

EQUALITY

By

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WORKING TRANSLATION BY SHAWN P. WILBUR

FROM THE NEW EDITION OF 1848

FOREWARD

TO THIS NEW EDITION.

This book, written and published ten years ago, bears the traces of the moment when it appeared. However, we did not think it necessary to follow the advice given to us to change some expressions that were inconsistent with current circumstances. The reader will easily refer to the date when we wrote, for example, when speaking of the revolutionary formula *Liberty-Equality-Fraternity*: “Erased today from our monuments and our flags, this motto only has to be pronounced to carry with it assent. Yes, we can erase it and we can make fun of it, it will never be truly erased, nor damaged by insults, for it is true, it is holy; it is the ideal to follow, it is the revealed future, it already reigns in principle, it will reign one day in fact, it is indelible and immortal.” After having been proscribed for fifty years, this motto has just reappeared, and here it is written again on our buildings and on our flags. Are we allowed to believe that the doctrine contained in this book and in other writings that belong to the same inspiration and the same philosophy contributed, for its part, to the reappearance of the immortal motto? Yes, certainly, we bear this testimony to ourselves, but with sadness, since we and the other servants of the truth have not done enough, during the time that we have been given to think and write, to prepare a more salutary and more glorious outcome for the new Revolution. Why is it not, in fact, engraved in our hearts and in all our actions, this motto, instead of being only in our words or floating in the air on the banners of our soldiers? Alas! We are reprinting this book at a time when the reappearance of the prophetic motto has only made the contrast between fact and right more striking and cruel!

But what does the laborious birth of truth matter if we have faith? Have we not seen Horace's aphorism: *Multa renascentur quæ jam cecidere...* come true miraculously? Did not the Republic, which was believed to be forever doomed to nonexistence, and which is still in truth only a word, come to suddenly replace the monarchy, which was apparently only a shadow and a ghost? If it has been given to us to acclaim the signs of Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality (I say the signs and not the things), is this not at least a guarantee that the deep meaning of these words, powerful even though they are only words, will one day be understood and realized?

Let us therefore rejoice in our souls, and let us be confirmed in all the strength of our thoughts, in the midst of our present sorrows. If our life has a real, though still invisible, purpose, let us accept the extent of the providential plan by which each of us must be redeemed. In vain the terrible discord in the midst of which the resurrecting signs seemed to be swallowed up forever seems to have returned with them to the earth: let us be sure that this discord will be temporary, and that Humanity will reach the heaven to which it is called. Humanity cannot fail in its destiny; for God cannot break his promises. The initiation is accomplished by degrees and painfully, but it is accomplished. Let us therefore hope in God and in the progress that he has given to our nature.

As for the writing of which we are publishing a new edition, we have nothing to say about it. These pages have come to their place in the series of successive studies that have served to found the Doctrine which is our faith and which we teach; the ideas they contain were the prelude to

those that we have recorded in the book of *Humanity*. Although this *Historical Essay on Equality* (for this would be the true title of this work, if it were complete) is only a draft, this draft can be useful, and that is why we are reprinting it. As for the good or bad reasons that prevented us from treating our subject with greater breadth and care, one will find them either in the work itself, or in the Preface to the book of *Humanity*.

July 1848.

PREFACE.

I demonstrate in this work that the current society, in whatever respect we consider it, has no other basis than the *dogma of Equality*, which does not prevent inequality from reigning.

Has God inspired us with an idea whose practice would be chimerical, impossible? In this case, God would not be the eternal Creator, the Life-giver, the Almighty, the All-Loving whose image is in our heart.

No, it is not so. This dogma of Equality is achievable, and it will come true. But it is only achievable on the condition of the progress that must be accomplished in our hearts and in our intelligence. This dogma of Equality is a heritage that was transmitted to us imperfectly by our fathers, and which we must in turn transmit more brilliantly and better revealed than we received it. This dogma is the moral life that comes to us from the past, and which we must leave, increased, to the future. Because everything is linked in the successive manifestations of being. The present, generated from the past, is pregnant with the future, says Leibniz admirably.

The eighteenth century, satisfied with a beginning of light in this dark night of the past, wrote, through the pen of Voltaire, at the bottom of Montesquieu's book: *Humanity had lost its titles; Montesquieu found them, and returned them to it*. It was Rousseau who deserved this praise. As for Montesquieu, I do not see what titles of Humanity he found and returned, he who admitted the monarchy, the aristocracy, the nobility, the clergy, the bourgeoisie, the plebs, he who admitted wealth and poverty, he who admitted, in a word, all kinds of inequality.¹

True sophists have called Rousseau a sophist, and have laughed at his immortal work. Hypocrisy and lies, in the pay of tyranny, became a weapon against him because he had provided no other proof in favor of Equality than the proof of sentiment. They have not reflected that metaphysics and history were lacking for Rousseau when he dared to take up the cause of Humanity.² Thus deprived of the necessary assistance, Rousseau could only make one complaint heard. But this complaint in favor of Humanity is true, well-founded, immortal, as immortal as the complaint that Jesus had previously made in favor of this same Humanity.

“Like,” he exclaims, “like the statue of Glaucus, which time, the sea and storms had so disfigured that it resembled less a God than a ferocious beast, the soul human, altered within society by a thousand constantly recurring causes, by the acquisition of a multitude of understandings and errors, by the changes occurring in the constitution of bodies, and by the continual clash of passions, has, so to speak, changed in appearance to the point of being almost

¹ We do not think that we will be accused of injustice towards Montesquieu, because we refuse him praise that belongs to Rousseau.

² In Rousseau's time, history was not a science, but a story of facts, and a truncated and fragmentary story. The philosophy of history was, as Bacon said, a *desideratum*, since it was in part the efforts of Rousseau that provoked it. In the absence of history, was there at least a psychology on which he could rely to reason properly about the nature of man? No. This true psychology could be in germ in Leibniz, but Leibniz was far from being understood; what was popular was sensualism, it was Condillac.

unrecognizable; instead of a being, acting constantly from fixed and invariable principles, instead of that celestial and majestic simplicity, impressed on it by its divine Author, we find in it nothing more than the misshapen contrast of passion believing itself to be reason, and of understanding grown delirious.”³

Rousseau's entire work is there, in this thought of the superiority of the human soul over the human condition. The human soul is a God, is made in the image of God, and it happens to resemble a wild beast. Sophists, who treat Rousseau as a sophist, this thought of Rousseau has occupied men for a century;⁴ it has raised Humanity:

Os homini sublime dedit, cælumque turi
Jussit.

By placing the ideal in the primitive forest, Rousseau may have been mistaken; but he showed the ideal, and excited men to seek it in the future.

Job, afflicted with evils and covered with reproach by the permission of God, groaned on his bed of ashes. The wise men of the region represent to him how vain his complaint is, and end up declaring it impious and sacrilegious. These learned men, these pious people, satisfied with the present, would be careful not to incriminate the work of God in any way. They repeat again and again to Job all the old adages and all the commonplaces with which we are accustomed to legitimize the fact and the present. Job is in darkness; he only has the feeling of justice that God has placed in his heart. But, strong in this feeling, he would dare to contest against God himself. He treats the remonstrances of his friends as hypocritical speeches, and never ceases to exclaim: “I would like to know where God is. I would bring my complaint to him, and he would justify me.” God appears, and vindicates Job against the wise men who defended the cause of God so well.

Such is Rousseau pleading, in the name of sentiment, the cause of Humanity. He is in darkness, like Job, but he speaks like him in the name of the justice of God engraved in his heart.

If since Rousseau science has made progress, if the French Revolution proclaimed human Equality, if the tradition of Humanity is better understood today, if Christianity and all previous Religion explained only asks us to lend it arms, it is thanks to him! Oh! if I had his strength! I would add to this force the relief that history and philosophy offer in my time. But what does my weakness matter? It is not appropriate for anyone to decline the duty that they feel in their heart, and I do not want to fail in the sacred cause for which Rousseau suffered, and whose defense he transmitted to me, as to all my generation.

I will therefore take up, in this writing, with the rigorous method that our time requires, the problem posed by him. I will look for the causes of the inequality of human conditions, and I will prove Equality by this tradition of Humanity that it has lacked and by the very dogmas of Religion.

³ *On the Inequality of Conditions*, preface.

⁴ The *Discourse on Inequality* is from 1754.

I will have history before my eyes. I will have the support of a true definition of human nature. I will finally have in my heart the holy doctrine which, regarding evil as a necessary and reparable imperfection, justifies Providence and excuses Humanity, by making the stains and sins disappear in the progression of creatures and the final goal of the work.

Solon wanted each citizen to speak openly for one party in civil disputes. If Solon's law is to be followed in the present discord of mankind, I write for slaves against masters, for the weak against the strong, for the poor against the rich, for all who suffer on earth against everything which, taking advantage of current inequality, abuses the gifts of the Creator.

It is very true that Humanity groans in all its children. But this universal pain, although undivided in its essence because of human solidarity, results in oppressors and oppressed people. I want to show where this awful spectacle of one part of the human race being crucified by the other comes from, and how the murder of Abel by his brother Cain continues indefinitely in Adam's race.

No doubt the vices of the oppressed play a part in the causes of evil. All the evil is not in the oppressors. If inequality is visible everywhere, the fault lies not only with the powerful and the rich. But Jesus himself gave us the example of putting ourselves on the side of the small and inferior, and of claiming for them against their despoiling and tyrant brothers. Religion is the support of all that suffers against all that dominates on earth. I will therefore say like Rousseau, without blasphemy: O my brothers who groan in ignorance, in misery and in slavery, immense majority of the human race, it is for you that I write! I will seek to bring to light your little-known and trampled titles.

EQUALITY.

PART ONE.

THE PRESENT.

We are between two worlds: a world of inequality that is ending and a world of equality that is beginning.

CHAPTER ONE.

The French Revolution summed up politics in these three sacramental words: LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY. It is not only on our monuments, on our coins, on our flags that this motto of our fathers was written; it was engraved in their hearts, it was for them the very expression of Divinity.

Why these three words? Why not just one or two? Why not four or more? There is a deep reason for this.

Indeed, man being, as we have demonstrated elsewhere, triple and one in all the acts of his life, that is to say simultaneously *sensation-sentiment-knowledge*, a term is needed in politics that responds to each of these three aspects of our nature.

To the term *sensation* of the metaphysical formula of man responds the term liberty *of* the political formula; to the term *sentiment* responds the word *fraternity*; the term *knowledge* corresponds to *equality*.

Man is sensation at all moments of his life; this means that he is a being in the state of manifestation, and that he only exists as long as he manifests himself. Now he only manifests himself because at the same time a world external to him manifests itself to him; he is therefore a sensation: his subjective life entails objectivity for him, and consequently any mode of his life implies a certain relativity with other men and with the entire universe. His entire life is therefore a series of acts; and even when he only thinks, he acts. Now, what term will express the right he has to manifest himself, and consequently to exist? A term that will not aim to express the two other necessary faces of our being at each moment of our duration, but only this face of our life which consists in the manifestation of this life in the midst of our fellow men and the world ; in a word, a term which will express the right to act, without directly implying anything else. This abstract term is the word *liberty*. Liberty is the power to act. The aim of politics is therefore, first and foremost, to achieve liberty among men. Making men free means making them exist, or in other words, making them manifest. Lacking liberty, there is only nothingness and death; non-liberty is the prohibition of being.

But the social man, the political man, the citizen in a word, is not only a being who manifests himself, a being in a relationship of practical relativity with other men; he is a man, and therefore he is endowed with feeling. Not only is he active, but he is sensitive, and even when he acts, he is moved emotionally. There is therefore in all his acts of civic liberty a civic sentiment attached to these acts. What is the word that will express the feeling that must produce or regulate the actions of the citizen? I ask, what other word than *fraternity* would be appropriate here? Fraternity means: It is the nature of man to carry a sentiment in all his actions; man cannot be in the presence of his fellow man, nor contract with him, without having a sentiment towards him. Now the ideal of the citizen is to love all other men, and to act in accordance with this charity, this love. This word is therefore as necessary for the definition of politics as the very word liberty; for if, lacking liberty, man does not exist, in the sense that his right to be is not recognized, it is also certain that, lacking fraternity or fraternity not being proclaimed, human nature does not exist, in the sense that it is neither defined nor recognized.

But that is not all yet: why must political society be regulated on Liberty and Fraternity; why must a true society, a truly human society, be a fraternity where everyone is free? The citizen must know the cause; he must have a dogma in this regard, because the citizen, being a man, is a being gifted not only with activity and sentiment, but with intelligence. The reason for things must not escape him: *rerum cognoscere causas*. A man of action, one says to him liberty, and he recognizes in himself the truth of this term; a man of sentiment, one says to him fraternity, and his heart applauds: but there is still in him a faculty which is not satisfied; it is intelligence, it is the need to know. We need a third term that responds to this need for science, a term that explains why we all have the right to be free, the duty to love and help each other like brothers: this third term is the word *equality*.

There is a whole science in this word, a science that is still obscure and shrouded in darkness today; the origin and goal of society are hidden in this word, as in the enigma of the Sphinx: but that does not prevent this word from being, in the political formula, the reason for the two other terms. You ask me why I want to be free: it would not be enough to answer you that I have the need, to allege to you my instinct, my nature, the desire I have to manifest myself, to live, in a word; you could reply to me by the same instinct that is in you, by the same unlimited right that you have on your side; and hence antagonism, collision, war, anarchy, despotism. This is the sad spectacle that the earth has perpetually offered to the vault of heaven. As long as intelligence does not intervene and deliver an oracle, right is only an obscure germ, and only exists in a latent and virtual manner; it is intelligence that formulates and proclaims it. So, if you ask me why I want to be free, I answer: Because I have the right; and I have the right to do so, because man is equal to man. And likewise, if I recognize that charity and fraternity are a duty of man in society, my mind only remains in agreement by virtue of the equality of our nature.

In vain you object to me the current fact of inequality, which reigns everywhere on earth. It is very true that inequality reigns everywhere on earth; we find it at whatever period of historical times we go back to, and the day when it will disappear is perhaps still very far away. It doesn't matter: the human mind rose above this mire of misery and crime that inequality entails, and it

dreamed of a society founded on Equality. Then, relating his ideal to God, as to the eternal source of beauty and truth, man said: Since, despite my weakness, I conceive a world where Equality reigns, this world must have been the desired world of God; therefore it was preconceived in God, and originally came from his hands. And, whether in fact we come from an Eden, a Paradise, a better world, or whether this world has only ever been realized spiritually within God and in our soul, and whether the only organized world where Equality has reigned until now had been the embryonic world of nature, the state of primitive savagery where the human race still touched on animality, the fact remains that we are justified in saying that Equality is germinal in the nature of things, that it preceded inequality, and that it will dethrone and replace it. This is how, from this double contemplation of the origin and end of society, the human mind dominates current society, and imposes Equality as its rule and ideal.

If then, once again, I believe in Liberty, it is because I believe in Equality; if I imagine a political society where men would be free and live among themselves fraternally, it is because I imagine a society where the dogma of human equality would reign. Indeed, if men are not equal, how can you proclaim them all free; and, if they are neither equal nor free, how can you expect them to love each other with brotherly love?

Thus, this third term *equality* represents the science in the formula. This word is, I repeat, an entire doctrine; a prophetic doctrine, if you like, in the sense that it looks rather to the future than to the present; a doctrine still in its infancy, which appears to many minds as vague, uncertain, or even false, but which is no less the doctrine already reigning in our time.

What does it matter that, as I will show shortly, the doctrine of Equality is recent and, so to speak, born yesterday, that the ancients only knew in their revolutions the cry of Liberty, that Christianity in turn only advocated Fraternity? What does that matter? I said: the question is whether Liberty alone was not a gap, if Fraternity alone was not one. We are intelligence, love, and activity; we are not only activity, or love, we are also simultaneously intelligence. The question, therefore, is to know if, for human nature to be truly satisfied in us, it is not necessary, at the same time that the need to exist makes us claim Liberty, at the same time that our heart admits Fraternity, it is not necessary, I say, for our intelligence to proclaim Equality. But this is as obvious as daylight. This last term of the formula responds to the need to know that we carry within us, just as the two other terms respond to the need to act and the need to love, which are the two other sides of our life.

The formula is therefore complete. The citizen has a dogma, it is Equality; a motive to manifest and act is Liberty; a moral rule for acting well is human Fraternity. None of the three faces of our nature is left without expression. The political axiom responds admirably to the metaphysical axiom. It is composed, like it, of three terms, none of which is useless, and which all agree without repeating themselves.

It is very true that these three words, *liberty*, *equality*, *fraternity*, fundamentally imply one another, and that we can logically deduce the other two from one. But it is no less certain that they are of various orders, in the sense that they correspond to the three different faculties or aspects of our nature. Indeed, no matter how much you repeat to men that they are free and all free, this

word liberty will only amount to a selfish right to act for them. They will conclude their own virtuality, their own activity; but no brotherly feeling for other men will result directly from it. It is in the name of Liberty that in all times and in all countries slaves have broken their chains and defeated their tyrants; but this word, good for war, has never generated either clemency or peace. No morality can result from a word that expresses the right to be, to manifest oneself, to act, but which does not express and recall sentiment and knowledge, these two other facets of life. And likewise, preach Fraternity to men; you touch them sentimentally, but you do not enlighten them. Christians became monks, and admit all despotisms. Finally, the man who would have reflected the most on the origin and purpose of society, and who would have the most sublime idea of Equality, would still need to express the dignity of his own nature with the word Liberty, and the bond that unites him to other men through that of Fraternity. Isolated, therefore, these three words each express only one side of life; and, although the other two faces are found in this one, because of the mystery of the unity that constitutes our being, although, consequently, each of these words implies, as we have just seen, the other two, nevertheless each, by its very meaning, is only a shred of the truth. But, united, they form an admirable expression of truth and life.

Holy motto of our fathers, you are not one of those vain assemblages of letters that we trace on the sand and that the wind disperses; you are founded on the deepest notion of being. Mysterious triangle that presided over our emancipation, which served to seal our laws, and which shone in the sun of the battles on the three-colored flag, you were inspired by truth itself, like the mysterious triangle that expresses the name of Jehovah, and of which you are a reflection.

Who found this sublime formula? Who said it first? We don't know: no one did it, and it was almost everyone who did it. However, it was literally not in any philosopher when the French people took it as their banner. The one who first brought these three words together, and saw in them the gospel of politics, had a sort of illumination that the entire people shared after him: enthusiasm, in revolutions, lays bare and reveals the depths of life, as great storms sometimes expose the bottom of the seas. Perhaps it was a man from the lowest ranks of the people who, in the exaltation of patriotism, was the first to bring together these three words, which had never been used before. In this case, he was proud and ready to die for his homeland, like a citizen of Sparta or Rome, this proletarian, and this was why he cried out: *Liberty*. But, between Rome and us, Christianity had passed, and the French revolutionary remembered the one whom Camille Desmoulins called the sans-culotte Jesus; his heart therefore made him proclaim a second commandment, *Fraternity*. Now he was no longer a Christian, although he admitted the morality of Christ, and yet his intelligence needed a belief, a dogma. Nor had the eighteenth century passed in vain; this man had read Rousseau; he uttered the word *Equality*. Triple response to the triple need within us to know, to love, and to practice our knowledge and our love; and at the same time a complete summary of what this triple need, always alive in man, had generated during so many centuries and revolutions, namely, the energetic activity of the ancient republics, the sentimental elevation of the Middle Ages, and the reflection of more modern centuries. Is it strange that such a formula has made its fortune? It is one of the expressions of eternal truth. And this is why, although erased today from our monuments and our flags, it only has to be pronounced to carry

with it assent. Yes, we can erase it and we can make fun of it, it will never be truly erased, nor damaged by outrages; for it is true, it is holy; it is the ideal to follow, it is the revealed future, it already reigns in principle, and it will one day reign in fact; it is indelible and immortal.

CHAPTER II.

Equality is a principle, a dogma.

In vain would we try to deny or invalidate the philosophical meaning that I have just given of the motto of our fathers. There is a base and wicked way of interpreting this motto, which the enemies of the progress of the human race never fail to adopt. According to them, it would be vice and ignorance, rather than virtue and genius, that would have enthroned this banner in the world. The people, that is to say the rabble, hearing them, would have eagerly embraced three empty words, which promised them license and a chimerical equality with their masters. The vilest passions, envy and greed, alone would have inspired this cry of war and not of peace. Thus France would have soiled itself by displaying this flag; and, after an experience full of disappointment, nothing would remain of this shipwreck, except the certainty that Equality is a chimera.

Another explanation, less base, but also petty, consists of saying that the authors of our laws and our constitutions did not understand, by this word equality, anything other than what we call civil equality, equality before the law, as it is achieved today. It would only have been a question of giving the program of a state where all citizens would, in certain respects, be subject to the law, where certain laws would be common to all, obligatory for all. Now, as in fact the Civil Code and the Penal Code do not recognize classes, and do not distinguish between citizens, it would follow that the program would now be carried out, and that the promised Equality would be achieved. To these one could reply that at least they should, in their explanation, understand the political law as well as the criminal law, and that one must be crazy to maintain that Equality reigns where a small fraction of the citizens alone have the power to make laws. But this is not even how the axiom of the Revolution should be understood. This axiom is not only about the equality of citizens, but about human equality; and, on the other hand, it is not a more or less restricted fact that is at issue, but a right that commands this fact. Between equality considered as a fact and equality considered as a principle, there is, to use an expression from Montesquieu, as much distance as between heaven and earth.

No, once again, this is not how our fathers understood their symbol. Each word of this symbol is a principle, that is to say both a dogma and a commandment. The term *equality*, in this symbol, does not mean: We will try to create a republic where all citizens will be equal. It means: Equality is a divine law, a law prior to all laws, and from which all laws must derive.

There is unanswerable proof of this for those who understand the succession of ideas, and how, first elaborated in the writings of thinkers, they then pass into public opinion, and are realized in action. Where does this word *equality* come from in the revolutionary formula? It comes from Rousseau. It is undoubtedly Rousseau, it is his books, it is his school, which gave it to our Revolution. Now, in Rousseau's writings, Equality is no less than an entire doctrine. Every writing of Rousseau is founded on the basis of Human Equality; because the very equality of the citizen is for him only a form and a corollary of the natural equality of men. So, when the soul of Rousseau

passed into the people and dictated our laws to us, it was a principle, a dogma, a faith, a belief, a religion, this word of *equality* proclaimed by an entire people.

CHAPTER III.

This principle is now recognized as the very criterion of justice.

I ask those who do not see a principle, that is to say, a dogma and a commandment, in human equality, why they would find evil and contrary to all fairness, as to all sound legislation, that a father would today have the right to life and death over his children, as was practiced among the Romans, or that a master could kill or injure his servant. I ask them why it would seem iniquitous and absurd to them to re-establish slavery and feudalism in Europe, why they find admirable, on the contrary, that the poorest citizen should have action against the richest, and that the penalty of a misdemeanor or a crime is the same, whoever the offended, and whoever the criminal.

You therefore have a different justice from that of the Lacedaemonians, who wounded and killed the helots with impunity; different from that of the Romans, who wounded and killed their slaves with impunity; different from that of the nobles of the Middle Ages, who wounded and killed their serfs with impunity. You no longer weigh the sorrows according the quality of the offender and the offended, and you would find it evil if a prince today, murderer of a peasant, paid for his fault with a few Parisian sous.

But why this variation in human laws? In the past, in criminal laws, what concerned us? And today what concerns those who make laws equal for all? Undoubtedly they regulate themselves according to a principle; they do not act like fools; they make the laws according to some general and sacred idea, engraved in their souls.

Now what is this idea, this principle, this rule, this criterion, according to which so many once-law actions are now regarded as crimes, hated or punished as such?

This principle is the Equality of men.

You are indeed forced to agree that the present justice does not distinguish between one man and another man; that, having both been clothed with the character of men, they are equal in the eyes of justice.

And if justice is fair and impartial to them, it is only because they are men. This father has no right to kill his child, because the character of Humanity is on the face of this child. This rich man has no right to violate this wretch, because the character of Humanity protects this wretch against him. So you recognize a right in man, just because he is a man.

Will you say that this rule was invented to make the administration of justice easier and more regular? Such an explanation would be absurd. It is that right, I mean the current right, is precisely the recognized equality of men. This recognized equality is before justice, it is what causes it and what constitutes it. When an irritated father or a jealous husband could take revenge and punish at will, it was because human equality was not recognized; it was because the weak did not count or mattered little before the strong. Rest assured that if the public made a difference between the races of men, justice would follow opinion, and that there would still be two or three justices, as in antiquity and the Middle Ages.

It would also be vain to try to say that the current justice recognizes equality only among the citizens of the same nation. Why, in that case, was murder committed against a foreigner punished as murder committed against a local in the country?

It should be noted, moreover, that it is not a question here of positive laws, but of the principle of these laws. I will prove at no time that the equality of the citizen, as we understand it today, is rooted in the belief that we have in the equality of men in general; that these two beliefs, since the last century, are inseparable, and are based on the same doctrine. So that we cannot object to the positive laws, and deny me the feeling that we have of human equality, by showing me that the equality of citizens often takes its place. What must be proved to me is that we are completely indifferent to the violence committed against men, whenever these men are not our fellow citizens.

Now, examine for this for yourself. I will not assume that it is a question of violence and torture inflicted on Europeans; the peoples of Europe have too many relations to ensure that there is not some mutual assurance of justice between them. But here are some slavers who are going to take slaves to your American colonies. I'm telling you that these sugar and coffee colonies need negroes to grow them. Neither the whites from Europe, nor the Indians themselves, can bear the work under this burning sun. Our planters wait, their fortune is compromised, the colonies will perish if the slavery of Africans is not confirmed or tolerated. You reply to me with this famous phrase, of which was so stupidly made a crime of the French Revolution: "Perish the colonies rather than a principle." This phrase that is accused is simply the sublime cry of conscience, it is the cry of justice, it is the *qu'il mourut* of Corneille.

But these men are black, someone says; they are of the race of Ham, and you are of the race of Japheth. You say that the difference in skin does not justify slavery; that the Swedes are whiter than the Spaniards, and that there is nothing to be concluded from it.

But, as you are told, the popes once gave Europeans a patent of sovereignty over Africa, and the great defender of the unfortunate Indians, Las-Casas, found it good and legitimate for the negroes to be reduced in Captivity. You reply that the popes had disposed of what did not belong to them, and that Las-Casas would later have been in Clarkson's opinion to emancipate the negroes.

Finally, let one raise as an objection to you the Bible and these sentences of extermination pronounced by Moses against so many peoples, you will close the book with disgust, and you will blame these commandments on the ignorance of the human race at that time.

So nothing can prevail over your sense of justice, and that feeling is nothing but belief in men's equality.

And this belief, innate so to speak in all well-made minds, produced a result. The diplomats have made positive laws and instituted penalties against trafficking in men.

Let us therefore conclude that it is recognized today by the human mind that a man has certain rights in his sole capacity as a man; which is to say, when you think about it, that a man has virtually the same rights as any other man. From which we must necessarily draw this second conclusion, that if we cannot yet truly realize the application of this right, if we are still too

ignorant, too vicious, too miserable, to organize human equality on earth, this equality is no less prior and superior to all our nationalities, to all our constitutions, to all our establishments.

CHAPTER IV.

The current society, in whatever respect we consider it, has no other basis than this principle.

Those who do not want to see a principle in human Equality cannot help but at least recognize one in civil equality. By civil equality I mean the equality of the citizen in all aspects, criminal law, political law, civil law properly speaking.

In whatever aspect, in fact, we consider society today in a large part of Europe, we find civil equality not only established in fact, but proclaimed in right. What spectacle, for example, does France present today?

1. This nation offers itself to other nations as a single body ready to defend its rights, and represented for this purpose by its army. Now what is the recognized principle of the organization of this army? It is Equality. Because it is supposed that all citizens without distinction contribute their person to military service, and that each soldier carries, as one of our princes said, his Marshal of France baton in his bag. This is in no way true, I know, and inequality reigns there as elsewhere. The rich are replaced, and the real competition for courage and merit does not exist where some, by the privilege of the fortune of their parents, leave the schools born officers, like the Nobles of the old regime, or at least equipped with a special education that opens the path to the ranks, while the sons of artisans and wine-growers have just what it takes to remain soldiers, whatever merit moreover and whatever generosity of courage nature has given them. No, equality does not exist there; but in the end the principle is proclaimed and recognized.

2. The nation makes its laws and administers itself. I admit that the principle of equality has found great obstacles in gaining recognition on this point. The nobility and the monarchy initially resisted stubbornly, in order to preserve what they called their rights and their power: this was our first Revolution. Then, this monarchy and this nobility overthrown, there was found I don't know what false monarchy and I don't know what false nobility who wanted to reign in their place: this was the Empire and the Restoration. Then another overthrow, and this time the Third Estate, which had won with the people and by the people, saw ardent doctors of aristocracy emerge from its bosom, who claimed that to it alone belonged legislative right and the government: this is the nameless state that we have before our eyes today. But finally, I ask, what other principle do you have to oppose to the sovereignty of the people, that is to say to the rights of all, that is to say to Equality? Is not this very right explicitly stated in the last of your charters as it was in our first constitutions? Then have we not seen the fall of all the governments that wanted to give another origin to power than the will of all? And although the immense majority is still disinherited from political rights, is it not agreed that the laws are made in the name of all by a few? Thus fiction supplements reality, and at least prevents right from being out of date. Or rather the State only supports itself because the right is recognized, proclaimed; remove it, remove the fiction that replaces it, and society no longer has a basis.

3. The nation engages in agriculture, industry and commerce. What is the principle that governs these various labors? It is equality under the name of free competition. The most atrocious inequality, I know, actually reigns at this point. Real competition does not exist; because a small number of men being the only ones in possession of the instruments of labor, the others find themselves reduced to the miserable condition of serfs of industry. Some are masters of the earth, of the machines, and of all the sources of production that the genius of all men has invented during all the preceding centuries, or that it discovers every day. Production is done for them, and is regulated by their consumption; so this number is infinitely small and miserable compared to what it could be. As for the workers, they only have the right to the wage; they compete for this wage among themselves, they compete for it with animals and machines, their real competitors. Their existence, the existence of so many millions of men, of so many millions of our equals, of similar positions, of our brothers, of our fellow citizens, is left to all the hazards that improvidence, that carelessness entail, the incapacity, the passions, the follies of all kinds of the owners of capital. Society, in proclaiming competition, has thus far done nothing other than great irony: it is as if it had organized a closed field where bound and unarmed men would be handed over to other men armed with good weapons. The spectacle of liberty presented by labor and industry resembles a great deal, in truth, the penal colony of Toulon. No matter; the people have won a great victory, since the right of all to all industry and all property is proclaimed and recognized.

4. The same principle of Equality is everywhere proclaimed in criminal laws.

Here again I would be angry if someone thought I was a dupe, and if someone imagined that, deceived by the bait that was thrown to the multitude, I am foolish enough to believe that our criminal laws are equal for all, and that we thus possess the *nec plus ultra* in equity. No, in truth, I don't believe a word of it. But if it is false to say that true penal equality in fact reigns, it is true to say that in fact general penal equality is established. If it is false to say that the principle of criminal equality, as we understand it today, is the very principle of justice, it is true to say that this principle is a shadow of justice and a journey towards true equity. Let me explain.

In order for justice to be equal between the poor and the rich, there would first have to be, initially, neither poor nor rich children; it would be necessary, in other words, for public education to be given to all, as the Convention had decreed; it would be necessary that, without distinction of birth, they all receive the same moral instruction, and that they start together from the same point. They could then truly strive for virtue, and any misdeeds could be justly imputed to them. But what justice is there, I ask, in punishing an unfortunate imbecile, a man whose original condition deprived him of education, or who was driven to crime by want and poverty, in the same way and with the same penalty as a man to whom nothing that could enlighten him or spare him from crime has been refused? Do you punish a minor as you punish a grown man? No, you have regard for the weakness of the age. How many men, due to lack of education, are truly minors in society, and should be treated as such! Justice, in its very essence, is equality: where there is so little equality in conditions I find it difficult to see what justice there is in the equality of punishment. When you run horses for a prize, you do not allow one to be loaded twice as much as the other; you carry the taste and the feeling of equality in these things to the point of weighing the jockeys who

must ride on your steeds. But when it comes to human criminality, you act differently. You punish with the same penalty the theft committed by a rich person (when you punish him), and the theft committed by a poor person. Do you not see that this poor man has a burden a thousand times heavier than this rich man?

But let us move on from that; let us admit that, whatever the inequality of the various environments into which men find themselves thrown, the penalty for the offense must be the same. Does this equal justice, this equal repression take place? We believe it, everyone says it, we repeat it at every turn, we shout it from the rooftops; but it's still a lie.

Consult the statistics; they will tell you which classes pay their tribute to the prisons, to the galleys, to the scaffold. There is a society where it is impossible to be criminal without falling under the influence of the Penal Code and the police: these are the poor classes. There is another where one can commit almost all crimes without being liable to the Penal Code, or at least without having to fear it: these are the rich classes. Justice is a blind Polyphemus, a shapeless and crude cyclops: the rich, protected by their politeness and their air of innocence, shelter themselves from its attacks, as Odysseus and his companions escaped from the cave by hiding under the white fleece of the sheep.

A man of the people wants to obtain more than the salary he could honestly earn: he has no other means than violence; he becomes a thief; they seize him, they imprison him, they judge him, they condemn him to the galleys. A rich thief, a thief of the upper classes is much differently favored by fate; he carries out his industry at ease; he steals a hundred thousand francs more easily than the other steals a penny. Consider, in fact, the lucrative occupations of the upper classes, and tell me which one is the one where fraud does not reign, where it is not common, ordinary, the rule so to speak, and almost never punished. Are loyalty, probity and honor the prerogative of the princes of finance and industry? In our time the epithet *loup-cervier*, lynx, has been invented for certain capitalists; but from small to large, in this obscure forest where men today fight against each other to wrest wealth, every capitalist is a *loup-cervier*. Below these great bankers, thus described by their peers, come speculators with fortunes less gigantic, then others even more modest: but are they purer? How much shameful trafficking, it is said, how many immoral games, and how many turns of the stick are used to pay the charges that replaced the old offices! Is it in trade itself where loyalty reigns? But who does not complain today that commerce is a perpetual fraud, that deceit is its soul, and that charlatanism is its nerve? Besides, does not every man of bad faith who embraces the profession of commerce always have, as his last resource, the bankruptcy that enriches him?

I suppose a man born into the upper classes or admitted into their midst, who is very greedy, very light of conscience, and who therefore wants to enrich himself *by foul means or fair*. He will have been seduced by luxury, and he will have said to himself: I will have all this wealth, I will have a hotel, land, servants; I was born to be a prince: *Et in Arcadia ego*. This man, who has no other morality than to become powerful and rich, powerful for the sake of being rich, rich for the sake of being powerful, is in many ways the analogue of the thief who is sent to the penal colony. He has more spirit, I agree, more intelligence, that is true; but I suppose him to be devoid of

morality, a real idiot from a moral point of view. How many people are made like this! Well! Justice will have no hold on him; and how far will we not see his rise! If he disdains trade, finance, or procedure, let him become a political intriguer. As a journalist, he will sell the trust that the public has placed in his paper. As a deputy, he will sell the mandate of his voters; and if he is reproached for this, he will, if necessary, subjugate his electors by ministerial favors, and he will say: I have the right to sell them, because they are mine. Why wouldn't this man become a minister? We have sometimes seen such prodigies. Then he will sell or have his mistress sell the functions of the State, or he will certainly speculate on public funds. How many examples can we cite that come more or less close to this imaginary type! Illustrious diplomats who betrayed and sold the interests of their homeland for money, honest deputies of the people who sold their votes in parliament for seats, scrupulous civil servants of all ranks who tampered with their authority, valiant generals who stole the subsistence of their soldiers, devout priests and holy bishops who have abused religion to steal inheritances, the crowd of delinquents of this type is truly innumerable.

But does the license for crime, among the upper classes, stop there? Is it limited to cleverly disguised fraud? No, the possibility of committing all kinds of crimes is everywhere in proportion to wealth; all passions can be satisfied with impunity behind the rampart of gold. Lovelace is covered by his gold, as formerly he could be by his rank and nobility. Rich Tartuffe can spin his plots with impunity, without the officer arriving at the end of the play to stop him.

It seems that in our time the supposition that I have just made of a man who would carry into the upper classes, and into the functions with which they are invested, the audacity of the Cartouches and the Mandrins of the low stage, has come true. Men with greedy souls and daring genius saw the customs of our century, and, leaving the penal colony and prison to imbeciles, they changed theaters, and received only crowns. Satire, it is true, has taken hold of them; but what does it matter to them? Perhaps it was they who made this satire. Robert Macaire is this poem of license and impunity for crime in the upper classes. This bandit traffickers in everything, trust, friendship, love, all possible feelings; and it happens to everything. Indeed, such is our time: Cartouche and Mandrin, disguised as bankers, calculate in public, and if necessary establish in court the capital at their disposal. "You can't hang a man who has a hundred thousand crowns," said insolently a trader from the last century who had deserved the noose. Today not only do we not hang such a man, but we give him all the honors.

From time to time only some of the crimes committed in the upper classes, I mean crimes positively provided for by the Code, come to light, and it is necessary to prosecute them. But even then there is no shortage of voices to cry out that we must prevent the scandal of these revelations, that such examples take away from the people the faith they must have in the morality of those who govern them, and that if decent people are thus unmasked, society is compromised. Honest society, even if it only lives by lies!

On this point too, we have taken the shadow for the body, I readily agree: *decipimur specie recti*. Equality in criminal laws, as we know it today, only serves to cover and hide deplorable inequality. But after all, how many centuries it took to get there, and it is a marvel that we got

there. Let us remember that among the Romans, throughout the Republic, and long after under the Empire, any slave could be put to death by his master, without justice taking notice. It was necessary to come to Adrien for a law to be made against these murders. Still, a law was only made against the murder of slaves committed without motive; the right to kill them remained. Today not only does everyone see their life and property materially protected by the law, but it is supposed that the repression of crime is the same for everyone, that justice watches over everyone equally, that no one goes unpunished because he is rich, that no one is punished too much because he is poor. It is an admirable progress in Humanity that such an assumption is necessary today for the maintenance and stability of States.

5. The same principle of equality also regulates the conventions and contracts of citizens among themselves, and ensures their execution.

I know very well that here again it is only a fiction; that the poor person who contracts with the rich man is never sure that his right will not perish in the lawsuits. I see all the leads to inequality among the thousand pitfalls of procedure, the onerous fees that are charge, and the ease for the rich to have at their disposal attorneys, lawyers, notaries, bailiffs, and all the whole litigating army. Read what Bentham wrote on the administration of justice, and you will see what the right of the widow and the orphan is. But ultimately the equity of judges serves as much as possible as a rampart of the law. Here again the principle of equality reigns, and right is established on this principle.

6. But here is another, much more astonishing proclamation of the principle of equality. Who would have said, in the Middle Ages, that a time would come when the thought of the last citizen would be considered equal in right to the thought, not of a cleric or even of a tonsured priest, not even of a bishop or an archbishop, but of the pope, and that to the decisions of the sovereign pontiff, united even with the whole Church, and supported by twenty councils, any man, even the most ignorant of men, would have the right to refuse his suffrage and to oppose his own opinion, not only in himself, in the secret of his soul, but publicly, by speech, by writings, by all possible means of communication and expression; that no one, in a word, would report to anyone in matters of conscience, and that thus virtually every man would be pope? Yet this is what happened: because what do you proclaim under the name of freedom of thought, freedom to publish one's opinions, freedom of conscience, philosophical and religious freedom, freedom of worship, if not equality of minds, equality of intelligence?

Here again equality is only a lie, I know; because for there to be reason for the exercise of the right conferred by this equality, the people would have to have the possibility of engaging in intellectual work, or at least some leisure to occupy themselves with intellectual things. This is a magnificent river, it is true, and it passes very close to me; but if it is impossible for me to draw a single drop from it to refresh my lips, what use is this water, so abundant and so beautiful, to me? This is the fate of the people: they have the freedom of intelligence, but they do not have the possibility of making use of it.

I am not attached, as we see, to the thousand little obstacles that are brought daily to the recognized right of thought. Legal restrictions on the liberty to write, secret or open persecutions

against liberty of conscience, obstacles of all kinds to liberty of worship, all these Machiavellian ruses in which our rulers are consumed to steal in detail what they concede in bulk, are unworthy of attention on such a subject. I am talking about the general lack of organization that makes the proclaimed right of all to intelligence illusory. Nothing being organized in current society, this equality of intelligence, recognized in right, is in fact a chimera. The immense majority of the people do not participate in intellectual life; they live randomly in the life of brutes; because they have, in order to govern themselves, only their sensations, their needs, and the threat of a brutal penalty. Consider your cities and your countryside, and see if there is real use of the liberty of thought and religious liberty. There is undoubtedly equality, but it is the equality of nothingness. Will the seventy-five thousand *canuts* from the Lyon factory, for example, make great use of this right to think so generously recognized to all? The wretches have barely been born and can move their arms regularly when their parents, driven by hunger, think of using them. Locked up during the day with their loom, lying at night above this loom, in a sort of hammock, in order to save space, here they are at work for their entire lives. Yes, a man's life is spent moving his arms in the same way over and over again. Here they are transformed into machines; they become an integral part of their profession, as this profession is part of themselves; they and the profession become one whole that labors; they are the soul of this profession, but they no longer have a soul. There they are, I say, like the spider that spins its web. The spider seeks to take insects for food; it obeys its instinct, it is not otherwise gifted with intelligence. He, the canut of Lyon, weaves his web to reach the piece of bread and the piece of cheese that make up his food every day. And yet, there were perhaps, among these sons of artisans, men who had received from nature the mission of calculating the law of the stars, like Laplace, that son of a peasant, or of singing virtue and to alleviate the evils of Humanity, like Virgil, that other son of a peasant, or to lead the human race towards God, like Socrates, that son of a sculptor, or like Rousseau, that son of a watchmaker. When Socrates and Virgil lived, when Rousseau appeared, when Laplace was born, the right was not proclaimed; today it is, thanks to them and their peers: but what does it matter if the right is proclaimed, if a miracle is always needed for this man of genius, unjustly plunged into darkness and kept in a world lower, can rise towards the light? As cruel, indeed, as the miserly Pluto, it is very rare that society lets Orpheus out of hell. We see a soul emerge by chance from the abyss into which so many other souls sink, and we exclaim with admiration at the current equality. Well! Don't you see that your very astonishment is proof of the inequality that weighs on intelligence?

But is it only for a few rare geniuses who can thus be atrophied at birth that we should have pity and tears? We owe it to all, because everyone has the right. So I am talking about all these children, all these men without exception. I am talking about the weakest of spirit as well as the strongest. I tell you that by virtue of your principle of the equality of intelligences, wherever God has placed an intelligence, that is to say wherever a man exists, this man has the right to be a man, and to live a life other than that of the brute. Man, Jesus said, does not live only by bread, he lives by light and truth: where is the light, where is the truth, where is the spiritual nourishment that today's society provides to its children?

It is necessary, you will tell me, that a part of society is thus condemned to labor; it is impossible for it to be otherwise. If you believe it, remove from your speeches these great words of liberty of thought, liberty of writing, religious liberty; or agree that you mean by this, as I said earlier, a general negation and the equality of nothingness. Liberty of thought, liberty of expressing one's thoughts, religious liberty, restricted to a few hundred or a few thousand men in a nation of thirty million, is not equality, I hope. Where one man in a hundred thousand enjoys such a prerogative, the word slavery is more appropriate than that of liberty. Say then that intelligences are slaves, that they languish in slavery, and do not say that they are free.

But really, do you believe that it is impossible for all men to make use of the faculty of intelligence that is within them? Because labor is a necessity of our nature, do you believe that it follows that a large part of the human race must be deprived of all spiritual life? You don't believe it, because you remember the past. There was a time when Christianity reigned in Europe, when the Church existed alongside civil societies, alongside the secular world, opposite Caesar. Well, then the equality of intelligences was not proclaimed, the freedom of intelligences was far from being recognized, but the use of intelligence existed for all men. Every man, in fact, even if he was originally covered with all the stigmata of servitude and all the leprosy of poverty, was introduced into the domain of spiritual life. To every man initiation, to every man moral bread; the living spring was not closed for anyone. The Church was the spiritual city where all souls were received, where all lived and were nourished. I repeat again, equality did not reign there, liberty did not reign there: there were two worlds, the priest and the layman. The only equality was that spiritual food was given to all; but the right to prepare this food did not belong to all, and so the food was not the same for the clergy and for the people. The priests gave the bread to the laity, and reserved the wine for themselves: for them the inspiring cup, for the people a less generous food. The result was horrible inequality, theocracy weighed on the world. The men responsible for preparing the intellectual nourishment of all were no longer distributing to the people anything but corrupt food, when Wycliffe and Jan Huss, these great martyrs, demanded the cup for everyone, that is to say equality. Yes, it was necessary to overthrow the spiritual city, and proclaim equality on its ruins. But what happened? The spiritual city destroyed, nothing was put in its place. The rich therefore, the men of leisure, alone have inherited the scattered debris of the intellectual edifice. What do they do with this inheritance? That is not the question. But what have the people inherited, and what do they have in their possession? Nothing. What do we do for them? Nothing. We leave them this religion which we renounced for their own benefit; we suppose it still suits them. The fact is false. The people are as incredulous as you, their noble masters; they do not believe in the pope any more than you, no more in his priests than you, no more in the divinity of Jesus Christ than you, no more in the future life, in paradise and in hell than you; I would even say that they do not believe in God any more than you, that they are finally as deprived of moral and religious ideas as you are. No matter, you need there to be a religion, in order to say that there is one, and not appear to be dragging behind you herds of slaves similar to brutes. So what are you doing? You write in your charters: The Catholic religion is the religion of the majority of French people. You put a false label on an empty bottle, and you are satisfied. But you know very well yourselves that it is

only a fiction, that Catholicism no longer reigns in France, and that the immense majority of the people no longer have a religion.

Now, these men thus condemned to work and deprived of religion, what intellectual life do they live? Where are their hours of elevation, the hours when, in the rest of the body, they rose towards God, understood his works, learned the reason of things, and gave their assent to the order of the world and even to their own? misfortune? Where are the dogmas that regulated their actions, corrected their vices, and taught them to repair their faults? Where, in a word, is for them the exercise of intelligence and the occupation of reason? All this no longer exists, all this has now passed. The rich abuse human knowledge, which is abandoned to them and handed over to them like prey; they poison themselves with it rather than nourish themselves with it, and the people are deprived of it.

I therefore say that all these great words of liberty of thought, liberty of expressing one's thoughts, liberty of conscience, religious liberty, mean nothing other than a right without realization, a virtuality without effect for the immense majority of men. But, considering the necessary progress of the human race, I say that this phase of deprivation is better, a thousand times better, for the cause of the people than the previous phase. It is not the present, in fact, the present in itself, that we must see; it is the present in relation to the past and in relation to the future. The right of all to intelligence is today proclaimed: this is an immense revolution; because the right proclaimed and not realized is superior to the use which was not covered by the right. The use of the right will come again, be sure of it; and this time the use clothed with law will not generate theocracy and superstition, but democracy and religion. A day will come when again all intelligences will take their place at the spiritual banquet; but then there will no longer be any distinction between priests and laity; the secular world will have become the Church, and Equality will reign in the double domain of the civil sovereign and the ecclesiastical sovereign, of the priestly king and the temporal king, of the Pontiff and the Despot, of the Pope and Caesar.

This is obviously, according to us, where Europe and Christianity have been advancing since the glorious insurrection that we called the Reformation. But whether we are granted this conclusion or not, the fact remains that no one today can, without madness, refuse to admit that the legal participation of all minds in the administration of society is a *fait accompli*, that the right of each person to intelligence is one of the current bases of society, and that thus, in the intellectual respect, it is still the principle of Equality that triumphs and reigns.

7. Finally, the same principle still regulates the private relations of citizens among themselves and the host of relations that participate to different degrees in friendship and love. I know well, to repeat here my eternal observation, that current equality is on this point, as on all other points, only a lie: but here again the principle is no less proclaimed. We think one way, we act another. As an example, I only want the relationship that should be the most sacred, and which today is the most profaned, love.

Does it not seem, in fact, that equality in love is the current law of society? Everything that poets have written in favor of this equality is today received by all minds. Novelists had the art of getting us interested in some poor girl, and at the end they made her marry a prince; or else it

was, conversely, a poor devil whom they married to a princess: they thus overturned, in their ideal conceptions, the narrow and barbaric barriers of reality. What ardor of passion, what thirst for love and equality at the same time, have they not kindled in the human heart! Well, today their utopia is universally accepted. Rousseau, it is true, this great logician, set his century back for a moment by posing this problem: What if it was by chance a son of a king and an executioner's daughter? The century nodded a little, and again admitted the equality. Is there reversibility of the father over the child? Why shouldn't the daughter of an executioner be worthy of marrying the son of a king? A child comes into the world, he is neither king nor executioner. Thus reasoned this reasoning century, and the sentimental revolution went hand in hand with the political revolution which, in certain cases, subjected kings to executioners.

The Revolution has accomplished its work: today, what is, in the eyes of reason, and even in the eyes of public opinion, a misalliance? Are there then nobles, patricians, so that they can debase themselves by marrying common women? No, everyone is common today, and everyone is noble.

But what is actually happening? It is still the people who have lost the cost, for the moment, of this proclamation of a right without realization. For, by abolishing the barriers that separated the house of the poor from that of the rich, we gave entry to corruption. The rich do not ordinarily take their wives from the poor classes, but they often take their mistresses there; doubly cowardly, they speculate on the wealth of some and the poverty of others.

The right itself, the recognized right of equality in love, becomes the means of this corruption. This poor young girl of obscure birth once knew that she could not marry this nobleman or this rich man: today why would she not believe his oaths?

Deceived by this equality, youth let themselves be carried away by all the ardor of their passions. The girls of the people aspire to escape from their condition through marriage, and very often only achieve shame; wealth and luxury become their goal, for which they lose sight of both love and marriage. As for rich young people, there is no longer any brake that holds them back; because equality has brought all women closer to them, and delivers them to them like prey; equality invites them to descend from their condition, as it invites women to rise above theirs; so they meet, but it is not in love that they meet. You complain about libertinism, you ask what causes it: it is the current equality, that is to say a false and lying equality. There is no longer any barrier today that can contain so much unleashed passion.

One of the results of this equality that is acknowledged, but in no way achieved, is a horrible tax levied, for the benefit of libertinism, on the poor classes. The Athenians, tributaries of Crete, sent each year a certain number of young girls to the frightful Minotaur: among us the poor classes pay the same tribute. Where do these unfortunate women come from, I ask, who reproduce among us, after eighteen centuries of Christianity, what was most frightful and most impure about ancient slavery and the license of Paganism? They come out of the ranks of the people; it is a tribute that the people pay alone. Ask your scholars: the scholars, concerning themselves with everything, have come to concern themselves with these unfortunate people; serious doctors, commissioned *ad hoc*, paint a picture of their way of life... Study them, doctors, they are the daughters of the people.

These are relegated to the last circles of hell, I agree; but hell, like Dante's symbolic painting of it, has many different circles that wind into each other. How many women and how many men move around in these innumerable circles, looking for love and not finding it, because love is equality, and the false equality that we have before our eyes robs us of real equality!

Yes, love is like justice: its very essence is equality; or rather it is justice itself and equity, that is to say equality at its highest power. What justice done to your fellow woman to love her and take her as your wife! What equality is such a bond that makes us part of her and she of us, or rather that identifies us with her and she with us, which carries on it all the faculties of our soul, and makes us dependent on her at the point where we exist in her and through her! What equality, I say, is the sacred and mysterious bond that, from the father and the mother, will produce a being participating in both and uniting them in itself! The poets and novelists were therefore not wrong: no consideration, unless it is truly sacred, can balance the divine bond that makes love.

But also carry into this bond, instead of true equality, a false idea of equality, and see what crime results. If you have no other idea of equality in love, other than the idea that no barrier separates you from the object of your desires, it is no longer an act of justice that you are carrying out, but the greatest injustice; it is no longer equality that you achieve, it is inequality that you erect in its place.

And love, which is equality, which is justice, moves away and escapes you; and your embraces only embrace, instead of him, pain and remorse, inseparable companions of all injustice.

Is it therefore surprising that so many men and women today complain of having found nothing but eternal pain in love? Deceived by the false equality that we have before our eyes, they only seek to achieve this, and thus give themselves license to offend true equality, that is to say, love. They are free, they say. Free from what? In other words, why are they free? The right of equality in love, which is proclaimed, is proclaimed only so that we achieve this equality. But to take this right and abuse it without actually producing the act of justice that it confers on us is to behave like newly freed slaves, who do not know what freedom consists of. And this is what is ordinary today: in the absence of a true notion of justice and love, instead of love, which is equality achieved, we realize the opposite of love. And this is what the very proclamation of equality in love contributed to.

It has been said: There are no more barriers between men and women; in the name of equality, no more ranks that separate those whom love wants to unite. But what resulted from this proclamation of equality? Is this equality in love? No, it is inequality in love. For equality to result, it would have been necessary for love to be clothed with justice and holiness, that is to say, for men to understand that this bond is the greatest act of equity that we can achieve on earth, that it is the most august application of the very principle of equality, identical with that of justice. But, failing to understand this, they have only realized, in the name of equality, inequality, injustice, inequity. For, uniting without the idea of justice and equality, the bond they contract is, not true love, but the overthrow of true love, and a true crime against this love.

The ancients gave a sister to the celestial Venus, but they did not give this common Venus the same attributes as the other. We, more advanced in certain respects, have understood that equality

must always accompany love; but, for lack of really knowing equality, justice, love, we have formed some confused idea where we give to one of the two goddesses what belongs to the other. And we suffer all the more the more vaguely we have a higher feeling. We aspire to equality, we proclaim it, and we achieve its opposite; we look for love, and we only find its shadow. From there, in our darkness, so much weeping and gnashing of teeth, following the word of the Gospel.

Has human morality therefore been increased by this proclamation of equality in love? I have no doubt about it; but I say that it temporarily resulted in great harm. Alas! Progress is only accomplished with suffering! Yes, it is an immense progress in human destiny to have proclaimed the right of all to the free development of their sympathy: what horrible slavery, in fact, is that of feeling and love! But until man has taken a corresponding step in knowledge, that is, until the notion of true equality in love, or, which is the same thing, of true love, is acquired, everything is reduced to an insurrection without rules, to a brutal devastation of the most beautiful of human faculties. And isn't that, in fact, what's happening today? Do we not hear on all sides comparing the morals of our century, not to the morals of the regency, that is too little, but to the morals of the Romans in the last and solemn orgy in which the empire was destroyed.

Thus, to follow the chain of our reasoning, equality in love is admitted in principle; but in fact the inequality remains. Shall I now talk about this other inequality that weighs on the very condition of women?

Everything is linked in the moral world as in the physical world. We have not been able to emancipate slaves without eliminating the slavery of women; we could not abolish the nobility of blood without emancipating love; or rather love itself has been the principal emancipator of the human race, because it has been involved in all the revolutions which have brought about our civil and political equality. It is love, in large part, that, groaning in slavery, overthrew all barriers, and made the principle of equality reign on earth. How could it not have shared the fruit of a victory to which it had contributed so much? And that being the case, how could the woman not have benefited from it? It is no longer rank, fortune, things in a word, the earth and all the circumstances of the material environment in which we live, which decide the human will in love; no, it is love itself that decides. Now, if it is love, it is as much the woman as the man. Therefore, since each woman, as a wife, appears to us equal to her husband, all women appear to us to be on the same rank as all men. Equal to us in love and marriage, how could they not be equal everywhere? Therefore, today's society feels invincibly led to proclaim the equality of men and women.

I do not agree with those who have recently preached the emancipation of women as an insurrection. It is a question of emancipating us all through each other by making justice reign among us in all our relationships, and not of splitting us up, of dividing us into two different camps; in a word, it is necessary that woman rises through man and with him, that man rises through woman and with her, but not that one of the sexes separates and distinguishes its cause from that of the other.

There are not two different beings, man and woman; there is only one human being with two sides that correspond and come together through love. The couple is before the man and before the

woman. The man and the woman are to form the couple; they are the two parts of it. Outside of the couple, outside of love and marriage, there are no more sexes; there are human beings of common origin, with similar faculties. Man is at all moments of his life sensation-sentiment-knowledge; woman too. The definition is therefore the same.

That sentiment in general predominates in women, that abstract reason generally predominates in men, that is possible: but what does it matter? Do not all the inhabitants of the same country have certain characteristics of resemblance between them that distinguish them and separate them from the rest of the world? Don't the ages present the same contrast? Don't all children, all young people, all old people have very marked relationships with each other? Does not sensation dominate in childhood; is not the mixture of sensation and sentiment the incessant motive of youth, just as knowledge is the prerogative of mature age, and becomes the source of all the qualities or all the defects of the old man? Women considered in general, independently of the manifestation of the sex, likewise have a type, I grant; but this type does not separate them from the rest of Humanity, and does not make them a separate race that must be distinguished philosophically from man. In this respect, they will form, if you like, a nation in Humanity, or even a particular age of life: it is in this way that they are distinguished from man; not otherwise. They are, like man, sensation-sentiment-knowledge united indivisibly at all moments and in all acts of their existence. Absent love, they manifest themselves to man as human persons, and place themselves, like man, in the various categories of civil society.

It is not that I mean by this that their character, their particularity never abandons them, that they are ever men. No, any manifestation of their life always implies the virtuality of women that they have within them. But I say that this virtuality is then completely hidden in them, and as if it did not exist. We see it with the eyes of the body, but we do not feel it in our soul; or if we have the sentiment of it, this sentiment is in a virtual state within us, and we have no awareness of it.

I say more, I say that their originality, their particularity, even when it manifests itself, is of no other order than that of the three great types corresponding to the three faculties inherent in our nature, scientists, artists, industrialists, or that of the three ages of life, childhood, youth, old age. It is certainly other, but it is not of another order. Their particularity lies in the fact that they are virtually, at every moment of their existence, predestined to form the human couple with man. As long as this virtuality does not manifest itself and remains latent, they enter, as I have just said, into the generality of the human species, just like the child, the young man, or the old man, just like the scholar, artist, or industrialist. But, even when it manifests itself, as it only manifests itself by acts imbued with sensation, feeling and knowledge at the same time, no essential disparity of nature between them and us is revealed to us; but, on the contrary, we still find our own nature in theirs.

Indeed, consider what happens; consider the cause of the phenomenon, the nature of the phenomenon, the effects and the consequences of the phenomenon. First of all, the cause of this originality, of this particularity of women, is the same in our eyes as that which makes a man a scholar, an artist, or an industrialist. This cause is hidden in God, within a life that is not communicated to us. Is it not true that we roughly attribute these various faculties of men to what

we call nature or organization? What does this mean, and what do these words nature and organization mean, if not the unknown and completely incomprehensible cause for us of a virtuality that can manifest itself as well as it can remain latent. Well, it's the same with women. It is to nature, to organization, to which we relate the secret and mysterious virtuality, which, from the latent state, can pass to the state of manifestation; which, from a human being in general, can make a particular being, having certain distinct properties, a wife, a mother. The phenomenon taking place, the same parity continues. For the artist loses inspiration or finds it again without being master of it, and without knowing how God acts in him; and in the same way the woman feels within herself the inspiration which makes her love, and, having become a mother, bend over the cradle of her child, without understanding anything of these profound mysteries. But both, the woman and the artist, manifest their lives and the virtuality that is in them through acts where sensation, sentiment, knowledge are united, and where there is no something else, neither for them, nor for the natures with which they are in communication. The identity of condition is therefore still obvious.

Now draw the conclusion. For being what they are, that is to say certain very diverse potentialities, but hidden in their essence, scientists, artists or industrialists, are no less all equal, as men. While there is predominance among them of one of the three aspects of our nature, they nevertheless unite these three aspects, and that is why they are equal. They leave this general state of uniformity when the special function for which God has destined and made them suitable begins: then their particularity is revealed. Acts imbued with the triple stamp of sensation, sentiment, and knowledge, but which have their source in a particular innateness, reveal them as they are, particularize them and distinguish them. But, by only grasping within themselves and communicating to other men sensation-sentiment-knowledge, they thereby remain our equals, natures similar to ours, human persons in a word. It is the same with the woman: all that she feels within herself and all that she expresses is sensation, sentiment, knowledge, united. She is therefore always our equal and of a similar nature. The source is diverse in God, but the effects are the same, and everything that is perceivable and communicable happens to be identical. The same error that caused the thinkers that I am refuting here in passing to imagine, between the scholar, the industrialist, and the artist, an essential or natural difference, as if they had, for example, only one of the three prerogative faculties of our being, also made them consider woman as a separate type, essentially different from the type of man. But this is a serious mistake.

So, to summarize, in whatever way we consider this question, we are led to proclaim the equality of men and women. Because if we consider the woman in the couple, the woman is the equal of the man, since the couple itself is founded on equality, since love itself is equality, and where there does not reign justice, that is to say equality, there cannot reign love, but the opposite of love reigns. And if we consider the woman outside the couple, she is a human being similar to man, endowed with the same faculties to varying degrees; one of those varieties in unity that constitute the world and human society.

This way of understanding the equality of women is very different, I repeat, from the doctrine presented for this purpose in recent times, and it also carries completely different consequences.

Jewish-Christian theology, born in the East at a time when the slavery of women was universal, had found nothing better than to bring woman out of the rib of Adam, and thus to subordinate her to man in the very idea of her creation. It was to consecrate, through a genetic dogma, the inequality of the two sexes and the servitude of women. In their turn, those who previously took up the cause of women, and who preached revolt to Eve, presented a theological idea that essentially separates the two sexes, while equalizing them and placing them on the same rank. Indeed, have they not given this seemingly bizarre formula of God: "God *he* is good; God, *she* is good. This formula is a return to Shaivism. But have they properly understood the ancient cult of Shiva and Durga, those who reproduce it in this way? Did Shaivism separate the two principles? No, on the contrary, it united them indivisibly in his symbol. Certainly, M. Enfantin's formula, applied to divine manifestations, is superior to the Hebrew myth; it does not bring Eve out, by a secondary creation, from Adam's rib; it does not make her a dependency, an appendage of man; it hatches her alongside him, and constitutes her as his equal. But it has a great fault, according to us: it is to wrongly differentiate, in an essential way, what should not be thus differentiated. Yes, God is in fact the two principles, he contains them in the mystery of his essence; but he is therefore neither he nor she: he is the two united by a third. Why essentially explain in God what must not be explained, what can only be explained by destroying the very idea of God? God is neither in one nor the other of the two faces that you distinguish in him; it is in these two faces united by love, which is its third face. So the conclusion you draw from your formula is false: there is no more he and she in the human manifestation of the divine essence, that is to say in the human race, than there is in any other manifestation of the very essence of God. God only manifests itself when the he and the she, which are virtually in it, are united by a third principle, love; and it is then, and only then, that the two principles that you distinguish are revealed. And likewise, man and woman only reveal themselves as sexes when love unites them. Before love and the couple, the woman is not, so to speak; because she does not exist as a woman, she is only a human person.

Moreover, as I have already said, this unphilosophical differentiation is due to other errors of the same kind committed by the man of genius whom I have just named. Because, after having differentiated the scientist, the artist, and the industrialist, as three natures of diverse essences, between which there was no possible link except through the intermediary of the theocrat or the priest, he must *a fortiori* differentiate man and woman as two natures of diverse essences, between which also the androgynous priest would serve as a link. And this whole system, ultimately, had to be summed up in a similar distinction of the divine nature, in a duality of principles, in an erroneous reproduction of Shaivism.

Again, I do not deny that these two principles do in fact exist in God: but I ask what unites these two principles in God. You are forced to answer me that it is love. It is therefore love, and love alone, that manifests these two principles in God. It is therefore also love, and love alone, that manifests them in the human race. So the woman does not have to claim equality as a woman, as you taught her, but to claim equality as a wife, that is to say, to claim true love by raising herself

even to the supreme idea of love, and by sharing it with man. Beyond that, she must only claim equality as a human person.

From this doctrine follow corollaries very different from those resulting from the system that we reject. In this system, the woman being declared free as a woman before the couple exists, the result is that her love, her sex, are handed over to her, so to speak, so that she can parade her liberty. To declare her free in this way, free in this way, free because she has a sex, is to declare her free not only to use, but to abuse her love.

But, on the contrary, declaring her free as a human person, as long as the couple does not exist, does not in any way entail the same consequence. Free and recognized as such, not in the particular title of woman, but as a human person, she becomes free without doubt, in her love as in all her faculties, but not free to abuse love. The abuse of love does not become the prerogative and the very sign of one's liberty. And see the immense difference that results. Before loving and being loved, she was not free as a woman, but as a human person; she had no sex then, that is to say, the sex in her was not manifested; it was a latent faculty, like reason hidden in the child. She loves, she is loved, here she is a woman, she reveals herself; it is love that reveals her, it is love that manifests her hitherto mysteriously veiled sex. But at the same time and indivisibly she is a wife; love having been shown, the couple exists under the holy law of equality; she is therefore only a woman for the one she loves and who loves her under this law; her liberty of love is therefore withdrawn from her at the same time as she uses it; this liberty is replaced by equality in love, by the equality of the couple. Marriage, love, therefore regains all its rights. It was through marriage that the condition of women was improved; it is through marriage, equality in love, that the emancipation of women will truly take place.

From our point of view, we must say to women: You have the right to equality, in two distinct capacities, as human persons and as wives. As wives, you are our equals; because love itself is equality. As human beings, your cause is that of all, it is the same as that of the people; it is linked to the great revolutionary cause, that is to say to the general progress of humankind. You are our equals, not because you are women, but because there are no longer slaves or serfs.

This is the truth that must be told to men and women; but it is to distort this truth and transform it into error to say to women: You are a sex apart, a sex in possession of love. Emancipate yourself, that is to say, use and abuse love. The woman thus transformed into an immodest Venus loses both her dignity as a human person, and her dignity as a woman, that is to say as a being capable of forming a human couple under the holy law of love.

We see that we are far, infinitely far from sharing the system in the name of which there has been so much noise, in recent years, about the emancipation of women, and given to this emancipation a turn that is, in our opinion, pernicious. But we nevertheless adopt with all our hearts the truth that inspired it, namely, the equality of the two sexes. Well! In fact, who does not feel this equality today, and who does not remain in agreement with it? Who today believes in the myth of Eve taken from Adam's rib? Who would dare to decide today what Milton decided so boldly, not yet two centuries ago, that woman is an inferior being who cannot elevate herself to God by herself; that Eve can only know God through Adam; that he alone of the two of them is the

guide and the beacon in their common march towards the infinite Being; that he only reports to God, while she reports directly to him and to God through him:

“He for God only, she for God by him.”

No, the Genesis of the old Jew Moses is as false on this point and as abandoned today as the theology, borrowed from the same source, of the Protestant Milton. Eve is the equal of Adam; the original priority is a chimera. The two faces of God in creation are co-eternal. Love supposes two, can only exist with two, and the two united by love eternally reproduce in time and space the divine Trinity. Children of love therefore, if we suppose them to be created, Adam and Eve both existed before their birth; for they pre-existed as equals in their cause. They are only the two uncoupled halves of the mysterious androgyne. Thus nature still shows us the two principles united and forming only one being in almost the entire plant kingdom and in the lowest ranks of animality. But it is not only in her cause in God that Eve is Adam's equal. In the divine sense of things, equality between her and him has always existed. Created his equal, she always remained his equal in the divine manifestation which generated, through successive phases, the world of Humanity. Yes, beneath this apparent human inequality in which she has been classified until now, she really shared equality; because she had not only equality of suffering, but the same effective potentiality as man. She shared with man all the painful crises of the successive education of the human race; she therefore deserved as much as he, and did as much as he. Is it not in fact obvious, I repeat, that it is largely love that, from the law of slavery, has made us pass, through a thousand revolutions, to the law of equality? Woman has therefore paid her painful share to the common cause: if we are free, it is partly because of her; let her be free through us.

But is she? Is she treated as an equal by us? As a wife, does she find equality in love and marriage? As a human person, does she find equality in the city? That is the question.

Now, I will not say to you: Examine the facts, see what is happening; but I will tell you: Just open the Code, and see if this Code, which should be the ideal of justice and morality, and which apparently reflects our highest and noblest ideas, does not violate in the first place, in the most brutal way, the equality of women as wives.

Our civil law is, regarding women, a model of absurd contradictions. According to Roman law, the woman lived perpetually under guardianship: at least in this legislation everything was in perfect agreement; the woman was still a minor there. We declare her, in a multitude of cases, as free as man. For her, no more general guardianship or fiction of guardianship: her age of majority is fixed; she is capable of inheriting by herself; she inherits in equal portions; she owns and disposes of her property; there is even more, in the community between spouses we admit the separation of property. But is it a question of the very bond of marriage, where it is no longer wealth that is at stake, but where it is a question of us and our mothers, of us and our sisters, of us and our daughters. Oh! then we are intractable in our laws, and we no longer admit equality; we want the woman to declare herself our inferior, our servant, to swear obedience to us. Truly we value money more than love; we have more consideration for bags of crowns than for human

dignity: because we emancipate women as proprietors; but as women, our law declares them inferior to us.

However, it is the link where the equality of woman with man is most evident, the link where, so to speak, this equality bursts forth, where it is so necessary to proclaim that without it this link does not exist. But, by an absurd contradiction, our civil law chooses this moment to proclaim the inferiority of women; it condemns her to obedience, makes her swear a false oath, and abuses love to make her outrage love.

It will be, I have no doubt, for future ages, the characteristic sign of our moral state: this article of our laws that consecrates in such formal terms inequality in love. It will be said of us: They understood justice so little that they did not even understand love, which is justice in its most divine degree; they understood love so little that they did not even include justice in it, and in their book of justice, in their Code, the formula of marriage, the only sacrament of which they still had some idea, instead of consecrating equality, consecrated inequality; instead of union, disunion; instead of the love that equalizes and identifies, I don't know what contradictory and monstrous relationship, based both on identity and on inferiority and slavery. Yes, like these formulas from the law of the Twelve Tables that we cite today, when we want to prove the barbarity of the ancient Romans, and their ignorance of justice, this article of our Codes will one day be cited to characterize our rudeness and our ignorance; for the absence of a high notion of justice is as marked there as the absence of a high notion of love.

Everything follows from this in relation to the condition of women, or rather everything is linked to this point: for will we respect the equality of women as human persons, when we are foolish enough to deny her this equality as a wife? Are women today really, as human beings, treated as equals to men? I don't want to go into this vast subject. I limit myself to a single question: What education do women receive? You treat them like you treat the people. To them too you leave the old religion that no longer suits you. These are children who are kept in the vest for as long as possible, as if this were not the right way to deform them, to destroy both the rectitude of their spirit and the candor of their soul. What does society do for them anyway? What careers does it give them access to? And yet, it is obvious, for those who think about it, that our arts, our sciences, our industry, will make as much new progress when women are called up, as they did, a few centuries ago, when the serfs were called. You complain of the misery and misfortune that weigh on your sad societies: abolish the castes that still exist, abolish the caste in which you keep half of the human race confined.

CHAPTER V.

The present evil of society results from the struggle between this principle and its opposite.

We have just reviewed society in all its aspects. Man being indivisible sensation-sentiment-knowledge, and not being anything else, society is composed of three spheres corresponding to these three faces of our nature, and it is entirely included in these three spheres. These three spheres, which penetrate each other and which never exist without one another, like the three faculties to which they correspond, are, 1. the social world of sensation, that is to say of manifestation, activity, reciprocal act, convention, contract; 2. the social world of sentiment, that is to say of the invisible and not yet manifested attraction that unites and brings together the different members of society, and leads them to contract with each other; 3. the social world of knowledge, that is to say, of the awareness that we have of our feelings and our actions, as well as of the feelings and actions of others, and that we communicate to each other. But no society can subsist unless there is a certain regulation in these three worlds, where the life of each of its members is exercised and developed. Hence the right, the right that is truly the idea that man, in each era, makes himself, and which he recognizes for his law. Right in the domain of knowledge generates religious right; right in the domain of feeling produces moral right or mores; right in the active practice of life constitutes civil and political right. Now, we have seen, in each of these three parts of the right, equality proclaimed as the law, that is to say as the only reasonable principle and the only criterion of justice that we have today.

In the sphere of society that corresponds to the act (*political and civil right*, the ancient *temporal power*, including political legislation proper, the regulation of industry and commerce, the civil and military hierarchy, civil, criminal and penal justice), equality has been formulated everywhere, and no other principle is applicable today: what is consistent with equality is just and reasonable; what is contrary to it is unfair and absurd.

In the sphere of society that corresponds to intelligence (*religious right*, the ancient *spiritual power*), same proclamation and same adhesion.

Finally, in the sphere of society that corresponds to sentiment (*moral right* or mores, that is to say what formerly temporal power, usurped by Caesar or by a caste, and spiritual power, usurped by the Pope or by the Clergy, left to the individual for all), same proclamation, same adhesion, same axiom.

Whichever way we turn, it seems that we will grasp and feel Equality. False appearance, deceptive mirage! it is the inequality that we embrace. Equality, Equality! I only hear this cry resounding around me, and I see everywhere only shocking inequality, crude despotism, and shameful slavery.

And what is most awful is that we all have the feeling of a better world, precisely because the only principle of reason and justice that we recognize today is Equality. The Genoese inscribed on the walls of their prisons and on the irons of the condemned the word *libertas*. Condemned as we

are to inequality, how is it that we have written the word *equality* everywhere? We therefore treat ourselves as the Genoese treated their prisoners and their galley slaves!

Yes, indeed, we are poor condemned people. I spoke above of these unfortunate women who seemed to me to inhabit one of the circles of hell. I admit that sometimes society as a whole, with its ideal of Equality and its reality of slavery, seems to me like hell with its infinite circles. "Seek not hell outside the world," says the great poet Lucretius admirably; "it is in society that it is found:

"Atque ea nimirum quæcunque Acherunte profundo
"Proditæ sunt esse, in vita sunt omnia nobis."

Are they not, in fact, in a circle of hell, all these unfortunate people who are burdened by infamous, hereditary poverty, and who see the word *Equality* written everywhere? Why are they told that there is only one race, when, from their hard and incessant work, they feel that there are two, and are uncertain if they are themselves of the race of Abel or that of Cain, they prove at least by their sufferings that in fact the sons of Adam stained the cradle of Humanity with blood, and that Cain killed his brother. It is them that the poet painted when he shows us Ugolino and his sons eternally reproducing their torture of hunger, where the father saw his children die before him: a symbol a thousand times more poignant than the ancient figure of Tantalus starving and dying of thirst in the middle of the waves and the fruits. For you would still willingly suffer hunger and thirst like Tantalus, in the midst of the luxury that surrounds you and the wealth that you produce without being able to participate in it, Proletarians, but to suffer like Ugolin, to see your children turn pale, these children as beautiful as those of the tyrant who keeps you confined in the Tower, and to feel them devoured by this hunger that gnaws at your insides, that is what is dreadful and truly worthy of hell!

And doesn't the second sphere, that of sentiment, also have its tortures and its figures of the damned? Are they not also in the circles of hell, all those who today seek life in love with an ardent soul? Ixion, the symbol of the ancients, pursued the goddess of the air in vain: the object of his love did not yet exist on earth, for the woman was only a child and a slave; he therefore sought it in the sky, and he only embraced the clouds. In Dante, the woman, the wife, is no longer a dream, it is a real existence; the lover sees his lover and knows her, he knows that Françoise de Rimini exists: but an insurmountable barrier separates them, and they look at each other sadly. Today the tyrannical hand, the hand armed with a sword, which came from behind and separated the two lovers, is no more. Why then does their torment still last?

And in the third sphere, that of intelligence, what new tortures the poets of our time have shown us! Intelligence is no longer a slave; Prometheus is no longer chained to his rock; he has broken his chains, or they have been broken for him, and he walks the earth. But is he delivered for this? Oh, no! He has become Faust, who evokes demons, and who only gathers evil from his knowledge; he has become Manfred (the free man,⁵ the emancipated man), who desperately climbs the mountain peaks, without the vulture ceasing to devour his heart.

⁵ *Freedman*, affranchi.

It is because we are, as they say, between two worlds, between a world that is ending and a new world that is beginning. We have proclaimed Equality in the sphere of activity, and we have not been able to organize the world of activity according to this principle: hence a duality, right and fact, which generates our torture. We have proclaimed Equality in the sphere of sentiment, and we have not been able to organize the world of sentiment in accordance with this principle: hence a duality, right and fact, which tears our souls. We have proclaimed equality in the sphere of intelligence, and we were unable to organize the free communion of intelligences: hence a duality, right and fact, which pursues us and makes us eternally unhappy.

Neither activity, nor feeling, nor intelligence, are therefore satisfied in us by this world that we have before our eyes.

There are truly two men in each of us, two tendencies, two different lives. The two political parties that divide us, the party of the old regime and the revolutionary party, are only the image of what is happening in each of us: our civil discords are only the reflection of the internal discord of our soul. There are two men, I say, in us; there is the future, there is the past; there is the man of the law of equality, and the man of the law of servitude. Our soul, our reason, only understands Equality as an ideal; but our practical life only realizes inequality, and our eyes do not see anything else.

So here is the problem: Was today's society, with this duality that divides it, born viable, yes or no? Which principle will triumph to the point of leading to a practice? Is it equality or inequality? If it is inequality, quickly plunge us back into the darkness of the centuries that passed before this ideal appeared to us. If it is Equality, then march towards the realization of this ideal.

It seems, in fact, a child who has been torn from the maternal womb by a cesarean operation, and who has been plunged alive back into the womb of his expired mother, not daring to entrust him to the light of heaven. Isn't this bloody revolution followed by twenty years of war quite a beautiful Caesarean operation? Can the new Humanity that you have before your eyes, I ask, remain thus between life and death? Does it not have new conditions of existence, and can it not follow them? What doctors are you, who persist in making it live the fetal life, when all the springs of this life are broken, when it needs a new environment, a new life! Hurry up; if you persist, death in turn will seize it.

That is the problem, I said. There is here the question of Hamlet, the question of the passage from one life to another, the question of death and resurrection: *To be or not to be, that is the question.*

But, whatever one may think of the future result of this situation in the world, no one at least can refuse this evidence and this conclusion, that present society, in whatever relation one considers it, has no other basis than the idea of Equality. If it does not have this basis, it must be declared that it has none. But in vain you would deny that it even has this basis, and would you pretend to push Pyrrhonism so far as to recognize, in so many laws and proclamations, only facts. These are facts, you say. Yes, but these facts imply a cause; behind these facts, beneath these facts, there is a reason for these facts; in the mind of each man who contributes to these facts (and the

whole of society contributes to them, either by wanting them or by accepting them without resisting), there is an idea that causes and generates these facts.

You ask me what this idea is. The answer is easy. In the past, to know what a man had the right to be in society, we asked of what blood, of what caste he was born. Today all caste is overthrown, the blood of one man is considered as noble as that of another, and the sole title of citizen justifies all ambitions. It is recognized that, by the very fact that a man is a citizen, he is virtually entitled to all the advantages and all the honors of the city. This new, strange, incredible belief, if we compare it to the ancient beliefs of the human race, this belief that has not been around for a hundred years is nevertheless already engraved in all souls, and this is why it shows itself in the facts, We think about this idea before practicing it; then we practice it, badly it is true, but we practice it, or we imagine ourselves practicing it. We no longer believe in races, we believe in all men, in the nation in general, and we have introduced Equality into the Penal Code, into the Civil Code, and even into political law.

We haven't gone beyond that, you will say; so that is enough; the limit is found, Equality actually reigns where it has the right to reign, and all is accomplished.

Such reasoning is madness! You admit a principle, you will be forced to admit its consequences. A principle embraces within itself a multitude of consequences that are only revealed successively. A principle is a force that marches like a conqueror: *Vires acquies eundo*. Once an idea is deposited in the human soul, it germinates, it develops, it grows every day, and eventually rises to the heavens.

Agree that Equality is not only this fact that we have before our eyes, this fact of equality before the Penal Code and before the Civil Code, but that Equality is an idea before being a fact, a belief which has already ordered and carried out certain consequences, and which may well carry out others.

CHAPTER VI.

Conclusion.

I believe I have demonstrated in the previous chapters that it is recognized today by the human mind: 1. that a man has rights in his sole capacity as a man, which amounts exactly to saying that a man has *virtually* the same rights as any other man; 2. that any member of the city has rights in his sole capacity as a citizen, which also amounts to saying that a citizen has *virtually* the same rights as any other citizen.

This is the recognized and demonstrated right. What does it matter the limit that our current ignorance imposes on this right that arises from the quality of man or the quality of citizen! This right is recognized: time will develop it.

Today you arbitrarily limit this right, and you say, by virtue of the present: Man, in this capacity of man, the citizen, in this capacity of citizen, has the right only to this or that thing. I say to you, in the name of the future: The right of man as a man, the right of the citizen as a citizen, is more extensive than you make it; man, in this capacity of man, the citizen, in this capacity of citizen, has the right to more than you think.

So be careful not to confuse the right with its current limit. Right, this infinite potentiality that results from the character of man and the character of citizen, will always have restrictions and limits. But there will be legitimate and illegitimate, reasonable and unfounded reasons. These two causes of restrictions on the right must be clearly distinguished. We must not confuse the necessary limits ordered by reason itself, with the temporary limits that ignorance and error can bring today, and which our efforts, on the contrary, must tend to make disappear.

Suspend, as much as you like, your judgment on the legitimate consequences of the principle; but admit the principle and the necessity of its legitimate consequences. Recognize then, by a true act of faith:

That, in the order of nature as it reveals itself today to our intelligence, man is equal to man, and that the legitimate consequences of this principle, whatever they may be, will be realized;

That in the city, as we understand it today, the citizen is equal to the citizen, and that the legitimate consequences of this principle, whatever they may be, will be realized.

You have to be blind, once again, to imagine that our current society, so full of suffering and scourges, has discovered the Herculean limits of justice, the *nec plus ultra* in equity; you have to have a triple blindfold over your eyes to dare to say that all the applications of a principle as new in the world as Equality have been made; and, on the other hand, only a fool can believe that the consequences of this principle can be overcome by violence or evaded by trickery. It is believing, in other words, that divine creation will stop. So stop the movement in the universe, stop the stars in their progress, prevent the stone from falling.