollection of her face. No sooner are you in her presence than your eyes are afflicted as by a kind of drunkenness. You are seized with a mad impulse to do odd things. It is as if you had two beings, one to act and the other to reproach you for acting. In some confused way you feel that to concentrate upon the idiocies will cool your blood

for a moment, and banish the thought of the end of the visit and the pain of leaving her for a fortnight.

If some old bore happens to be present, droning out a dull anecdote, the poor lover in his inexplicable madness is all ears, as if he were particularly anxious to fritter away these rare moments. The hour of delight he had promised himself passes like a searing flash, and yet he is bitterly conscious of all the little things which tell him how much he has become estranged from his beloved. He is one among a crowd of indifferent visitors, and finds that he is the only one who does not know the little day-to-day details of her life. At last he goes, and as he bids her a frigid farewell, he is racked by the thought of the fortnight which must elapse before he may see her again. He would certainly suffer less if he were never to see her. He is even worse off than the Duke of Policastro, who used to travel a hundred leagues to Lecce every six months for a quarter of an hour with his adored but jealously-guarded mistress.

It is easy to see from this that the will has no control over love. Outraged by your mistress and yourself, how gladly you would rush headlong into indifference. The visit is only worth while for one thing: it renews the treasured crystallization.

Salviati's life was divided into fifteen-day periods, and each period was coloured by the evening when he was allowed to visit Mme —; for instance, on 21st May he was madly happy while on 2nd June he dared not return home lest he blew out his brains.

I decided that night that novelists haven't dealt very adequately with the moment of suicide. 'I'm thirsty,' Salviati told me quite simply, 'I think I'd better drink this glass of water.' I did nothing to dissuade him, but said goodbye; then he broke down and began to weep.

Since the utterances of lovers cause them so much anxiety, it would be unwise to jump to conclusions from any single detail of their conversation. Only in chance remarks are their feelings reflected; then the heart itself cries out. Apart from this, one can only draw conclusions from an analysis of the whole pattern of the conversation between the lovers. It should be remembered that a person under the stress of strong emotions seldom has time to notice the emotions of whoever is causing them.

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CHAPTER 54: *Concerning the Education of Women*

THE present system of education for girls, which is the fruit of chance and the most idiotic pride, leaves idle their most brilliant faculties, those which hold the richest promise of happiness both for themselves and for us. But where is the man of prudence who has not cried at least once in his life:

*Une femme en sait toujours assez,
Quand la capacité de son esprit se hausse
A connaître un pourpoint d'avec un haut-de-chausse.*

Les Femmes Savantes, Act II, Scene VII.

In Paris the highest praise for an eligible girl is that 'she has a very gentle nature', and stupid suitors, like sheep, are always greatly impressed by this phrase. Look at them two years later, hat on head, lurching alone with their wives on a dull day, with three tall lackeys standing in the background.

In 1818 a law was enacted in the United States by which any man who taught a Virginian negro to read was liable to receive thirty-four lashes.¹ Nothing could be more logical and reasonable than this law.

Were the United States of America themselves more useful to the mother country as her slaves, or since they have become her equals? If the labour of a free man costs two or three times as much as that of the same man reduced to slavery, why should the same not be true of that man's thoughts?

If we dared we should educate our girls like slaves, and the proof is that the only useful things they know are those we do not wish to teach them.

'But these scraps of education they pick up by mischance, they turn against us,' may argue some husbands. Precisely; and Napoleon too was right to withhold arms from the National Guard, and the ultra-royalists are also right when they forbid Mutual Instruction. Give a man arms and then continue to oppress him, and you will find him perverse enough to turn these arms against you when he has the chance.

Even if we were legally permitted to bring up our girls as idiots,

1. I am sorry I cannot find the official source of this fact in the Italian manuscripts. I hope it can be denied.

with *Ave Marias* and lewd songs as in the convents in 1770, there would still be one or two minor objections:

1. In the case of a husband's death they are required to assume control of the family.

2. As mothers they provide their male children, the young tyrants of the future, with the initial education which forms their characters and gives them a bent to seek happiness in one way rather than another, a matter which is always decided by the age of four or five.

3. For all our arrogant pride, in all those little domestic matters on which our happiness depends, since when passions are lacking happiness is based on the absence of little everyday vexations, the advice of our life's indispensable companion exerts a very great influence, not because we want to let her influence us in the least, but because she repeats the same things for twenty years on end; and where is the man of such Roman mettle that he can resist the same idea reiterated throughout a lifetime? The world is full of easily-led husbands, not because they have any feelings of justice or equality, but because they are weak. Since men will grant things under duress there is always a temptation to be over-insistent, and it is sometimes necessary to be over-insistent in order to protect one's gains.

4. Lastly, as to love, during that period which in Southern climes often lasts twelve or fifteen years – the best years in life – our whole happiness lies in the hands of the woman we love. One moment of misplaced pride can make us unhappy for ever; and if a slave be put upon the throne he can hardly be expected not to abuse his power. This is the origin of false delicacy and feminine pride. My pleadings could hardly be more futile; men are *despots*, and look how much notice other despots take of the most reasonable advice. The man with limitless power heeds only one kind of advice, that which teaches him to extend that power. Where shall girls find themselves a Quiroga or a Riego to give advice to the despots who oppress them, and degrade them only to oppress them further – salutary advice which would earn honours and decorations instead of the gallows which was Porlier's fate?

Such a revolution would only take place over several centuries, because by extremely bad luck all the early experiments would be bound to suggest the opposite of the true facts. Enlighten a girl, shape her character, give her, in fact, a good education in the true sense of the words, and sooner or later she will perceive her superiority over other

women and become a prig, the most unpleasant and degraded creature in the world. Not one of us but would prefer a servant rather than a blue-stocking as a life companion.

Plant a young tree in the middle of a thick forest and, deprived of air and light by its neighbours, its leaves will be etiolated; it will grow spindly and ridiculous, developing *unnaturally*. The whole forest must be planted at the same time; it is hardly an occasion for pride that a woman should know how to read.

For two thousand years pedants have been telling us that women have quicker wits and men more staunchness; that women have subtler ideas and men more power of concentration. A Parisian who used to go gaping round the gardens of Versailles concluded from what he saw that all trees grow clipped.

I will grant that little girls are less strong physically than little boys; and clearly this must hold good for their intelligence too, since as everyone knows Voltaire and d'Alembert were in their time the chief exponents of the art of fisticuffs. It is generally admitted that a little girl of ten is twenty times as clever as a young hooligan of the same age. Why is it that by the age of twenty she has become a great dolt, gauche, shy, and frightened of spiders, while the little hooligan is then a man of intelligence?

Women only know what we do not wish to teach them, in fact what they learn from experience of life. It is therefore a great disadvantage for them to be born into very wealthy families; instead of mixing with people who behave *naturally* towards them they find themselves surrounded with chambermaids and lady companions who are already corrupted and spoilt by riches.¹ There is no fool like a prince.

Sensing their bondage, girls have their eyes open very early; they see everything but are too ignorant to perceive it correctly. A woman of thirty in France has not the acquired knowledge of a boy of fifteen, nor a woman of fifty the logic of a man of twenty-five. Look at Mme de Sévigné admiring Louis XIV's most ridiculous behaviour. Look at the childish arguments used by Mme d'Épinay.²

Women must feed and care for their children: I deny the first statement and grant the second. *They must also keep control of their cook's accounts:* therefore they have no time to be the equals of little boys of fifteen in

1. *Memoirs of Madame de Staal*, Collé, Duclos, the Margravine of Bayreuth.

2. First volume.

terms of acquired knowledge. Men have to be judges, bankers, barristers, merchants, doctors, priests, and so forth. Yet they can still find time to read Fox's speeches and the *Lusiade* of Camoëns.

In Peking, the magistrate who runs early to the Palace to find an excuse for imprisoning and ruining (with the most honourable intentions) a poor journalist who has offended the Under-Secretary with whom he had the honour to dine the night before, is certainly just as busy as his wife who checks her cook's accounts, teaches her little girl to knit a stocking, watches her at her dancing-class and piano lesson, entertains the parish priest who brings her the *Quotidienne*, then goes to choose a hat in the Rue de Richelieu and take a walk in the Tuileries.

In the midst of his noble pursuits the magistrate still finds time to think about that walk his wife is taking in the Tuileries, and if he were on as good terms with the power that rules the universe as he is with the one which rules the State, he would entreat heaven to grant women, for their own good, eight or ten more hours of sleep a day. In the present state of society, leisure, which for men is the source of all happiness and all wealth, is not only a disadvantage for a woman but is one of those ill-starred freedoms from which the worthy magistrate would gladly help to deliver us.

CHAPTER 55: *Objections to Education for Women*

BUT women are responsible for the small household tasks — My Colonel, M. S—, has four daughters brought up in the best traditions, which is to say that they work all day; when I arrive they are singing some music by Rossini which I brought them from Naples; besides this they read the Royaumont Bible, study the stupidities of history, learning chronological tables and the verses of Le Ragois; they know a good deal of geography and execute admirable embroidery. I calculate that each of these pretty little girls could earn by her labours some eight sous a day. For three hundred days that makes four hundred and eighty francs a year: less than the salary of one of their tutors. For four hundred and eighty francs a year they fritter away for ever the time allotted to the human machine for gathering ideas.

If women are to take pleasure in reading the ten or twelve good books annually published in Europe, they will soon cease to look after their children.

— This is as if we feared that by planting trees along the shores of the ocean we should arrest the movement of the waves. This is not the way in which education is all-powerful. Besides, for the last four hundred years the same argument has been used against education of all kinds. Not only has a Parisian woman more virtues in 1820 than in 1720, in the days of Law's system and of the Regent, but the daughter of the pettiest lawyer nowadays receives a better education than did the daughter of the wealthiest farmer-general in those times. And are household duties less well accomplished now? Certainly not. And why? — because poverty, sickness, shame, instinct, all compel their accomplishment. It is as though one were to assume that because an officer had acquired too much charm, he would forget how to ride; the fact is ignored that he would break an arm the first time he took such a liberty.

The good and bad effects of the acquisition of ideas are the same for both sexes. Vanity is always with us, even when there is no conceivable reason for being vain: look at the *bourgeois* of a small town. Let us at least insist that vanity should be based on true merit, a merit useful or agreeable to society.

The not-so-clever, drifting in the wake of the revolution which is changing the face of France, have come to admit over the last twenty years that women can be active, but that they should confine themselves to those occupations proper to their sex, such as tending flowers, making a herbarium, or breeding canaries; all these are classed as innocent pleasures.

1. These innocent pleasures are better than idleness. Let us leave them to foolish women, just as we leave to fools the glory of penning verses in honour of the feast-day of the master of the house. But could we in all good faith suggest to Mme Roland or Mistress Hutchinson¹ that they should spend their time looking after little Bengal rose-trees?

All that this argument boils down to is that one wishes to be able to say of one's slave: 'he is too stupid to be wicked.'

But because of a certain law called *sympathy*, a natural law which in truth vulgar eyes never perceive, the shortcomings of your life's companion do not detract from your happiness by virtue of the direct

1. See the *Memoirs* of these admirable women. I could quote other names, but they are unknown to the public, and besides one must not even mention merit in its own lifetime.

harm they could cause you. I would almost prefer that my wife should try to stab me in an angry moment once a year, than that she should behave ill-humouredly every evening.

Lastly, for people who live together, happiness is contagious.

Whether your mistress has spent her morning, while you were at the Champ de Mars or the Chamber of Deputies, in copying a rose from Redouté's beautiful work, or in reading a volume of Shakespeare, her pleasures will have been equally innocent; but on your return she will soon bore you with the ideas she has culled from her rose, and will moreover be eager to spend the evening in society in search of sensations somewhat more lively. If on the other hand she has read her Shakespeare, she will be as fatigued as you yourself and will have had as much pleasure. She will be happier to take a walk alone with you in the Bois de Vincennes, arm in arm, than to put in an appearance at the most fashionable *soirée*. The pleasures of high society are no pleasure at all for a happy woman.

Ignorant people are the natural enemies of education for women. At present they spend their time with women, make love to them, and are well-treated by them; but what would become of them if women were to tire of playing boston? When people like ourselves return from America or India, sunburnt and with a manner which remains a little outlandish for six months, how could the ignorant counter our stories if they could not say: 'Well, we have the ladies on our side. While you have been in New York, the colour of tilburies has changed; nigger-brown is the fashion now.' And we listen carefully, because information of this kind is useful: such and such a pretty woman won't look at us if our carriage is in poor taste.

These same fools, thinking they owe it to the pre-eminence of their sex to be better-informed than women, would be utterly ruined if women took it into their heads to learn anything. When he sees girls of twelve at a friend's country house, a thirty-year-old fool will say to himself: 'Ten years hence I shall be spending my time with them.' Imagine his protestations and horror if he were to see them studying something useful.

Instead of the company and conversation of effeminate fops, a well-educated woman, if she has acquired ideas without losing the graces of her sex, is sure to inspire among the most distinguished men of her century a consideration which verges on the fanatical.

Women would become men's rivals instead of their companions. - Yes, as

soon as you have abolished love by legislation. And in anticipation of this fine law, love will merely grow twice as delightful and exciting. The basis for the establishment of *crystallization* will grow wider; a man will be able to enjoy his ideas to the full with the woman he loves, and all nature will take on new charms before their eyes. And since ideas always reflect something of people's characters they will know each other better and be less liable to act rashly; love will grow less blind and result in less unhappiness.

The desire to attract raises modesty, delicacy, and all feminine graces for ever beyond the influence of any education whatsoever. It is as though one feared lest nightingales were to learn not to sing in springtime.

The graces of women bear no relation to their ignorance; look at the worthy helpmates of your village *bourgeois* or the wives of wealthy merchants in England. The affectation named *pedantry* - (for I call it pedantry, this affectation of irrelevant allusion to a dress by Leroy or a novel by Romagnesi, likewise the affectation of quoting Fra Paolo and the Council of Trent in a discussion upon our gentle missionaries) - this pedantry of dress and fashionable taste, the necessity of saying just the right thing about Rossini, all these destroy the graces of Parisian women; and yet despite the ravages of this contagious disease is not Paris the home of the most charming women in all France? Might it not possibly be that they are precisely the ones into whose heads chance has introduced the greatest number of apt and interesting ideas? Now these are the very ideas I expect books to give me. Not for one moment would I suggest that they should read Grotius or Puffendorf, now that we have Tracy's commentary on Montesquieu.

Women's finesse is a product of the perilous position in which they so soon find themselves, and of their having to spend their lives among cruel though charming enemies.

There are in France perhaps fifty thousand women who are wealthy enough to be exempt from all work. But where there is no work there is no happiness. (The passions themselves drive one to work, and very arduous work at that, which needs all the energy of one's mind.)

A woman with four children and an annual income of ten thousand francs *works* when she knits stockings or makes a dress for her daughter. But it is quite untrue that a woman who has her own coach is working when she is at her embroidery or tapestry-making for

chair-covers. Apart from a few glimmers of self-satisfaction the action can hold no interest for her; she is not working.

Her happiness is therefore gravely jeopardized.

And what is more, so is the happiness of the despot, because a woman whose heart has for two months been stimulated by no interest beyond that of tapestry-making will perhaps make so bold as to feel that mannered love, vanity-love, or in the last resort even physical love, offer very great happiness as compared with her customary condition.

A woman must not get herself talked about. — To which I again reply: 'Show me the woman whose ability to read is a matter for gossip.'

And what is to stop women, while they are waiting for their luck to turn, from concealing the study with which they normally occupy themselves, and which provides them with a daily ration of honest happiness? I will let them into a secret, *en passant*: once you have set yourself a goal, for instance to reach a clear understanding of the Fieschi conspiracy in Genoa in 1547, the most insipid book becomes interesting, rather as, when in love, one meets a person of no consequence who has just seen one's beloved; the interest is redoubled month by month until study of the Fieschi conspiracy is done with.

The real setting for a woman's virtues is the sickroom. — But are you earnest in your entreaties that Divine goodness should multiply the occasions of illness in order to keep our womenfolk busy? This is argument from the exception.

Besides, I maintain that a woman should spend three or four hours of each day at leisure in the same way as sensible men spend their own leisure hours.

A young mother whose son has the measles could no more find pleasure, even if she would, in reading Volney's travels in Syria, than could her husband the wealthy banker, in meditating upon Malthus during a run on the banks.

In this way alone can rich women set themselves apart from the common run: by moral superiority. Naturally one has other feelings then.¹

So you want to turn every woman into an author? — Yes, exactly as you announce your intention of having your daughter sing at the Opéra

1. See Mistress Hutchinson refusing to serve the interests of her family and her husband whom she adored, by betraying certain regicides to the ministers of the forsworn Charles II (vol. II, p. 284).

when you engage a singing tutor. I say that a woman should never write except, like Mme de Staal (de Launay), works to be published after her death. For a woman of less than fifty to go into print is to pit her happiness against terrible odds; if she is fortunate enough to have a lover she will begin by losing him.

I can see only one exception, and that is the woman who writes books for the sake of feeding or educating her family. In this case she must always fall back on economic necessity in speaking about her work. To a cavalry major, for instance, she should say: 'Your profession brings you in four thousand francs a year, and with my two translations from English last year, I was able to devote another three thousand five hundred to the education of my two sons.' In other cases, a woman should publish as did Baron d'Holbach or Mme de la Fayette, whose best friends knew nothing of it. The publication of a book is fraught with difficulties for anyone but a harlot; the vulgar, being able to despise her as they please for her profession, will praise her to the skies for her talent and will even go into raptures about it.

In France, among those whose income is six thousand francs a year, there are many men whose happiness customarily derives from literature even though they have no thought of going into print; to read a good book is one of their greatest pleasures. After ten years they find they are twice as intelligent, and no one will deny that, in general, the greater one's intelligence the less one is subject to passions incompatible with the happiness of others.¹ No more do I believe it would be denied that the sons of a woman who reads Gibbon and Schiller must have greater genius than those of a woman who tells her rosary and reads Mme de Genlis.

A young barrister, a merchant, a doctor, or an engineer can launch themselves in life without any education, for they are teaching themselves every day in the practice of their professions. But what opportunity have their wives to acquire necessary and admirable qualities? The great book of life and of necessity is closed to them, isolated as they are within their households. The three louis which their husbands give them every Monday are always spent in the same way, after a discussion with the cook.

In the interests of the despot I must aver that the least of men, if

1. This is what gives me great hopes of the rising generation among the privileged. I also hope that the husbands who read this chapter will be less despotic for three days.

he be twenty years old and rosy of cheek, is dangerous for a woman who knows nothing, because she is entirely a creature of instinct; while in the eyes of a woman of intelligence he will rightly create no more impression than a handsome footman.

The amusing thing about present-day education is that it teaches girls only those things that they have to forget the moment they are married. It takes four hours a day for six years to learn to play the harp properly; and half that time to learn to execute good miniatures or water-colours. Most girls do not even achieve a competent mediocrity; hence the all too true proverb: 'who says amateur says dunce.'¹

And even supposing a girl has some talent, three years after her marriage she will not take up her harp or her brushes once in a month. These symbols of so much hard work will have become wearisome unless fate has chanced to endow her with the soul of an artist, which is exceedingly rare and not at all suited to household duties.

Thus it is that on the flimsy pretext of propriety girls are taught nothing which will serve to guide them through the situations they will encounter in life. Furthermore these situations are concealed and denied so that to their own force is added: (i) the element of surprise and (ii) an element of mistrust which regards all education as having misrepresented the truth.² I maintain that well-brought-up girls should be informed about love. Who would dare claim in good faith that girls of sixteen in the present day know nothing of the existence of love? And from whom do they gather ideas so important and so difficult to convey effectively? Remember Julie d'Étanges complaining of the knowledge she owed to the woman Chaillot, a chambermaid in the household. We must be grateful to Rousseau for having dared to portray this so faithfully in a century characterized by false propriety.

Since present-day education for women is perhaps the most ludicrous nonsense in modern Europe, women are the less educated in the true sense of the word, and the more highly-prized.³ Perhaps it is because of this that in Italy and Spain they are so superior to men, and I should even say superior to the women of other countries.

1. The opposite of this proverb is true in Italy, where foreign amateurs in the theatre have the finest voices.

2. Education given to Mme d'Épinay (*Mémoires*, vol. 1).

3. I except education in manners; they enter drawing-rooms better in the Rue Verte than they do in the Rue Saint-Martin.

CHAPTER 56 (i): Continuation

IN France all our ideas about women come from the penny catechism, and the amusing thing is that while many people would question the authority of that book in settling some fifty-franc transaction, they follow it literally and slavishly in dealing with what may matter most to their happiness in our nineteenth-century framework of futile habit.

There must be no divorce, because marriage is a *mystery*, and what mystery? – the symbol of Christ's union with his handmaiden the Church. And what sort of a mystery would it be if the Church had happened to be personified in a more masculine way?¹ But enough of these outworn prejudices;² let us merely remark the peculiar spectacle of a tree whose roots have been chopped away by the axe of ridicule, yet whose branches continue to blossom. And now to return to the observation of facts and their consequences.

For both sexes one's fate in extreme old age depends upon the way one's youth has been spent; and women experience this earlier. What sort of reception is accorded by society to a woman of forty-five? A rather uncompromising one, and generally less than she deserves; women are flattered at twenty and abandoned at forty.

A woman of forty-five is only of consequence by reason of her children or of her lover.

1.

*Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram
Aedificabo Ecclesiam meam.*

See M. de Potter's *History of the Church*.

2. Religion is a matter between each man and the Divinity. What right have you to come between my God and myself? I do not employ an attorney in the pay of the social contract except for affairs I cannot undertake myself.

Why should a Frenchman not pay his priest as he does his baker? If we have good bread in Paris it is because the State has not yet seen fit to declare that the provision of loaves shall be free, and to make all bakers a charge upon the Treasury.

In the United States each man pays his priest, so that these gentlemen are obliged to be worthy, and my neighbour does not see fit to stake his happiness upon saddling me with his priest (*Birkbeck's Letters*).

If I am convinced, as our fathers were, that my priest is the close ally of my wife, what then? In that case, short of a Luther, Catholicism in France would cease to exist before 1850. Only M. Grégoire could have saved that particular religion in 1820, and see how he is treated.

A mother with a talent for the fine arts can only very rarely hand that talent down to her son, in the exceptional case where he is naturally gifted. A mother who is intelligent and cultivated will instruct her young son not only in the purely pleasant talents but also in all the others useful to a man in society, and he will be able to choose for himself. The barbarity of the Turks derives largely from the moral benightedness of the lovely women of Georgia. Young men born in Paris owe to their mothers their incontestable superiority at sixteen over their country cousins of the same age. Between sixteen and twenty-five the tables are turned.

Every day the men who invented the lightning conductor and printing and the art of weaving cloth contribute to our happiness, and the same is true of people like Montesquieu, Racine, and La Fontaine. Now the number of geniuses which a nation produces is proportional to the number of men who are educated to an adequate level of culture,¹ and there is nothing to prove that my bootmaker has not the soul of a Corneille; all he lacks is the education needed to develop his feelings and to teach him how to communicate them to the public.

With the present system of education for girls any genius who happens to be born a *woman* can make no contribution to public happiness; but no sooner does chance provide a means of showing her capabilities than you will see her mastering the most difficult achievements. Take, in our time, Catherine II, who had no education beyond danger and whoring; take Mme Roland, or Alessandra Mari raising a regiment in Arezzo and leading it against the French; take Caroline, Queen of Naples, with a better cure for the epidemic of liberalism than your Castlereaghs and your P. . . s. As for what prevents women from pre-eminence in the works of the mind, you are referred to the chapter on modesty, article 9. What heights might not Miss Edgeworth have reached had the respectability necessary to a young English miss not obliged her from the very beginning to carry the pulpit into her novels?²

1. Compare the generals of 1795.

2. In the field of the arts, this is the great defect of a reasonable government and also the only reasonable point in favour of monarchy in the style of Louis XIV. See the literary sterility of America. Not a single ballad like those of Robert Burns or of the Spaniards in the thirteenth century. See the admirable ballads of the modern Greeks, those of the Spaniards and Danes of the thirteenth century, and still better, Arabic poetry of the seventh century.

How many men, married or in love, are fortunate enough to be able to communicate their thoughts as they occur, to the woman with whom they spend their lives? Such a man finds a kind heart to share his troubles, but he must always translate his thoughts into small change if he wants to be understood, and it would be futile to expect sound advice from a mind which requires such a diet to be able to digest ideas at all. The paragon of womankind by present educational standards leaves her partner isolated amid life's dangers and soon risks boring him.

What an excellent counsellor would a man find in his wife if she knew how to think! — a counsellor whose interests are, after all, exactly the same as his own, with but one exception, and that only in the morning of their lives.

One of the finest prerogatives of intelligence is that it commands respect for old age. Consider how Voltaire's arrival in Paris outshone *roya!* majesty. But poor unfortunate women, once the brilliance of their youth begins to wane, have but one sad blessing: the ability to delude themselves about the part they play in society.

The remnants of their youthful talents are now no more than ludicrous, and it would be a blessing for our women nowadays if they could die at fifty. As for real morality, the greater one's intelligence the more clearly one sees that justice is the only road to happiness. Genius is a power, but even more is it a torch which lights the way to the great art of being happy.

There comes a moment in the lives of most men when they are capable of great things, a moment when nothing seems impossible to them. Women's ignorance deprives the whole human race of this wonderful opportunity. At best, nowadays, love teaches one to ride well or to know a good tailor.

I have no time to ward off criticism; if it were in my power to establish systems I should, as far as possible, give girls exactly the same education as boys. As I have no intention of filling this book with irrelevancies I shall not be expected to itemize the absurdity of present-day education for men (they are taught neither of the two most important sciences, logic and ethics). Even taking this education as it is, I say it would be better to give it to girls, rather than merely to teach them music, water-colour, and embroidery.

Therefore, teach girls reading, writing, and arithmetic, using Mutual Instruction in central boarding-schools where the intrusion

of any man except the schoolmaster would be severely punished. The great advantage of bringing the children together is that, whatever the limitations of the teachers, the children would learn willy-nilly from their little companions the art of living in society and of looking after their interests. A sensible teacher would be there to explain their little quarrels and friendships to the children, and so lead that way to the study of ethics instead of beginning with the *Golden Calf*.¹

Doubtless within a few years Mutual Instruction will be applied to all subjects of study, but taking things as they are now I should like to see girls learning Latin as do little boys. Latin is valuable because it teaches one to cope with tedium; and with Latin should go History, Mathematics, the study of plants useful as food or medicine, then Logic and the moral sciences, etc. Dancing, music and drawing should be begun at five.

At sixteen, a girl should begin to think of finding a husband, and be given sound ideas by her mother upon love, marriage, and the scant probity of men.²

CHAPTER 56 (ii): *Concerning Marriage*

WHERE there is no love, women's faithfulness to the marriage bond is probably against nature.³

1. Young man, your esteemed father is fond of you, which is why he gives me forty francs a month to teach you mathematics and drawing, in a word, to earn your living. If you were cold for lack of a little coat your father would suffer. He would suffer because he feels sympathy, etc., etc. But when you are eighteen you yourself will have to earn the money required to buy that coat. Your father is said to have an income of twenty-five thousand francs a year, but since you are one of four children you will have to get used to doing without the carriage you are privileged to enjoy at your father's home, etc., etc.

2. Yesterday evening I heard two delightful little girls of four singing some very lively love-songs as I pushed them in their swing. The chambermaids teach them these songs and their mother tells them that *love* and *lover* are meaningless words.

3. Anzi certamente. Coll'amore uno non trova gusto a bere acqua altra che quella di questo fonte prediletto. Resta naturale allora la fedeltà.

Coll'matrimonio senza amore, in men di due anni l'acqua di questo fonte diventa amara. Esiste sempre però in natura il bisogno d'acqua. I costumi fanno superare la natura ma solamente quando si può vincerla in un istante: la moglie indiana che si abbrucia (21 ottobre 1821) dopo la morte del vecchio

This unnatural condition has been sought after by using the fear of hellfire and religious sentiments; the examples of Spain and Italy will indicate how far this has been successful.

In France public opinion was used to the same end, and it was the only bulwark that might have held; but it has been ill-constructed. It is ridiculous to tell a girl she must be faithful to the husband of her choice, and then to marry her against her will to a tedious old dotard.¹

But girls are very glad to marry. – This is because, with the restraints of the present educational system, they are intolerably bored by having to submit to the slavery of their mothers' households; besides, they lack enlightenment and, after all, it is the will of Nature. There is but one way to ensure greater faithfulness among women to the bond of marriage, and that is to allow freedom to girls, and divorce for married couples.

In a first marriage a woman invariably throws away the brightest days of youth, and by her divorce invites the malicious gossip of fools.

Young women with many lovers have no use for divorce. Older women who have had many lovers think they can mend their reputations, and indeed in France they always succeed, by an attitude of extreme severity towards misdemeanours which are now past for them. It is left to some virtuous young woman, head over heels in love, to seek a divorce and bring down upon herself the contumely of women who have had fifty lovers.

marito che odiava, la ragazza europea che trucidava barbaramente il tenero bambino al quale testè diede vita. Senza l'altissimo muro del monistero, le monache anderebbero via.

1. With us everything to do with the education of women is comical, even the minutest details. For instance in 1820, in the reign of those same nobles who proscribed divorce, the Ministry despatched to the town of Laon a bust and a statue of Gabrielle d'Estrées. The statue was destined for the main square, apparently with the intention of popularizing love for the Bourbons among young girls and of exhorting them, if the occasion arose, not to be cruel to charming kings but rather to provide this illustrious family with offspring.

On the other hand this same Ministry refused to supply the town of Laon with a bust of Marshal Serrurier, a fine fellow who was not a ladies' man – a man moreover who had begun his career in a plebeian way as a mere private soldier. (Speech by General Foy, in the *Courier* of 17th June 1820. Dulaure, in his curious *History of Paris*, section entitled *Loves of Henri IV.*)