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The REVOLUTIONARY IDEAS *of the* MARQUIS DE SADE

The

REVOLUTIONARY IDEAS

of the

MARQUIS DE SADE

by

GEOFFREY GORER

With a foreword by

PROFESSOR J. B. S. HALDANE, F.R.S.

1934

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FOREWORD

EITHER of two courses is open to the reader who wishes to preserve his self-respect. He may dismiss this book unread as another attempt by a high-brow to whitewash a monster. Or he may read it. He will then discover that if de Sade on several occasions indulged in abnormal pleasures, he also risked his life to save that of a woman who had caused him to be imprisoned for thirteen years; that if a psychologist has attached his name to a form of cruelty, he was actually an inveterate opponent of capital punishment.

When the monster legend is dissipated, it becomes clear that de Sade was a very remarkable and original thinker. To-day we find the philosophical fathers of the French Revolution slightly ridiculous because they generally assumed that with the abolition of a particular set of abuses the golden age would return. De Sade saw a great deal further. He had no illusions about the natural goodness of man, but he believed that with complete economic and sexual equality human conditions could be greatly bettered. He anticipated the views of Malthus on population, and the tolerance of the Danish penal code as regards sexual behaviour.

In certain other respects he went far beyond even the most 'advanced' social thinkers of the present day. Whether the attempt will ever be made to put his ideas on sexual morality into practice is doubtful. Nevertheless they are interesting because they are logical—less of a compromise with our existing morality than those of Plato or More. If de Sade had not passed twelve years in almost solitary confinement in the Bastille his political

system might have been more practical and have stood a greater chance of adoption. But it would have been less intellectually coherent, and therefore less interesting to the student of political ideas.

It is unlikely that the original documents on which Mr. Gorer's work is based will be made available to the public within our own time. For this reason his book will be absolutely indispensable to the student of political thought who wishes to trace the genesis of many ideas which are now accepted, and others which are still violently controversial. It will furnish intellectual ammunition to both sides. The conservatives will be able to say that sexual and economic equality are part of the same system of ideas as the tolerance of murder and rape. The radicals will find in de Sade a political thinker who foresaw with considerable accuracy the failure of the French Revolution to achieve liberty, equality and fraternity, and pointed to the causes of this failure.

Mr. Gorer has not attempted to disguise his sympathies, and it is probable that his book would have been less valuable had he done so. It would have been beyond the powers of one who did not share many of de Sade's opinions to reconstruct them, as he has done, from the fragmentary remains of his works. His bias is at least undisguised and can therefore be allowed for without difficulty.

As a biologist I cannot conclude without a few words on de Sade's outlook on sex. It was based on actual observation, and forms a contribution to the natural history of man. Unfortunately our knowledge of human biology is still so fragmentary that a comprehensive study of human erotics lacks an adequate background, and stands out as an obscenity. A man or woman who has studied the anatomy of the rest of the body can approach that of the reproductive system without undue excitement, and in the same way, when human physiology is

part of common knowledge, the physiology of sex will find its natural place in our intellectual equipment. And a study of its abnormalities will throw considerable light on the normal process, as it has already done in the hands of Freud.

The time will then have come when de Sade's novels will be appropriate for the educated public, and it may well be that he will be regarded not as a purveyor of filth, but as a man who was greatly in advance of his age in the range of his interests. It may be remarked that in no other form but fiction could his observations on human behaviour have been published 140 years ago. Meanwhile, Mr. Gorer has done a service to students of psychology in pointing out that de Sade must be regarded as a pioneer in their study, even though his work might have been of greater value had he been born a century later.

I do not wish to suggest that de Sade was a man of perfectly balanced mind, whose works are to be taken as a guide either to thought or morality. He would perhaps have been unhappy in any age. But he was doubly unfortunate, not only in incurring imprisonment under the ancien régime but in surviving the period of the French Revolution during which some at least of his ideas were put into practice. If Mr. Gorer's book had no other justification, it would deserve an audience because it renders a posthumous justice to a very remarkable writer who was the victim both of himself and of his fellow men.

J. B. S. HALDANE.

PREFACE

Two excuses are usually demanded for a book about the Marquis de Sade; firstly a justification for writing at all about such a monster, and alternatively the reason for adding yet another book to the existing quantity concerning him. My excuse for both actions is that I have found the unfolding of his ideas extremely interesting, and hope others will do the same; and that without exception all the books already published deal exclusively with his life and legend, and with the mechanics of the plots of his novels, occasionally with a faint and distorted summary of his ideas concerning sex, but never with any development of his theories either on that or any other subject.

I claim, therefore, that this is the only book in any language which has presented the ideas of this extraordinary man in any way; and the only one which allows the general public to judge him through his own words. To as great an extent as possible I have quoted him *verbatim*: and to avoid making a bilingual book I have translated him into English, paying more attention to the accuracy than to the elegance of the translation. The quotations have involved me in an awkward code of dots; de Sade himself frequently employs . . . three dots for his own effects; so I have been driven to use four dots . . . . to indicate the omission of some words in a sentence and five dots . . . . . to indicate the omission of complete sentences.

I imagine the chief reason why there has been no book on the ideas of de Sade during the hundred and twenty years since his death is due to the difficulty of obtaining

copies of his works and to the astounding obscenity of many of these works once obtained. (Throughout this book I distinguish 'obscenity' and 'pornography' in the same way as D. H. Lawrence did—obscenity referring to the subjects discussed and language used, pornography to the titillating intentions of the writer.) From most booksellers a demand for his works will produce an ignorant stare, violent indignation, or the leering offer of the kind of pornographic works of which de Sade said "these miserable little volumes composed in cafés or brothels demonstrate simultaneously two voids in their authors—their heads and their stomachs are equally empty."[1*]

By chance I happened to find copies of *Aline et Valcour* and of *Juliette* on the open shelves of booksellers in Cambridge and London respectively and bought them out of curiosity. As they were respectable shops the books were not outrageously dear. In *Juliette* at first reading I only found that boring and nauseous perversity I had been led to expect, but *Aline et Valcour*, which on account of its lack of obscenity has been almost completely neglected by people writing about de Sade, appeared to me so full of pregnant ideas that I returned to *Juliette* with new eyes. I then found that if the obscenity can be, if not overlooked, taken in one's stride, there was presented a Weltanschauung of curious originality and force. I thereupon set about trying to collect the rest of his works with indifferent success; and had it not been for the energies of one man and the great kindness of another I should probably still be searching. Monsieur Maurice Heine has since the war been collecting and editing de Sade's books and manuscripts in limited editions and various magazines, which has placed at our disposal a great deal of hitherto unknown material; and Mr. C. R. Dawes, whose book on de Sade is within its

* For the sake of tidiness I have placed all references to sources at the end of the book.

self-imposed limits the best yet written on the subject, responded to a plea for assistance from a complete stranger with a kindness for which I can find no adequate thanks.

This summer, in a discouraged rest from the vain efforts to get a hearing as a playwriter, I decided to try to systematise de Sade's ideas with the double object of trying to clear my own head by measuring my own ideas against those of an original and extreme thinker, and to gain some understanding of the events around us, both at home and abroad, which seemed to correspond so closely with the circumstances depicted by de Sade. This book is the outcome. I have found that it has given for myself pretty well the results I wanted; if it succeeds in doing so for anyone else I shall be gratified.

Before the discussion of de Sade's ideas I have placed a short biography and an attempted criticism of his writings. The biography was necessary to situate him historically—the development of his thought is bound up with the history of his times—and to attempt to dispel the bluebeard legend surrounding him. As far as I have been able I have given the main sure facts about him and nothing else; I have not kept any of the legends and in only one case have I gone into any detail. That is the story of the scandal of Marseilles, of which the true facts were first brought to light by M. Maurice Heine this summer; and I thought it was advisable to try to dispel the false versions which have to now perforce been given of this incident. I have not mentioned the other details of his sexual life which are now known as they do not seem to me to have any importance or interest except for impertinent and rather morbid curiosity. The chief originality of this chapter lies in the autobiographical quotations which, with one exception, have not (as far as I know) been collected together or noted before.

In trying to give an account of de Sade's intentions and their result in his works I have done a thing which has

never been attempted to my knowledge so far. The plots of the main works have been given several times, but, as my analysis of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* shows, this can better than any other way disguise the spirit and the bearing of a book. The rest of the book is simply exposition.

Many of his ideas are still so novel and so revolutionary that they must inevitably offend some people. I have tried my utmost to reduce this offence to the minimum without distorting his real thought. I may enter a caveat that I am presenting the ideas of de Sade, not my own; I have been as objective as I can and cannot accept responsibility for his theories, some of which shock my sensibilities as much as they can shock any reader's.

The chief pitfall of which I have been conscious is the danger of picking out phrases and sentences which suit my purpose and distorting them away from their context. To guard against doing this, or the suspicion of having done it, I have given some long and uninterrupted quotations, of which perhaps the whole is not apposite to the matter discussed but which illustrate the tendencies of the passage. When I have wished to give my own opinion I have done so in the first person, thinking it dishonourable to hide behind the impersonal or editorial attitude and undignified to squirm behind the Chinese fan of 'the present miserable author.'

When I first contemplated this book I thought in my ignorance of history that it would be possible to say definitely whether de Sade was original or not in advancing his ideas, such as the theory of the optimum population, or of equal rights for men and women; but I soon abandoned this attempt and have contented myself with stating his ideas and leaving to those who are more learned in such matters than I am the question of priority. The priority of statement of some political ideas which I claim for him is justified by Guido de Ruggiero's *History*

of European Liberalism: his originality on the subjects of psychology and sex is unquestioned, for such subjects were only discussed in the century after his death.

This book is open to attack from two different sources; from those who consider such a monster better buried in oblivion and who will find in the ideas I have attempted to assemble but further proofs of his monstrosity; and from that smaller group, with its nucleus in the Surréelistes, who will consider that any attempt to rationalise and explain the arch-criminal and arch-rebel is blasphemy. To both such possible detractors I will reply in the words de Sade used in the preface to *Aline et Valcour*:

"Nevertheless we will have critics, contradictors and enemies without a doubt:

> It is a danger to love men,
> A crime to enlighten them.

So much the worse for those who will condemn this work, and will not feel in what spirit it has been made: slaves of prejudice and habit, they show that they are swayed solely by opinion, and the torch of philosophy will never shine for them."[2]

August—October, 1933.

SOME PRELIMINARY JUDGMENTS

SOME PRELIMINARY JUDGMENTS

. . . . *Le* MONSTRE-AUTEUR . . .

Restif de la Bretonne. 1797.

Readers acquainted with the Justine *and* Juliette *of the Marquis de Sade will comprehend my horror and indignation at the style of amusement these dens afforded. The volumes referred to (the most blasphemous and obscene ever painted and which came hot from hell soon after the date of this letter) are filled with the records of experiments tried for the purpose of exciting by every species of torture the most unheard of debaucheries.*

W. Beckford. Note added to a letter written in 1784. (*It may be noted that de Sade had published nothing at this date.*)

Cet atroce et sanglant blasphémateur, cet obscène historien des plus formidables rêveries qui aient jamais agité la fièvre des démons, le Marquis de Sade. . . . . Croyez-moi, qui que vous soyez, ne touchez pas à ces livres, ce serait tuer de vos mains le sommeil, le doux sommeil . . . J. Janin. 1834.

Ce frénétique et abominable assemblage de tous les crimes et de toutes les saletés. F. Soulié. 1837.

De Sade—une des gloires de la France—un martyr.

P. Borel. 1839.

J'oserais affirmer, sans crainte d'être démenti, que Byron et de Sade (je demande pardon du rapprochement) ont peut-être été les deux plus grands inspirateurs de nos modernes, l'un affiché et visible, l'autre clandestin—pas trop clandestin. Saint-Beuve. 1843.

That illustrious and ill-requited benefactor of humanity.

Usually the work is either a stimulant for an old beast or an emetic for a young man, instead of a valuable study to rational curiosity.

I only regret that in justly attacking my Charenton *you have wilfully misrepresented the source. I should have bowed to the judicial sentence if instead of "Byron with a difference" you had said "De Sade with a difference." The poet, thinker, and man of the world from whom the theology of my poem is derived was a greater than Byron.* He *indeed, fatalist or not, saw to the bottom of gods and men.*

Did he lie? did he laugh? does he know it?
Now he lies out of reach, out of breath,
Thy prophet, thy preacher, thy poet? . . .

A. C. Swinburne (between 1860 and 1880).

Il faut toujours en revenir à de Sade, c'est-à-dire à l'homme naturel, pour expliquer le mal. C. Baudelaire.
Journaux Intimes.

Flaubert, une intelligence hantée par de Sade. . . . .
Causerie sur de Sade, auquel il revient toujours.
Journal des Goncourts.

The Marquis de Sade is perhaps one of the most extraordinary men who ever lived and a very interesting subject for a psychological study; Nature has produced some strange abortions, both physical and mental, but probably never a greater mental monstrosity than de Sade.
Pisanus Fraxi (H. S. Ashbee).
1880.

Le Marquis de Sade fut l'homme indiqué pour synthétiser et pousser jusques à ses derniers limites l'art de la spermocracie anormale et monstrueuse. Il dépassa dans ce genre toute l'antiquité, il fixa dans un monde d'horreurs les colonnes d'Hercule des démentes priapées. Jamais heureusement on n'ira désormais aussi loin, de Sade aura borné l'horizon du champ érotique. Octave Uzanne. 1901.

C'est le 2 juin, 1740 qui vit naître un des hommes les plus remarquables du dixhuitième siècle, disons même de l'humanité en général. . . . Les Œuvres du Marquis de Sade constituent un objet de

l'histoire et de la civilisation autant que de la science médicale. . . . Il y a encore un autre point de vue qui fait des ouvrages du Marquis de Sade pour l'historien qui s'occupe de la civilisation, pour le médecin, le jurisconsulte, l'économiste et le moraliste un veritable puits de science et de notions nouvelles.

Eugène Dühren (Ivan Bloch). 1901, 1904.

Cet homme qui parut ne compter pour rien durant tout le dixneuvième siècle, pourrait bien dominer le vingtième . . . Le Marquis de Sade, l'esprit le plus libre qui ait encore existé. . . . Le lecteur qui aborde ces romans ne remarque souvent que la lettre, qui est dégoutante, et l'analyse ci-dessous n'en peut malheureusement pas livrer l'esprit.

G. Apollinaire. 1909.

Sade, D. A. F. French licentious writer . . .

Encyclopædia Britannica. 13th Edition.

De Sade wrote according to his lights and though his ideas were extravagant he was at least sincere. It is just that, perhaps, which makes him such a sinister figure. Mere obscenity is always disgusting and nearly always dull; but there was much more than that here and he was savagely in earnest.

C. R. Dawes. 1927.

Je n'arrive pas à le prendre au sérieux.

P. Bourdin. 1929.

Un écrivain qu'il faut placer sans doute parmi les plus grands.

J. Paulhan. 1930.

Il y a donc lieu de croire que Sade, après avoir inquiété tout un siècle qui ne pouvait le lire, sera de plus en plus lu pour remédier a l'inquiètude du suivant. M. Heine. 1930.

Dello scrittore—non diciamo poi dello scrittore di genio—mancano al Sade le qualità più elementari. Poligrafo e pornografo a maggior titolo d'un Aretino, tutto il suo merito sta nell' aver lasciato dei documenti che rapresentano la fase mitologica infantile della psicopatologia: in forma fiabesca egli da la prima sistematologia delle perversioni.

M. Praz. 1930.

Hier also, wenn irgendwo, ist Sade unnormal, defekt. Statt der Spannung liegt Spaltung vor und zwar eine Spaltung die nicht mit Dämmerzuständen und Störungen des Bewusstseins verbunden ist. Er weicht dem Konflikt aus, verantwortet sich nicht vor sich selbst und empfindet nie die Notwendigkeit, sich zu ordnen. . . . . Wie man mit dieser doppelter Buchführung ein genialer Mensch wird zeigt Kierkegaard: wie ein negativer von armer nutzloser Tragik: Sade. O. Flake. 1930.

Rien en saurait plus tenir à l'écart de cette voix inouie ceux qui sont capables de l'entendre et ne méconnaitront jamais le sens profond de sa révelation. M. Heine. 1931.

That frenzied pornographer . . . . Sade was born in Paris in 1740 *and in* 1772 *was condemned to death for the sexual practices to which he has left his name. He made his escape and he was afterwards imprisoned at Vincennes and in the Bastille, where he wrote several phantastic romances in which his imagination dwelt upon those objects and scenes which excited and satisfied his peculiar sex-mania. He died insane in* 1814.

Desmond Macarthy. 1933.

I care not whether a man is Good or Evil; all that I care
Is whether he is a Wise man or a Fool.

W. BLAKE,
Jerusalem.

CHAPTER I

LIFE, 1740–1814

Si les hommes, en entrant dans la vie, savaient les peines qui les attendent: qu'il ne dépendit que d'eux de rentrer dans le néant, en serait-il un seul qui voulût remplir la carrière!

DE SADE,
Aline et Valcour.

The Bastille trembles . . .

And the den named Horror held a man
Chained hand and foot: round his neck an iron band, bound to the impregnable wall;
In his soul was the serpent coil'd round his heart, hid from the light, as in a cleft rock,
And the man was confined for a writing prophetic.

W. BLAKE,
The French Revolution.

"CONNECTED by my mother with the highest in the land; by my father with all that was most distinguished in Languedoc; born in Paris in the midst of luxury and abundance, I believed as soon as I could think that nature and fortune had joined together to cover me with gifts. I believed this because people had been foolish enough to say so to me and this absurd prejudice made me haughty, despotic, and quick to anger; it seemed to me that the whole world should give way to my caprices and that it was only necessary to form them for them to be satisfied. I will give you one example from my childhood to convince you of the dangerous principles that were so idiotically allowed to grow in me.

"Born and brought up in the palace of the illustrious

prince (a connection of my mother's) of nearly my age, I was encouraged to be with him as much as possible, so that my childhood friend should be useful to me all my life; but my vanity at the time, which didn't understand anything of this calculation, took offence one day in our childish games because he wanted to take something from me, and more especially because, doubtless with great reason, he thought his rank entitled him to it; I revenged myself by many reiterated blows, without any consideration stopping me; only force and violence could separate me from my adversary.

"At about that time my father was engaged in diplomatic negotiations; my mother went with him and I was sent to my grandmother in Languedoc whose too blind kindness encouraged in me all the faults I have mentioned.

"I returned to Paris to go to school, under the guidance of a firm and intelligent man, doubtless most suitable to shape my youth but whom unfortunately I did not stay with for long. War broke out. My people, in a hurry for me to serve, did not finish my education and I joined my regiment at an age when I should naturally have been going to school.

". . . . The campaigns opened and I venture to say I did well. The natural impetuosity of my character, the fiery soul I had received from nature only added further force and activity to that ferocious virtue called courage, doubtless incorrectly considered the only one necessary for a soldier.

"When our regiment was crushed in the penultimate campaign of that war we were sent to barracks in Normandy; from there my misfortunes began.

"I was just twenty-one; till then entirely occupied with the work of war, I had neither known my heart nor realised that it was sensitive. . . . . (He describes the

seduction and abandonment of a young girl of good family, the usual custom in the mess.)

"My father called me to Paris that winter and I hurried to him: his health was failing, and he wished to see me settled before he died; this project and the pleasures of the town diverted me. . . . . I spent two years in different pleasures. . . ."[1]

This is the account Valcour, the hero, gives of himself at the beginning of the novel *Aline et Valcour*; the details have nothing to do with the plot and correspond so entirely with what we know of de Sade that it is justifiable to treat them as autobiographical.

Louis-Donatien-François-Alphonse (or Aldonze—there is considerable ambiguity concerning de Sade's Christian names: an ambiguity which was later to cause him considerable inconvenience and danger during the later years of the Republic when one version of his name was inscribed on a list of émigrés.) Marquis and later Comte de Sade was born on the second of June, 1740, in the house of the great Prince Condé, who was a connection of his mother's. He was the first and apparently the only child of the Comte de Sade, Chevalier-comte de la Coste et de Mazan, Seigneur de Saumane, Lieutenant-général pour le roi de la Haute et Basse Bresse, Bugey, Valromey et Gex. The family, whose title of nobility dated from the first years of the fourteenth century, was one of the most important of Provence. One of de Sade's direct ancestors was Hugue de Sade, husband of the Laura who inspired Petrarch's delicate and platonic sonnets. It is more than usually pointed irony that the representatives of the two extremes of sexual imagination should be so directly joined.

De Sade's father was a typical grand seigneur, cold, restrained and formal to the highest degree. He was also

extremely extravagant and when he died left little behind him except inalienable land and debts. He had filled the post of Ambassador, first in Russia and later in London. His numerous brothers and sisters were with a single exception ecclesiastics.

At the age of four de Sade went to stop with his grandmother at Avignon; some time later he was given into the care of his uncle, the Abbé François de Sade, who had at that date withdrawn from the fashionable life in Paris to devote himself to the study of Petrarch at Vaucluse. The Abbé's researches on the family poet are said to be still useful to students.

In 1750 he went to the college of Louis-le-Grand, then the most famous in Paris, and stayed there for four years. There is a tradition, unverifiable as far as I can tell, but not improbable, that he was already developing his senses, becoming a good musician, dancer and fencer, and spending a great deal of time in the picture galleries of the Louvre. In later life his fondness of the arts continued; I have not been able to discover in what direction his musical taste lay, but in painting his preference went to the classical Italian masters, particularly Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese.

In 1754 the seven years' war with Germany broke out and he was sent to his regiment. He served with distinction, rising from sub-lieutenant in the royal regiment, to captain of a regiment of cavalry. Most of his time was spent in Germany, where he learned the language, and it is possible that he travelled further north. In 1761 he returned to France.

Nothing is known of the two following years. Possibly the story of the seduction and desertion of a young girl quoted above is true. His return to Paris and his enjoyment of the pleasures of the capital certainly is.

In 1763 the father of de Sade decided that his son, now aged nearly twenty-three, should settle down and therefore arranged a marriage for him. The bride he chose was Renée, the twenty-year-old eldest daughter of Monsieur de Montreuil, Président de la Cour des Aides—a title corresponding roughly to that of high court judge. The Montreuils were extremely rich, though correspondingly avaricious, and Renée's *dot* was munificent. They were striking examples of the rise of the 'robinocracie,' the preponderance of lawyers which marked the end of the ancien régime. The Président was almost entirely eclipsed by his wife, who managed the affairs of her family and of everyone with whom she came in contact with an energy, an unscrupulousness and a zeal which demand a certain admiration. She was extremely influential at the Court and she possessed a charm which de Sade averred she must have got from the devil. She had a very strong family pride, and excused her most inexcusable actions by pointing to family interests.

The first time de Sade went to visit his intended bride it happened that Renée was indisposed and he was left to be entertained by one of her younger sisters, the thirteen-year-old Louise. Louise was blonde and lively, well developed in every way; she entertained the young marquis by singing and playing on the harp in a touching and accomplished manner; by the end of the interview the two young people were deeply in love and de Sade had taken a dislike to his intended bride before he had met her. His entreaties to be allowed to marry Louise were repulsed both by his parents and hers. Louise was easily her mother's favourite child and Madame de Montreuil had for this daughter a most jealous affection. It was possibly this jealousy which first aroused the deep dislike for her son-in-law which drove her to attack and

ruin him to the best of her ability during the next thirty years. She is, incidentally, one of the only two women of whom we have any record who resisted de Sade's great charm. The other was the dancer Mademoiselle Rivière of the Opera, whom in the autumn of 1767 de Sade was unable to persuade to spend with him at his house at Arcueil those evenings when she was not appearing.

Succumbing to family pressure de Sade married Renée on the seventeenth of May, 1763, in circumstances of the greatest pomp, in the presence of the King and Queen and most of the members of the Court. Presumably a short honeymoon followed the marriage, for a son was born in the following year, but almost immediately he turned to debauchery, and in September of the same year he was arrested for the first time and imprisoned in Vincennes.

Beyond the fact that de Sade was concerned in some orgy which made a considerable scandal at the time, nothing is known, or, to my knowledge, even guessed at about this first contact with the law. He was apparently imprisoned for about two months, after which he was released, perhaps by his wife's intercession, but exiled for nearly a year to L'Aigle, in Normandy.

It is from this period that dates the first writing we possess of de Sade. It is a letter to the governor of the prison and in view of future developments is worth quoting at some length. I do not think it is hypocritical.

"Unhappy as I am here, sir," the letter goes, "I do not complain. I deserved the vengeance of God and feel it: to bemoan my sins and weep over my faults are my only employ. Alas, God could have annihilated me without giving me time to repent: what thanks must I give Him for allowing me to return to the fold. Sir, I pray you to allow me the means to accomplish this by permitting me to see a priest. Through his good offices and my own

sincere repentance I hope soon to be fit to approach the holy Sacraments, whose complete neglect was the first cause of my fall. . . . .

"I hope also that you will be good enough to refrain from telling my family of the true reason of my imprisonment: I would be utterly destroyed in their estimation.

"I venture to remark also that I was married on the seventeenth of May and can assure you that I only set foot in that house in June. Then I went to the country for three months. . . . However short may have been the period of my sins I am none the less guilty: it has been long enough to enrage the supreme Being whose just anger I now feel."

The governor noted on the letter that a priest had been sent to him.

In September, 1764, de Sade returned to Paris. It is likely that at that time he was already pursuing those ingenious experiments in sensuality that have since made him infamous, for in that year Police-Inspector Marais reports that he has strictly advised la Brissaut, without further explanations, not to provide him with girls to go with him to his little house. It is most probable that during the next three years he took part in the fashionable life in Paris and was then given the sobriquet of 'the divine marquis,' in emulation of the divine Aretino, for his father died in 1767 and he then succeeded to the title of Comte. He was still nominally in the army; he did not retire till the age of thirty-one, in 1771, when he held the rank of mestre de camp, the equivalent of colonel in a cavalry regiment.

In October, 1767, his reputation was already bad, for at that date the police-inspector notes, "We will soon be hearing again of the *horrors* of the Comte de Sade." At

Easter of the following year the affair Keller occurred, and his reputation was fixed for ever.

This affair has been so much written about that it is unnecessary to describe it again at length. Those curious to know the full details should see the books referred to at the end of the chapter, or better still the appropriate letters of the Marquise du Deffand to Horace Walpole which are the only contemporary account of the affair. Apparently de Sade was solicited in Paris by a widow of thirty, took her to his house near Arcueil, forced her to strip, whipped her, anointed her with some ointment and put her comfortably to bed. The woman was frightened escaped from the window by knotted sheets, and complained to the police. She said he had also cut her about with a small knife but was unable to show any scars two days later, which makes the fact improbable. For although contusions might leave no surface marks after treatment by some ointment, there is no known salve which will make cuts disappear. De Sade was probably being funny when he said to the police that far from being reprimanded he deserved public thanks for calling attention to an ointment which could miraculously heal all wounds. In any case the affair caused an enormous scandal. The magistrates threw themselves with gusto on to such a savoury case; the chief judge was the Président de Maupéou, a sworn enemy of de Sade's father-in-law. In a humorous story de Sade wrote about this persona enemy later;[2] he makes one of the enemies of de Maupéou remark, "Recall to the memory of the judges of Paris . . . . that famous adventure of 1769 (*sic*) when their hearts far more moved to pity by the whipped bottom of a street-woman than by the people, whose fathers they style themselves and whom nevertheless they let die of hunger, determined them to accuse a young officer who on his

return from the sacrifice of the best years of his life in the service of his king found his only laurels in the humiliation prepared for him by the greatest enemies of the country he had been defending." It is also possible that Sartine, the infamous Sartine who made a fortune by his corruption and then retired from office on the ground that he was ruined, the Sartine whom de Sade never tired of attacking, was already on his tracks.

The results of this case however were not very serious for de Sade. He was condemned to pay Rose Keller a hundred louis (with which dowry she remarried a month later) and was imprisoned for six weeks, first at Saumur and then at Lyons. He was then released through the good offices of his wife and his mother-in-law on condition that he should not return to Paris but should live at the family property of La Coste, near Marseilles.

For the next three years he lived there luxuriously but discreetly. His wife was with him some of the time, either at La Coste or at Saumane, a property of his in the neighbourhood. His two other children were born at that period. Part of the time, however, he had a dancer called La Beauvoisin living with him, and is said to have introduced her as his wife, while his real wife was in Paris. He had a private troupe of actors, who performed plays he wrote. There is still extant an invitation to a Monsieur Girard, dated January, 1772, asking him to come to the second performance of his comedy and asking for his frank criticism of his work. This is the first indication we have of de Sade's writing. For the rest of his life he was connected with the theatre as author, actor and producer, finding in it on different occasions relaxation, friendship, love, and even a means of subsistence.

At some time towards the end of this period his wife brought with her her young sister Louise, now a woman

of twenty-one, released from her convent. She probably considered that eight years should have been sufficient to damp their mutual love, but she was wrong.

In June of 1772 occurred the second important scandal in the life of de Sade, the scandal of the poisoned sweets. Until last year the truth about this affair had been completely unknown and all accounts of it have been far from the facts; but Maurice Heine, the untiring revealer of de Sade's life and works, has discovered the copies of the original indictment and published them in the review *Hippocrate* (Number One, March, 1933) together with the depositions of the witnesses. This article should be consulted for the full details.

De Sade went to Marseilles on some business, accompanied by his valet La Tour, a tall, pock-marked man dressed in sailor's clothes. Wishing to amuse himself without too much publicity he sent his servant to make all arrangements for him for two consecutive evenings; owing however to a subsequent supper arrangement the arrangements for the two evenings were compressed into one. He visited a woman called Marguerite Coste with his servant, whom, by some caprice, he called Monsieur le Marquis, while he himself was addressed as La Fleur. He gave the woman a number of sweets flavoured with aniseed and containing cantharides, enjoyed her in a simple way, since she refused more complicated ones, and left. Some time after the woman was taken extremely ill with a great deal of vomiting and continued in a critical state for some days before recovering.

The same day, probably a little earlier, had taken place another orgy, also arranged by the valet. Three girls were engaged from a bawd, but taken to a newer and more discreet part of the town, as the brothel was too public. There they were received one after the other by the

marquis and his valet and slightly beaten by him. They were then asked to beat him in his turn, and he took out of his pocket a whip made of parchment studded with big and little nails and covered with bloodstains. This was more than the girls could stand—soft-hearted and simple as most whores—so he had a twig broom sent for, and received from the three girls and his valet no less than eight hundred strokes, if the score he kept on the wall is not an exaggeration. He also bedded with the girls and his valet, treating the girls as his valet treated him, which so 'suffocated' the onlookers that they burst into tears. He also gave these girls some of the sweetmeats; one ate them, the others threw them away. The girl that ate them was also sick, though much less so than Marguerite Coste.

I have given this case in some detail (though very much modified and shortened as comparison with the article already quoted will show) as it is of very great interest for the study of de Sade. It is the only known account of his sexual habits and is as far removed as possible from what is ordinarily considered 'sadistic' behaviour. I do not think, however, that any generalisations can be made from the behaviour of this one day; de Sade was almost certainly exploring conscientiously and practically all possible extensions of sensual pleasure, from which he was to draw his theory and criticism some years later. Both his physical and mental courage were adequate to the task.

Within a week his arrest and that of the valet were ordered; but they had both left the country, de Sade at last accompanied by his dearly loved Louise. A few weeks later he and his valet were both condemned to death for poisoning (which was absurd: all the invalids were completely recovered) and sodomy, for which the

death penalty was no longer inflicted; de Sade was to be beheaded and the valet hanged after making public penance. In their absence they were condemned as defaulting and contumacious, and de Sade's property was seized.

The complete disproportion between the severity of the sentence and the alleged crime (it must be remembered that we only have the accounts of hostile witnesses) is so great that further explanations are needed. A variety are forthcoming.

Firstly, by an unfortunate coincidence, the Parlement at Aix, where the judgment took place, was under the influence of the same de Maupéou who had condemned de Sade in Paris four years before. This man appears to have been a puritan, with the salacious mind and bitter cruelty that one associates with puritanism. Also, as explained before, he was a personal enemy of de Montreuil, Sade's father-in-law, and anything which would disgrace his family would be of advantage to him. This would partially account for the continuance of the case, even after the 'poisoned' girls had withdrawn their complaints. It would also account for the charge, if true, de Sade brings against him[3] of manufacturing false evidence; he makes de Maupéou say in the story already referred to: "Well, wasn't it a scandalous affair? Didn't a thirteen-year-old valet whom we had bribed come and tell us, because we wished him to tell us, that that man was murdering whores in his château, didn't he tell us a story of Bluebeard which nurses to-day wouldn't deign to use to put their children to sleep?" In the same story he says[4] "Colic is an important illness at Marseilles and Aix, since we have seen a troop of idiots, fellows of this judge here, decide that some prostitutes who had the colic had been *poisoned*" and further:[5] "In 1772 a young noble-

man of the province wanted in playful revenge to whip a courtesan who had made him a bad present; this joke was treated as a criminal affair, as murder and poisoning, and this judge won all his colleagues over to this ridiculous opinion, destroyed the young man and had him condemned to death by contumacy, since they could not get hold of his person." These judgments of de Sade on his own condemnation, written in 1787, are interesting and have not as far as I know been pointed out before.

But there is also another possibility, equally mentioned by de Sade and also so far ignored; it is that the actual charge was merely an excuse, the real reason for his condemnation being political activities. The passage in question[6] is discussing the later capture of de Sade in Paris in 1777 and will be quoted at the appropriate time; when the judge (as always a favourite villain with de Sade, quite understandably) boasts of the way the accused was caught six years after the crime his interlocutor says, "'Sir, your story horrifies me: I suppose the man in question must have been guilty of high treason.' 'Not at all, writings against us magistrates . . . against kings; some other youthful adventures . . . . .'" and, lest any reader should fail to recognise the subject of this passage he adds a footnote, "Monsters capable of this horror, you grow pale as you recognise your victim. . . ."

The probability of this interpretation is encouraged by the fact that in March of the following year when he was in prison in Chambéry, the ambassador de la Marmora wrote to the governor "to keep the prisoner as close as possible, to prevent him flooding the public with his *terrible writings* and memoirs." Certainly the word 'memoirs' is ambiguous, but surely even at that period an ambassador would be more concerned with political than with immoral pamphlets.

Another reason which makes me think this likely is the letter from Mademoiselle de Rousset, the friend of his wife, who in 1780 succeeded after great risks in seeing the indictment against him. She writes: "By this bold stroke we have discovered that the Présidente is not so guilty as we had thought. He has deservedly even more powerful enemies. Before he can hope for anything some people must die and the others forget." This is certainly vague enough; but since in his debaucheries he seems to have been involved exclusively with whores, servants and peasants, his more powerful enemies must have been instigated by some other motive.

Before this new arrest in December of the same year de Sade and his sister-in-law had been enjoying in Italy their nine-year-long frustrated love. But not for long. Within a few weeks de Sade was alone again. It is not quite clear what happened. The generally accepted version is that Louise fell ill and died suddenly, at the age of twenty-two. There is a possibility however that they separated and that Louise returned home. Certainly a Mademoiselle de Launay, by which title Louise was known, was living until 1780, when she died of smallpox. If, however, Louise had died it is possible that her title had passed to a younger sister. The whole incident is obscure.

In any case the elopment had so infuriated Madame de Montreuil that she used all her influence at the Court and in the embassies to get de Sade arrested; and by her machinations he was eventually captured at Chambéry in Savoy, then part of the kingdom of Sardinia. She discovered his whereabouts by intercepting his letters. It is probable that before this new imprisonment de Sade passed through Geneva and he may then as he claims[7] have visited Rousseau and been encouraged by him in

his intention to devote himself to literature. The passage is of interest. "Rousseau was then living," Valcour, who as we have seen is in part a self-portrait of de Sade, is made to say, "and I went to see him; he had known my family and received me with great kindness; he praised and encouraged the project that he saw that I had formed to renounce everything to give myself over entirely to the study of literature and philosophy; he gave me good advice and taught me to separate true virtue from the detestable systems under which it is smothered. . .

"'My friend,' he said to me one day, 'as soon as the rays of virtue shone on men, they, too dazzled by their radiance, put in the way of these waves of light the prejudices of superstition, and the only sanctuary that remained for virtue was the bottom of the heart of honest men. Detest vice, be just, love your neighbours, enlighten them; then you will feel virtue resting sweetly in your soul, and you will have daily consolation for the pride of the rich and the stupidity of the despot.'"

If this passage is not autobiographical it is difficult to understand its existence, for there is no other example in the whole book of a famous person being mentioned by name; moreover Valcour in the story is not a writer but exclusively an unhappy lover. And surely it is not improbable that de Sade, so recently bereaved and so nearly ruined financially should have made at that time the resolve to change his life entirely. It is pleasant to think that these two great revolutionaries, the one romantic, the other realist, should have met, though it is distressing that the influence of the romantic should have so entirely dominated both his century and the following one.

De Sade was a prisoner in Chambéry for five months. He seems to have been fairly comfortable there, spending

a good deal on his upkeep and gambling with his fellow prisoners. On the first of May in 1773 he broke his parole and escaped through a lavatory window, leaving behind him an ironical note of condolence and advice for the governor. The details of the escape—the dummy in the bed, the light left burning, the ladder made out of sheets—are in the best tradition of the adventure novel. Travelling under an assumed name and by night he made his way back home to the château of La Coste and to his wife.

Of the many enigmas which make the interpretation of de Sade's life so difficult, none is more obscure than the character of Madame de Sade. She has been called a saint of married life, a convenient but misleading label. Not only did she submit to her husband, she actively aided and abetted him; indeed some of her actions seem to indicate that she was also his procuress. One of the young girls whom she had taken into her service and who later was reclaimed by her parents gave the most lurid accounts of de Sade's behaviour towards her; of his wife however she had only praise, adding that she was usually the first victim of a rage which was near madness. (There is no certainty that this girl's story is true; de Sade's reputation at the time was so bad that anything could be believed against him, and the story was dragged out by his enemies.) But he undoubtedly did make a chambermaid pregnant, and in order to prevent this girl telling inconvenient tales she had her arrested and kept in a convent under a completely false charge of theft. She seems to have abandoned her children to their grandmother without a murmur; she fought for her husband against his family and hers; she humiliated herself out of all measure; and yet she maintained to the end an almost unmitigated innocence.

She cannot possibly be considered simple-minded; she was not particularly religious; passionate love is not altogether an adequate explanation, for love demands some return, and although de Sade generally treated her kindlily and affectionately, he can never have given the impression of being in love with her. I think if we had a portrait of her, her conduct might be more understandable. I imagine her to have been very plain—we know she was tall, gawky, ungraceful, and extremely shabby in her dress, wearing clothes ten years old—and her love for de Sade to have been the endless gratitude of a passionate woman with no sort of sex appeal for the one man who had gratified her. It cannot be argued that she was constrained in any way; on the contrary every sort of device and bribe was used to separate her from her husband; in 1778 threats were used to prevent her rejoining him; her mother, who was working for what she considered to be her daughter's interests, became for fifteen years her daughter's greatest enemy.

Madame de Montreuil is easier to understand. She was a very rich and very clever woman with too little to do, so that all her energies went into intrigue. After de Sade's elopment with her favourite daughter her one aim was de Sade's destruction. He must be imprisoned for life. At the same time the sentence against him must be quashed and all scandal concerning him hushed up; for otherwise her daughter and grandchildren would be dishonoured and her numerous other children would lose all chance of marrying well. With this double aim in view she used her very considerable influence with the judges and the Court to get the sentence revised; at the same time she used every method to insure that once formally acquitted de Sade would stand no chance of freedom, by bribing more or less overtly de Sade's

relations and servants; she even bought his lawyer, so that de Sade could make no move of which she did not know immediately. During his enforced absences de Sade left his keys with this lawyer-steward; Madame de Montreuil took advantage of this fact to get the lawyer to break into his desk and steal some notes of his which could be used against him. Although de Sade seems to have suspected this double-crossing on the part of his lawyer he was never quite convinced of it; moreover this man Gaufridy was on the spot and could collect his money during his many absences; so that despite his suspicions he never broke with him.

On de Sade's return to La Coste his wife used what money was left to them to turn the château into a real fortified place, with high walls and a drawbridge; and for a great part of the next four years the pair lived there in a state of siege, seeing no one except the servants and the lawyer; the bridge was only down for a few hours in the middle of the day. It is possible that secret rooms were built, for in the beginning of 1774 a party of soldiers came to search for de Sade; but although they turned the place upside down they did not find him.

In 1774 Louis XV died and the lettre de cachet against de Sade under his name lost its validity; moreover de Maupéou was finally disgraced and there was considerable hope of de Sade's rehabilitation. Madame de Sade started a lawsuit against her mother for persecution and later went to Paris to try to interview the necessary people to get the sentence quashed. She received a great deal of encouragement but nothing concrete; in the autumn her funds were completely exhausted and she had to return to La Coste; with her back turned the mother was able to destroy all that her daughter had accomplished. The lawsuit against Madame de Montreuil seems to have

petered out inconclusively. On her return she brought with her two young girls from Lyons and Vienne, and also a young secretary for her husband. In November the château was closed for the winter.

Whether there were any orgies at the château this winter, and if so of what nature and who took part in them can only be guessed at. Certainly in the spring the parents of the three young people Madame de Sade had brought with her all turned up to demand the return of their children; but Madame de Montreuil was so intimately concerned with the whole affair that it is difficult to tell whether she was really trying to cover up the traces, as she claimed, or to manufacture fresh evidence. Considering de Sade's character there is reason to suppose that there was considerable foundation for complaints; in which case the rôle his wife played becomes even more peculiar. She imagined she was again pregnant this winter, but inaccurately; on the contrary it was her chambermaid who was in this interesting condition; to shut her mouth Madame de Sade had her arrested on a false charge and held under a lettre de cachet, until her father also turned up.

Either this winter or two winters later de Sade started his systematic study of sexual psychopathology. He had written two volumes before his arrest in 1778, and had also made numerous notes. There seems to be little question that the famous papers which Madame de Montreuil had stolen from de Sade's desk were notes for this work; in all probability they were each an analytical description of the behaviour of all the people with whom he had to do, and also possibly second-hand accounts. This early work was all destroyed by the order of his mother-in-law, to his great distress; thirteen years later he was still trying to recover these papers.

The complaints made by the little girls in the spring made it unsafe for de Sade to stay at La Coste; he therefore went to Italy, and spent a year visiting Florence, Rome and Naples. At the last place he was presented at Court, and it is possible that he had an interview with the Pope. It is not known whether he travelled alone; in a footnote to *Juliette*[8] he claims complete accuracy for the description of the various historical personages, on the ground that he visited Italy with a very beautiful woman, whom "uniquely on the principle of sexual philosophy I introduced to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, to the Pope, to Princess Borghese, and to the King and Queen of Naples." This is obviously unverifiable.

In 1776 the Président of the Parlement at Aix sent a memoire to the Garde des Sceaux protesting against the excessive condemnation of de Sade; so that it was probably with a feeling of some hopefulness that he returned to La Coste. He did not guess that in his absence his mother-in-law had bought over his lawyer. Moreover both he and his wife were so short of money that they had barely enough to eat. At the end of the year another parent of another chambermaid turned up to demand his daughter; he shot at de Sade but missed him. This chambermaid was called Justine. She was a very plain girl.

At the beginning of 1777 de Sade and his wife set out separately for Paris, he in the company of a valet, she with the maid Justine. He had barely arrived when his mother-in-law had him arrested, on February 13th.

It has always been supposed that the reason of this visit was some debauchery—neither his detractors, or with few exceptions his defenders, are willing to find anything else either in his life or works—but he has again given an explanation[9]: "A gentleman, who had a case against him

at the Parlement of Aix . . . and which the Parlement . . . . was only willing to compose with his wife's family on the condition of a long detention, this gentleman, I say, who had been in hiding for several years, carried away by the imbecile delicacy of wanting to care for his dying mother came to Paris in spite of dangers. Hardly was he in the dead woman's room than his wife's family had him arrested. He complained of this procedure . . . they laughed in his face and threw him into a dungeon of the Bastille, where amusingly enough he could weep at the same time for the loss of his liberty, the death of his mother, and the barbarous stupidity of his relations." This is the passage to which de Sade draws attention by identifying himself in a footnote. The old Comtesse de Sade did die in January of this year. Since the autobiographical facts have recently been proved true, there seems no cause to doubt his explanation of the real reason of his persecution.

He was held in Vincennes for a little over a year. He got permission to communicate with his wife and their joint efforts, accompanied by his protestations of penitence for his contumacy, succeeded in having his case re-heard at Aix in June, 1778. The previous conviction was quashed as 'erroné et vicieux de forme' and the punishment altered to a fine of fifty francs, an admonition from the bench and an order to keep away from Marseilles for three years. From that date to the end of his life (with the exception of a few months in 1793) *no accusation was ever brought against him, yet he spent all but ten of the thirty-seven years that remained to him in close confinement.*

The means by which he was kept in prison till the revolution was a lettre de cachet, granted to his mother-in-law. This monstrous piece of tyranny, by which a person is kept in preventive imprisonment, was a well-

known feature of the ancien régime. It was made doubly intolerable by being granted to certain private persons for reasons of family interest or private revenge. Nowadays, of course, it is only used by the State. (Cf. the almost universal preventive arrest of Communists before announced manifestations, or the imprisonment of Tom Mann under a statute of Edward III; in the latter case the magistrate was good enough to tell the prisoner that it was not necessary for him to be charged with any crime.)

It is possible that de Sade was forced to acquiesce to this lettre de cachet. In the story about de Maupéou already referred to he says,[9] "The idea of a lettre de cachet revolts you, but wasn't it by barbarously advising it that you finished the destruction of that gentleman? Did you not dare by a prevarication as dangerous as it is punishable to place this unfortunate soldier between the choice of prison and infamy, and only suspended your powers on condition that he should be crushed by those of the King?"

Here again de Sade came against one of his implacable legal enemies. The police-inspector Marais, who was working against him fourteen years earlier, was once more in charge of him; and it was from him that he escaped for the last time at Lambesc on the road from Aix to Paris. The details of this escape are given in several different versions, more or less contradictory. He succeeded in getting a boat to Avignon and returned to La Coste for the last time. His wife was in Paris, in ignorance of what had happened; when she learned of her husband's freedom she tried to rejoin him but was restrained by force by her mother. De Sade had stopping with him as a guest a friend of his wife's who was also perhaps a relation of his, a Mademoiselle de Rousset—an indefatigable, sprightly,

provincial blue-stocking, well-meaning, muddle-headed and consumptive, incurably arch and daring in her conversation and letters. She espoused the cause of the de Sades wholeheartedly, living with Madame de Sade in Paris for several years and helping her in her efforts to regain her husband's freedom; she carried on for a time a flirtatious correspondence with the prisoner, in which they exchanged verses in Provençal, somewhat to Madame de Sade's disturbance, though quite unjustifiably; eventually, when there was no hope of de Sade's release she returned to La Coste with the intention of putting things in order, made a fantastic muddle of everything, and died there.

De Sade was only at La Coste for a couple of months, but he seems to have cherished the illusion that he was now to be left in freedom, that the anger of his mother-in-law was satisfied; his wife, too, tried to mollify Madame de Montreuil but her mother refused to see her and returned her letters unopened. In September Marais succeeded in tracking him down and he was taken to Vincennes without further incident.

The inspector, however, over-reached himself. When he arrested de Sade he said, "Now then, little man, speak up. You're going to be shut up for the rest of your life for having done this and that in a black room upstairs where there are dead bodies!" This complete realisation of the bluebeard legend in all its details seems merely laughable; but police-inspectors must learn that even if they are sent by a lady to arrest her son-in-law they must treat their prisoner with the respect due to one of her relations! The unfortunate Marais was dismissed and ruined.

At Vincennes for the first time de Sade experienced the full bitterness of imprisonment. He was kept in a cold

and damp dungeon, furnished only with a bed that he had to make himself. He was fed like a fierce animal in a menagerie, the food being pushed through a hole in the door. He was refused both writing-materials and books, except for one letter he was allowed to send and receive each week. A couple of pathetic little notes of that period have been preserved. One complains of being "Without air, without paper, without ink, without everything in the world." The other is probably a request for "An hour's exercise and permission to write, once a week."

A régime of this sort for any man must be murderous; for a person like de Sade, who prized liberty above everything, and who was removed from the greatest sexual licence to complete abstinence at the age of thirty-seven, the physical and mental torture must have been overwhelming. We know very little of the psychosexual effects of imprisonment on adults; the only book I know of on the subject is Karl Plättner's *Eros im Zuchthaus*, which is mostly autobiographical and unscientific, but nevertheless sufficiently revealing. It explains a good deal of de Sade's behaviour, especially the way he acted towards his wife.

There is little wonder that de Sade went nearly mad under this treatment; there is rather cause for wonder that he did not become permanently insane. That he was not far from madness at the time is proved by his annotations to his wife's letters that have since been recovered and published. The forms his obsessions took were an idea (not unfounded) of persecution by his wife's family and her connivance with them (which was untrue) and also of his wife's infidelity. He also went mad about numbers. Numbers had a permanent fascination for him; in *Juliette*, for example, he is continually working out the exact state of his heroine's finances, and deducing

her income from her present capital; he also insisted on the numerical values of the excesses of his various characters. In Marseilles, as we have seen earlier, he kept a tally of the strokes he had received, and he informed the last of the girls that he had still twenty-five strokes to give. In the present circumstances he attached mystical ideas to the numbers he could find in his wife's letters; e.g., "The connection you make between the number thirteen and treachery proves that you deceived me on the thirteenth of October, 1777," and again on a note from his daughter which was added to a letter: "This letter has seventy-two syllables corresponding with the seventy-two weeks of my imprisonment; it has seven lines and seven syllables which are exactly the seven months and seven days from the seventeenth of April till the twenty-second of January, 1780." He also covered the letters of his wife with obscenities and suspicions.

His wife, however, understood or overlooked his behaviour and continued to work for him and provide him with what luxuries she could. The restraints of his imprisonment must have been relaxed by the end of the year, for we find his wife sending him clothes, books, perfumes, writing-materials and home-cooked food. Her letters as always are full of solicitude and submission; he seems after a time to have lived in a little comfort. Moreover he had an external diversion; he started the literary flirtation with Mademoiselle de Rousset.

In 1779 de Sade had still some hopes of release. The principal inhabitants of La Coste sent a petition for his release, and his wife and Mademoiselle de Rousset were working in Paris. Madame de Montreuil, however, was able to counter every move and at the end of the year de Sade resigned himself to what seemed likely to be a life-long imprisonment and turned his back on the world. His wife

was supposed to be looking after his estates; and except for occasional interviews with her, which were often forbidden by the governor on account of de Sade's violence (Plättner's book gives several examples of equally violent behaviour between husband and wife, even when they were deeply in love with one another. Such behaviour should not be taken at its face value), he had no contact with the outside world. He refers to this period of his life as his 'pressurage,' taking the metaphor from the wine-press.

For a number of years Madame de Sade devoted herself to her husband's interests, despite the warning of her uncle that thereby she was ruining the matrimonial prospects of her brothers and sisters; but gradually she got older and lazier; she became an invalid and money got harder and harder to find; Madame de Montreuil changed her tactics and became kind; her children grew up and replaced her husband in her affections; finally in 1787 she abandoned the administration of her husband's estate to trustees; she retired into a convent and left her husband to himself. Madame de Montreuil had won.

It was at this period that de Sade took his vocation as a writer with full seriousness. He was reading omnivorously—I do not think there is one major writer in any European language whom he does not refer to either directly or by implication—and studying the technique of writing. Of his work in Vincennes only two small fragments have been published—a short dialogue on religion and the plan for a comedy—and I do not know if much else has survived. All through his imprisonment he kept a diary, partly written in cypher, but it has either been destroyed or is still in the possession of his descendants. It is probable, however, that he worked out his technique of writing that he afterwards adhered to.

It was his custom first of all to make a rough plan of the work in project—just a few pages—noting the salient traits of his characters and working out the time schedule and similar mechanical details. When his mind was clear on the main outlines of the work he would write the first draft extremely quickly, abbreviating and not revising. He would do about four thousand words a day. His handwriting was neat and even, and very close. He left big margins, in which at the first revision he would insert all necessary additions and corrections. Longer additions he would write in a separate notebook. When the original draft had been improved and reshaped to his complete satisfaction he would make a fair copy of the whole. The only exceptions were made when he was short of paper, as in the case of the 120 *Journées*, of which the first draft (all that survives), written in almost microscopical handwriting, covers both sides of a thirteen-yard roll of paper. He also kept notebooks filled with quotations and odd sentences. His technique of writing has been compared with some justice to that of Balzac and Proust.

In February, 1784 de Sade was transferred to the Bastille and given quarters in the ironically named Tour de la Liberté. But though physical freedom was denied to him he attained with his pen such mental freedom as few have known either before or since his time. Every variety of human behaviour was scrutinised and criticised by him with an extraordinary individual independence. In his twelve-year isolation he developed a complete philosophy. The only interruptions of his solitude were the occasional visits of his wife, and these were discontinued after a time.

By far the greater part of the writings of de Sade that we possess were written during this period. A great deal, however, was lost or destroyed and we know only a

fraction of his output. He wrote in every conceivable style—plays in verse and prose, short stories of a comic and also a dramatic nature, novels, essays and miscellanies. From notes and fragments we know the titles of some of the works that have been lost. There are thirty-five acts of plays, of which we barely know the titles. There was a large collection of short stories to be published as *Les Contes et Fabliaux d'un Troubadour Provençal*, in which a dramatic and even tragic story was to be followed by a comic one, in the style of the Decameron, to the number of fifty. There was a four-volume literary miscellany *La Portefeuille d'un Homme de Lettres*, of which all but a few traces have disappeared. The four-volume novel *Aline et Valcour* was written in 1788. The draft of *Les 120 Journées de Sodome* is dated 1785. The first version of *Justine* was written in 1787, the second probably the following year; and it is to my mind almost certain that the first three volumes of *Juliette* also were written before 1790.

Catalogued in this way the output of de Sade seems enormous; but it must be remembered that for six years at least he had no other occupation than reading and writing; all his work was carefully planned and written and *intentional*; he did not use his powers of imagination as others have done, including Mirabeau who was for some time his fellow prisoner, as a sedative.

De Sade clearly foresaw the revolution that was approaching, even prophesying it in some of his writings. It is even tempting to say that he caused it. In June of 1789 he tried to escape by forcing his way through the sentries but was prevented. Thereupon he had the idea of inciting the people against the Bastille, which he did by scattering from his windows notes describing the bad treatment the prisoners were receiving; on July 2nd

he improvised a loudspeaker from a tube and a funnel and called on the populace to rescue the prisoners who were having their throats cut. A crowd was gathered by this device and the governor of the prison thought sufficiently seriously of the danger to write: "*If Monsieur de Sade is not removed to-night from the Bastille I cannot be answerable to the King for the safety of the building.*" On July 3rd he was therefore transferred to the asylum of Charenton. Eleven days later the ancient and almost empty fortress of the Bastille was stormed by the mob, whose anger against it had been so inexplicably roused. Three-quarters of de Sade's manuscripts "whose loss he wept for with tears of blood" were lost on this occasion, thanks to the dilatoriness of his wife, who put off fetching them from day to day. She also had destroyed some other manuscripts of his which he had confided to her, on the grounds that they might be possibly politically dangerous.

In March 1790 the constituent assembly released all prisoners held by lettre de cachet, and on Good Friday in 1790 de Sade re-entered the world, a free man at the age of fifty, after thirteen years almost continual imprisonment, mostly in virtual solitary confinement. It is possible that his sons met him at his release; but the elder shortly after emigrated to Germany, thereby causing his father considerable danger; the younger was a knight of Malta and stayed at his post abroad during most of the Revolution. His wife had obtained a separation and refused to see him, nor did they ever meet again; their only contact was through their lawyer in quarrels over money. Madame de Sade kept their daughter Laura, who seems to have been almost a mental defective, with her. It seems as though the two women emigrated during the Terror.

When de Sade first came out of prison he was homeless

and penniless and found the re-entry into the world very difficult, as indeed is generally the case with released prisoners. In a letter to the lawyer he describes his condition as follows: "In prison my sight and my lungs have been ruined (he seems to have been practically blind in one eye since 1784); being deprived of all exercise I have become so enormously fat that I can hardly move; all my feelings are extinguished; I have no longer any taste for anything, I like nothing any more; the world which foolishly enough I so wildly regretted seems to me so boring . . . and so dull. . . . . I have never been more misanthropic than I am now that I have returned among men, and if I seem peculiar to others they can be assured that they produce the same effect on me. I had been very busy during my imprisonment, and had fifteen volumes ready for the press; on my release I have only about a quarter left, thanks to the criminal carelessness of Madame de Sade. . . ."

For the next ten years he is in continual communication with his lawyer, always demanding money, money, money. He has never enough, for with the inflation the value of money is always descending; moreover he had great difficulties in collection, firstly as being the father of émigrés, and later as being erroneously inscribed by a mistake in Christian names as an émigré himself. These letters show the worst side of his character, testy and sycophantic in turns, disingenuous to the point of dishonesty, disproportionately avaricious. Where money is concerned de Sade shows all the vices of his family, and of many of his compatriots. His only excuse is his age and infirmity, and the fact that he was a great deal of the time in actual want. Also his behaviour is very much on a par with that of the rest of his relations and in-laws with whom the lawyer had to deal. There are few people who

would appear to advantage in their dealings with their lawyer and steward; de Sade, who had a Frenchman's reverence for the centime, certainly does not.

Almost as soon as de Sade was freed he regained the administration of his estate, and accepted the deed of separation from his wife, by which he agreed to, but did not, pay her alimony. For a little while his sons were with him. In June he went to live with a forty-year-old widow, la Présidente de Fleurieu, through whom he made some useful acquaintances; but the arrangement was not a success and in the autumn he set up house with a woman called Constance Renelle, the wife of a Monsieur Quesnet. Madame Quesnet was probably an actress (by another account she was the wife of an émigré); but she was a cultivated and intelligent woman with a large and useful circle of acquaintances; according to de Sade she was a paragon of all the virtues. They were very devoted to one another and shared good and bad fortune together; their mutual affection only ended with de Sade's death.

In the winter of 1790, as soon as he had settled down with Quesnet—he nicknamed her 'Sensible' and she responded by calling him 'Moïse'—he sent for his books and furniture from La Coste and settled down to the business of being a professional writer. He had considerable success with his plays. One was accepted unanimously by the Comédie Française, but for some reason was never performed. *Le Comte Oxtiern* was acted with a certain success at the Théatre Molière in 1791. Several others were accepted by different theatres. He appears to have mixed a great deal with actors at this time; one Monvel, a revolutionary, was one of his chief friends, and he took lessons in acting from another called Molé. As far as we can tell from the indications—all the manuscripts have disappeared—he seems to have special-

ised in the dramatic comedy in verse, in the classical tradition. Considering himself a professional playwright he was ready to write pieces to order; and it is his admission of this fact in a letter to his lawyer which has led some people to suppose that his pen was always venal—despite the consistency of all his published work.

In 1791 also the first version of *Justine* appeared; it had a considerable success and ran through five editions in the next ten years. The novel *Aline et Valcour* was also accepted, but for various reasons connected with the publishers did not appear till two years later.

At this period he was nearly ruined, for his name had been included in the list of former nobles published in 1791. Also his health was bad. Nevertheless he worked for the Revolution to the best of his abilities; he became secretary and speaker for the Section des Piques (formerly Vendôme), the section to which Robespierre belonged. It was in the latter function that he was chosen to make a funeral oration in favour of Marat and Le Pelletier, which oration had so much success that it was printed and distributed through France at the public expense.

I do not know whether it is pure chance that thus joined these three names together, but it is a happy coincidence. De Sade has much in common with both the subjects of his eulogy. Marat was a scientist before he was a revolutionary; his work on the diffraction of light, though considered incorrect nowadays, was far nearer to what is to-day held to be the truth than that of his contemporaries; but because of its very novelty—he had the heresy to try to criticise Newton—he was excommunicated by the learned bodies of the time. His revolutionary activity was chiefly journalistic, starting under the old régime and continued despite persecution and illness to the day of his murder. He was continually critical;

neither success nor reputation were safe from him. It was only in his savagery that de Sade, sworn enemy of the death penalty, could not follow him.

Le Pelletier was also a strict egalitarian who achieved a certain power. He believed, as did de Sade, in the enormous possibilities of education for the alteration of man's habits, and until he too was murdered devoted his energies to that end.

De Sade was assiduous in his functions with the Société, and wrote another petition in their name to the people of France. He also made a petition about religion, which he claims was the origin of all the anti-religious movement; this, however, has not been preserved, unless the first part of the pamphlet quoted in Chapter VI is an elaboration of it. He was also engaged in the inspection of hospitals.

But when the senseless butcheries of the Terror occurred de Sade could follow the revolutionaries no longer. Those people who are surprised at his gentleness and moderation at this time show a very superficial understanding of both his character and his work.

Among the innumerable other victims of the mob's fury were the Président and Madame de Montreuil, his wife's parents who were the immediate cause of his misery for the last twenty years. By a curious coincidence de Sade was président of the bench before which they came to trial. With a magnanimity worthy of his heroine Justine he voted against their execution; and like Justine he found that virtue was always punished; he was imprisoned for moderantism.

I do not think that it is necessary to seek elaborate explanations for de Sade's behaviour on this occasion. He had the courage now as throughout his life to act up to his theories. He had already voiced his complete disbelief in

the death penalty. And his own account of his actions explain his motives. "I am broken, done in, spitting blood," he wrote. "I told you I was président of my section; my tenure has been so stormy that I am exhausted. Yesterday, for example, after having been forced to withdraw twice I was forced to abandon my seat to the vice-président. They wanted me to put to the vote a horrible, an inhuman project. I definitely refused. Thank God, that's the end of that. . . . . During my presidency I had the Montreuils put on a liste épuratoire (for pardon). If I had said a word they were lost. I kept my peace. I have had my revenge."

For the next ten months he passed through four different prisons, each more ghastly than the other, expecting death any minute. His final prison at Picpus was the worst of all. It was a beautiful place with a lovely garden. In the centre of the garden was the guillotine. More than a thousand people were executed under his window and buried in the garden during a month of his imprisonment there, a great number being his fellow-prisoners. It is possible that he had to help in the burial. The date of his own execution was fixed but the reaction occurred just in time. There is little wonder that a year later he was still haunted by this nightmare. It is necessary to keep this experience of his in mind when considering his work.

Finally in October he was released by the efforts of Madame Quesnet. It is possible that the deputy Rovère, though unknown to him personally, may have been responsible for this. He later sold to him his estate at La Coste; the château had been pillaged and destroyed by the peasants.

In the winter of 1794 life in Paris was torture. Paper money was practically valueless, food nearly unobtainable,

and the weather the coldest of the century. (It is a curious coincidence that excessive cold and excessive misery often seem to go together.) Under these circumstances de Sade set about trying to earn a living.

There is still in existence a letter of his dated February, 1795 to the Conventionnel Bernard demanding employment in any form, whether as ambassador, writer, keeper of a library or a museum or indeed any position where he could gain a subsistence. His application seems to have been unsuccessful and he had to rely on his writing. The novel *Aline et Valcour* was issued by a different publisher with some success; and he wrote and published at the same period *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir*. This is not only the shortest of his works but also the most nearly pornographic; it was probably written with the direct aim of money-making. The ideas in it are almost entirely repetitions from his major works, and were it not for the incorporation of a very important political pamphlet which will be considered later in detail it would not be of much interest. It is possible also that from this year should be dated the pamphlet entitled *Une Idée sur le mode de la sanction des Lois* in which he proposes that laws should be brought forward by the deputies but voted on directly by the people, because "one should admit to the sanctioning of laws that part of the people who are most unfortunate, and since it is them that the law strikes most frequently they should be allowed to choose the law by which they consent to be stricken."*

De Sade's vision of a real revolution faded away. Socialism had disappeared and nationalism was triumphant. Private property was still respected, there was still glaring inequality, office seekers and rogues were still in power. Babeuf's egalitarian revolt, with which de Sade

* M. Heine dates this pamphlet 1792.

was certainly in sympathy if he was not implicated in it, was bloodily crushed by authority; business was as usual; the revolution, at any rate as he envisaged it, had failed. In his pessimism, his disgust and rage at mankind, he threw on to the booksellers' shelves those poisoned bombs, the ten volumes of *La Nouvelle Justine ou les Malheurs de la Vertu suivie de l'Histoire de Juliette sa sœur.* With terrific irony he presented a copy bound in white vellum to each of the five directors.

These volumes were published if not written during the only five years in the whole history of Christendom in which they could be openly sold. Despite the engravings which adorned the first edition and which stress exclusively if rather naïvely the obscenity of the work, these books were openly displayed in the bookseller's windows. In 1801 Napoleon had all the copies that he could find destroyed, and since that date his work has been persecuted and burned. Organised authority has vowed an inveterate war against his work and his ideas; only recently have a few people dared to start republishing his books in small, costly, limited editions; and though he is now in some quarters praised as rashly as he was blamed before (chiefly with a desire to shock) he still remains almost completely unread.

But although the publication of this work may have aided the reputation of de Sade (albeit his life long he officially denied the authorship with considerable vigour) it did not help him financially, and in 1797, the same year as these volumes appeared, we find another letter from him asking to be paid as soon as possible for some work he had done. In the summer of the next year he returned to Provence for the last time accompanied by Quesnet, in an effort to get some money from thence. The journey was in every way disastrous. Not only did he get no

money, he found his name was by mistake on a list of émigrés from which, owing to the confusion in Christian names, he could not get it removed; he was also involved in an action for slander. From this date until about 1804 when his family settled an annuity on him in exchange for all his property (except a small portion he had settled on Quesnet) he was in the greatest misery and poverty imaginable. In 1799 he was glad to get a job at the theatre at Versailles for forty sols a day, which sum had to keep both him and Quesnet's son by her husband, while the faithful 'Sensible' made every effort in Paris to get work or help. His play *Oxtiern* was revived there with some success; he himself acted the rôle of Fabrice, the young lover. A letter from him covering two copies of this play has been preserved; he begs the addressee to try to get the same play performed at Chartres; he would be willing to act in it again, and in any case would come to supervise rehearsals.

His already broken-down health gave way under this régime; his sight became so bad that he could no longer see to write; he was forced to spend three months of the winter of 1799-1800 in the public hospital at Versailles, absolutely penniless, with only the food and clothes of charity. Even from this refuge he was finally turned out "dying of hunger and of cold," and in danger of being imprisoned for debt. In the spring his situation must have improved; either his sons, who had now returned, or Quesnet, or his incurably dilatory steward must have come to his help.

He had already in the July of the previous year been in communication with the Théatre Français (not for the first time) urging them to perform a patriotic play of his called *Jeanne Laisné or the Siege of Beauvais*; the subject is historical and he explains at some length how he had gone

to the original records to verify the heroine's name and other details. The theatre, however, would not accept it because Louis XI appears on the stage, and a year later he appealed over their heads directly to the Conventionnel Goupilleau de Montaigu. This letter, coming from a once proud man, now nearly sixty and destitute, has a rather tragic interest. It is too long to quote more than a portion of it. After some rather fulsome compliments he writes: "You are all agreed, Citoyens Représentants, as are all good republicans, that it is extremely important to elevate the public spirit by good examples and good writing. My pen is said to have some energy, my philosophical novel, *Aline et Valcour*, has proved it; then I offer my talents to the service of the Republic, and offer them willingly. I was unhappy under the old régime, so you can understand that I must fear a return to an order of which I should inevitably be one of the first victims. The talents I offer to the Republic are disinterested; if a plan of work is made out for me I will execute it, and I dare to say that it will be satisfactory. But I pray you, citizen, put a stop to that horrible injustice which is cooling for me the feelings with which I am warmed; why do they wish to give me cause for complaint against a government for which I would lay down a thousand lives if I had them? Why has all I own been confiscated for the last two years, and why during that period have I been reduced to charity without in the least deserving such horrible treatment? Aren't people convinced that instead of emigrating I was occupied in all sorts of employment during the most terrible revolutionary years? Do I not possess the most authentic certificates possible? Then if they are persuaded that I am innocent, why am I treated as guilty? Why do they try to force into the ranks of the enemies of the Republic one of its warmest and most zealous par-

tisans? It seems to me such conduct is as unjust as it is impolitic.

"In any case, Citoyen Représentant, I offer my pen and my talents to the government, but don't let unfairness, poverty and misery weigh on me any longer, and have me taken off the list (of ex-nobles) I beg of you, aristocrat or not, what difference does it make: have I ever acted like an aristocrat? Have I ever been known to share their conduct and their sentiments? My actions have destroyed the wrongs of my origin, and it is to that reason that I owe all the attacks that the royalists have made on me, especially Poultier in his paper of the 12th fructidor last. But I defy them as I hate them. . . .

"In a word, citizen, as a first sample of what I can offer I propose to you a tragedy in five acts, a work most competent to awake in every heart love for their country. . . ."

He then goes on to describe the plot of his tragedy. Goupilleau seems to have answered politely and kept him dangling; the play was not, as far as is known, performed.

It will be seen that de Sade protests almost over-emphatic admiration for the republic, which, as I pointed out earlier, had fallen so far short of his ideals. But bad as the republic was, it was better than the danger that de Sade, with his keen political foresight, saw approaching, the danger of a new tyranny, of an empire, of Napoleon. With quixotic rashness this old man tried to warn his lethargic fellow citizens; in the summer of 1800 he printed and published at his own expense a *roman à clé*, *Zoloé et ses deux Acolytes*, in which Napoleon, Josephine and their chief friends, Monsieur and Madame Tallien, Barras, Madame Visconti and others could be easily recognised, either by the anagrammatic names of the characters or by the detailed physical descriptions. In this work de Sade applied his own principles of attacking

by mockery, rather than by indignation and force.[10] He made Napoleon and Josephine ridiculous.

It is hard to understand nowadays how this book provoked such a violent storm and scandal; it is nearly incomprehensible. We can only suppose that his claim that it represents history is true; that he displayed in the most ludicrous light anecdotes then current about these people and that they were accepted as true by his readers. The only passage that has any interest for us is his analysis of the reasons for Napoleon's future success, reasons that are equally valid to-day for the rise of dictators. He says[11]: "All the parties in France cross and shock one another—there is no rallying point. The so-called aristocrat detests the rule of men covered with blood and crime. The mad demagogue is furious that people dare to muzzle him and that those in power leave him to disgrace. The nervous and indifferent who form the greatest number pray for a single master who joins courage to vision, virtue to talent, and they find him in d'Orsec (Napoleon). His marriage with Zoloé (Josephine) gains him the adhesion of the proscribed class." Elsewhere he pays tribute to Napoleon's military abilities.

He paid the penalty of his rashness. He should have remembered the distich he had placed at the head of *Aline et Valcour*.

> "It is dangerous to love men,
> A crime to enlighten them."

In March, 1801, he was arrested with his publisher Bertrandet on the specious excuse that he intended publishing *Juliette* (which had actually been on sale for five years), "an immoral and revolutionary work." The charge against the publisher was soon after withdrawn.

He was imprisoned first at Sainte-Pélagie, then at

Bicêtre. His case did not come up for hearing. In a letter of June, 1802, he demands that he should be judged: he had been imprisoned for fifteen months although legally he should have been tried within ten days. The Minister of Justice replied by giving an order that he should be forgotten for a while. In April, 1803, he was declared mad and transferred to the asylum at Charenton, officially at the request of his family.

This was a favourite trick of Napoleon's, to declare mad any enemy of his whom he could not catch on a criminal charge. The poet Désorgues, M. de Laage, the Abbé Fournier, to mention only a few of the best known, were similar victims of an odious despotism.

There is no question that de Sade was really insane; even the doctors in charge of him denied it. It would have been perhaps more merciful for him if he had been. Even the consolation of his writing was denied to him now; periodically police officers came to hunt for his manuscripts, wherever he hid them, and confiscated them. Some were kept, some were seized at his house prior to his arrest, others after his death; the greater part were burnt by the police at the request of his son. The old age of Lear was not more tragic than that of this man, living too sane among lunatics.

By a piece of good fortune the asylum was under the conduct of an exceptionally sensible man, the ex-Abbé Coulmier, who understood and sympathised with de Sade. Under his protection de Sade developed a project which saved him from dying from boredom; he instituted a theatre for madmen. Occasionally he got actors and actresses from outside; more often he trained the less violent of the lunatics to act themselves, coaching them and producing the spectacles; they acted both the ordinary repertory and plays specially written for them by de Sade

himself. We cannot know to what extent he did this consciously as a therapeutic measure; it is anyhow a line of approach that could be developed with advantage by alienists to-day. As a method of re-education play-acting offers enormous possibilities.

It was possibly due also to Coulmier's benevolence that the novel *Les Journées de Florbelle*—a work in which Louis XV, Fleury and the Comte de Charolais were among the characters—got so near publication before it too was seized by the police in 1807, and that *La Marquise de Gange*, if it is by him, was published in 1813.

It was also due to Coulmier that he was able to enjoy a certain amount of freedom of communication and to receive visits. Quesnet, whom for the sake of appearances he described as his natural daughter (there is certainly no truth in this statement) visited him freely; it is even possible that she lived in the asylum for a certain time. One of the only two letters which survive from this epoch bear both their names; it is concerned with the settlement de Sade made on her. The other letter is about a variety of subjects ending up "*I am not happy* but I am in good health. That is all I can say."

The performances in the asylum became quite a social event. Guests came in from outside, though the issuing of invitations depended entirely on the director. We have a list of invitations for May 23rd, 1810, which includes the local mayors and curates, doctors, a lady-in-waiting of the Queen of Holland and various other people; also thirty-six employees of the building and sixty patients. On these occasions de Sade acted as producer and master of ceremonies. On special occasions, such as the director's birthday, or a visit to the asylum of a notability such as the Cardinal Maury, de Sade composed special allegorical

pieces or else wrote a poem to be recited or sung for the occasion. The verses written for the visit of the Cardinal in 1812 still exist; they are such as one might expect—as competent as a poet laureate would produce on a similar occasion, and equally untouched by poetry.

But even now de Sade was not free from persecution. In 1808 the head doctor wrote to the chief of the police (incidentally it would be interesting to know what the police had to do with an asylum) a violent attack on de Sade, grudging him his comparative freedom of movement and communication and demanding his removal to some fortress. He attacks the play-acting by the lunatics as unorthodox and liable to bad effects (though it had been going on for some years he could not show any) and states formally that de Sade was in no way mad "his only delirium being that of vice." Coulmier, however, was able to resist this impertinence and de Sade stayed at Charenton and the play-acting was continued till 1813. Then the same doctor got his way and the plays were forbidden; they were replaced by concerts and balls.

In 1808 de Sade appealed vainly to Napoleon for his release. In his letter he stated that he had spent over twenty years of the most miserable life in the world in prison, that he was now nearly seventy, almost blind, and suffering from gout and rheumatism in the chest and stomach.

There are several accounts of him in his old age. They show him to be quick-tempered as always, extremely polite, graceful in his movements, rather fat and white-haired; we can picture him to some extent. There is no known portrait of him at any time of his life and the only description of him in his youth that I can find is the rather summary one of the witnesses at Marseilles where he is described as shorter than his servant, fair-haired and

rather plump. At that time he was smartly dressed and wore a sword.

Of the last years of his life we know nothing. He died on December 2nd, 1814, at the age of seventy-four. The cause of his death was given as "pulmonary congestion."

Nine years earlier in a fit of great bitterness he made his will, which was found after his death. The last paragraph was as follows:

"I expressly forbid my body to be opened under any consideration soever. I ask with the greatest emphasis that my body shall be kept for forty-eight hours in the room I shall die in, placed in a wooden coffin which shall only be nailed down on the expiration of the time mentioned; during this interval an express messenger shall be sent to the sieur Lenormand, wood merchant, at Versailles to pray him to come himself accompanied with a wagon to fetch my body to be transported under his escort to the wood on my property at Malmaison in the commune of Mance near Epernon, where I wish it to be placed, without any sort of ceremony, in the first thicket on the right in the said wood, entering from the direction of the old château by the large road which divides the wood. My grave shall be dug in the thicket by the Malmaison farmer under the inspection of M. Lenormand, who will only leave my body after it has been placed in the said grave; if he wishes he can be accompanied in this ceremony by those of my relations and friends, who, without mourning of any sort, will have the kindness to show me this last mark of attachment. Once the grave has been filled it shall be sown over with acorns so that subsequently the said grave being replanted and the thicket being tangled as it was before, the traces of my tomb may disappear from the face of the earth, as I *flatter* myself that my memory will be wiped away from the minds of men.

"Made at Charenton-Saint-Maurice, while of sound mind and body, January 30th, 1806.

(*Signed*) D. A. F. SADE."

Even in death he was thwarted. The passionate atheist was given Christian burial and a stone cross set over him. But that was not sufficient indignity. Hardly was the earth settled over his coffin when body-snatching disciples of Gall, the phrenologist, dug up and stole his skull, as a subject for their 'science.' They pronounced that this skull "Resembled that of all old people; it was a curious mixture of vices and virtues, of benevolence and crime. It was small and well-shaped; at first glance it might be taken for a woman's head, especially as the bumps of tenderness and love of children are as prominent as in the head of Héloise, that model of tenderness and love."

They seem to have thought that these conclusions were paradoxical. Actually it is not a bad epitaph.

Note.—The facts in this chapter are mainly selected from previous books on de Sade, particularly 'Eugène Dühren,' *Der Marquis de Sade und seiner Zeit*, Guillaume Apollinaire, preface to *L'Œuvre du Marquis de Sade*, Dawes, *The Marquis de Sade*, and numerous articles and prefaces by Maurice Heine.

The collection of letters written to the lawyer Gaufridy and published by Paul Bourdin in 1929 under the title of *La Correspondance inédite du Marquis de Sade* gives a good deal of information, especially about the years 1774–1777 and 1790–1800. About half the letters are from de Sade, the rest being from his relations, his wife, his mother-in-law, Mademoiselle de Rousset, and various people with whom he had business. Nobody's character comes particularly well out of this correspondence; they are mostly about money, speculations about wills, and methods of defrauding the revenue, etc. They do however clear up a number of riddles in the life of de Sade. Unfortunately the letters are only a selection, and M.

Bourdin has such a bias against de Sade that one cannot tell to what an extent such a selection is representative. Anything which is against de Sade is true, anything in his favour is an exaggeration or a lie. He cannot even mention a list of de Sade's books without suggesting that he has bought but not read them. M. Bourdin is a very superior person, but despite his prejudices the book is informative, though not interesting.

CHAPTER II

LITERARY WORK

The letter killeth but the spirit giveth life.

ST. PAUL.

The Second Letter to the People of Corinth.

I must create a system or be enslaved by another Man's;
I will not reason and compare; my business is to create.

W. BLAKE,

Jerusalem.

I. LITERARY PRINCIPLES

ALMOST the last piece of writing from de Sade's pen that has come down to us is an *Essay on the Novel* which he wrote as a preface to *Les Crimes de l'Amour*, a collection of eleven of the tragic and dramatic short stories (their length almost allows them to be called short novels) from his projected *Contes et Fabliaux du Dixhuitième Siècle par un Troubadour Provençal*, which he had written in 1787. This Essay, written and published in 1800, when all his major work was written, is of considerable interest, for not only does it give his ideas on the function and art of the novel, and fiction generally, but is also a tacit criticism and justification of his own work. The fact that he formally denies the authorship of *Justine* therein is of no importance; at the date of writing it was the only policy.

He starts by sketching the origin of the novel. Deriding those people who would seek an origin in one country or in one people, he places the origin of fiction in two ingrained human weaknesses—prayer and love. The first fiction arose when the first religion was invented. Man's mythopœic faculties were first occupied with gods,

then demi-gods and finally heroes. Somewhat later ideal and lyrical love-stories were written. He glances over the novels of the Romans and Greeks—incidentally he states that Petronius' *Satyricon* should not be considered a novel; he shared with his contemporaries the idea that it was a personal satire on Nero—to consider in greater detail the productions of Christian Europe, and especially France. Neither the chansons de geste nor the fabliaux can be considered as real novels, though the latter come nearer to being so; it was only when gallantry was added to observation that the novel was born. Almost at once the novel reached its apogee—*Don Quixote* is for him the best novel ever written. He also rates very highly the *Princesse de Clèves* of Madame de Lafayette, mentioning in passing the absurd supposition that being a woman she must have had help from men to make a masterpiece; women, he says, are more fitted to novel-writing than men, owing to their greater delicacy. His judgments on the French novels of the eighteenth century are so just and so much in accordance with the accepted taste of to-day that they do not need repeating; he gives Voltaire and Rousseau their just praise, and takes to task Crébillon, Tanzai and their followers—writers who are considered typically 'eighteenth century'—for their immorality. From these he excepts Prévost, whom he admires very much.

He then turns to the English novel. "Richardson and Fielding," he says[1] "taught us that only the profound study of man's heart, nature's maze, and that alone can inspire the novelist whose work shows us not only the man as he is or pretends to be—that is the historian's task—but as he can be, as he is influenced by vice and all passion's shocks; so that one must know and employ them all to use that style; they taught us, too, that virtue's

continual triumph is not always interesting. . . ." He adds that virtue is only one of the heart's phases.

He then deals with the 'Gothic' novel.[2] "Then there are the new novels, nearly whose whole merit lies in magic and phantasmagoria, with the *Monk* at their head, which are not entirely without merit; they are the fruit of the revolution of which all Europe felt the shock. For him who knows the misery the wicked can inflict on mankind the novel became as difficult to write as it was boring to read; there was no one who did not undergo more misfortunes in five years than the best novelist could describe in a century; therefore hell had to be called in to help and interest, to find in nightmare merely what one knew ordinarily just by glancing over the history of man in this age of iron. But how many inconveniences this style offers; the author of the *Monk* has not avoided them any more than Radgliffe (*sic*); there is the alternative of explaining the magic trickery, and then there is no more interest, or else of never lifting the curtain, which causes complete lack of verisimilitude. If a successful work appeared without being wrecked on either point, far from blaming the means employed we would offer it as a model." It is hardly open to doubt that in this paragraph he is explaining his own intentions in his major works, particularly *Justine*.

After this historical survey he makes some general considerations on the novel. He defines it as "The picture of contemporary manners," "*le tableau des mœurs séculaires*" and claims that it can be as useful as history to the philosopher; the one shows the façade, the other the whole man.

He then proceeds to give advice to other writers. "The most essential knowledge is certainly that of the heart of man, to be learned by misfortune and travel: one

must have seen men of all nations to know them and one must have been their victim to appreciate them; misfortune's hand, in exalting the character of him whom it crushes puts him at the right distance to study men; he sees them there as the traveller sees the furious waves break against the rock on which the storm has thrown him; but in whatever situation nature or chance has placed him let him keep quiet when he is with other men; one doesn't learn by speaking but by listening; which is why chatterers are usually fools."[3]

The only rule is verisimilitude. Descriptions of places, unless imaginary, should be exact. It is not necessary to keep to the original plan, for ideas that come in the course of writing are just as useful, provided the interest is kept up. Incidents—the short story inserted into the body of the main work was still general when this was written—must be even better than the main body to justify themselves. An author should never moralise, though his characters may. But above everything don't write unless you have to; if you need money make boots and we will respect you as a competent cobbler; if you write for money your work will show it.

Finally he justifies himself for the attacks made on *Aline et Valcour*. "I don't want to make vice amiable; unlike Crébillon and Dorat I don't wish to make women adore their deceivers but to loathe them. . . . I have made my heroes who follow the career of vice so loathsome that they will surely inspire neither pity nor love; thereby I make bold to say I become more moral than those who allow themselves 'toning down'";[4] and in an outburst of justifiable pride he adds, "*We, too, we know how to create.*"

Even a work as innocuous as this was not allowed to go without detractors. An otherwise unknown journalist,

Villeterque, filled a column in attacking de Sade as advocating crime and immorality; in an extremely witty and spirited reply de Sade justifies himself, analysing his essay and stories; he applies the Aristotelean canon of purging by pity and terror and asks, "From what can *terror* spring, save from pictures of crime triumphant, or *pity* save from virtue in distress?"[5]

II. MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

De Sade's work can conveniently be divided into three groups, depending upon his attitude towards his readers; the first group which is directly addressed to all readers, the third of works written principally for himself and of which he himself says, "I only address myself to those capable of understanding me; such people can read me without danger." The second group is midway between the two, and is only represented by *Aline et Valcour*; this very curious novel is extremely personal and exhibits the various facets of de Sade's mind as clearly as any of his works; but the 'gauzes'—to use his own word—with which parts are enveloped show a sensitiveness to the reader's prejudices which prevent its inclusion in the third category.

If de Sade's work had come down to us in its entirety it is practically certain that the first or 'public' group would be of preponderating bulk; but by a curious irony it is that part of his work more than any other that has been destroyed or lost; so that our judgment of his contribution to conventional literature is purely provisory. All his theatrical work obviously falls into this category, for a play is only still-born till it is acted before an audience; but of his twenty or more comedies and dramas in verse and prose we know nothing save the plots of three of them and the titles of a few more. In the given

plots he employs the devices which he also uses in his novels—babies changed in the cradle and the Aristotelean Anagnorisis, or recognition of characters by one another, either just in time or just too late (the chief distinction between melodrama and tragedy); we cannot know the way he developed these very general devices. He appears to have shown some originality in form, if not in content, for we possess the plan for an entertainment made up of five different pieces—tragedy, comedy, opera, pantomime and ballet respectively, each complete in itself yet each adding to the main plot or frame which held the pieces together. I have much sympathy with this idea personally, for to me a visit to the contemporary theatre is almost always an agony of boredom; after the first quarter of an hour the style is set and not deviated from till the final curtain. He also wrote three full-length historical novels; these again we only know of by their titles. Incidentally in his renovation of the historical novel also he seems to have been a precursor; I do not know of any other eighteenth-century novelist who used history as a frame for romance and went to the original sources and documents for verisimilitude. *Waverley* was published some years after his death.

His four-volume *Portefeuille d'un Homme de Lettres* has fared little better; we only know a very rough plan of the work and a few isolated scraps. It was to be in the form of a correspondence between a man in Paris and two young ladies in the country and was to cover a very wide range of subjects, from the art of writing a comedy to the etymology of words; there was to be a dissertation on the death penalty, a plan to employ criminals in such a way that they should be useful to the State, a letter on luxury, and another on education, treating of forty-four points of morality. The letter on play-writing was to contain

fifty rules which would give all the necessary guidance for such an art. The more serious subjects were to be diversified by anecdotes; of these a dozen have come down to us. They are amusing and well told. A certain number are definitely indecent in a humorous 'gaulois' style—the last thing one would have expected from de Sade; a couple deal with well-attested local ghost stories. After his diary from 1777–1790 this is the work whose disappearance I regret the most. The diary, if it could be found, would almost certainly be the most extraordinary document humanity has ever known.

The rest of the works which have disappeared but the existence of which we know of may be mentioned here. They include four novels, one of them humorous; memoirs and confessions; plans for a public brothel, and for a spectacle similar to that of the Roman gladiators (his intention in this proposal will be found in Chapter VIII); and the strange historical novel already mentioned —*Les Journées de Florbelle*—in which public characters whom he may well have known figured. A great deal of his correspondence—chiefly dealing with business or family affairs—has been published. His political pamphlets have been referred to in the first chapter. He probably wrote more which have not been identified.

In brief, all that remains to us of his normal literary work, besides the essay already referred to, are thirty-seven short stories. Of these eleven were published in his lifetime, a twelfth under the editorship of Anatole France in 1881, and the remainder in 1927, edited by Maurice Heine, who transcribed them from the manuscripts in the French National Library. On the whole they are very competent, written in a sober and economical style (though, as are nearly all his works, bespattered by fixed epithets and mechanical similes of the order of

'beautiful as a rose'); the dénouement is well worked up to and dramatically emphasised; *Les Crimes de l'Amour* are nearly all on the thesis of the struggle between virtue and vice—usually with disastrous results to the actors of either side; they are chiefly remarkable for the meticulous accuracy of the local and historical details.

The humorous stories are much slighter; they are chiefly surprising in that they show in de Sade a sense of humour and gaiety that could never have been suspected from his other work; they have an epigrammatic neatness which would give the author an honourable place among his lighter contemporaries. I give two short quotations as samples of this style:

"There is a sort of pleasure for one's pride in making fun of faults one doesn't possess oneself, and such pleasures are so sweet to all men, and particularly to fools that it is extremely uncommon to see them give them up . . . also it gives an opportunity for spiteful remarks, pale jokes and flat puns; and for society—that is to say for a collection of people whom boredom brings together and stupidity modifies—it is so pleasant to talk for two or three hours without saying anything, so delicious to shine at others' expense and to mention and blame vices one is far from having . . . it is a sort of tacit self-praise; for that people even consent to join together, to unite to crush the person whose great crime consists in not thinking like the rest; then they go home mightily pleased with the wit they have shown, when obviously they have thereby merely proved their stupidity and their pedantry."[6]

The second quotation is from the story already mentioned, *The Mystified Magistrate*, in which de Sade makes fun of his judges. It is by far the longest of his humorous stories and very spirited; the backbone which holds the

different incidents is that old hardy annual of French farce, the prevention of the consummation of a marriage. The magistrate has been made drunk and is giving his profession of faith in his office; unfortunately the pun is untranslatable. "Dame, voyez-vous," he says, "J'aime les mœurs, j'aime la tempérance et la sobriété, tout ce qui choque ces deux vertus me révolte et je sévis; il faut être sévère, la sévérité est la fille de la justice . . . et la justice est la mère de . . . je vous demande pardon, madame, il y a des moments où quelquefois la mémoire me fait faux bond. . . —Oui, oui, c'est juste, répondit la folle marquise. . . ."[7]

In this category of works addressed entirely to the general public I would include *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir*, in spite of its erotic content and vocabulary; its chief raison d'être is the hundred-page pamphlet *Frenchmen, a further effort if you wish to be republicans*, which occupies about a third of the book and which will be considered in great detail later; the frame in which it is placed was, I think, an attempt to diffuse the pamphlet more effectively than would be done if it was offered by itself, and also to make money.

The plot of the work is the sexual education of a young girl, a perpetual device of pornographic writers. True, it is done with more verve and greater variety than in most similar books, and the intellectual equivalent of sexual emancipation receives at least as much space as the physical side; there are many traces of de Sade's individual approach to such problems; but the aim of the book is obviously to excite the reader—and therefore pornographic; it is the only work of de Sade's against which such an accusation can be laid with honesty. It is written in dialogue form; the seven actors are little more than lay figures and have no existence 'off the stage.'

D'Alméras, one of the first French writers to take Sade seriously, believed this book was not by him, probably because it is unworthy of him; but he acknowledges it himself in *Justine* and the style and intellectual attitude make the attribution doubly certain; it must be regretfully accepted and excused, if an excuse is necessary, by the author's circumstances at the time of its writing.

III. "ALINE ET VALCOUR"

I had hoped that in this criticism of de Sade's works I should be able to dispense with the necessity of detailing the plots, referring any readers who might be curious to the books already published about him; the remainder of his books have been dealt with at length, but *Aline et Valcour* has, as far as I know, only been carefully considered once in a work published in a small limited edition in 1901; later writers have been content with the merest caricature of a summary and a regretful remark to the effect that the book contains no obscenities, and with the exception of one poisoning and a few flagellations, no scenes of cruelty. It is possible however for a book to have interest, even with the exclusion of these two subjects. I am forced, therefore, to give a rather long account of it.

It is really three completely distinct novels, linked together by rather slight threads of a secondary intrigue. The main book (occupying the first and fourth volumes) is a dramatic and tragic story told in letters; the second volume is an account of a symbolical voyage, somewhat in the style of Swift; the third volume is an adventure story. For convenience I shall refer to these different parts as the story of Aline and Valcour, the story of Sainville, and the story of Leonora respectively.

The story of Aline and Valcour is told in letters and

was undoubtedly influenced by Richardson and Choderlos de Laclos. A poor young man, Valcour, is in love with Aline, the daughter of the Magistrate de Blamont. Aline loves him in return and his suit is favoured by her mother, a charming woman and a sincere Christian. These three are all honourable people, governed by their heart rather than by their head, sentimental, virtuous, religious and stupid. Aline's father disapproves of the match owing to its imprudence; he has found for his daughter a thoroughly acceptable husband in the financier Dolburg, a rich man already three times widowed, a friend of de Blamont's and his companion in debauchery. Aline, however, is constant in her love, and seconded by her mother uses every possible device to postpone the arranged wedding. De Blamont, infuriated by this resistance uses all his powers to cause the wedding to take place.

The scene is set for the conflict. On one side there is sentiment, honour, religion—the heart; on the other the intellect which acknowledges no laws but those of reason, no prejudices, no tacit agreements. The heart is bound to lose, for it considers itself bound by conventions and decencies at which the intellect laughs.

The action is straightforward. When all legal means of forcing his daughter to the marriage have been foiled either by Madame de Blamont or friends, de Blamont tries to have the girl kidnapped. This too fails, as does an attempt to bribe Valcour to renounce his claims, and a subsequent attempt to have him assassinated. De Blamont therefore decides to isolate the girl, removing by one device or another all her friends, and finally causing her mother to be poisoned by a servant he had seduced. Alone and powerless, the girl is taken to a distant country property of her father's, where she is

held a prisoner by her father and Dolburg. Escape is impossible, all her appeals for pity are dismissed; in complete despair the girl commits suicide.

The book is extremely well written. The characters and beliefs of the different actors are excellently revealed in their letters; the emotion continually and carefully heightened, and the climax is handled with considerable restraint and deep feeling. Unfortunately there is a sub-plot, concerned with a lost elder daughter of Madame de Blamont, which, although it helps the intrigue (it is the excuse for the introduction of the two other novels) and serves to reveal de Blamont's character, is the cause of a great deal of diffuseness, and is probably the chief reason for the book never having been accorded its due. Slightly pruned, the novel could stand against any other product of its country and century.

The dominating figure of the whole book is de Blamont, the prototype of the 'sadistic' villain. Although he only writes six of the seventy odd letters of which the book is formed, his shadow is cast on every page. He is a materialist, an intellectual, guided entirely by his own pleasures and advantage; he has worked out a philosophy to justify his conduct. He gives an impression of deathly coldness. Even his debauches and atrocities heighten that impression. In face of his single-minded, unscrupulous, cold determination the rest of the characters are like birds trying to escape from a snake. He is probably the most terrifying character ever created, the more so as we see him chiefly through the eyes of his victims. Although de Sade's later works abound in far greater monsters their very number and the lack of contrast lessen their effect.

It has already been remarked that this novel is partly autobiographical. Valcour's life-story is de Sade's; in

Aline, so charming, so gay, so constant in her love despite all opposition it is surely not too far-fetched to see a portrait of the long-loved Louise de Montreuil; and the broken-hearted letter that Valcour writes on hearing of Aline's death is, in its intensity, certainly an echo of the author's own despair. The charitable and long-suffering wife of de Blamont may well be a picture of Madame de Sade.

The story of Sainville is completely different. It is an account of a voyage, but such a voyage as only Gullivers make. It is principally concerned with two countries, Butua on the Gold Coast, and Tamoe, somewhere in the South Seas. In the preface de Sade says, "Nobody as yet has penetrated to Butua . . . . save the author. . . . . If with the more agreeable fictions of Tamoe he tries to console his readers for the cruel truths he has been obliged to paint in Butua, should we blame him?" Although nobody perhaps has penetrated to Butua, we all live in it; for, by a curious coincidence, he has adopted the same device as Miss Edith Sitwell for exposing existing civilisation in the symbols of African barbarity; and though he nowhere approaches the level of *Gold Coast Customs*,* one of the finest, if not the finest poem of this century, he produces effects and contrasts which are not unworthy of the comparison. In Tamoe de Sade has painted his Utopia. This volume will be analysed in subsequent chapters.

The story of Leonora is the longest of the three, the most full of incident, and the dullest. The young lady is kidnapped and goes through adventure after adventure all over the world before returning home. She is a most disagreeable character, cheating and lying, using her

* When writing this I had not seen Miss Sitwell's *Romance*, which surpasses both her own earlier works and all her contemporaries'.

beauty to lead men on and extort favours and help from them with promises she has never any intention of fulfilling. She manages to preserve her virtue through all dangers. She has somewhat unjustly been compared with Juliette; but the latter paid for what she got: she wasn't that sort of a cheat. In Spain, Leonora undergoes some of the vicissitudes which later afflict the unhappy Justine —the cut-throat inn, the murderous monks, the band of beggars. Some of the incidents and minor characters are of great interest; the salient points will be dealt with as occasion arises.

In several different places de Sade prophesies the imminence of the Revolution. The book was twice suppressed in the early nineteenth century as being politically subversive.

IV. "LES 120 JOURNÉES," "JUSTINE" ET "JULIETTE"

From every point of view *Les 120 Journées de Sodome* is one of the most extraordinary books in the world. Even its history is peculiar. The manuscript we possess is a single roll of paper about thirteen yards long and not quite five inches wide, covered on both sides by an almost microscopical writing (in print the work covers nearly 500 pages of royal quarto); this was written by de Sade in thirty-seven evenings, writing from seven to ten every night, starting August 20th, 1785, in the Bastille. On his removal from there the manuscript was lost, or stolen, and came into the possession of a French family where it remained for over a century. Then a hundred and twenty years after its composition it was published by Dr. Ivan Bloch ('Eugène Dühren') in a very limited edition; a second and corrected edition was started in Paris in 1931, but the enterprise seems to have fallen through.

And yet this monstrous work—perhaps 150,000

words—is the merest skeleton of what was originally intended. It was to be in four parts, preceded by an introduction and perhaps followed by an epilogue; but except for the introduction and the first part, which have been fairly fully developed, it is only in the form of detailed notes. We shall probably never know whether de Sade used this canvas to write the complete book. As with *The Castle* of Kafka we have only the fragment of the intended whole; and these two fragments, utterly opposed as they are in every way, can both be qualified as masterpieces.

The central portion of the book is a description of every form of sexual perversion, to the number of six hundred, "expressly excluding all the pleasures allowed or forbidden by that brute of which you talk ceaselessly, without knowing it, and which you call nature."[8] This is not only the first psychopathia sexualis, but by far the most complete ever written, despite the scientific and pseudo-scientific collections of the last fifty years. It includes every range of intellectual, sensual and physical activity which can possibly be brought into this category. Dr. Bloch was undoubtedly justified in claiming for this work a very high place as a scientific document, and claiming that it alone would place de Sade among the very first writers of his century.

These perversions were to be described by four old women, who were to place them in the stories of their lives, thus giving four detailed life histories with their economical and social background.

These historians were to recount the perversions, to the number of five every evening during a four-month orgy, lasting from the end of October till the beginning of March, to four excessively debauched war-profiteers, their four wives, and their harem of twenty-eight subjects

of every age and sex in a lonely and desolate medieval castle in Switzerland. During the four months the development of the thirty-six characters and their mutual interaction was to be described.

The introduction sets the scene and gives elaborate physical and mental portraits of the actors. This portrait gallery is an astounding performance, as a piece of writing hardly ever equalled. They are monstrous figures, well over life size, painted with extreme naturalism, yet crystallised to an individualism the naturalist school never attained. De Sade is absolutely merciless; we are not spared a single wrinkle, a single sore, unpleasant smell or habit, not a single meanness or treachery; no detail of cowardice or filth is hidden. But the canvas is not monotonous; religion and beauty are there too, childishness and romanticism; the whole gamut of human possibilities are exhibited in their extremest development.

The work starts off with a thunderclap. "The extensive wars which Louis XIV had to wage in the course of his reign, which ruined the State's finances and the people's faculties, none-the-less found the secret of enriching an enormous quantity of those bloodsuckers who are always on the look out for public calamities, which they engender instead of appeasing, in the direct intention of thereby making greater profits. . . . . It was at the end of this reign . . . . that four of these contractors imagined the singular party of debauchery we are going to describe. It would be a mistake to imagine that only business people took part in this malpractice, it had at its head very great gentlemen indeed. The Duke de Blangis and his brother the bishop had both made enormous fortunes by these means, and are sufficient proof that the aristocracy did not disdain this method of making a fortune, any more than other people.

These two illustrious persons, intimately bound by pleasure and interest to the financier Durcet and the Judge de Curval, were the first to imagine the debauch we are going to describe; they communicated it to their two friends and these four formed the principal actors of those famous orgies."[9]

This single paragraph gives a good sample of de Sade's penetrating social criticism. It is no accident that his four villains are representatives of the four groups which represent law and order.

This very slight sketch will give some notion of the scale on which the work is planned. Details of the plot can be found in the books mentioned at the end of the chapter.

De Sade was driven by two motives to write this work. The first was undoubtedly scientific; as he himself writes[10]: "Men already so different from one another in all their other manias and in all their other tastes, are even more so sexually, and he who could fix and detail these perversions would accomplish one of the finest works on morals one could wish for, and perhaps one of the most interesting." In *Justine* he offers a similar explanation. "But shall we not wear out our reader's patience in describing new atrocities?" he asks. "Have we not already sufficiently soiled their imaginations with tales of filth? Should we hazard new ones?—Hazard hazard, replies the philosopher. People don't realise how important these pictures are to the soul's development; our great ignorance of this *science* is only due to the stupid modesty of those wont to write on such matters. Held in by absurd fears they only tell us of puerilities that every fool knows and do not dare to lay hands fearlessly on the human heart and portray its gigantic divagations. We will obey since philosophy commands and

will fear no more to paint vice naked."[11] His sincerity cannot be doubted; it is only his lack of a polysyllabic vocabulary which makes him scientifically suspect to-day.

The second motive which actuates this work is a misanthropy unequalled in human history. Lear and Timon are but pale shadows compared to de Sade at this epoch. His aim is no less than to strip every covering, both mental and physical, off man and expose him to our disgusted gaze as the mean and loathsome creature he is. It is the supreme blasphemy. Our gods you may attack, individuals you may show to be monsters, but to attack the human race is unforgivable. Even the paler 'scientific' exposures of the Viennese psychoanalysts have called forth the most indignant remonstrances; no wonder de Sade, with his cold and objective exhibition of the most carefully hidden corners of our unconscious minds, of our daily weaknesses and meannesses, has been tracked and pursued by authority all over the world.

In this work the blasphemy reaches Mephistophelean heights. Curval complains that there are only two or three crimes to commit. "How many times," he cries, "Have I not wished that I could catch the sun and deprive the world of it, or use it to burn up the earth?"[12] Never again did de Sade reach this pitch; though when the Revolution falsified all the hopes he had set on it he drew near the same level in *La Nouvelle Justine*. He allows himself to make paradoxical moralising asides; "If crime has not the delicacy of virtue, has it not ceaselessly a character of grandeur and sublimity that surpasses and will always surpass the monotonous and effeminate features of the latter?"[13] And again, "Beauty is simple, ugliness extraordinary."[14]

De Sade realised the unique quality of this work. At the end of the Introduction he calls on his friend the

reader "to prepare your heart and spirit for the most impure tale that has ever been written since the world exists, such a book not existing either among the ancients or the moderns."[15] As Maurice Heine has pointed out with considerable perspicacity, when de Sade lost the manuscript (? manuscripts) of this work he lost his masterpiece, and knew it; and it is probably due to the vain effort to repair this loss, from the scientific point of view, that we get the numerous obscenities in the final edition of *Justine* and *Juliette*. The account of the monastery Sainte-Marie-des-Bois in *La Nouvelle Justine* in particular seems to be a vain effort to reconstitute the lost work.

In contrast with the fragmentary remains of *Les 120 Journées* we have no less than four complete versions of *Justine*, written over a space of ten years. The first version, *Les Infortunes de la Vertu*, is the original rough draft; it is a long short story written in a fortnight in 1787, and was never intended by the author for publication. It was transcribed from the manuscript by Maurice Heine in 1930. This manuscript was worked over, corrected and expanded by the author in his usual fashion during the following year, and a version *Justine, ou les Malheurs de la Vertu* was published soon after de Sade's release, in 1791, in two volumes. The following year it was brought out again by another publisher with slight alterations—the chief being that it is his mother, and no longer his aunt, that the 'homosexual' de Bressac feels so strongly about—psychologically an important change. This version had a considerable success in the ten following years. Although the sexual element is present none of the first three versions can be considered obscene. Finally in 1797 the book was entirely re-written and expanded to more than double its size, largely by

the inclusion of the life-story of two minor characters; probability is destroyed, the natural development is lost, the story is drowned in a deluge of blood and semen.

The basic fable is the same throughout all the versions; it is the story of a young girl left suddenly without resources who tries to make her way through life following the precepts of religion in which she believes completely, and the misfortunes and discomforts she undergoes. In its original conception it was almost certainly meant to be an ironical tale in the style of Voltaire–*Zadig* indeed is quoted on the first page; it was to be as it were a pendant to *Candide*, the story of the chaste but unfortunate Cunegonde. Justine was to pass from the hands of one extraordinary character to another's, a miser's, a 'homosexual's,' a coiner's, a vegetarian and a temperance reformer's. In every case the exercise of some Christian virtue, chiefly pity or charity or the negative abstention from crime, was to land her in one predicament after another. The final moral was to be not 'cultivate your garden,' but 'learn how to correct the caprices of fortune' —*anglice* 'God helps those who help themselves.'

But almost immediately de Sade saw that this subject necessitated more serious treatment, for he was not attacking a minor foolishly optimistic philosophy, but the whole basis of Christianity and the Christian conception of human nature. Christianity assumed that gratitude, remorse, a natural leaning towards gratuitous kindness and charity were fundamentals of human behaviour in a Christian country, and that there was a providence which especially looked after the good and pious. De Sade intended to show how unfounded such assumptions were, how worldly success was only to be obtained by a façade of virtue combined with a strict attention to business unalloyed by scruples or unneces-

sary honesty, and how indifferent was providence to the characters of the people it struck through its instrument nature. Justine is killed by lightning.

So from being the *Candide* of Christianity *Justine* became the *Don Quixote*. The parallel is very close. Both protagonists believe in a state of affairs and a humanity which in fact do not exist; both prefer to stick to their delusions rather than to learn from experience, and in consequence go from one disastrous and ridiculous situation to another, finally dying in misery, still convinced that their vision of the world is a true one. Justine is consoled by her assurance that she is right, comforted by prayer, and upheld by her hopes of heaven.

In this spirit the first published version of *Justine* was written (as also the rough sketch). The tale is well told and the incidents lively and diversified; it is one of the most depressing books ever written. For, in spite of experience, we all have a tendency to hope that virtue will be rewarded in the end; the continuous triumph of vice, as the continuous triumph of common sense in *Don Quixote*, lends a certain monotony to the work. Not that Justine meets exclusively vicious people; at Grenoble she is befriended by at least three disinterested people, including an honourable judge; a certain Monsieur Servan, whom de Sade designates by the initial 'S,' is honoured by being especially pointed out by de Sade as a just and disinterested magistrate in a naughty world. But the good are in a terrible minority; and except in this one case they are never in a position to influence their fellows; the world is composed of rogues and their victims.

The history of Paris between 1791 and 1797 is amply sufficient to account for the alterations between the two versions. During that time de Sade had witnessed the

incredible brutalities of the Terror, the fever of blood and lust and crime which had swept the masses in whom he had hoped; he had seen the failure of the Revolution to right any of the major wrongs of a suffering country, the reinstatement of private property and profit, the bloody suppression of Babeuf's egalitarian revolt. The first version of human nature in *Justine* must be re-written; man was not merely a self-seeking hypocrite, he was the most bloodthirsty, cruel and lustful animal that had ever encumbered the face of the earth. *La Nouvelle Justine* is the final vomiting of de Sade's disgust and disappointment.

In the preface he claims that he has acquired the right to say everything and then goes on to remark that in a century as philosophical as this no one will be scandalised by any descriptions or systems he may employ! (Commentators on de Sade are so fascinated or appalled at his obscenity that they have no eyes for any other quality; yet his irony is sufficiently strong to be appreciated, even if he had not stressed his intention in several foot-notes.) He then goes on: "As for the cynical descriptions, we believe that since every situation of the soul is at the disposition of the novelist, there are none which he has not the right to employ; only fools will be scandalised; true virtue is never frightened or alarmed by pictures of vice, only finding therein a further motive for the sacred progress it has imposed on itself. Perhaps there will be an outcry against this work; but who will protest? The libertines, as formerly the hypocrites against *Tartuffe*."

This last sentence needs a little consideration, for in it de Sade gives away the intention which motivated the writing of the book. It was certainly not pornographic—he lacks every qualification for that; he neither beautifies nor romanticises sex, his descriptions are of

the most summary, his vocabulary business-like and monotonous, the half-a-dozen necessary and commonplace words (the distinguishing mark of pornography, after its romantic, poetic attitude to sex is its peculiar vocabulary of synonyms); it was not primarily the demonstration that *in present civilisation* virtue is oppressed and crime prosperous; it was the exposition of human nature at its greatest development, untrammelled by fear, and particularly in this book of that tangle of instincts called sex. His prophecy about his detractors has proved correct; starting from his personal enemy, Restif de la Bretonne, it has been the gallants, the lady-killers, the successful amorists who have attacked de Sade with the greatest violence and have been the most distressed by his debunking of their behaviour.

If *Justine* may be compared with *Don Quixote* the story of *Juliette* her sister is an earlier and intensely serious version of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. The last-mentioned delightful work, it will be remembered, is the story of a poor young girl who becomes the mistress of her employer whom she shoots; at her trial she gains the favour of the judge and jury by sexual means; she then goes to Hollywood where she is taken as mistress by an elderly and unpleasant button-manufacturer; she deceives him when and as occasion arises; she involves a rich young man in a breach of promise suit and compromises with his relatives for money. The man who is keeping her then sends her on a trip to Europe; on the way over she indulges in a little espionage; in London she makes love to a man till he gives her an extremely valuable diamond tiara; in the Central of Europe she makes the acquaintance of an austere but extremely rich young man whom, by the aid of considerable lying and subterfuge, she persuades to propose to her; she makes every effort to prepare for a

breach of promise case to obtain heavy damages, but at the last moment, after the robbery of some uncut diamonds, decides to marry him so that she can finance another man with whom she fancies herself in love.

This will probably be claimed to be a wilful distortion of a charming and humorous work; but I do not think the actual plot can be otherwise described; and (with the necessary changes made for time and place) if the actual complaisances which Lorelei was forced to have with her different lovers, the details of the business plans of Mr. Eisman and the political intentions of Major Falcon had been given, you would have a very fair idea of the contents of *Juliette*.

When Juliette, like her sister, was suddenly left an orphan without resources and was equally denied both help and charity from the quarters from which she expected it, she decided to utilise the one asset she possessed and went into a brothel. Her religious convictions had already been undermined by the Mother Superior of the convent where she was educated, and convinced that no one would help her unless she helped herself she set about the task of getting money by every possible means. She spent a couple of very unpleasant years at the brothel, robbing her clients as much as she could, when she met an elderly, disagreeable, criminal and extremely intelligent business man, whose mistress she became. After some time she met at dinner at his house a person called Saint-Fond, a 'statesman,' the most powerful and richest man in the kingdom, a repulsive megalomaniac; she became less his mistress than the supervisor and administrator of his pleasures, a sort of Pompadour. She retained this position for some time, enjoying very great wealth and numerous privileges, but she was always in a dependent state. She lost Saint-

Fond's patronage by betraying her horror at a monstrous project of his to starve to death two-thirds of the population of France. At the age of twenty-two she found herself again nearly as poor as she was seven years earlier, but a good deal more experienced. She went to Angers and started a gambling-den; she there met a respectable provincial nobleman and became his wife. For two years she endured the boredom of matrimony, then poisoned her husband and went to Italy to seek her fortune in company with a card-sharper. She travelled through the different states of which the peninsula was then composed making money by every possible means—stealing and swindling, running brothels and gambling-houses, occasionally prostituting herself. At the age of twenty-five she needed alcohol and opium to stimulate her, she was so exhausted. In her travels through Italy she met the most important people of the time, the King of Sardinia, the King and Queen of Naples, the Pope, and the most prominent members of the aristocracy. She amassed a second large fortune, but that in turn was partly confiscated for a time by her refusal to supply the Doges of Venice with poison. She returned to France to enjoy the money she had sent ahead of her; eventually the Doges restored the rest of her fortune and she settled down to enjoy the ten years of life that remained to her; she died at the age of forty. As might be guessed from the life she was forced to lead she was not very fond of men; her deepest and most passionate friendships were with women. The chief of these were a woman named Clairwil, a cold and vicious person, Princess Borghese, and a strange person with 'psychic' powers called la Durand, an exploiter of the quack magical religions of the time and a vendor of poisons.

The principal motive of this book is not sex, but

money, the means of acquiring it, the power it gives, the civilisation and institutions which surround it—in a word, capitalist society. There is hardly a single phase of the contemporary civilisation, from education to the Church, from care of the poor and disabled to politics, which is not scrutinised. The characters are all capitalists, business men, aristocrats, kings and the higher clergy; they are condemned out of their own mouths. All through the book there is a tentative search for some form of civilisation which would do away with the misfortunes of virtue and the prosperities of vice at the same time; the conclusions reached will be examined later.

This is by far the most realistic of de Sade's books. Research has shown that one after another of the institutions and persons that de Sade denounced were—not figures of a diseased imagination—but historical truth. Two hundred and fifty pages of Dühren's book are filled with parallels between de Sade's work and the history of the epoch. From the description of the brothel where Juliette started her apprenticeship to the horrible behaviour of Ferdinand and Caroline, King and Queen of Naples, there is little that is not historically true. Even the man-eating ogre Minski has a historical counterpart in the famous Blaise Ferrage. With regard to the Italian part of the book we have seen that de Sade claimed complete accuracy for all the details, which are based on personal experience. This may be true, for Casanova has shown how easy it was for people of far less distinction than de Sade to approach foreign royalty. His description of Ferdinand and Caroline is certainly not an exaggeration of the facts. Juliette's interview with the Pope is in another category.

Although this book was not published till 1796 I feel certain it was written earlier. The optimism alone dates

it. Moreover the footnotes bringing the work up to date show conclusively that the first three volumes, up to Juliette's marriage, were written before the death of Mirabeau in 1791. De Sade comments on his erotic works, saying of him, "Mirabeau, who wanted to be smutty to be something, and who is not and never will be anything all his life." And he adds in a footnote, "Assuredly not a legislator; one of the best proofs of the folly and delirium which characterised the year 1789 in France is the ridiculous enthusiasm inspired by this vile spy of the monarchy. What is the impression that remains to-day of this immoral and unintelligent man? That of a hypocrite, a traitor and a fool."[16]

The rest of the work, with the possible exception of the rather sickening ending, was almost certainly written in 1793 or '94, when anti-monarchical feeling was at its height, possibly during de Sade's imprisonment for moderantism. It is the only time when de Sade shows a disposition to take kings seriously; at other times he looked behind and beyond them. In the story *Juliette et Raunai* he makes his point of view quite clear when he says, "Tyranny, which first frightens sovereigns, *or rather those that govern them*, ends almost always in providing them with pleasures."[17] In the present case he was probably trying to use the popular feeling against kings to carry the people with him in his attack on the far more sinister powers which lay behind these figure-heads.

As a historical document this book is of considerable value, and it contains many extremely pregnant ideas; as a novel it is poor, losing by its very accuracy, diffuse and episodic; some of the characters, particularly the statesman Saint-Fond, who has nearly a whole volume devoted to him, are well drawn; but regard for truth, and

de Sade's comparative ignorance, make many of the others little more than lay figures. There are a large number of well-written descriptions of Italy—its countrysides, its towns, its ruins and its works of art; but I have never personally found much pleasure in the Baedeker school of writing, however minute the observation and however exquisite the language. Juliette's methods of getting a living necessitate a good deal of obscenity; but there is far less attempt at analysis than in *La Nouvelle Justine;* rather was de Sade trying to reconstitute the lost 120 *Journées* by presenting a collection of sexual monomaniacs and fetishists, but he nowhere approaches the level of the earlier work. It would be possible—though difficult—to make a bowdlerised version of *Juliette* which would still be of considerable interest, a feat quite impossible with the two other works.

V. LITERARY INFLUENCE

Although the ban on the greater part of de Sade's works has never been lifted since 1801 (save for a small number of extremely limited and expensive editions) his books by means of clandestine reprints have enjoyed a long and wide circulation. How wide it is impossible to estimate, but there have been learned books quoting him from nearly every country in Europe; and probably the greater number of readers have used him, to employ the admirable phrase of Swinburne, "either as a stimulant for an old beast or an emetic for a young man, *instead of a valuable study to rational curiosity.*" During the nineteenth century de Sade's work must have appeared completely satanic; before some corners of the veil of taboo covering sex had been lifted by the psychologists and psychoanalysts, and the findings given a fig-leaf of scientific respectability by a vocabulary free from associa-

tions, his knowledge and ideas must have been considered infernal. His revolutionary ideas too must have been extremely upsetting, when not incomprehensible; that they often were (and are) misunderstood can be proved by the fact that the ghastly projects he puts into the mouths of his reactionary 'fascist' characters were taken to represent his own desires; as I have already pointed out, sex is for most people so overwhelmingly important and exclusive, obscenity so fascinating and repulsive, that they put aside all other considerations when faced with such subjects; and the fact that de Sade treats sex objectively as merely one of the major factors of life completely escaped them. To treat religion ironically is understandable, if reprehensible; to treat sex ironically is inconceivable.

De Sade's influence on the literature of Europe since his death has been considerable. Saint Beuve, who was a canny critic, bracketed him with Byron as one of the twin inspirations of modern writers. His influence was obvious and openly confessed in the cases of Flaubert, Baudelaire, Swinburne,* Dostoievski, and Lautréamont. To-day his most open disciples (though they completely caricature him) are the French surréelistes, with their rather impotent desire for violence, both intellectual and physical.

Despite numerous pointers de Sade has been completely neglected by the historians of literature, with a single exception. At the end of 1930 a learned and polyglot Italian called Mario Praz wrote a 'reproving' work—to use Saki's charming phrase—on the romantic literature of the nineteenth century, chiefly French and English,

1 Swinburne particularly was soaked in de Sade, reading and quoting him constantly; a great deal of *Atalanta* and *Poems and Ballads First Series* are inspired by him. The Fourth Chorus in *Atalanta*, *Anactoria* and *Dolores* especially are practically transcriptions (see Lafourcade, *Jeunesse de Swinburne*, Vol. II.).

with side-glances elsewhere at other politically suspect countries and individuals, with the horrific title *La Carne, La Morte et il Diavolo nella letteratura romantica.* The chief originality of this work lies in the study of the influence of de Sade; in the index de Sade has easily the greatest number of references, only approached by the 'sadic' poets Swinburne and Baudelaire. With peculiar ingenuousness he starts by denying de Sade any merit soever: "Dello scrittore—non diciamo poi dello scrittore di genio—mancano al Sade le qualità più elementari. Poligrafo e pornografo a maggior titolo d'un Aretino, tutto il suo merito sta nell' aver lasciato dei documenti che rapresentano la fase mitologica, infantile della psicopatologia."* After which downright statement he proceeds to show his influence on a list of authors which seems, at first glance, to contain most of the major names of French literature of the century, and some quite respectable ones outside; of course all these authors may have been without any sensibility or discrimination. Among those listed are the following: Baudelaire, Shelley (in *The Cenci*), Swinburne, Maturin, J. Janin, Soulié, Pétrus Borel, de Musset, Sue, Victor Hugo, Théophile Gautier, Georges Sand, the painter Delacroix, Flaubert, Lautréamont, O. Mirbeau, d'Annunzio, Stendhal, Huysmans, Barbey d'Aurevilly, Péladan, Barrès, Rachilde, Villiers de l'Isle Adam, Rémy de Gourmont and Dostoievski. This list is not exclusive, and possibly one or two of the names are wrongly included as undergoing direct influence; but in any case the catalogue is sufficiently remarkable when it is considered that these authors were all influenced by the works of a man who lacked the most elementary qualities of a writer. I should hesitate to

* It is interesting to note that the correct attitude to-day to de Sade's work is no longer indignant disgust, but boredom and a refusal to take him seriously.

suggest that any of Signor Praz' pontifical judgments are fallible, especially as he has actually read *Justine* and *Juliette* (I am not certain of this: there is an extraordinary identity between his quotations and those made by G. Lafourcade in his treatise on Swinburne), and gives quite long if slightly ridiculous quotations from them; a number of these quotations are derived from the manichaean theology of the 'statesman' Saint-Fond, a subject only introduced to add superstition to the other cowardices and vices of this monster, and which is afterwards very thoroughly refuted; obviously such ideas are ridiculous; they were intended to be so.

It is not, however, with de Sade as a writer, but as a thinker and precursor that I am primarily interested; and the rest of the book will be occupied with him in those capacities.

Note.—For details of the plots of de Sade's works any of the books mentioned at the end of the first chapter should be consulted. Guillaume Apollinaire gives the best account of *Les* 120 *Journées*, Dawes of *Justine et Juliette*. Dühren's account is sketchy, with much emphasis on details which are chastely given in Latin. A German called Otto Flake has also written a book on Sade, mostly founded on Dühren; he gives some notion of the plots, but the book so overflows with moral indignation that it is chiefly interesting as a proclamation of Herr Flake's pure mind.

Addendum.—Since writing this chapter I have seen an article by Maurice Heine on *Le Marquis de Sade et le Roman Noir* (Nouvelle Revue Française, August, 1933) in which he claims priority for de Sade in the use of Gothic trappings to the adventure novel, on the historical ground of the dates of his books, compared with those of Mrs. Radcliffe and 'Monk' Lewis.

This seems to me difficult to justify, when the work of Clara Reeve and the wide diffusion of such German books as Boden's *Children of the Abbey* are taken into account. From the purely literary point of view de Sade's chief originality still seems to me to lie in his use of history for romance.

CHAPTER III

PHILOSOPHY

Chi disputa alegando l'autorità non adopra lo'ngegno, ma piuttosto la memoria.

LEONARDO DA VINCI,
Notes.

All Bibles or sacred codes have been the causes of the following errors:

1. That man has two real existing principles, viz., a Soul and a Body.
2. That Energy, call'd Evil, is alone from the Body; and that Reason call'd Good, is alone from the Soul.
3. That God will torment Man in Eternity for following his Energies.

But the following contraries to these are true:

1. Man has no Body distinct from his Soul; for that call'd Body is a portion of Soul discern'd by the five Senses, the chief inlets of Soul in this age.
2. Energy is the only life, and is from the Body; and Reason is the bound or outward circumference of Energy.
3. Energy is eternal delight.

W. BLAKE,
Marriage of Heaven and Hell.

I. LA METRIE

WHEN dealing with a thinker so widely read, so eclectic and at the same time so original as de Sade it is difficult to speak of masters or predecessors. The number of authors he quotes is prodigious, ranging through all classical and modern literature from Rousseau and Hobbes to the Bible, from Herodotus and the Christian Fathers to the travels of Captain Cook, Thomas More and

the Encyclopedists. But there is one author whom he quotes more often than any other and who obviously had a preponderating influence on the formation of many of his ideas; that author is La Metrie, a philosopher now so completely forgotten that I may perhaps be forgiven for giving a short account of his life and principal ideas.

Julien Offray de La Metrie was born in 1709, the son of a merchant. He was trained for the Church as a Jansenist, but after a precocious bout of piety—he wrote an *apology* at the age of fifteen—he became disgusted with theology and started the study of medicine. He was qualified at Rheims at the age of nineteen and practised for five years; he then went to Leyden and studied under the famous Boerhaave. He translated his master's work on venereal diseases, and added his own work on the same subject, a work which received considerable abuse. In the course of the next few years he published several other medical books. In 1742 he returned to Paris and was made doctor to the army corps of the duc de Grammont, in which capacity he took part in the siege of Fribourg. During these operations he caught a fever and was so struck by the alterations in his personality as the result of delirium that he wrote a book on the subject called *The Natural History of the Soul* which was published at the Hague in 1745, supposedly as a translation from the English. He was at once attacked by the ecclesiastical authorities and forced to resign his commission. In compensation he was made inspector of hospitals; but he employed his leisure in writing a couple of plays which made fun of the doctors and medicine of his time. This did not lessen the animosity felt against him and in 1746 his books were burned by the public executioner and he was forced to flee for his life. He first went to Saz near Ghent, but he was accused of spying

and had to escape to Leyden. There he wrote *Man a Machine*—a work which with characteristically impudent wit he dedicated to the extremely pious Haller as an offering to his love of truth. The outcry caused by this work was enormous and his life was in constant danger. By a piece of luck he managed to cross the frontier into Prussia, where he was given asylum by Frederick the Great, "the Solomon of the North," as he constantly calls him. Frederick created a nominal post for him—Reader to the King—and gave him a pension. They quickly became very friendly, somewhat to Voltaire's annoyance and jealousy. He wrote a number of essays in the next three years, the most important being *The System of Epicurus* and the *Anti-Seneca, or Discourse on Happiness.* The minor works include *L'Homme Plante*, *Les Animaux plus que Machines*, *La Volupté*, and *L'Art de Jouir*, the last two being delicate 'eighteenth-century' lucubrations on love and gallantry. He presented a collected edition of his works to Frederick in 1751 and died in November of that year from eating poisoned food. Frederick pronounced a discourse in praise of him before the Berlin Academy in 1752.[1]

We must now examine the ideas that gained for him the attacks not only of the representatives of orthodoxy, but even such comparative free-thinkers as Voltaire, Maupertuis, Diderot, Holbach, Grimm and many others. Even Goethe many years later praised him extremely grudgingly. His principal heresy was the statement that the object of science is the discovery of truth and that this can be obtained exclusively by the use of evidence and experiment. In short he posited the basis on which all modern scientific work rests. He followed this up by the equally shocking statement that man must be considered as an animal—that if as Descartes

said, animals were machines, then so was man; if man was more than a machine, then so were the animals. In short he posited the basis on which all modern medicine and biology rests. Finally he claimed that the idea of a 'soul' deprived of senses is inconceivable, and that the soul developed and decayed with the body and was subject to the same modifications as the body—e.g., various intoxications, delirium, neurosis and madness. The dualism of Descartes, Malbranche or Leibnitz was untenable, because unverifiable. In short he posited the basis on which nearly all modern psychology rests. For all science to-day is materialist in its assumptions, whatever it may be in its popularisations; it is a pity that it has forgotten this precursor and well-nigh martyr in the cause of objectivity.

It is difficult to realise to-day the strangle-hold maintained by religion on every department of thought up to the middle of the last century. In most countries to-day religion is so much on the defensive, so 'broadminded' and complaisant and unassuming, that we can hardly throw our minds back to the time when Darwin was preached against in every pulpit and Hegel denounced as heretical. Similar conduct to-day in the Bible Belt of the United States is smiled at and deplored even by the most pious of churchmen. In the middle of the eighteenth century affairs were very different; not only the central ideas but even the minor dogmas of the Catholic Church must not be questioned. For La Metrie never called himself an atheist, but an agnostic; he considered the existence of God and some sort of survival after death as probable but unverifiable and therefore to be excluded from philosophy; he adds that we have no means of knowing which cult pleases God the most; and all cults are objectionable on account of the wars they engender.

In the preface to his collected works he makes a rather disingenuous apology for himself. He admits that philosophy is contrary to both morality and religion, but denies that it can destroy or harm them. Philosophy, which is entirely concerned with evidence, stands in the same relation to nature as morality does to religion. But it can never affect the masses, for its appeal is based on reason, to which the masses are blind, whereas religion is based on emotion, and therefore potent. Although it never touches politics it is useful to rulers as it enables them to see through rhetoric and similar emotional appeals. Legislators will control men better as philosophers than as orators, as reasonable rather than reasoning beings. Philosophy for him is materialist, pragmatical, atheist. ("Atheists are virtuous by conviction, theists if at all by superstition.") It can only be based on physical science, derived from sensual observation, and must be completely unbiased by pre-conceived ideas of any sort.

He then makes a personal justification, claiming that there need be no correspondence between an author and his work, for he writes for truth and speaks and acts for convenience. Finally he closes with an exordium that must have touched de Sade very closely. He demands a 'republican' freedom of thought and writing, and exalts spiritual over physical liberty. And he advises the future philosopher to write anonymously and "as though you were alone in the universe, or as though you had nothing to fear from man's jealousy and prejudice."

The *Treatise on the Soul* is an exposition of his mechanistic view of man. A great deal of his theory is invalidated for us by the central position he gives to the theory of the animal spirits or electric fluid in the nerves, by means of which all perceptions are conveyed

to the brain. This idea, which originated in Malbranche, was universally held till the beginning of the nineteenth century; de Sade takes it over unquestioned; it gave a satisfactory, but oversimplified account of sensations. He denies the metaphysical conception of the soul, claiming that it only exists through sensations; he defines it as the motive principle of passive matter. Later he makes the assumption, which de Sade places in a central position in his metaphysics, that motion, at any rate potential motion, is a property of matter. He then examines the various faculties from this point of view. *Judgment* is the comparison of ideas founded on memory and association. Too good a memory is bad for judgment. *Imagination* is the voluntary reproduction of sense impressions. In health it is weaker than external impressions, but in delirium or under drugs it can be stronger, and in any case need not be true. *Hysteria* is voluntary—there is no wish to be cured. *Love* is a sort of madness. *Passions* are based on the pleasure-pain principle. *Instincts* are mechanical reactions, equally valid for humans and animals, as can be seen by the latter's pantomime. *Sensations of the soul* are due to knowledge and pleasure and pain caused by modifications of the self. *Happiness* is an involuntary manner of thinking and feeling; men are happy by accident, but philosophy teaches resignation. *Will* is the result of pleasure-pain stimuli. *Good taste* is majority taste. *Genius* is general excellence. It is easy to be a good mathematician because the subject is so limited. *Free Will* is probably a true conception. *Faith* is necessary to explain the origin of evil, the nature of the soul, and life after death.

Man a Machine is a development of the same thesis; it is primarily a refutation of Descartes. The human body is defined as a self-winding machine, with courage as a

coefficient of food, but a machine so complicated that it is impossible to get a clear idea of it or a definition. Character and morals differ with temperament, heredity and environment. Mind and body are interdependent, the one modifying the other (fever and anxiety both prevent sleep). Anatomically there is a great similarity between men and mammals, the chief difference being that man speaks and that he possesses the heaviest and most complicated brain. Man at birth is the weakest and stupidest of all animals, for his instincts are feeble; the more sense an animal has, the less instinct. Imagination —image-forming—is the chief function of the soul, all other faculties deriving from it. Philosophy is imagination plus self-criticism.

In the course of this essay he lets drop a number of generalisations, unconnected with the subject, which have either directly or through the criticism they provoked from him a great significance in the study of de Sade. Nature, he says, not God, is the prime mover; but Nature is purposeless and inequality is one of her characteristics. The natural law is, "Don't do to others what you wouldn't have done to you." In people appearance and character correspond (an idea de Sade held very firmly). Motion is a property of matter, vide the muscular reactions of dead animals. Anything which doesn't touch the senses is an impenetrable mystery. In the eyes of nature all creatures are equal; there is only one substance, differently modified in the universe. Finally three axioms: "Never generalise in science"; "Only good doctors should be judges"; "We were not born to be wise but to be happy, from the worm to the eagle."

The System of Epicurus is a number of apothegms defining his attitude to life. It is definitely hedonistic and pragmatical. It is not only impossible to know first

causes but useless to worry about them. Nature is the prime mover and is amoral, indifferent and purposeless. Man was the last in creation because he is the most complicated. Life can be very pleasant if you don't take it too seriously; materialism is the antidote to misanthropy. Man is not responsible for his qualities or defects, and therefore remorse is useless, nor is he criminal for following his instincts. Death is annihilation, and therefore unimportant; what do we risk in dying? and what don't we risk in living? Knowledge is only good if it is useful. "Just as medicine is often only a science of remedies with fine names, philosophy is only a science of fine words: it's doubly lucky when the first cure and the second mean something."

The *Anti-Seneca* is a plea for sensibility against stoicism. Happiness depends on character and is unintellectual. "One can be happy in refraining from what causes remorse: but thereby one often refrains from pleasure, from the demands of Nature." Illusion is preferable to an unpleasant reality. Knowledge is only good, in so far as it is conducive to happiness, and to worry about the future is folly. Men are born bad but are improved by education; nevertheless the disposition to evil is such that it is easier for the good to become bad than for the bad to become good. Virtues and vices only exist relatively to society, and the appearance of virtue is as good as virtue itself. Happiness comes from consciousness, not from fame, and remorse is a childish and useless feeling. Crime is also a search for happiness—it is a question of character. Happiness is irrespective of virtue and a man who has a greater satisfaction in evil-doing will be happier than he who has less in good works. There are criminal natures who enjoy torturing. The instincts are stronger than education. Happiness does

not depend entirely on sensuality, though the pleasures of the intellect are only partial. Men can be unhappy socially and happy personally. Public opinion is unimportant and fame deceitful. Adversity is the midwife of the virtues; suicide is justifiable but stupid.

In *La Volupté* and *L'Art de Jouir* he gives his prescription for happiness. It is very delicate, very sentimental, and very erotic, illustrated with excerpts from imaginary classical idylls. He dislikes obscenity and obscene books (which he considers dangerous as destroying illusions) and prefers what I can only qualify as elegant poetic pornography. For him, pleasure is inexistent without sentiment. Within the limits he sets himself he shows considerable interest and knowledge in sexual technique and variations, even going beyond what is generally considered permitted with the explanation that "Tout est femme dans ce qu'on aime." Despite, and partly on account of, his boastings, one gets the impression that he was not particularly potent.

II. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

I have found it desirable to give this rather detailed précis of La Metrie's ideas in the somewhat boring style one associates with the works of Aristotle as it is a convenient point from which to consider de Sade's general philosophy. He accepted from La Metrie completely the materialist conception of man and the universe, much elaborating the thesis, but not questioning it, and with it La Metrie's view of nature. He also accepted from him the idea that the pursuit of happiness is the main object of all activity after self-preservation, and the fatalistic acquiescence in the irresponsible divagations of character. He seized on and elaborated at enormous length the purely temporal and local aspect of actions regarded as

virtuous and vicious; he makes huge catalogues of examples drawn from the literature and folklore of every country to show that actions regarded as virtuous in eighteenth-century France were considered vicious at other times and places, and conversely; so much so that an early critic considered this to be his main object in writing. It is an interesting part of his work, and is one of the earliest examples of systematic comparative anthropology from the moral rather than the physical aspect. Finally he accepted the paramouncy of imagination in intellectual, and sensation in physical activity, the uselessness of remorse, the value of truth for its own sake and the supreme importance of education.

His chief difference with La Metrie was one of character. La Metrie was a happy and contented man, an epicurean, with epicurean pococurantism. He was interested in truth as an abstract idea, not as it affected his fellows; like many scientists and philosophers he had no desire to apply his results to life. Even his devotion to truth was not fanatical; he quotes with great approval Montaigne's remark, "La vérité doit se soutenir jusqu'au feu, mais exclusivement." He was quite happy to be illogical and he never attempted to develop his ideas to their logical conclusion.

De Sade on the other hand was a fanatic—his moderantism during the Terror is sufficient proof—and mercilessly logical. "Philosophy is not the art of consoling fools: its only aim is to teach truth and destroy prejudices."[2] Also he was only interested in truth as it affected mankind here and now and all his original work was concerned with man in his relations to God, to the State and to his neighbours—in other words religion, politics and what for convenience can be called sex; but before examining

his diagnoses and suggestions in these three departments of human life it will be convenient to deal in more detail with a few of his more general ideas.

Perhaps the most important of his philosophical conceptions is his distinction between 'real' and 'objective' ideas and his treatment of the idea of cause-and-effect; the passage in question[3] is rather long and elaborated; I have abbreviated it as much as possible. The Mother Superior is instructing Juliette.

"What is reason? It is the faculty given to me by nature to determine me in favour of one line of conduct as opposed to another, according to the pleasure or pain involved; a calculation obviously determined by the senses. Reason, as Féret says, is the balance with which we weigh objects and by which . . . . we know what we ought to think by their mutual relation. . . . . The first effect of reason is to assign an essential difference between the object that appears and the object that is perceived. Representative perceptions of an object are again different. If it shows us objects as being absent, but formerly present, that is called memory. If it shows us objects without warning us of their absence that is called imagination, and that is the true source of all our errors . . . . in that we suppose a real existence in the objects of these interior perceptions and believe that they exist apart from us, since we conceive them apart from us. To make this distinction clear I will give to this branch of idea the name of 'objective idea,' to distinguish it from a true perception which I will call a 'real idea.' . . . . The infinitesimal point, so essential to geometry, is an 'objective idea'; bodies and solids are 'real.' . . . . Before proceeding further it must be remarked that the confusion of these two groups of ideas is extremely common. . . . . People were forced to imagine general terms for groups of

similar ideas; and they called 'cause' any thing which produces some change in a body independent of it, and effect' any change produced by a cause. As these terms call up for us a more or less confused image of existence, action, reaction, change, the habit of using them has made us think that they correspond to a clear and distinct perception. . . . . People are unwilling to reflect that since all things act and react on one another incessantly they produce and undergo change at the same time. . . . ." This idea has considerable importance in his analysis of sex and other instincts and is the chief reason for his difference with the 'causal' findings of psychoanalysis.

It follows from this that words should be examined with the greatest caution. "Like all the fools with the same principles you will reply to me that all these (problems of the soul, etc.) are mysteries; but if they are mysteries you understand nothing about them, in which case how can you decide affirmatively about a thing of which you are incapable of forming any idea? To believe in or affirm a thing one must at least know what one is believing in and affirming. To believe in the immateriality of the soul is equivalent to saying that one is convinced of a thing of which it is impossible to form any 'real' notion; it is believing in words without attaching any meaning to them; to affirm that a thing is what one says it is is the height of folly and vanity."[4]

On materialism. "People offer us as an objection that materialism makes man simply a machine, which they find very derogative to humanity; will that humanity be much more honoured when you say that man acts under the secret impulsions of a spirit or something which animates him somehow?"[5] And again: "The esteem which so many people have for spirituality seems to have its only motive in the impossibility in which they find

themselves of defining it in an intelligible manner . . . . . when they say to us that the soul is finer than the body they tell us nothing except that that of which we have absolutely no knowledge must be far more lovely than that of which we have some faint idea."[6] Unlike most of his contemporaries de Sade did not believe that the sum of possible knowledge was now in the possession of his generation, though he considered that the development of chemistry and physics might one day render everything possible.[7]

He categorically denies the existence of free will. He places the following speech in the mouth of the Cardinal Bernis, at the time the Ambassador of France, formerly reputed to be one of the Pompadour's lovers; his reputation for chastity was not above suspicion (see Casanova) nor were his verses particularly moral; and although de Sade allows him considerable wit and intelligence, as was his due, his reputation and his rank are sufficient to embroil him in some of Juliette's most disreputable adventures. I give the speech in full as it is a good example of de Sade's methods.

"The faculty of comparing different methods of action and deciding on the one which appears to us to be the best is what is meant by free will. Does man possess that faculty? I make bold to affirm that he doesn't possess it, and that it would be impossible for him to do so. All our ideas owe their origin to physical and material causes which lead us in spite of ourselves, because these causes belong to our organisation and the exterior objects which influence us; our motives are the results of these causes, and consequently our will is not free. Assailed by different motives we hesitate, but the instant when we make up our mind doesn't depend on us; it is necessitated by the different dispositions of our organs;

we are always led by them, and it never depends on us to take one mode of action rather than another; always moved by necessity, always the slaves of necessity, the very instant when we think we have the most completely demonstrated our free will is the one in which we are led most invincibly. Hesitation and indecision make us believe in the freedom of our will, but that pretended freedom is only the instant when the weights in the balance are equal. As soon as a decision is taken it is because one side is heavier than the other, and it is not we who are the cause of the inequality but physical objects which act on us and make us the plaything of all human conventions, the plaything of the motor force of nature, like the animals and plants. Everything depends on the action of the nervous fluid and the difference between a criminal and an honest man consists in the greater or less activity of the animal spirits which compose this fluid.

"'I feel,' said Fénelon, 'that I am free, that I am completely in the hands of my own decisions.' This gratuitous assertion is impossible to prove. What makes the Archbishop of Cambrai so sure that, when he made up his mind to embrace the pleasant doctrine of Madame Guyon, he was free to choose the opposite path? The most that he can prove to me is that he has hesitated, but I defy him to prove to me that he was free to take the other path, from the moment that he decided as he did. 'I modify myself with God,' this author continues, 'I am the real cause of my own will.' But Fénelon has not considered in saying this that since God is the stronger he has made Him the real cause of all crimes; also he has not considered that nothing destroys God's omnipotence as man's free will, for that omnipotence of God which you suppose, and which I grant to you for a moment, is only such because God has ordained all things from the begin-

ning, and it is in consequence of this invariable ordination that man can be no more than a passive being who can change nothing in the order of things and who consequently has not free will. If he had free will he could at any moment destroy this first established order, in which case he would become as powerful as God. A supporter of the divinity like Fénelon should have considered this subject more carefully.

"Newton skated warily over this great difficulty, daring neither to go into it deeply nor to embroil himself in it; Fénelon, more positive though far less learned, adds, 'When I will a thing it is in my power not to will it; when I do not will a thing it is in my power to will it.' No. Since you didn't do it when you wanted, it is because it wasn't in your power to do so, and because all the physical causes which must direct the balance pressed it down, this time, on the side of the action that you did take, and choice was no longer in your power from the moment that you had been determined. Therefore your will was not free; you have balanced, but your will was not free and never is. When you let yourself go in the direction that you have chosen, it is because it was impossible to you to choose the other. You have been blinded by your indecision, you have believed yourself capable of choice because you have felt yourself capable of balancing. But that indecision, the physical effect of two external objects presented simultaneously, and the freedom to choose between them are two very different things."[8] Earlier in the work de Sade had for convenience defined everything capable of acting on man, including memory, prejudices, etc., as external objects.

I am going to close this chapter with an exhortation to consistency which is not particularly apposite, but which I want to bring in and for which I can find no other

opportunity. It is from the consistent villain de Blamont to his vacillating companion in vice. He writes:[9]

"That's what your end will be; I see you from here surrounded by priests proving to you that the devil is waiting for you, and you trembling and blanching, crossing yourself and forswearing your tastes and your friends, and then dying like an imbecile. And why will you be like that . . . because you have not any principles; I have told you that you only listen to your passions without reasoning about their causes, you have never had enough philosophy to submit them to systems which can identify them with yourself; you have jumped over all your prejudices without trying to destroy any of them; you have left them all behind you and all will return to distress you when there will be no longer any means of fighting against them."

Would that our innumerable well-meaning muddle-headed socialists and pacifists would take the gist of this passage to heart!

CHAPTER IV

GOD AND NATURE

Remove away that black'ning church,
Remove away that marriage hearse,
Remove away that man of blood—
You'll quite remove the ancient curse.

W. BLAKE,
Gnomic Verses.

From these contraries spring what the religious call Good and Evil. Good is the passive that obeys reason. Evil is the active, springing from energy.

W. BLAKE,
Marriage of Heaven and Hell.

Are gone to praise God and His Priest and King
Who make up a heaven of our misery.

W. BLAKE,
Songs of Experience.

I

ALL his life de Sade was obsessed by God. People who wish to denigrate him by calling him mad would have far more justification in calling him a religious, rather than a sexual maniac. There is not a single one of his writings but is occupied with religion; quite a number deal with sex not at all, or at most summarily.

We have seen that in his youth in 1763 he attached great importance to the sacrament and speaks of religion with considerable piety. There is little reason to question his sincerity; his family, during its seven hundred years of recorded existence, has had a continual connection with the Church; faith in God and His service was a family tradition.

In 1782 he had changed his position. It is from that year, the third of his continual imprisonment, that date the first writings of his that have come down to us; and the very first that is developed is an elegant little *Dialogue between a Priest and a Dying Man.* This short essay in the style of Fontenelle is concerned with the inadequacy of the religious description of the universe; the addition of the mysteries of God to the mysteries of Nature only make the understanding of the latter more difficult; with the unsatisfactory nature of prophecies, martyrs, miracles ("To believe in a miracle I should want to be absolutely sure that the phenomenon you claim as such is absolutely contrary to the laws of Nature—for only so can it be a miracle: and who knows enough of Nature to be able to swear that this is the precise point at which she draws a line and where she is outraged?"[1]). The whole opuscule is a well-reasoned piece of dialectic; it is moderate and dignified in its language.

From this time onwards de Sade cannot leave God and religion—particularly the Catholic Church—alone. By comparison he showed a certain amount of respect and toleration to Protestantism. I do not think there are fifty pages in any of his works in which the subject is not mentioned. His knowledge of the literature concerned with it is encyclopædic. He would seem to know the Bible almost by heart; he quotes and deals with Christian apologists from the early Fathers to Scot, Fénelon, Pascal and even more recent theologians; he mentions the Koran and Confucius; he deals in theological quibbles of the greatest niceness and subtlety; he is aware of the distinctions of the heresies which have at different times rent the Church; he discusses at length every one of its central dogmas.

All this learning is employed in an attack on God and

the Church which for length and intensity can seldom have been equalled; he attacks them with reason, with ridicule, with imprecations, with blasphemy; he attacks from the philosophical, the economic, the political, the ideal and the pragmatic angle; he ranges from the discussion of inconsistencies in the Bible (in the style of the question, "How could Pharaoh's cavalry pursue the Jews in a country where cavalry cannot operate, and further how did Pharaoh come to have any cavalry since, in the fifth of the plagues of Egypt, God had caused all the horses to perish?"[2]) to the Black Mass, from the history of the Papacy to the pre-Christian origin of the Eucharist, from the dogma of Hell to the economic foundations of the Church's property.

The basis of all this is obvious. De Sade was a passionate idealist and could neither forgive a God who permitted all the evil and misery of which he was so terribly aware, nor a Church whose explanations could not satisfy his reason, and whose practice and representatives so completely belied the principles they professed to observe. The culminating point of his attack is Juliette's interview with Pope Pius VI; it opens as follows: "'Haughty phantom,' I replied to this old despot, 'your habit of deceiving other men makes you try to deceive yourself. . . . . Listen to me, you Bishop of Rome, and allow me to analyse for a moment your power and your pretentions.

"'A religion is formed in Galilee whose bases are poverty, equality and hatred of the rich. The principles of this holy doctrine are that it is as impossible for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven as for a camel to go through the eye of a needle; that the rich man is damned, uniquely because he is rich. The disciples of this cult are expressly forbidden to make any provision.

Their head Jesus says positively, "I have not come to be served but to serve . . . There shall be neither first nor last amongst you . . . He among you who would raise himself shall be debased, and he who will be first shall be last" (*a*). The first apostles of this religion earn their bread in the sweat of their brow. That is all true?' 'Certainly.' 'Well, then, I ask you what relation there is between these primitive institutions and the enormous riches that you have given to you in Italy. Does your wealth come from the Gospel or from the roguery of your predecessors? . . . Poor man, and you think you can still impose upon us!' 'Atheist, at least respect the descendant of Saint Peter.' 'You're not descended from him. . . . .(*b*)'"[3] Juliette then proceeds to analyse the origin of the papacy and to account for its growth by its political usefulness to the different rulers during the troubled centuries of the middle Empire; she blames the Church's obscurantism in the Middle Ages, and then gives a brief but comprehensive history of the crimes and inconsistencies of the Papacy.

To the passage quoted de Sade adds two curious footnotes. The first (*a*) follows the quotation from the Gospels; he writes, "It is amusing that the Jacobins in the French Revolution wished to destroy the altars of a God who used absolutely their language, and even more extraordinary that those who detest and wish to destroy the Jacobins do so in the name of a God who speaks like the Jacobins. If this is not the nec plus ultra of human absurdity I should like to know what is." The second (*b*) is an elaborate discussion of the real meaning of the name Peter and the Holy Pun made on that word in which he decides that the Christian Peter is the same as Arnac, Hermes and Janus of the ancients, all of whom had the gift of opening the gates to some paradise; and he employs

Phœnician, Hebrew and Latin etymology to prove that Peter, or Kephas, can mean Opener as well as Rock.

Again and again he reverts to the inconsistency between Christian profession and practice; the most savage reactionary in his works is the Bishop of Grenoble. Continually, too, he stresses the political reasons which allowed the Church to emerge and which account for its continual support. The statesman Saint-Fond is made to say, "The force of the sceptre depends on that of the thurible; these two authorities have the greatest interest in mutual help and it is only by dividing them that the masses will shake off the yoke. Nothing makes people so abject as religious fears; it is right that they should fear eternal punishment if they revolt against their king; that is why the European powers are always on good terms with Rome."[4] When Juliette is talking to Ferdinand of Naples, she says, with a strange echo of Lenin's famous epigram, "You keep the people in ignorance and superstition . . . . because you fear them if they are enlightened; you drug them with opium . . . . so that they shall not realise the way you oppress them."[5]

He attacks the Church as an economic racket. "Unquestionably priests had their motives in inventing the ridiculous fable of the soul's immortality; could they otherwise have made moribunds contribute?"[6] This theme is developed with several variations.

Religion is dangerous as a basis on which to build morality; for if the falseness of the foundations are recognised, the whole edifice will tumble down.[7] Similarly the fact that it may be a consolation to some is not a sufficient reason for it. "I cannot see that the desire to appease a few fools," says the Mother Superior to Juliette, "is worth the poisoning of millions of honest

folk; and anyhow is it reasonable to make one's desires a measure of the truth?"[8]

Saint-Fond, the reactionary statesman, is superstitious and credulous; it is the last insult that de Sade can give to his villains. He believes in a sort of Manichaean diabolism, in which hell plays a central part; and he thinks that by some ritual he can make his victims sell their souls to the devil. The confession of this weakness is an excuse for a fifty-page examination of the dogma of hell considered from every possible angle.[9] First of all the Old and New Testaments are examined with great detail to prove that the idea of eternal damnation does not exist in them, that the idea of Gehenna was purely local and temporal; secondly he demonstrates the inefficacy of the fear of hellfire as a method of restraining men from evil-doing, for the damned, who cannot repent, are invisible and therefore no use as a warning to the living, and crime is if anything more common in the countries where such beliefs are held; thirdly he ridicules the muddled thinking which can associate fire and torments with disembodied spirits; and finally he expatiates on the barbarity of a God who can punish finite faults with infinite pains. This is the centre of his complaint; for him, as for Blake the great 'sadistic' poet, the Christian God is too base and too immoral to be accepted. "So," he writes, "after having made man extremely unhappy in this world, religion gives him the vision of a God . . . . who will make him even more so in the next. I know they get out of this dilemma by saying that God's goodness will give place to his justice; but a goodness which gives place to terrible cruelty is not infinite. . . . . Would it not have been more in keeping with his goodness, with reason and with equity only to have created plants and stones, rather than to form men whose conduct can bring

on them infinite pain? A God treacherous and evil enough to create a single man and then to expose him to the danger of self-damnation cannot be considered as perfect; he can only be considered as a monster. . . . ." And finally, "If you want a God, let Him be faultless and worthy of respect!"

This cry is continually re-appearing; man has made God in his own image,[10] God is either impotent or cruel;[11] give us a God worthy of respect!

His hatred for the God that had deceived him is rabid. No opportunity for reviling, for ridicule, for imprecations, for blasphemy is neglected; the mockery and insults are so intense that they tend to miss their effect. With considerable inconsistency (at least on the surface) a number of black masses are described. (It is an interesting comment on human frailty that the engraving illustrating one of these is nearly always torn out from the first edition; the possessors didn't mind reading the descriptions or admiring the naïve obscenities of the other ninety-nine plates; but a line had to be drawn somewhere!) De Sade indeed feels called upon to make excuses; the importance others would attach to such acts is their justification.

II

In place of the God he could not respect, de Sade enthroned Nature as the prime mover of the universe; but this Nature is not a consistent conception; in the fifteen years covered by his writings the idea undergoes constant modifications. In the *Dialogue* she is considered as pleasant, beneficent and philanthropic, somewhat in the style of Rousseau; within three years she becomes "That unknown brute"—'bête,' I think, carries the idea of stupidity without any moral inflection; another three years and it is "the disorders of that stepmother,

Nature"; until finally in *La Nouvelle Justine* she becomes a sort of malevolent goddess, entirely occupied in harming mankind, and who is best seen in the Sahara desert or the crater of Etna.[12]

This degradation of Nature is accompanied by a degradation of man and of "The law of Nature"; this latter changes from "Make others as happy as you wish to be yourself" to "Please yourself, no matter at whose expense."[13] Nature's sole object in creation is to have the pleasure of destruction; while man is destroying, is giving free vein to all the criminal instincts Nature has planted in him, he is being natural, following in Nature's plans; virtue, and education which leads to virtue, is unnatural. It follows that ethically man's mission is an endless battle against this adversary, this ogress Nature; but pleasure and pain are her weapons, and the former can only be achieved from following her will.

From this personification of Nature there emerges a version of Bernard Shaw's peculiarly unscientific worship of the "Life Force"—a Force which possesses all the ascetic, benevolent and partly informed qualities of its inventor; de Sade's version is not so personal. "Once man has been launched on to the earth he received direct laws from which he cannot depart; these laws are those of self-preservation and propagation . . . laws which affect him and depend on him, but which are in no way necessary to Nature; for he is no longer a part of Nature; he is separated from her. He is entirely distinct, so much so that he is no longer useful to her progress . . . or necessary to her combinations, so that he could quadruple his species or completely annihilate it, without in the least altering the universe. If he multiplies he does right in his own eyes, if he decreases he does wrong, equally in his own eyes. But in the eyes of Nature it is quite dif-

ferent. If he multiplies he does wrong, for he deprives Nature of the honour of a new phenomenon, the results of her laws being necessarily creatures. If those that have been launched didn't multiply, she would launch new beings, and would enjoy a faculty she has no longer. Not that she could not have it if she wished to, but she never does anything uselessly, and as long as the first beings launched propagate themselves by the faculties they have in them, she will not propagate any more. . . . . You will object perhaps that if this faculty of self-propagation, which her creatures have, harmed her, she would not have given it to them . . . but she is not free, she is the first slave of her laws . . . she is enchained by her laws which she cannot alter in any jot or tittle, and one of these laws is the vital urge of her creatures once made and their faculty for self-propagation. But were these creatures to stop propagating or be destroyed then Nature would regain her primal rights. . . . . Does she not prove to us how much our multiplication irritates her . . . . by the plagues with which she ceaselessly visits us, the divisions she sows amongst us . . . . by the wars and famines, plagues and monsters, criminals like Alexander, Tamberlaine, Gengis Khan, all the *heroes* which devastate the earth. . . ."[14] The Pope, who makes this speech, goes on to prove the equality of all things in the eyes of Nature, and therefore the unimportance of murder, whether through passion, ritual, custom or war, with examples drawn from every country.

This view of Nature, with its implications, is the best known—in fact practically the only known part of de Sade's Weltanschauung; for *La Nouvelle Justine*, by far the most notorious of his books, is almost exclusively occupied with the development and application of this theory; in this book almost all the characters are anti-

social 'natural' men, as in *Juliette* they are anti-social rich men. The epigraph to the book:

> On n'est point criminel pour faire la peinture
> Des bizarres penchans qu'inspire la Nature.

stresses the point.

Nature proceeds by destruction and corruption: "When the seed germinates in the earth, when it fertilises and reproduces itself is it otherwise than by corruption, and is not corruption the first of the laws of generation?"[15] and consequently human destruction and corruption follow Nature's laws. Do not our instincts urge us to such actions, and are not our instincts the voice of Nature?[16] It follows that we are in no way responsible for our tastes and inclinations: "Is man the master of his tastes? One should be sorry for those that have strange ones, but never insult them; their wrong is Nature's; they were no more capable of coming into the world with different tastes than we are of being born plain or beautiful."[17]; and he who abandons himself most recklessly to the promptings of Nature will be happiest, although nowadays "we are more creatures of habit than of Nature."[18]

This conception has far more extensive results than the removal of responsibility from man for his criminal behaviour; it is an implicit and explicit criticism of the backward-looking optimism of Rousseau and all his school, including Condorcet and Babeuf. It completely dethrones the 'noble savage'—with what glee does not de Sade comb the accounts of foreign travel for instances of savage barbarity, lust and superstition!—and the notion that man can revert to justice and happiness. If the idea that a satisfactory civilisation must be man-made, planned and unnatural had been able to gain currency when de

Sade first formulated it the history of the revolutions of the eighteenth, nineteenth and most of the twentieth century would not be so disheartening.

For de Sade, savage man knows only two necessities—hunger and lust;[19] there is only one distinction—force,[20] the result of Nature's inequality. "What mortal is fool enough to assert, against all the evidence, that men are born with equal rights or strength? Only a misanthropist like Rousseau would dare to establish such a paradox, because, being very weak himself, he prefers to degrade to his own level those to whom he did not dare raise himself. But how can a pigmy be the equal of . . . . Hercules? . . . . In the beginning of societies . . . . a family or village being forced to defend itself chose amongst its members the person who seemed to unite the qualities (strength, cleverness, etc.) mentioned above. Once the chief had been given this authority he took slaves from amongst the weakest. . . . . When societies became established, the descendants of these first chiefs, accustomed to represent their fathers, although often far from equalling them in physical or moral qualities, continued to exercise authority. . . . . This was the origin of aristocracy. . . . . They inherited a power handed over to their predecessors by necessity; they abused it by caprice. . . . ."[21]

This view of the origin of society has the double advantage over Rousseau's of being more in accordance with probability, and of placing the golden age of mankind in the future, rather than in the past. The next two chapters will be occupied with de Sade's diagnosis of contemporary civilisation and the various remedies he proposed.

CHAPTER V

POLITICS I.—DIAGNOSIS

Prisons are built with the stones of law,
Brothels with bricks of Religion.

W. BLAKE,
Marriage of Heaven and Hell.

In every cry of every Man
In every Infant's cry of Fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forged manacles I hear.

How the chimney-sweeper's cry
Every black'ning church appals;
And the hapless soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down palace walls.

W. BLAKE,
Songs of Experience.

I. CLASS DIVISIONS

IN Europe society is divided into two antagonistic classes—the haves and the have-nots. This point is so fundamental for de Sade that he stresses it in every book. In *Aline et Valcour* the good king Zamé begins his description of his visit to Europe by saying: "Everywhere I could reduce men into two classes both equally pitiable; in the one the rich who was the slave of his pleasures; in the other the unhappy victims of fortune; and I never found in the former the desire to be better or in the latter the possibility of becoming so, as though both classes were working for their common misery . . . . ; I saw the

rich continually increasing the chains of the poor, while doubling his own luxury, while the poor, insulted and despised by the other, did not even receive the encouragement necessary to bear his burden. I demanded equality and was told it was Utopian; but I soon saw that those who denied its possibility were those who would lose by it. . . ."[1]

He defines his conception of these classes very exactly. "Don't think that I mean by the *people* the caste called the *tiers-état* [bourgeoisie in the limited sense]; no, I mean by the *people* . . . . those who can only get a living by their labour and sweat." This is the beginning of a treatise on the class-war by the extremely savage fascist Bishop of Grenoble; and de Sade, trying to guard against the misunderstanding of which he has been a perpetual victim, adds a footnote saying, "Considering in whose mouth we place these projects of despotism and terror, our readers will not be able to accuse us of trying to make them liked." He deceived himself on his readers' acuity.

The Bishop continues: "That is the class that I would abandon to perpetual chains and humiliation . . . . ; all others ought to join together against this abject class . . . . to fasten chains upon them, since they in their turn will be enchained if they relax." He then outlines a series of oppressive measures to be enforced against the workers and peasants, which include public torture and execution, and adds, "By these projects how well will the hatred be satisfied of those numerous gentlemen for this wretched class of which Saint-Pouanges, Archbishop of Toulouse, could not see a representative without belabouring him with abuse and blows, or having him set upon by his servants!"[2]

II. NATURE OF PROPERTY

This distinction of classes is founded on property; and with unaccustomed epigrammatic terseness de Sade defined property as "a crime committed by the rich against the poor."[3] But he examined this institution more closely. "Going back to the origin of the right of property," he writes, "we come necessarily to usurpation. But theft is only punished because it attacks the right of property; but that right is in origin itself a theft, so that the law punishes theft because it attacks theft. . . . . As long as there is no property legitimately established (which is impossible) it will be very difficult to prove theft a crime."[4]

He accepts Rousseau's premise of the Social Contract but his elaboration of the idea is individual. "When laws were made and the weak consented to lose some of his liberty to preserve the rest, the continued and peaceful enjoyment of his possessions was undoubtedly the first thing he desired, and the first object of the restraints he asked for. The stronger consented to laws he knew he could wriggle out of, and they were made. It was pronounced that every man should possess his heritage in peace, and anyone troubling it should be punished. But that was not the work of Nature but of man, henceforth divided into two classes; the first who gave up a quarter of its rights to possess the rest in peace; the second who, profiting by this quarter and seeing it could have the other three portions when it wanted consented to prevent, not his class despoiling the weak, but the weak despoiling one another, so that it alone could despoil them at its ease. So theft . . . . was not banished from the earth but changed its form; people robbed legally. Magistrates robbed in having themselves paid for a justice they should give gratuitously. The priest robbed in having

himself paid for acting as a mediator between man and his God. The merchant robbed by profiteering, by having his goods paid at a third more than their real intrinsic value. Sovereigns robbed in imposing on their subjects arbitrary taxes and imposts, etc. All these thievings were permitted and authorised under the specious name of 'rights,' and action was only taken against the most natural, that is to say against the man who lacked money and tried to get it from those whom he suspected to be richer than him, without considering that the first thieves, to whom not a word was said, were the unique cause of the crimes of the second. . . . When the miserable peasant, reduced to charity by the enormous taxes you impose upon him, leaves his plough, takes arms and goes to await you on the highroad you commit an infamous action if you punish him; it is not he who is in fault. . . ."[5]

III. THE RULING CLASSES—THEIR POLICIES AND MECHANISM

These remarks on property come at the beginning of *Juliette*, and are obviously intended to act as guide to the motives of the politicians, kings, and financiers who people the six volumes of this work. The first three volumes deal with France, the fourth with Italy; and most of the fifth consists of a brief review of the sovereigns of Northern Europe, with the exception of England. Without giving a précis of the whole work it is difficult to illustrate de Sade's very thorough examination of the ruling classes; he exposes a system of corruption and intrigue which often reads like a description of the United States to-day, together with a hard-heartedness and sanctimonious cynicism which might have served as a model to Hitler's Germany or our own National Govern-

ment. The astounding feature of the book is its modernity; it is difficult to realise that it is the eighteenth and not the twentieth century he is describing. The following speech of Saint-Fond, for example, might easily be part of a manifesto by one of the franker members of the front Tory benches. "We are frightened," he says, "of a revolution in the kingdom shortly; we see its germ in a too numerous population. The greater the extension of the masses, the greater the danger; the more enlightened they are the more they are to be feared. First of all we are going to suppress all the free schools whose lessons, propagating too rapidly, give us painters, poets and philosophers where we only want labourers. What need have people like that of talents, and what use is there in giving them to them? Let us rather diminish their number; France has need of a vigorous bleeding, and it is the shameful parts we must attack. To attain this aim we are first of all going to attack the unemployed with the greatest rigour; it is almost always from that class that agitators appear; we are going to destroy the hospitals and refuges; we don't want to leave the masses a single asylum which can encourage their insolence. Bound under chains a thousand times heavier than those they bear in Asia, we want them to crawl like slaves, and we will spare no means to accomplish this aim. 'These proceedings will be long,' said Clairwil, 'and if you want to act quickly you want speedier ones: war, famine, plague.' 'The first is certain,' replied Saint-Fond, 'We are shortly going to have a war. We don't want the third for we might be among the victims. As for famine, the corner in grain at which we're working, will firstly cover us with riches and will soon reduce the masses to eating one another. The Cabinet has decided on it because it is prompt, infallible, and will cover us with gold.'"

(It may be remembered that in 1932-33 the National Government attacked the principle of free secondary education and scholarships; lowered the dole by the means test; and sent up the price of bread and many other foodstuffs by means of tariffs, quotas, import boards and the like. Their preparations for war on the other hand, are far too efficient to allow criticism.)

Saint-Fond then continues his speech with an exaltation of the State which neither Hitler nor Mussolini could improve on. "'For a long time,' continued the minister, 'penetrated as I am with the principles of Machiavelli, I have been completely persuaded that individuals are of no account in politics. Secondary machines of government, men should work for the prosperity of the government, and not the government for the prosperity of men. Governments occupied with the individual are weak, the only vigorous one is that which counts itself for everything, and men for nothing; the greater or lesser number of slaves in the State is indifferent, what is essential is that the chains weigh heavily on the people, and that the sovereign should be despotic. While Rome was a democracy she was weak and feeble; when tyrants took authority she was mistress of the earth. All force should be concentrated in the sovereign, and since that force is only moral, since physically the masses are the more powerful, it can only be by an uninterrupted series of despotic actions that the government can acquire the physical force it lacks; otherwise it will only exist in ideal. When we wish to impose on others we must accustom them little by little to see in us what really doesn't exist, otherwise they will see us as we are and we will infallibly lose.' 'I have always believed,' said Clairwil, 'that the art of governing men is the one which demands the maximum of hypocrisy.' 'That is true,'

replied Saint-Fond, 'and the reason is obvious; you can only govern men by deceiving them; one must be hypocritical to deceive them; the enlightened man will never let himself be led, therefore it is necessary to deprive him of enlightenment to lead him as we want, and that can only be done by hypocrisy. . . . The government must have more energy than the governed; well, if that of the governed is mixed with crimes, how can you expect the government itself not to be criminal? Are the punishments used against men anything except crimes? What excuses them? State necessity. . . . .'"[6] Elsewhere he (Saint-Fond) develops his desire for a plutocratic oligarchy with a slave basis;[7] he gained his position by sleeping with the king's mistress.

I have thought it better to give one fairly long and exhaustive quotation, rather than the large number of shorter ones that I had originally prepared. They are all of much the same tenor; they all exhibit the same greed for money and power; Machiavelli is continually quoted; and all exhibit the same hatred and fear of the masses. The chief of the police at Rome, e.g., plans to kill off all the unemployed on the grounds that "they are not only a charge on the honest man, but will become dangerous if the dole is stopped."[8] *Juliette* is one of the most thorough, as it is by fifty years the first, analysis of a society ruled by money.

Noirceuil, one of Juliette's earlier lovers, gives her as a present an income of a thousand crowns with the remark that it was intended for the hospitals: "The sick will have a few soups less, and you a few more fal-lals."[9] and in *Aline et Valcour* the judge remarks: "The happiness of being above others gives one a right to think differently from them; that is the first effect of superiority; the second is its abuse . . . . which allows one man to betray the

State, make his fortune and retire on the grounds that he is ruined (the abominable Sartine), another to destroy the internal trade of France, because his mistresses' absurd plan is worth two million to him (the criminal Lenoir); and a hundred others get together to make a corner in the people's food, and then starve the same people by re-selling to them the food they have stolen from them at ten times its proper value."[10]

These passages read as though they were extracts from some work of Upton Sinclair's describing the American Red Cross scandals, or the operations of Chicago's magistrates and speculators. Indeed there is a certain resemblance between the two authors, including the gusto with which they describe capitalist villainy; but de Sade's more firmly embedded and logical principles would never have led him into making a hero and martyr of such a person as William Fox. Both, for instance, might have remarked: "He conducted his business honestly; wasn't that more than enough ground for him to be promptly crushed?"[11]

At the head, at any rate nominally, of the different States, were kings. Nominally, for in some States the financiers and politicians held the real power; Saint-Fond is more powerful than the king himself. De Sade gives a rapid glance at the holders of the greater number of European thrones. He wrote in a period when royalty was particularly unfortunate in its representatives and rich in fools and monsters. France possessed the somewhat ludicrous Louis XVI and his wife; Tuscany, Leopold; Naples, the appalling Ferdinand and Caroline; Russia, Catherine the Great, nymphomaniac and poisoner . . . the list is tedious. De Sade has a certain amount of praise for Gustavus III of Sweden and more for Frederick of Prussia, the philosophical king; and he passes over

in silence the King of England. De Sade never takes them very seriously, though his criticisms are not unfounded; he makes the perspicacious remark that if kings are beginning to lose credit in Europe it is their humanity which is destroying them.[12]

The accompaniment of tyranny is organised religion. "When the strong wished to enslave the weak he persuaded him that a god had sanctified the chains with which he loaded him, and the latter, stupefied by misery, believed all he was told."[13] This point was dealt with in the last chapter, but a curious passage in *Aline et Valcour*, a discussion between a Frenchman and a Portuguese, is worth quoting. The Portuguese is complaining of the damage done to his country's commerce and agriculture by the Inquisition, and the preponderating place the English have gained in their internal commerce; the Frenchman advises a revolt against the Inquisition: "Destroy and annihilate them; enchain these dangerous enemies of your freedom and commerce in their own chains; let the last autodafé in Lisbon be these criminals. But if you ever had the courage to do this a very funny thing would happen; the English, who are quite rightly the enemies of this monstrous tribunal, would nevertheless become its defenders; they would protect it because it serves their purpose; they would support it because it holds you in the subjection they desire; it would be all over again the story of the Turks protecting the Pope against the Venetians, so true is it that superstition is a powerful arm in the hands of despotism, and that our own interest often forces us to make others respect what we ourselves despise."[14]

Politics and finance are succinctly summed up in two sentences: "Politics, which teach men to deceive their equals without being deceived themselves, that science

born of falseness and ambition, which the statesman calls a virtue, the social man a duty, and the honest man a vice. . . ."[15] "The financier taught me about the raising of taxes—the atrocious system of enriching oneself alone at the expense of many unfortunates . . . without thereby helping the State."[16]

War is simply public and authorised murder, in which hired men slaughter one another in the interests of tyrants.[17] It proves nothing except the ambition of the people promoting it—"The sword is the weapon of him who is in the wrong, the commonest resource of ignorance and stupidity."[18] It is merely imperial brigandage. "When Bras-de-fer and his companions join together to rob a coach, are they any different to two sovereigns who join together to despoil a third? Yet the latter expect laurels and immortality for crimes unnecessarily committed, while the former will only get contempt, shame and the gibbet for crimes authorised by hunger, the most imperious of laws."[19] The inconsistency of governments is laughed at when "they teach publicly the art of murder, and reward him who is most successful in practising it, and yet punish the man who gets rid of his enemy for a private reason."[20] He had no patience with the notion of honour whether it concerned private duels or war. "It is pride, not necessity, which makes tyrants order their generals to destroy other nations."[21] About duels, he says, "Honour is an illusion born of human conventions and customs, which are merely based on absurdity; it is equally untrue that a man gains honour by assassinating his country's enemies and that he loses it by assassinating his own."[22]

The object of colonial expansion is to acquire cheap labour and raw materials: "As long as a State's riches is counted in gold, the mineral being in the bowels of the

earth, labour is necessary to get it up, therefore slavery is necessary and the subjugation of negroes by the whites. . . . ."[23] We are shown colonial expansion at work, in the person of a kindly and honourable Portuguese delegate employing every form of lying, bribery and treachery for the aims of State; when he is acting for his prince he can commit crimes which would make him tremble if they were personal.[24] Understandably the great fear of the people of Tamoe in the South Seas is European colonisation.

We have seen that de Sade described the English penetration of Portugal; similarly of Sweden he writes: "The English are always ready to serve those they think they can swallow up one day, after having disturbed their trade or weakened their power by means of their usurious loans."[25] It may be remarked in passing that de Sade seems to have had a great liking for the English; he is continually excluding them from his strictures and praising them for their honesty. He also prophesies a great future for the United States: "The Republic of Washington will grow little by little, like that of Romulus, and will first subjugate America, and then make the rest of the world tremble."[26]

IV. THEIR RELATION TO THE POOR. THE POOR

Besides contractual relations there are also emotional connections between the haves and have-nots. The feelings of the rich for the poor can be divided into two groups—dislike and fear on the one hand, pity and charity on the other. The former are the commoner. When Juliette was suddenly left orphaned and penniless she appealed for charity to the Mother Superior of the convent where she was being educated, thinking that as she had always been a great favourite of hers when she

was rich, she would get help when she was poor. She was rudely rebuffed and at first could not understand why. "Alas, I said to myself, why does my misfortune make her so cruel? Are rich Juliette and poor Juliette two different creatures? . . . . Ah! I did not realise yet that poverty was a charge on wealth, nor did I know how much it was feared by the latter . . . to what extent wealth flees from it, and that the fear it has of being forced to relieve it results in a strong antipathy for it. But, I continued reflecting, how is it that that libertine, nay criminal woman, does not fear the indiscretion of those whom she treats so brusquely? Another puerility on my part; I didn't know the insolence and effrontery in vice displayed by wealth and credit. Madame Delbène was the Superior of one of the most famous Abbeys in Paris, she had an income of 60,000 livres, influence with everyone of importance at Court and in town; to what extent should she not despise a poor girl like me, young, orphaned and penniless, who could only oppose her injustice with reclamations which would soon be disposed of, or complaints which, immediately treated as libels, would perhaps have gained for the girl who had the boldness to utter them, eternal loss of liberty! . . . . . Very well," I said to myself, "my only plan is to try to become rich in my turn, then I will be as shameless as this woman, and will enjoy the same rights and the same pleasures."[27] Her plan succeeded; as Saint-Fond's mistress she became excessively rich, and a local famine gave her an excuse to put in practice the lesson she had learned. "People came to beg for charity; I was firm and with great impertinence coloured my refusal with the excuse of the enormous expenses my gardens were causing me. 'How can I afford to give charity,' I said insolently, 'when I have to have mirrored boudoirs in my woods and alleys

adorned with statues?'"[28] (c.f., the continual cry that crushing taxation makes the upkeep of large estates impossible, and yet people loll in luxury on the dole).

This is the most common attitude; it is adorned sometimes by the pleasure people feel in their opulence contrasted with the surrounding misery. This trait is most general with financiers.[29]

Among others, however, and particularly among the less rich, this attitude is replaced by the exercise of the vile virtues pity and charity. "Pity is a purely egoistical feeling, which makes us be sorry for the misfortunes of others which we fear for ourselves. If there was a person exempt from all human ills, not only would he not feel any sort of pity, he could not even conceive it. Another proof that pity is only a passive reaction . . . . is that we are always more moved by a misfortune that happens to an unknown under our eyes than that of our dearest friend a thousand miles away. . . . . Another proof that this sentiment is founded purely on weakness and cowardice is that it is stronger in women and children than men. . . . . Similarly the poor, who are nearer to misery than the rich, are naturally more touched by the misfortunes chance offers to their eyes; since these ills are nearer to them they have greater sympathy with them. . . ."[30] He goes on to claim that it is an undesirable and insulting feeling.

Similarly charity "is bad for the poor . . . . and even more dangerous for the rich, who thinks he has acquired all the virtues when he has given a few shillings to the clergy or idlers—a sure method of covering your own vices by encouraging others.'"[31] Elsewhere charity is defined as "a vice of pride, rather than a virtue of the soul."[32] De Sade continually harps on this theme, perhaps with the presentiment that in his old age he would be reduced to this indignity. (Despite his general

scepticism, de Sade admits as verified presentiments, thought-reading, dowsing, clairvoyance and phantasms of the living.[33])

The attitude of the poor to the rich varies between a religious and patriotic resignation and complete cynicism. The poor do not figure largely in his works, nor are they very articulate. The adventuress la Dubois says to the resigned Justine, "The hard-heartedness of the rich legitimises the rascality of the poor; let their purse be opened to our wants, let humanity reign in their hearts, and virtues can establish themselves in ours; but as long as our misery, our patience in supporting it, our honesty and our slavery only help to double our burdens our crimes become their work. . . . It amuses me to hear rich people, judges, magistrates, preach virtue to us; it is indeed difficult to refrain from stealing when one has three times more than one needs to live, indeed difficult never to think of murder when one is surrounded with flatterers and prostrate slaves, terribly hard truly to be temperate and sober when pleasure intoxicates them and the most delicate food surrounds them, a real hardship to be truthful when they have no interest in lying."[34] Later in the book, when Justine, more miserable than ever, meets la Dubois who has achieved prosperity, the latter explains, "I want equality, I only preach that. If I have corrected the caprices of fate it is because, crushed and annihilated by the inequalities of fortune and rank, seeing on the one side tyranny and on the other misery and humiliation, I desired neither to shine with the pride of the rich nor to vegetate in the humility of the poor."[35]

De Sade has some extremely moving passages in which he describes the life of the poor. "The unhappy man waters his bread with tears; a day's hard work hardly gives him enough to bring back in the evening to his

family the wherewithal to preserve life; the taxes he is obliged to pay take away the greater part of his thin savings; his naked and illiterate children dispute with the beasts of the forest the vilest food, while his wife's breasts, dried up by want, cannot give to the nursling that first part of nourishment which will give him the strength to go, to get the rest, to share that of the wolves; till finally, bowed down under the weight of years, ill-treatment and grief, always under the hand of misfortune, he sees the end of his career coming, without the star of heaven having for one instant shone pure and serene on his humbled head."[36]

In *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir* the young chevalier reproaches the libertine Dolmancé: "When your body, tired out by pleasures alone, rests languidly on beds of down, look at theirs, worn out by the work which makes you rich, gather a little straw to protect them from the cold of the earth, whose surface they, like the beasts, have as only resting-place; give a glance to them when, surrounded by succulent dishes with which twenty chefs tickle daily your sensuality, these poor people dispute with the wolves the bitter roots of the dried earth; when laughter, graces and sport lead to your impure couch the most charming objects of Cythera's temple, see this unhappy man lying beside his sad wife, satisfied with the pleasures he gathers among tears, without suspecting that others exist; look at him when you refuse yourself nothing, and float in the midst of superfluity; look at him, I say, lacking even the first necessities of life; cast your eyes on his desolate family; see his trembling wife tenderly dividing herself between the attentions she owes to her husband languishing beside her and those ordered by Nature for the pledges of their love; deprived of the possibility of fulfilling any of these duties, so sacred for a

sensitive mind, hear her, without trembling, if you can, a you for the superfluity your cruelty refuses her. . . . Dolmancé replies: "You are young, as your conversatic proves, and inexperienced; later you will not speak so w of men, when you know them. Their ingratitude dri up my heart, their perfidiousness destroyed in me tho virtues for which I was born perhaps as much you. . . ."[37]

These passages are over-written, but they do, I thin show real feeling of a sort which the reputation of t monster-author would not lead one to expect; and it w probably of himself that de Sade thought when he quot Marmontel's remark: "Il y a un excès dans la sensibili qui avoisine l'insensibilité."[38]

V. LAW AND JUSTICE. PRISON. THE DEATH PENALTY

It follows from the foregoing analysis of society th the law-courts only dispense a class justice, in favour the rich. "The judge generally takes the part of t stronger both by personal interest and the secret a invincible inclination which makes us all favour o equals."[39] "The case against a poor woman witho credit or protection is quickly dealt with in Franc Honesty is believed to be incompatible with miser and in our law-courts poverty is sufficient proof again the accused. . . ."[40]

The object of the law is not to prevent crime, but keep crime within certain prescribed limits. "T difference that laws have made is that instead of t strong having power as primitively, it is now the ri and well-born"[41] (c.f. origin of laws in last chapte "The laws of a people are never anything but the ma and the result of the interests of the legislators."[42] "T

object of laws is either to multiply crimes, or to allow them to be committed with impunity."[43] Only the smaller fry among criminals get caught: "I didn't steal enough, a little more vision and all would have been kept quiet; it is only second-class malefactors who get caught."[44] "There are two sorts of criminals, one whose powerful fortune and immense credit put out of danger, and the other, born poor, who will not be able to escape if he is taken."[45]

When the law gets hold of a guilty man (or a supposed guilty man: "A hundred innocent for one guilty, that is the spirit of the law"[46]) its object is not reformation, but revenge. "The laziness and folly of legislators led them to invent the law of talion. It was much easier to say, 'Let us do to him what he has done,' than to proportion spiritually and equitably the punishment to the crime."[47] The stupidity of punishments made de Sade cry: "Murderers, imprisoners, fools of every country and every government, when will you prefer the science of knowing man to that of shutting him up and killing him?"[48]

The ideas of justice and crime are anyhow purely local and arbitrary, as de Sade points out at great length. "The claim of your semi-philosopher Montaigne that justice is eternal and unalterable at all times and places is false; it depends on human conventions, characters, temperaments, local morality. If this were so, the same author continues, it would be a truth so terrible that one would have to hide it from oneself. But why disguise such essential truths? Should man hide from any of them?"[49] In this connection his pamphlet on the manner in which laws should be sanctioned, already described in the first chapter, should be remembered.

The punishments of the law were motivated by the spirit of revenge, and de Sade, who pronounced revenge

unworthy of an honourable man (even reporting to the police)[50] five years before he so signally put his theories into practice considered the penalties then in vogue as barbarous as they were useless.

"I don't say that one should let crimes continue, but I claim that it is better first of all to decide, which hasn't been done, what really troubles society and what in fact doesn't do it any harm; once the tort is recognised people should work to cure it and extirpate it from the nation, and you don't succeed in doing that by punishment; if the law were wise it would never inflict any punishment except one which tends to correct the guilty and preserve them to the State. The law is false when it merely punishes, detestable when its only object is to destroy the criminal without teaching him, to frighten without improving him, and to commit an infamy as great as the original one without gaining anything from it."[51]

The punishments used, then as now, were torture, imprisonment and death. Torture, whether used for discovering evidence (third degree) or for punishment (the cat, etc.) were for de Sade such obvious barbarities that their only use was to make the citizen of a country where they were employed blush for shame.[52]

Mere deprivation of liberty was equally useless. "The only excuse (of prisons) is the hope of correction; but you must know very little of man to imagine that prison can ever have that effect on him; you don't correct a male-factor by isolating him, but by giving him back to the society he has outraged; from there he should receive his daily punishment, and it is the only school at which he can improve; reduced to a fatal solitude, to a dangerous vegetation, to a tragic abandonment, his vices germinate, his blood boils, his head ferments; the impossibility of satisfying his desires fortifies the criminal cause of

them, and he comes out slyer and more dangerous. . . . . If your prisons . . . . had produced even a single conversion . . . . there would be some point in continuing them, but you cannot quote a single example of a man made better by chains. How can he be? How can one become better in the midst of depravity and degradation? Can one gain anything in the midst of the most contagious examples of greed, roguery and cruelty? Characters become degraded, morals corrupted; you become vile, lying, ferocious, sordid, treacherous, mean, underhand, a perjurer like those who surround you; in a word all your virtues are changed to vices and you come out full of horror for mankind, occupied only in harming them and revenging yourself."[53]

As an example they are equally useless; crimes are committed for two reasons—either want or passion. If either stimulus is strong enough no amount of fear is going to restrain the criminal; the heaviness of penalties does not decrease the amount of crimes; their only result is to make the petty criminal more desperate.[54] New laws merely create new crimes; the only solution is to change society to a form in which crime does not become a necessity for anyone. "Destroy the interest a person has in breaking the law and you will take away the means from him of contravening it."[55]

The only exception to this rule is the case of criminal natures who commit crime because it is a crime, for the sole pleasure of breaking laws. "Against such it is useless to make laws; the stronger the ramparts raised against them, the greater the pleasure in breaking them down . . . . such people are rare . . . . one should try to win them by kindness and honour, or else attempt to make them change the motives of their habits" (sublimation).[56]

His final conclusions are: "Honour is man's guiding

rein; if you know how to use it properly you can lead him where you will; with a whip always in your hand you humiliate, discourage and finally lose him."[57] "If you destroy a man's self-respect you make a criminal out of him."[58] "Once a criminal is recognised as dangerous he must be withdrawn from society . . . . either by banishment or by making him better by forcing him to be useful to the people he has outraged. But don't throw him inhumanly into those poisoned cloacas, where all that surrounds him is so gangrened that it becomes uncertain which will finish his corruption the quicker, the frightful examples he receives from those in charge of him or the hardened impenitence of his unhappy companions . . . murder him even less, for blood repairs nothing and instead of one crime you now have two. . . ."[59]

The whole passage on crime and punishment is quite extraordinary; had space permitted the whole fifty pages[60] from which the above extracts are drawn were worthy of quotation; doubly extraordinary indeed, for not only is it in accordance with the ideas and experience of the most modern penologists both theoretical and practical (cf., for example Lawes' 20,000 *Years in Sing Sing*); it is unique in being the considered opinion of a prisoner written while he was still in prison.

Both in his works and in his life de Sade showed himself an inveterate enemy of the death penalty; it is a theme continually recurring in his works from the earliest onwards. The one case in which he hesitated was that of a crime against the State; but even for this he preferred exile. His numerous arguments against it reduce to the syllogism, "Is murder a crime or not? If it is not, why punish it? If it is, why punish it by a similar crime?"[61] His account of its origin is curious. "The Celts justified

their horrible practice of human sacrifice with the excuse that the gods could only be appeased by the redemption of one man's life by another's. . . . . When contact with the Romans altered their customs the victims destined to the gods were no longer chosen among the old men or the prisoners of war; only criminals were sacrificed, always under the absurd supposition that nothing was so pleasing to God's altars as the blood of man. . . . . When governments became Christian anything which that doctrine condemned was turned into a capital crime; little by little your sins were turned into crimes; you thought you had the right to imitate the thunder you placed in the hands of divine justice, and you hanged and broke on the wheel because you imagined that God did so. . . . Nearly all the laws of St. Louis are founded on these sophistries. We know it and we don't change, because it is far simpler to hang men than to find out why we condemn them. . . ."[62]

VI. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

(*a*) *Patriotism.* De Sade was always a strong local patriot. In his earliest work he writes: "Kings and their majesties alone impress me; he who does not love his country and his king is not fit to live."[63] His respect for kings soon diminished, but his love for his country continues all through his writings. He was, however, always against imperialist aggression; he advises his country to "Fortify its frontiers . . . and renounce the spirit of conquest; only occupied in protecting your boundaries you will no longer have the necessity of keeping up a large army. By this means you would give back a hundred thousand men to agriculture and do away with the licence and debauchery of the barracks. . . ."[64] The enthusiasm he professed for the republic has already

been seen. This love of his land did not, however, carry with it necessarily the idea of a sovereign State; one of the characters in *Juliette* is made a member of a Lodge at Stockholm, in which the oath is taken "to exterminate all kings; to wage eternal war on the Catholic religion and the Pope; to preach the liberty of nations; and to found a universal republic."[65] See also Section ii in the following chapter.

(*b*) *The Directoire.* Obviously de Sade could not express openly his criticisms of the actual government at the time of publication; and although *Juliette* and in a less degree *La Nouvelle Justine* are a tacit criticism in nearly every line, there is only one occasion in which de Sade openly criticises the Republic, and then only in a footnote. The occasion is the initiation of a minor character into the Masonic Lodge at Stockholm mentioned above where a senatorial anti-monarchical conspiracy is being hatched; de Sade takes advantage of this opportunity to attack the Masons for their self-seeking under the cover of philanthropy. The following interrogation between the Master and the man who wants to become a member takes place:

"*Q.* What motives make you detest the despotism of kings?

A. Jealousy, ambition, pride, desperation in being lorded over, the desire to lord it over others myself.

Q. Is the people's happiness of any importance to you?

A. Not in the least. I am only interested in my own.

Q. And what rôle do the passions play in your way of thinking about politics?

A. The strongest. I have never believed that the so-called statesman had any other real intentions than the fullest gratification of his desires: his plans, the alliances

he makes, his projects, his taxes, even his laws are designed for his personal happiness. The public good never enters his thoughts and all that the duped masses see him do is merely to increase his own wealth or power."

To this dialogue he adds the revealing footnote: "*Spirit of the revolution of Stockholm, have you not somehow or other come to Paris?*"[66]

(*c*) *Family Group and Position of Women.* In the family group de Sade saw the greatest danger to equality and to the State; family interests are necessarily anti-social. He proposed to avoid this inconvenience by the establishment of national schools for all children.[67]

He considered that the position of women both sexually and legally was anomalous and unfair; consequently he demanded *complete equality of women and men* in every circumstance.[68] This notion of de Sade's is indeed so important that Guillaume Apollinaire, one of his most intelligent commentators, considered that it was chiefly to illustrate this thesis that he wrote *Justine* and *Juliette* and chose heroines instead of heroes.

(*d*) *Education.* Education was for de Sade potentially of supreme importance, and it is therefore comprehensible that he complained of the current education, which was then even more stupid and unsuitable than it is to-day. "Instead of teaching young men what they ought to know they put in its place a thousand idiocies which are only good to be trampled on as soon as one reaches the age of reason. It would seem that they were only trying to produce monks—bigotry, fables, useless follies, and never a sensible moral maxim. Go further, ask a young man his true duties to society, ask him what he owes to himself and to others, what line of conduct he should take to be happy; he will tell you that he has learned to go to Mass and recite litanies, but he doesn't understand a word

of what you are talking about, that he has learned to sing and dance, but not to live among men."[69] If for litanies you substitute what is drolly called 'history,' and for singing and dancing, cricket and football, the passage is just as pertinent to-day.

(*e*) *Agriculture.* De Sade agreed with the contemporary physiocrats in considering agriculture not only the main industry of man and of countries, but also as the only true source of all wealth.[70] "The man who goes to mine gold from the bosom of the earth and leaves the friendly soil which would nourish him with far less trouble is an extravagant fool worthy of the greatest scorn."[71] He considered that to a great extent the actual impoverishment of France was due to the too great centralisation and the absence of the proprietors from their lands, so that "instead of lords living despotically on their own lands . . . . thirty thousand intriguing slaves fawn before one man"[72]—a criticism which history amply justifies.

(*f*) *Population.* De Sade was much occupied with the idea of the optimum population, and in *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir* he reaches conclusions very similar to those put forward by Malthus three years later in his *Essay on Population.* He did not pronounce definitely whether France had passed the optimum, though he rather suspected it had; the future danger was anyhow grave.[73] He pointed out the contradiction of France complaining of a falling birth-rate, and insisting on the celibacy of monks, nuns, soldiers and other functionaries. He was against the preservation of malformed or diseased children: "Any child who is born without the necessary qualities which will allow him to become one day a useful citizen has no right to life and the best thing to do is to deprive him of it the moment he gets it."[74]

VII. BUTUA—A PARABLE OF CIVILISATION[75]

The second volume of *Aline et Valcour* consists of the description of the strange voyages of a young man called Sainville. By a series of odd adventures he is cast on to the Gold Coast in Central Africa. He tries to make his way across the continent and after some days' hard travelling he has the misfortune to observe a scene of torture and cannibalism practised by one negro tribe on their captured enemies; but, as de Sade remarks in a footnote, "If it is a crime among savages to be conquered, why should not they be allowed to punish criminals in this way, just as we punish ours by similar proceedings? So that if the same horror is found in two nations the one has no right to be indignant with the other, because the first acts with a little more ceremony: it is only the philosopher who admits few crimes and kills no one who has a right to be indignant with both."

Sainville is taken prisoner and led before the King of Butua, who grants him his life provided he will take up the post of inspecting the candidates for his harem, a post up till then occupied by a renegade Portuguese, who is appointed his mentor and guide.

The inhabitants of Butua are cruel and licentious cannibals. Women are in a completely inferior position, little above that of the beasts of the field, whose work they have to do. The king, who is also the high priest, is an absolute monarch; the provinces are under the rule of chiefs only answerable to the king, to whom they have to pay tribute; but since they have merely to collect it by any means they see fit from the peasants this doesn't present much difficulty.

The only people who equal the king and his nobles in power are the priests. They worship a god half human and half snake, who is the cause of all things, the prime

mover of the Universe. This god delights in human sacrifice, and after a man has transgressed his rules he can only be absolved by a sacrifice (preferably the object of his transgression) and a payment to the church. There are numerous other superstitions, including a belief in the resurrection and paradise, in which white women and freshly cooked little boys will be at their complete disposal. There is complete collaboration and understanding between the king and the priests, and the latter can use the law to enforce or punish any neglect, slight, or failure to pay tithe, with the utmost rigour, as in Europe.

The priests have complete charge of education. The principal and practically the only thing they teach women is the most entire resignation to the will of their husbands; the men are taught to submit themselves, first to the church, then to the king, and lastly to their particular chiefs; they should be ready to lay down their life for any of these causes.

Outside the family, in which the father is complete master, with power over life and death, the peasants are severely punished for the slightest crimes. "For it is not as though there were no laws, there are perhaps too many, but all have a tendency to favour the strong against the weak." Theft and murder are disregarded among the nobles but punished with the utmost rigour among the people; they are punished personally by the local chief who calls in his friends to help him; for such occasions are parties of pleasure, corresponding to hunting parties in Europe.

With the exception of the king, whose succession is gained by trials of strength and endurance, property goes exclusively from father to eldest son; this, however, actually only applies to the nobles, for the poor possess

practically nothing, and what little they do is always liable to be taken from them.

The people are devout, credulous, superstitious and almost illiterate. Their few sciences, such as astronomy, are frowned on by the priests, and almost smothered in superstition. What little medicine is known is in the hands of a sort of secondary priesthood, who never give help except for payment. The population is falling rapidly, owing to the ill-usage of the women. The people get drunk on a sort of alcohol made from maize. They have absolutely no thought for the future. Their commerce consists of the exchanging of rice and maize for fish from their neighbours; this trade is often a cause of war.

The king is an exaggerated image of his countrymen, even more cruel, lecherous and superstitious than they are. The description of him and his habits is completely nauseating. The people might have revolted against him without the aid and support of the priests.

This people and their customs are explained and commented on by the renegade Portuguese, who, after a first revolt, bowed to the necessity of living among such people, and even ended in acquiring most of their habits. The most monstrous and revolting aspects are justified by him as being natural, since they do not upset the natives, and are found elsewhere in the world.

I have not emphasised the numerous descriptions of cannibalism, cruelty, infanticide and lust which are given, as I think I have already made tolerably clear the nature of the country into which de Sade claimed that he alone had penetrated.

CHAPTER VI

POLITICS II. SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

What is now true was once only imagined.
W. BLAKE,
Marriage of Heaven and Hell.

Nought loves another as itself,
Nor venerates another so,
Nor is it possible for thought
A greater than itself to know.
W. BLAKE,
Songs of Experience.

I. UTOPIA. 1788

BY good fortune Sainville managed to escape from Butua; he made his way to the coast where he succeeded in hiring a ship with which he intended to make his way home. But a series of storms drove him far out of his course into unchartered and temperate waters in the South Seas. When provisions and water were nearly exhausted he arrived at an unknown island; he approached it in the hope of being able to re-provision. The natives were friendly, and one who spoke French conducted him to the king. To make his way to his house he had to pass through the city of Tamoe; it was town-planned, consisting of circular boulevards set with uniform two-storey houses surrounded by gardens. When he reached the king's house he was astounded to notice that except for its slightly larger size it was no different from any other; there were no guards and no parade of any sort; people entered freely. The old King Zamé came to greet him;

he offered him hospitality and anything he might require; he kept Sainville as his guest for a fortnight, telling him his history and showing him his kingdom; he talked French fluently.

In his youth Zamé had been sent by his father to Europe to learn what civilisation could teach him which would be of benefit to Tamoe; and plentifully equipped with gold, which was the island's only metal, he made the grand tour. Except for some mechanical devices all that he saw of Europe frightened and disgusted him; and he returned home with the intention of avoiding as far as might be the terrible inequalities and oppressions, the superstition, the misery, the fear, and the crimes with which he saw the lives of all but a handful of Europeans darkened. He brought back with him a number of tools for agriculture and manufacture, and a certain amount of skill in various trades.

He found the greatest causes of European misery in four things—private property, class distinctions, religion and family life. He therefore proceeded to abolish or transform these institutions. Absolutely all property was made over to the State. Under certain conditions people had the usufruct of property, provided they developed it properly, during their life-time; on death it reverted automatically to the State. The State controlled all manufactures. Since everybody was working for the State, directly or indirectly, and since all had equal wealth—or rather commodities and comfort—class distinctions were abolished.

As soon as a child was weaned he or she was put into a State school, where they remained till marriage at the age of fifteen. The parents could visit them at these institutions as often as they wished, but the children must not leave. They became there just as good sons and better

citizens. The children were divided into three groups, up to six, six to twelve, and twelve to fifteen. In the first two groups they were taught such things as are suitable to their years, including reading, writing and a little arithmetic; in their last three years they were taught their civic duties and practical agriculture; the colleges were supported by gardens worked by the students. They were also prepared for marriage and it was impressed on them that such a state is a mutual partnership and can only be happily maintained by the efforts of both parties. The boys in addition were taught military drill, and as recreation dancing, wrestling and all sports, the girls cooking, sewing and clothes-making, these latter being exclusively women's jobs. When a boy reached the age of fifteen he was taken to a girl's school to choose a wife, unless through temperament or tastes he felt a strong aversion for matrimony, in which cases he was allowed to remain single on condition that he undertook public works. When a boy had chosen a girl he met her daily for a week under the supervision of the school masters and mistresses. At the end of that period they were asked to decide whether they would be married or not; if either of the parties disliked the idea the boy had to choose again, continuing until a mutual agreement was reached.

When a couple finally decided they were given a house and ground by the State. For the first two years they were helped and advised by their parents and neighbours—a service which they had to repay by assistance in old age.

The greater part of the population were engaged in small-holding agriculture. If, however, a man preferred some other job he was allowed to take it. If it was a job which only called for occasional practice, such as building, medicine, etc., they had their plot of land the same as the

others and during their enforced absences the land was looked after by the bachelors and divorced; if, however, it was a full-time job, such as work in a factory, they were given a landless house and supplied with goods by the State. The only direct taxation was in kind for this purpose and for public granaries which held two years' supply of corn against famine.

Divorce was granted at the request of either party on the following grounds: ill-health, sterility (either voluntary or otherwise), bad temper, cruelty or adultery. Nobody was allowed more than two divorces. Unmarried and divorced people had smaller houses and less land.

There were asylums for lonely or infirm old age attached to the schools; in the capital they were attached to the king's house.

If people neglected their land they were moved to uncultivated ground where greater effort was required for the same result; if they showed improvement their original home was given back to them.

There were no prisons and no death penalty. Moral faults were punished by a distinguishing dress and the refusal of privileges, chiefly visiting the king. More serious crimes were announced by the town crier through the town. A convicted murderer was put into an open boat with food for a month, and his description circularised so that he could not land elsewhere on the island. People with irremediable anti-social characters were exiled. Outstanding civic virtue was rewarded by military titles—which are meaningless but flatter the holder. In passing judgment on a man all his actions were taken into account. Only crimes which harm society were taken any notice of. Brothels were forbidden, as the fifteen-hundred-year-old error of France which sacrifices part of its female popula-

tion to preserve the honour of the other part is as repugnant as it is foolish. All civil cases were satisfied by compensation.

All luxury arts were forbidden. Painting, music, dancing, the theatre were encouraged but were only developed by amateurs. All the art was inclined to furnish moral propaganda.

The boys' schools and the towns other than the capital were under the direction of elderly bachelors, to show that if they could not be useful in one way they are in another. They were only excluded if the temperamental reasons which caused them to choose celibacy were obviously anti-social. The commanders of the towns were changed annually. The girls' schools were under the direction of widows, or divorced women if the reason for their divorce did not render them unsuitable.

There was no standing army but all male citizens were potential soldiers. Their only fear was European invasion and colonisation, against which they had erected defences. They occasionally had field days.

All priests were banished and religion reduced to a vague theistic Nature worship, of a voluntary nature. There were no temples and no vested interest in religion. There were also no professional lawyers and discussion of theology or law was punished as one of the gravest anti-social crimes. There was no money and commerce was restricted to exchange within the island. Any surplus was given away to their less advanced neighbours. Zamé advocated economic self-sufficiency.

By these measures Zamé claimed to have practically eliminated misery and crime. By suppressing luxury and introducing equality he did away with pride, greed, covetousness and ambition. By suppressing religion he did away with wars and massacres. By doing away with

the family group he destroyed the greatest enemy of equality and the State; by doing away with heritable property he abolished the reasons for patricide and infanticide. With equality there was no reason for theft or revolution or possibility for charity, except the help of neighbours and the sick. The ease of divorce and the equality of the sexes did away with the greater number of sexual crimes; such vices as were not affected by these measures were done away with—not by suppression which is the best means of propagation—but by public opinion, which was manifested by disgust, ridicule and tolerance. Economic self-sufficiency eliminated a great deal of the friction which leads to war. The State was the unrivalled and unquestioned possessor of all wealth.

As for Zamé himself, his chief object had been not to be feared but loved. "Your sovereigns only know how to be kings: I have learned to be a man," he claimed in almost the same words as the author of the *Zauberflöte* used three years later. He had nothing which the poorest of his subjects hadn't got. Like them he was a vegetarian and water drinker, not from motives of religion, but of diet and humanity. At Sainville's expressed surprise he retorted: "Do you think I could eat if I thought that the gold dishes in which I was served were got at the expense of my fellow citizens and that the weakly children of those who make such luxury possible would only have to support their sad life black bread ground with misery, washed down with the tears of grief and despair?" But his work was nearly done; when he has finished his task—which included re-educating his son, who showed 'homosexual' tendencies, to the love of the beautiful artisan's daughter to whom he had been married—he will lay down his crown; even so modified a kingship is unsuitable to his country; for them, as for France, only a

complete republic would satisfy their true desires. Frequently Zamé prophesies the coming republic.[1]

It was probably this portion of *Aline et Valcour* which was the cause of its condemnation in 1815 and 1830.

II. PLAN FOR A EUROPEAN FEDERATION, 1788

The following is part of a dialogue between a sort of Robin Hood chief of a band of robbers called Brigandos and a noble he is holding to ransom.

Brigandos: Since we are talking about politics let me tell you of a plan of mine; I want to redivide Europe and reduce it to four republics—the Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western.

Nobleman: Why do you choose that vicious form of government?

Brigandos: It is the best of all.

Nobleman: Which is precisely why you will never be able to make people who have been weighed down by the yoke of monarchy accept it. It is possible to pass from good to evil—it is the progress of nature which tends ceaselessly to degradation; the contrary is not practicable.

Brigandos: Rome started with kings; she only became republican after having realised all the dangers of a monarchy.

Nobleman: Granted; but Republican Rome was subjugated in its turn, and the chains of the Cæsars were heavier than those of the Tarquins; I assure you that you will not find a single republic which the aristocracy has not gangrened. And since aristocratic government is the worst of all, don't wish that sort of rule on Europe. I repeat that despotism is always nearer a republican than a monarchical government.

Brigandos: Yes, when it has the nobles at its head, as in Venice; then obviously the complete oppression of the

people would follow. But a people who would revolt, destroy the monarchy and establish its base on the imprescribable rights and duties of man would be a model to all, and that is the form of government I desire to give to Europe. Let me go on with my divisions, for the multitude of little states drives me to despair. I divide our continent into four republics, as follows: The Western Republic will consist of France, Spain, Portugal, Majorca, Minorca, Corsica and Sardinia, on condition that these countries get rid of all their inquisitors and clergy and send all such garglers of blest bread to the middle of Africa to say their Masses. The Northern Republic will be composed of Sweden and its dependencies, England and its dependencies, Belgium, Holland, Westphalia, Pomerania, Denmark, Ireland and Greenland. Russia will form the Eastern Republic; I want her to give to the Turks whom I expel from Europe all her Asiatic possessions, which could only be useful to her on the supposition of her wishing to trade by land with China, which she doesn't do; in recompense I give her Poland, Tartary and Turkey in Europe. The Southern Republic will consist of the whole of Germany, Hungary, and Italy, from which I exile the Pope, for nothing could be more useless to my project than a sodomitical priest with an income of twelve millions, whose only business is to distribute useless indulgences and agnuses. This Republic will have Sicily and all the islands between her and Africa. That is my division. I desire eternal peace between these four governments; I want them to give up all dealings with America, which is merely ruining them, and to limit themselves to mutual trade; and above all I want them to have a single religion, a simple and pure cult free from idolatry and monstrous dogmas . . . a religion in fact that the people can follow without having recourse to that

insolent vermin which is erected as mediator between their weakness and heaven; and which only succeeds in deceiving without improving them. According to my plan Danzig will be a free city where each republic will have a senate. There all discussions will terminate friendlily and the decisions of the judges will become the laws of the states; if the decisions arrived at are not satisfying, ten deputies from each republic can come and fight in person, without exposing millions of men to the danger of killing one another for interests which are very rarely theirs.

Nobleman: This plan was imagined by a certain French Abbé de Saint-Pierre who wrote about it at the beginning of the century.

Brigandos: Not at all, sir; I know the book you speak about. The Abbé didn't divide Europe in this way; he left all the little sovereign states which agitate and divide it; he didn't, as I do, join these powers together, while suppressing what is harmful in them; in a word the Abbé de Saint-Pierre renounced the system of equilibrium in favour of that of alliances; I only erect the system of alliances as a consolidation of that of equilibrium, and therefore my plan is better.

Nobleman: It wouldn't insure eternal peace.

Brigandos: To the extent that it equalises it diminishes the chances of war.

Nobleman: Ambition will still be the same; it is the poison of man's heart and will only disappear with him.

Brigandos: This passion would now be motiveless. The reason why one nation declares war on another is because it wishes to recover or to invade territory—in any case because it wishes to have as much as or more than the nation it attacks. But if the nations are equal the attack becomes unjust, whence, in my system you would have

three states against one, and the aggressor, knowing this, would keep the peace. It is very difficult to establish equilibrium between a large number of unequal weights; nothing is easier when the four weights are of the same measure.

Nobleman: But you must at least have a patriarch if you drive away the Pope; religion must have a head.

Brigandos: My dear sir, a good religion only needs a God; start by reaching a unanimous agreement on the essence and attributes of the one you admit by agreeing that he only needs our hearts and that the rest is as dangerous as it is useless. Since there would be then no necessity for you to cut one another's throats concerning the fashion in which God should be served you would have no need of a head; it is almost always on his account that you have fought one another about your gods; without the head's debaucheries and disorders Luther would never have separated; and consider the oceans of blood that disagreement has spilt. No, sir, no Pope; a God is already plenty; I must consider you all very sensible to allow you that; the system of such an existence is the most dangerous present one can give to fools.[2]

III. ANARCHY. 1794?

The following is a portion of a conversation between two Italians in Rome.

A. If we were convinced of the indifference of all our actions, if we realised that those we call just and unjust are seen quite differently by Nature, we would make less false calculations. But the prejudices of childhood deceive us and will continue to lead us into error as long as we have the weakness to listen to them. It would seem as though the torch of reason only lights us when we are no longer in a position to profit from its rays, and it is

only after folly has succeeded folly that we manage to discover the source of all those that ignorance has made us commit. The laws of the land still almost always serve us as compass to distinguish the just from the unjust. We say such an action is forbidden by the law, therefore it is unjust; it is impossible to find a more mistaken manner of judging than this, for the law is founded on the general interest; now nothing is more in contradiction with the general interest than particular interest, and at the same time nothing is juster than the latter; therefore nothing is more unjust than the law which sacrifices all particular interests to general interests. But man, you object, wishes to live in society and therefore must sacrifice some portion of his private happiness to that of the public. Agreed; but why do you want him to have made such a pact without being sure of gaining as much as he sacrifices? Now, he gains nothing from the pact he has made in consenting to the laws; for you inhibit him far more than you satisfy him, and for one occasion in which the law protects him, there are a thousand when it stands in his way; therefore either the laws should not be consented to or they should be made infinitely milder. The only use of law has been to postpone the annihilation of prejudices, to keep us longer under the shameful yoke of error; law is a restraint which man has placed on man, when he saw with what ease he broke all other restraints; how, after that, could he suppose the *supplementary* restraint could ever be of any use? There are punishments for the guilty; agreed, but I only see in them cruelties and no means of making man better, and that is, to my mind, what one ought to work at. Besides one escapes these punishments with the greatest ease, and that certainty encourages the spirit of the man who has made up his mind. Let us convince ourselves once and for all

that laws are merely useless and dangerous; their only object is to multiply crimes or to allow them to be committed with impunity on account of the secrecy they necessitate. Without laws and religions it is impossible to imagine the degree of glory and grandeur human knowledge would have attained by now; the way these base restraints have retarded progress is unbelievable; and that is the sole service they have rendered to man. People have dared declaim against the passions and enchain them with laws. But compare the one with the other; let us see whether passions or laws have done more good to mankind. Who can question the truth of Helvetius' remark that passions in the moral sphere correspond to movement in the physical? The invention and the marvels of the arts are only due to strong passions; they should be regarded, the same author continues, as the productive germ of the spirit, and the mighty spring of great actions. Individuals who are not animated by strong passions are merely mediocre beings. It is only strong passions which can produce great men; when one is no longer, or when one ceases to be passionate one becomes stupid. This point established, how dangerous are not laws which inhibit the passions? Compare the centuries of anarchy with those of the strongest legalism in any country you like and you will see that it is only when the laws are silent that the greatest actions appear. If they regain their despotism a dangerous lethargy dulls all men's spirits; if you no longer see vices you can hardly find a virtue; the springs get rusty and revolutions are prepared.

B. Then you would do away with laws?

A. Yes. I maintain that man, returned to a state of nature, would be far happier than is possible under the ridiculous yoke of the law. *I don't want man to renounce*

any portion of his strength or potentialities. He has no need of laws to get justice done to him; Nature has given him the instinct and the necessary force to get it for himself; and that justice he will make for himself will always be more prompt than that which he can hope for from the languorous hand of the law, because in the former case he will merely consider his own interest and the wrong he has suffered, whereas a people's laws are never anything else but the mass and the result of the interests of all the people who have co-operated to their erection.

B. But without laws you will be oppressed.

A. What does it matter to me if I am oppressed if I have the right to do likewise; I would rather be oppressed by my neighbour whom I can oppress in my turn, than by the law against which I am powerless. I have far less reason to fear my neighbour's passions than the law's injustice, for my neighbour's passions are controlled by mine, whereas nothing stops or controls the injustices of the law. All man's faults are in Nature; therefore there can be no better laws than hers; she imprints a single one in the heart of all men—to satisfy ourselves, to refuse our passions nothing, whatever the cost to others. So do not try to inhibit the impulsions of this universal law, whatever the effects may be; you have no right to stop them; leave the care of that to him who is outraged; if he is harmed he will know how to defend himself. The men who thought that from the necessity of living together that of making laws derived fell into the greatest error; they had no more need of laws united than isolated. A universal sword of justice is useless; this sword is naturally in the hands of everyone.

B. But everyone will not use it properly, and unfairness will become general. . .

A. That is impossible. Peter will never be unjust to Paul if he knows that Paul can revenge himself immediately for the injustice; but he will be if he knows he has merely to fear the laws which he can get round, or from which he can escape. I will go further, I will grant you that without laws the sum of crimes increases, that without laws the universe would be a volcano from which the most horrible crimes would erupt every minute; in that state of perpetual lesion there would be even fewer disadvantages; there would doubtless be far less than under the rule of laws, for often the law strikes the innocent, and to the mass of victims produced by the criminal you must add that produced by the unfairness of the law; under anarchy you would have those victims less. Certainly you would have those sacrificed by crime, but you will not have those immolated by the iniquity of the law; for since the oppressed would have the right to revenge himself he would surely only punish his aggressor.

B. But anarchy which opens the door to arbitrariness gives necessarily the cruel image of despotism. . .

A. That too is a mistake; it is the abuse of law which leads to despotism; the despot is the man who makes the law . . . who makes it speak or who uses it to further his own interests. Take away this method of abuse from the despot and you will have no more tyrants. There has not been a single tyrant who hasn't made use of laws to exercise his cruelties; everywhere where man's rights will be sufficiently fairly divided for everybody to be in a position to revenge himself for the injuries he receives there will surely never be a despot, for he would be struck down by the first victim he would try to immolate. Tyrants are never born in anarchy, you only see them raise themselves up in the shadow of the law or get authority from them. The reign of laws is therefore

vicious and inferior to anarchy; the strongest proof of my proposition is the necessity a government finds itself in to plunge itself into anarchy when it wishes to remake its constitution. To abrogate its old laws it is obliged to establish a lawless revolutionary régime; and from this régime finally other laws are born. But this second state is necessarily less pure than the former, since it derives from it, since it has been necessary to bring into force the first good thing, *anarchy*, to arrive at the second good thing, the *Constitution of the State*. Men are only pure in a state of Nature; as soon as they go away from it they are degraded. Give up, I say to you, give up the idea of making man better by laws; you merely make him thereby more cunning and more wicked . . . never more virtuous.

B. But crime is a plague on the earth; the more laws there are, the fewer crimes.

A. That too is wrong. The multitude of laws makes the multitude of crimes. . . . .[3]

This theme is again developed at length in the last volume of *Juliette* by another Italian. "Give man back to Nature, she will lead him far better than your laws. Above all destroy those vast cities, where the conglomeration of vices forces you to repressive laws. What need has man to live in society? Give him back to the wild forests where he was born and let him do there all that he can; then his crimes, as isolated as he, will do no harm and your restraints become useless: savage man knows only two needs—'copulation' and food—both natural, and nothing which he can do to obtain either can be criminal. All that produces in him other passions is the work of civilisation and society. . . . ."[4]

This last volume, with its added bitterness, and its lack of notes to bring it up to date, is probably later than the rest of the work, and may well date from 1796

when the whole work was first published. By the time the passage quoted above was written de Sade had lost all hope. He had returned to the hopeless pessimism of earlier years when he had written, "How tempted I am to go and live among bears when I consider the multitude of dangerous abuses, the crowd of intolerable follies, which, thanks to a few musical comedies and songs, people don't even seem to suspect."[5]

IV. PLAN OF LEGISLATION FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

1795

About a third of the *Philosophie dans le Boudoir* is occupied by a pamphlet entitled *Frenchmen, a further effort if you wish to be Republicans!* this pamphlet is a hundred pages long and therefore it is impossible to give more than a précis of it; it is a pity as it shows de Sade at his most typical and vigorous. The passages which are quoted verbally will be distinguished by quotation marks. It is divided into two sections—religion and laws or morals.*

Religion.

"I am going to offer you far-reaching ideas; if people will listen to them and reflect on them some if not all may rest; I will have contributed in some part to the progress of illumination and will be content. I do not disguise the fact that I am troubled at the slowness of our advance; and I am disturbed by the realisation that we are on the eve of missing our aim again. Can one believe that it will be reached when we have been given laws? Don't imagine it. What are laws without religions? We need a cult, and a cult made for the republican character which will remove the danger of ever returning

* The word 'mœurs' is ambiguous, containing at the same time the ideas of 'morals' and 'customs.' I have used only the first, but hope readers will keep in mind the double significance.

to that of Rome. In an age when we are convinced that religion should be founded on morality, and not morality on religion, we need a religion which goes with our customs, which would be as it were the development and necessary consequence, and which can raise the soul and hold it at the level of that precious liberty which is to-day its only idol.

"Can Christianity be suitable for a free warrior people? No, my compatriots, don't believe it. If unhappily for him the Frenchman should bury himself again in the veils of Christianity the pride, tyranny and despotism of the priests . . . and the lowness, stupidity and platitudes of this religion would lower the pride of the republican soul and quickly place it again under the yoke its energy has just thrown off. Never let us forget that this puerile religion was one of the best arms in the hands of our tyrants; one of its first dogmas is *Give unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's*, but we have dethroned Cæsar and we do not intend to give him anything more. You would be deceiving yourselves, Frenchmen, if you think that a clergy which has given the oath will be any different from a refractory one—there are some vices which are incurable. Within ten years by means of Christianity with its superstitions and prejudices, your priests, despite their poverty, would regain their former empire over your soul; they would chain you to kings again because these two powers mutually aid one another, and your republican edifice would fall down, deprived of foundations."

It is not enough to prune the tree of superstition, it must be eradicated root and branch; freedom and equality are so far from the ideas of Christ's ministers that they would do everything to destroy them, overtly or covertly. Their actual poverty is no restraint; it was the same at the

beginning of Christianity. "Annihilate for ever that which one day may destroy your work. Consider that the fruit of your efforts is destined to your grandchildren, and your duty and your honour demand that you do not leave them any of the germs which could one day replunge them into that chaos from which we have emerged with such difficulty."

These prejudices are already being dissipated; the people have suppressed the temples and thrown over the idols; it is agreed that marriage is now merely a civil act. But you mustn't stop there. "The whole of Europe, with its hand already on the bandage that blinds it, awaits from you the effort which should tear it from their eyes. Make haste; don't allow *holy Rome*, which is making every effort to repress you, the opportunity to keep a few proselytes. . . . . Frenchmen, I repeat that Europe awaits from you deliverance from the sceptre and the thurible. You cannot free it from royalist tyranny without breaking the reins of superstition; the two are too intimately linked; if you allow one to subsist you will soon fall back under the empire of both. A republican should not bow the knee either before an imaginary being or a vile impostor; his unique gods should be *courage* and *liberty*. Rome disappeared when Christianity was preached, and France is lost if she still reveres it. . . . .

"To convince ourselves of this let us examine the few individuals who remain attached to the senseless cult of our fathers and we will see that they are the irreconcilable enemies of the present system, that in their number is that caste, so justly despised, of royalists and aristocrats. Let the slave of a crowned brigand bow, if he will, before an idol of flour—such an object is suitable for his muddy soul; he who can serve kings should adore gods! But for us, my compatriots, for us to crawl under such des-

picable restraints, rather a thousand deaths than another enslavement! Since we consider some cult necessary let us imitate those of the Romans; actions, passions, heroes were the worthy objects of their worship. Such idols elevated the soul and electrified it; they did more; they communicated the virtues of the object worshipped. The adorer of Minerva wished to be prudent; courage was in the heart of the man at the altar of Mars." All heathen idols personified some active virtue; Christianity on the contrary merely passive ones. Theism is equally useless, both philosophically and ethically; atheism alone is suitable.

All leaders of religion made their gods a tool for their secular advancement; and there is only one step from superstition to royalism. Always one of the first of the king's oaths at his coronation is the maintenance of the religion in vogue, as one of the strongest political bases of their throne. Religion and liberty are incompatible.

"Let us stop thinking religion can be of any use to men. Have good laws, and you can do without religion. But the people want one, you say; it amuses them and keeps them quiet. Very well! Then give us one suitable to free men . . . . but not Christianity, which we will relegate to the perpetual neglect from which the infamous Robespierre wished to drag it. . . . . Let us treat the idols as we have treated the kings; we have placed the symbols of liberty on the pedestals which formerly held kings; similarly let us place the effigies of great men (whose reputations are long established) on those formerly occupied by saints." It is a mistake to think the peasants will resist. Place statues of Mars, Minerva, Liberty in conspicuous places, and hold festivals annually in which prizes will be given to those who have served their

country best. In that way at last some virtues will be produced by religion.

There is no need for such a revolution to be other than bloodless; "Believe me, the people are far more sensible than you think and will shake off the chains of superstition as easily as those of tyranny. You fear them without this restraint; how absurd! A person who is not restrained by the material sword of the law will not be by the moral fear of hell's tortures. . . . Perhaps people will say the time is not ripe to consolidate our revolution in so striking a fashion. Ah! my fellow citizens, the road that we have travelled since 'eighty-nine was far harder than that which remains in front of us. . . . .

"Frenchmen, if you strike the first blow, your national education will do the rest; but start work at once on this task; let it become your chiefest care; above all base it on that essential morality which religious education so neglected. Replace theistic follies by excellent social precepts; instead of learning to recite useless prayers, which they will make a point of forgetting as soon as they are sixteen, teach your children their duties to society; teach them to cherish those virtues of which you barely spoke before, and which suffice for their individual happiness without your religious fables; make them realise that happiness consists in making others as fortunate as we wish to be ourselves. If you found these truths on the chimeras of Christianity, as you had the stupidity to do before, as soon as your pupils realise the futility of the bases, they will pull down the whole edifice and will become criminals, simply because they believe that the religion which they have rejected, forbade them to be so. On the contrary, if you make them realise the necessity of virtue, because their own happiness depends upon it they will be honest people by egoism. . . . A simple

philosopher should instruct these new pupils in the incomprehensible sublimities of Nature" and teach them what is known of science and biology, and show that religion is founded on ignorance and fear. By these means you will produce good soldiers, good fathers and good husbands; you will make them men the more attached to their country because no idea of subservience will enter into their heads. Then true patriotism will flower in every heart; "it will reign in all its force and all its purity because it will be the only dominant sentiment, and no other idea will modify its energy; then your second generation is safe, and your work, consolidated by it, will become the law of the universe.

"But if by fear or cowardice these counsels are not followed and you leave in existence the foundations of the building you thought to destroy, what will happen? These foundations will be rebuilt on again and the same collossi will be replaced, but with the cruel difference that they will be cemented this time so strongly that neither your generation nor those that will follow you will be able to overthrow them. . . . .

"At the same time I do not propose massacres or exportations; such horrors are too far from my mind for me to think of conceiving them a second. No, do not assassinate or export; these atrocities belong to kings and the criminals who imitate them; it is not by acting as they do that you will bring them in horror. Let us reserve our violence for the idols; we only want ridicule for those that serve them; the sarcasms of Julian did more to destroy Christianity than all the tortures of Nero. Let us destroy all idea of God and turn our priests into soldiers; some are already and let them stay in a profession which is so noble for a republican; but don't let them speak to us any more either of their God or his religion.

"Let us condemn whoever first mentions these subjects to be mocked at, made fun of, and covered with mud in the market place; eternal prison will be the lot of him who commits twice the same fault. . . . . In six months it will be all over, your infamous God will have disappeared, and that without ceasing to be just and jealous of the esteem of others, without ceasing to fear the sword of the laws and to be honourable men, because we will have realised that the true friend of his country should not, like the slave of kings, be led by phantoms; because in a word it is neither the frivolous hope of a better world nor the fear of greater evils than those that Nature sends us which should lead a republican, whose sole guide is virtue and only restraint remorse."

Morals.

"After having shown that theism is completely unsuitable to a republican government, it appears to me necessary to prove that the present morals of France are equally unsuitable. This is the more essential as it is the morals which will serve as motives for the laws which are going to be promulgated.

"Frenchmen, you are too enlightened not to feel that a new government calls for new morals; it is impossible for a citizen of a free State to act in the same way as the servant of a despot; the differences of interests, duties and mutual relations necessarily demand a quite different line of conduct; a crowd of little errors, of little social crimes which were considered extremely essential under the government of kings, who had to make ever more and impose ever new restraints to make themselves respected and unapproachable by their subjects, will not exist now; other crimes, such as regicide and sacrilege should equally disappear in a republic which no longer recognises kings

or religion. In addition to liberty of the conscience and liberty of the Press, citizens, one should accord, with few exceptions, liberty of action, and except for crimes which disturb directly the bases of the State, there are practically no crimes for you to punish in a State founded on liberty and equality; for under thorough examination it appears that only that is criminal which the law reproves; for since nature dictates to us equally vices and virtues, according to our organisation . . . . her inspiration would become a certain rule for what is good or bad. To develop further my ideas on such an essential subject, I am going to classify the different actions in man's life which up till now have been called criminal, and measure them against the true duties of a republican.

"At all times man's duties have been divided into three classes—towards God, towards his neighbour, and towards himself."

The first series of crimes—towards God—obviously have no more existence. "If there is one thing more extravagant than another in this world it is to see men who only know their God and what he demands by their limited ideas, try to decide on the nature of what pleases or annoys Him. I don't want to stop at the freedom for all cults; I would like people to be free to laugh at and ridicule all of them," and a congregation be treated like a comic spectacle. "But don't destroy the idols in anger, break them up in play."

The second class is the duty of man towards his neighbour and is the most extensive of all.

"Christian morality, far too vague about the relations of man with his fellows, uses bases so full of sophistry that it is impossible to admit them, for if one wants to erect principles, great care must be taken not to found them on sophistries. This absurd morality tells us to love our

neighbour like ourselves. Nothing could be more sublime, were it possible that what is false can be beautiful. It is impossible to love our neighbour like ourselves, for it is against all the laws of Nature and her organ alone should direct us; we can only love our neighbours as good friends which Nature gives us, and with whom we should live more easily in a republican State, since the disappearance of distances must necessarily draw the links closer.

"Therefore let humanity, fraternity and kindness proscribe for us our reciprocal duties, and let us each fulfil them with all the energy that nature has given us on this point, without blaming and above all without punishing those whose colder or more atrabilious temperaments do not find in these bonds, which are yet so touching, all the pleasures which others discover in them; for it will be agreed that it would be absurd to prescribe universal laws; it would be as ridiculous as a general who would order uniforms of the same measure for the whole army; it would be a terrible injustice to demand that men, whose characters are different, should obey the same laws; what suits one does not suit another.

"I agree that we cannot make as many laws as there are men; but the laws can be so clement and so few that all men whatever their character can comply with them. I would also demand that this small number of laws be of a sort that could adapt themselves to all different characters; the directing spirit would be to punish more or less according to the character of the person in question. It has been shown that there are some virtues whose practice is impossible to certain men, as there are some remedies which are intolerable to certain physiques. Would it not be the height of injustice if you make the law strike a man when he cannot possibly obey it; it would be like forcing a blind man to distinguish colours.

"From these first principles results the necessity to make clement laws, and above all to do away for ever with the death penalty, for a law which attacks man's life is impracticable, unjust, inadmissible." As will be shown later, there are cases when men may be justified in attempting another's life, but the law cannot be, for it is passionless, and "passion is the only excuse which can legitimise the cruel action of murder; man receives from Nature impressions which may make such an action pardonable, but the law on the contrary is always in opposition with Nature and receives nothing from her; since it has not the same motives it cannot have the same rights. . . . . The second reason for doing away with the death penalty is that it has never repressed crime, since it is committed daily at the foot of the scaffold.

"In a word, this penalty should be suppressed because there is no calculation more stupid than that of killing one man for having killed another, since obviously instead of one man the less you have two; and it is only executioners and fools who can be happy with such arithmetic."

The crimes which can be committed against our neighbour fall into four categories—*Calumny*, *theft*, acts of *impurity* which can cause distress to others, and *murder*.

"All these actions were considered as capital offences under a monarchical government, but are they equally grave in a republic? That is what we intend to analyse by the light of philosophy—the only way in which such an examination should be conducted. Do not tax me with being a dangerous innovator; do not say that there is a risk of lightening, as perhaps these writings may do, the remorse in the malefactor's heart, or that there is a greater evil in increasing, by the mildness of my system, the inclination these same malefactors have for their crimes; I here protest formally that I have no such perverse views;

I am exposing those ideas which have been identified with me since I reached the age of reason, and against whose diffusion the infamous despotism of tyrants was directed for so many ages; so much the worse for those whom these great ideas would corrupt; so much the worse for those who can only catch hold of the evil in philosophical opinions and who are susceptible to corruption from everything! Who knows if they wouldn't be tainted by reading *Seneca* or *Charron!* It is not those whom I speak to; I only address myself to people capable of understanding me, and such can read me without danger.

"I confess quite frankly that I have never thought *calumny* an evil. . . ." Either the calumny falls on a wicked or a good man. In the former case a useful service has been done; in the latter it will encourage the good man to further efforts, so that he can throw off the unwarranted opprobrium. It is therefore not to be considered as a crime.

"*Theft* is the second fault to be considered. If we examine antiquity we will see that theft was allowed in many republics, like Sparta . . . . . ; some other people regarded it as a martial virtue; it is certain that it encourages strength, courage and address, all virtues useful to a republic. I will make bold to ask impartially if theft, whose effect is to equalise riches, is a great evil in a government whose aim is equality? Undoubtedly no, for if it tends to equality on either side, it makes the possessor more careful in guarding his goods. There was a people who used to punish, not the robber, but he who let himself be robbed, in order to teach him to take care of his property. This leads us to wider reflections.

"God forbid that I should wish to attack or destroy here the oath for the respect of property which the nation has just pronounced; but may I be allowed some remarks

on the injustice of this oath? What is the spirit of an oath pronounced by all the members of a nation? Is it not to maintain complete equality among citizens, to submit them all equally to a law which protects the property of all? Then I ask you if it is a just law which orders him who has nothing to respect him who has everything? What are the elements of a social pact? Doesn't it consist in abandoning a little of one's freedom and property to assure and maintain the preservation of both?

"All laws are based on this supposition; it is the motive of the punishments inflicted on him who abuses his liberty; also it authorises taxes; and the reason why a citizen doesn't complain when he receives demands is because he realises that by means of what he gives he preserves the remainder; but once again by what right will he who has nothing bind himself to a pact which only protects him who has everything? If you are acting justly by preserving with your oath the properties of the rich, are you not acting unjustly in exacting this oath from the preserver who has nothing? What interest has he in this oath of yours? and on what grounds do you demand that he promise a thing which is uniquely favourable to the man who by his riches is so different from him? Assuredly nothing could be more unjust; an oath should have an equal effect on all who subscribe to it; it cannot possibly bind a man who has no interest in its maintenance, because it would then no longer be the pact of a free people; it would be an arm for the strong against the weak, against which the latter should revolt continually; the rich alone enslaves the poor, the rich alone has an interest in the oath the poor pronounces with so little consideration, that he does not see that by means of this oath, extracted through his good faith, he

binds himself to do a thing which cannot be done for him in turn.

"If you are convinced, as you ought to be, of this barbarous inequality, do not aggravate your injustice by punishing him who has nothing for having dared take something from him who has everything; your unfair oath gives him more right than ever. When you forced him to perjury by this oath, which is absurd for him, you legitimise all the crimes this perjury leads to; therefore you have no right to punish that which you have caused. I will not insist further in trying to make the horrible cruelty of punishing thieves felt. Imitate that wise law of which I spoke and punish the man who is careless enough to let himself be robbed, not the robber; consider that he is authorised by your oath, and that by so acting he is merely following the first of Nature's laws—that of self-preservation, no matter at whose expense.

"The next class of crime that we have to examine consists of actions motivated by lust, especially those which can harm others—*prostitution*, *adultery*, *incest*, *rape* and *sodomy*. It is indisputable that all what are called moral crimes, of the sort we have just named, are completely indifferent to a government whose sole duty is to preserve by any means possible its essential form. That should be the unique morality of a republican government. But since it is always being attacked by the despotic governments which surround it, one can hardly reasonably suppose that its methods of preservation would be *moral methods*; for it can only preserve itself by war, and nothing is less moral than war.

"Now I ask how it can be shown that in a State which is *immoral* by obligation it is essential that the individuals should be *moral*? I go further and say that it is good that they should not be. The legislators of ancient Greece

felt completely the important necessity of keeping the members corrupt, so that their *moral dissolution* should be reflected in the dissolution useful to government, and thereby should result that spirit of insurrection which is always indispensable to a republican government, which, since it is completely happy, must necessarily excite the hatred and jealousy of countries surrounding it. These wise legislators considered that insurrection was not a *moral* state; therefore it would be as absurd as it would be dangerous to demand that those who must maintain the perpetual *immoral* movement of the machine of State should themselves be very *moral*, because the moral state in man is one of peace and tranquillity, whereas his *immoral* state is one of continuous motion, which brings him near the insurrection always necessary to the government of the republic of which he is a member.

"Let us now examine in further detail and start with modesty." Modesty is unnatural and local, founded on the inclemency of the climate and coquetry. "Lycurgus and Solon, convinced that the results of immodesty keep the citizen in the state of *immorality* essential to a republic forced young girls to appear naked in the theatres. Rome imitated this example with the games of Flora; most pagan mysteries were performed in this state; nudity even passed for a virtue among some nations. Be that as it may, from immodesty come lecherous impulses; the results of these impulses compose the so-called crimes which we are analysing, of which the first is *prostitution*. Now that we have recovered on this subject from the crowd of religious errors which held us captive, and that, nearer to nature on account of the quantity of prejudices we have annihilated, we only listen to her voice, in the assurance that if there was a crime in anything it would be rather in resisting the inclinations that she inspires

than in following them; and since we realise that lechery is a result of these inclinations it is less a question of repressing this passion in ourselves than in regulating the means by which it can be satisfied in peace. Therefore we should devote ourselves to the task of regulating this subject and to establish all the necessary safety, so that the citizen whom need unites with the objects of his lust can give himself over with these objects to all that his passions demand, without being inhibited by anything, because no human passion has more need of the fullest possible extension of liberty than this one. Various buildings, healthy, large, properly furnished and completely safe shall be erected in all towns; there, every sex, every age, every creature will be offered to the caprices of the libertines who will come to take their pleasure, and the most complete subordination will be the rule for the people present; the slightest refusal will be punished arbitrarily by him who has suffered from it. I must again explain here, and measure this against republican morals; I have promised to be equally logical everywhere and I will keep my word.

"If, as has been said, no passion has need of such a great extension of liberty as this one, no other is so despotic; it is then that man wishes to command, to be obeyed, to surround himself with slaves bound to satisfy him; well, whenever you deprive man of this secret means of getting rid of the measure of despotism Nature has placed at the bottom of his heart, in order to exercise it he will fall back on the objects which surround him and disturb the government. If you wish to avoid this danger, give free play to these tyrannous desires, which despite himself torment him ceaselessly; contented with the exercise of his petty sovereignty in the midst of his harem of ingles and sultanas . . . . he will come out

satisfied, and without any wish to disturb the government. . . . .

"See how the Greek legislators, penetrated by these ideas, treated debauchery in Athens and Sparta; they drugged the citizen with it, far from forbidding it; no sort was outlawed, and *Socrates*, whom the oracle declared to be the wisest man on earth, passed indifferently from the arms of *Aspasia* to those of *Alcibiades*, and was no less the glory of Greece. I will go further, and however contrary my ideas may be to current customs, since my object is to prove that we must hurry to change these customs if we wish to keep the form of government we have adopted, I will try to prove that the prostitution of women known as honest is no more dangerous than that of men, and that not only should they take part in the debaucheries exercised in the buildings I establish, but that such buildings should also be erected for them, where their caprices and the needs of their temperament, far more ardent than ours, can equally be satisfied in every way.

"First of all by what right do you claim that women should be excepted from the blind submission, which Nature proscribed to them, to man's caprices, and secondly by what other right do you pretend to enforce on them a continence which is impossible to their constitution and useless to their honour?"

In nature, women were 'vulguivagues,' that is to say belonging to all the males, like other female animals; interest, egoism and love modified this; people thought they were enriching themselves by taking a woman and the goods of her family. But "no act of possession can ever be exercised on a free person; it is as unjust to possess a woman exclusively as it is to possess slaves; all humans are born free and with equal rights; let us never forget that; consequently no sex can have a legitimate right to

the exclusive possession of another, and no sex or class can possess the other exclusively. Therefore a woman . . . . would have no right in refusing . . . . by saying she was in love . . . . as that would be exclusion. . . . .

"If, then, it is incontestable that we have the natural right to express our desires to every woman, we have equally that of forcing them to submit to our desires, not exclusively, that would be a contradiction, but momentarily. (I do not contradict myself; I am talking of enjoyment, not of possession; I have no right to the possession of the stream that I come to on my road, but I have to its enjoyment.) . . . .

(Modesty, or the attachment to another man, would be no motive for a woman's refusal. Love, which can be called *madness of the soul* is equally inadmissible because anti-social. Under the system established any man could summon any girl or woman to appear in one of the houses mentioned, and there, under the safeguard of the matrons, she must satisfy with the most complete humility and submission all the caprices the man desires, no matter of what sort. Age limits are fixed by the limits of desire.

Women will have exactly the same rights as men; "it is absurd to have placed their honour and their virtue in the anti-natural strength with which they resist their inclinations which are far stronger than ours; this moral injustice is the more scandalous since we consent to make them weak by seduction and then punish them because they have yielded to all the efforts we have made to encompass their fall. The whole absurdity of our morals, it seems to me, is founded on this iniquitous atrocity, and this simple exposition should make us realise the extreme necessity that we are in to change them for purer ones."

Consequently women will have exactly the same licence as men. The only possible danger in this is

fatherless children; but what does that matter to a republic where every individual should have no other mother than his country, when all who are born are children of the fatherland. "How much more will those love it, who never having known any but it will know from birth that it is from their country alone that they must expect everything! Do not think that you can make good republicans as long as you isolate children in their families—children who should belong only to the republic. In the family they give to a few individuals the love that they should divide among all their brothers, and adopt the often dangerous prejudices of these individuals; their opinions and ideas become isolated and all the virtues of a statesman become impossible for them. They give all their affection to those that have borne them and none to those who make them live, make them known and make them illustrious, as if these second benefits were not far stronger than the first"; since therefore family interests are anti-social it is to the advantage of the republic that the family be destroyed and children belong entirely to the fatherland.

Since women will have the same licence as men and will be encouraged to use it as and when they desire, openly and without shame, the question of *adultery* hardly arises. It is an added barbarity in our ancestors that they regarded a woman's infidelity as a crime; indissoluble unions are intolerable for both parties, but particularly for women. Thomas More, and the habits of the Tartars and the Peruvians are quoted to show that debauchery in a woman is neither undesirable nor criminal.

Similarly *incest* is of no importance and is general in some parts of the world. *Rape* would appear to be the form of lechery which is most harmful, "nevertheless, it is certain that rape—an action which is so rare and so difficult to prove—does less harm than theft, since one

deprives a person of property and the other merely deteriorates it. Anyhow what can you object to the raper if he replies that he has done very little harm, since he has merely placed the object which he has abused a little earlier in the condition which love and marriage would soon reduce her to?

"But what of *sodomy*, that so-called crime, which called down the fire of heaven on the towns which practised it, is it not a monstrous act for which the punishment cannot be strong enough? It is terribly painful for us to have to reproach our ancestors with the judicial murders they committed for this subject. Is it possible to be so barbarous as to dare to condemn an unfortunate whose crime consists in not having the same tastes as ourselves? We shudder when we think that less than forty years ago the absurdity of our legislators was still at that point. Console yourselves, citizens, such absurdities will take place no longer; the wisdom of your legislators answers for that. Completely enlightened on this weakness of some men, we realise to-day that such an error cannot be criminal, and that Nature does not attach enough importance to the fluid in our loins to be enraged at the route we make this fluid take.

"What is the only crime which can exist here? Surely not placing oneself in such or such a position, unless you wish to hold that some parts of the body are different from others, that some are pure and others impure, but as it is impossible to advance such absurdities the only possible crime can be in the waste of semen. But I ask you is it probable that that semen is so precious in the eyes of Nature that it cannot be wasted without crime?" Obviously not. It is completely indifferent how or with whom pleasure is taken, since all inclinations are natural. Sodomy is usually caused by organisation, occasionally

by satiety; in either case it is indifferent. It is more common in republics, and useful for them, as is proved by the examples and the writings of the Romans and Greeks. It is a habit which is found all over the world and various quotations show that it was encouraged for the martial and civic virtues it produces. It is therefore completely indifferent to a republic, as are all other and obscurer vices.

"Only *murder* remains to be examined in the second class of crimes. Of all the wrongs that man can do to his fellows, murder is undoubtedly the cruellest of all, since it deprives him of the only gift he has received from Nature and the only one whose loss is irreparable. Nevertheless several questions present themselves here, apart from the wrong that murder causes to its victim.

1. Is this action really criminal in the pure laws of Nature?

2. Is it politically?

3. Is it harmful to society?

4. How should it be considered by a republican government?

5. Should murder be suppressed by murder?

"We will examine separately each of these questions; the subject is sufficiently important to warrant prolonged attention. Maybe our ideas will be considered somewhat strong; but what of it? Have we not acquired the right to say everything? Let us develop these great truths in men's eyes; they expect them from us; it is time for error to disappear, its bandage must fall with that of the king.

"The first question was: Is murder a crime in the eyes of Nature? Doubtless we will humiliate man's pride in reducing him to the ranks of the other productions of Nature," but nevertheless he is merely an animal like any other, and in the eyes of Nature his death is no more

important than that of a fly or an ox. And, anyhow, death is not final, but merely a transmutation to some other form of life, man into worm. Destruction is Nature's method of progress, and she prompts the murderer to destruction, so that his action shall be the same as plague or famine.

"Is murder a crime politically? Let us confess on the contrary that it is unfortunately one of the principal springs of politics. Did not Rome become mistress of the world by force of murder? Is it not by force of murder that France is free to-day? It is unnecessary to warn the reader here that we are speaking of murders caused by *war* and not the atrocities committed by insurrectionaries and counter-revolutionaries; these latter, vowed to public execration, only need to be remembered to excite eternally the horror and indignation of all. What human science has more need of support by murder than politics, which tend ceaselessly to deceit, and whose only aim is the growth of one nation at the expense of another? Are the iniquitous wars, the fruits of these barbarous politics, other than the means by which the nation is nourished, fortifies and extends itself? And what is war except the science of destruction? The strange folly of man who teaches publicly the art of murder and honours him who succeeds the best therein, and then punishes the man who for a private quarrel gets rid of his enemy! Is it not time to turn back on such barbarous paradoxes?

"Is murder a crime against society?" Obviously one or two members more or less are indifferent to it, otherwise would it engage in battle?

"How should murder be considered in a republican and war-like State? It would assuredly be extremely dangerous to cast obloquy on this action or to punish it. Republican pride demands a certain amount of ferocity;

if it softens there is a loss of energy and subjugation will quickly follow. A very strange reflection presents itself here, but as it is true in spite of its strangeness I will say it. A nation which starts as a republic will only be upheld by virtues, because to arrive at the greater one must always start by the less; but a nation which is already old and corrupt and will have the courage to shake off the monarchical yoke to adopt the republican will only maintain itself by many crimes; for it is already criminal, and if it tried to pass from crime to virtue, that is to say from a violent to a calm state, it would fall into inertia with its inevitable ruin as the result."

Murder is permitted or encouraged in many States and at many different times. In the classical republics the murder of slaves was not taken notice of. Among many savages murder is considered an act of bravery, and men are not admitted to full rank before they have committed one or more murders. There were also human sacrifices and men running amuck in many nations. A number of nations to-day tolerate open murder. "What nation was greater or more cruel than Rome, and what nation preserved longer its freedom and its liberty? The spectacle of gladiators kept up its courage; it became war-like by the habit of turning murder into a sport. Twelve or fifteen hundred victims filled the arena daily, and there the women, far more cruel than the men, demanded that the dying should fall gracefully and that they should be statuesque even in the convulsions of death. . . . .

"Everywhere in fact it was rightly believed that a murderer, that is to say a man who could smother his sensibility sufficiently to kill his fellow and to brave public or private vengeance, must be extremely courageous and consequently precious in a warlike or republican government. Let us now examine the nations, even more

ferocious, who indulged in infanticide; we shall see such a course universally adopted and even sometimes enjoined by law." See for example the American Indians or the Madagascans. "In the republics of Greece all children were carefully examined at birth and if they were malformed, so that they could never defend the republic, they were immediately destroyed; there they did not think it necessary to erect richly endowed asylums to preserve that vile scum of the human race. Until the capital was changed, Romans who could not feed their children exposed them. The ancient legislators had no scruple on this account, and none of their codes suppressed it. Aristotle advised abortion and these old republicans, full of enthusiasm and love for their country, did not recognise that individual commiseration one finds in modern nations; people loved their children less, their country more. In all the towns of China an enormous number of abandoned children are found daily in the streets. . . . .

"It cannot be denied that it is extremely necessary and politic to put a limit to the population in a republic; the exact opposite is the case in a monarchy; there tyrants measured their wealth by the number of their slaves and consequently needed men; but an excess of population is undoubtedly a real vice in a republic; nevertheless one shouldn't cut throats to lessen it as our modern decemvirs said;* it is merely a question of not allowing it to exceed the limits prescribed by its happiness. Take care not to multiply too much a people in which each individual is sovereign; revolutions are always the effect of too big a population. If for the glory of the State you allow your warriors the right to destroy their fellows, for the preserva-

* Robespierre seriously advanced the plan of killing off two-thirds of the population, thereby giving a model to the project of Saint-Fond which caused Juliette's revulsion and disgrace.

tion of the State you should allow everybody to get rid of children they cannot nourish or which cannot be useful; and also grant the citizen the right to get rid of, at his own risks and peril, all enemies who harm him. . . . . Let monarchists say that a State is great in relation to its population; a State will always be poor if the population exceeds its supplies necessary for life, and will always be prosperous if it is kept to the right level and can sell its excess . . . . . but you should not destroy grown men to diminish the population. It is unjust to shorten the days of a properly developed individual; birth control on the contrary is not. . . . .

"It is time to resume. Should murder be punished by murder. Undoubtedly not. The only punishment which a murderer should be condemned to is that which he risks from the friends or the family of the man he has killed. *I pardon you*, said Louis XV to Charolais* who had just killed a man for his amusement, *but I also pardon him who will kill you.* All the bases of the law against murderers is contained in that sublime sentence. (Salic law punished murder with a fine.)

"In a word murder is a horror, but a horror often necessary, never criminal, and essential to tolerate in a republic." Above all it should never be punished by murder.

As far as man's duties towards himself are concerned, the philosopher will only follow them as far as they affect his pleasure or his self-preservation; consequently it is useless to recommend their practice to him, and even

* Charolais, prince of the blood by his birth and by his tastes, is the real 'sadist' of the eighteenth century, and many of the legends which surround de Sade would be more properly applied to this man who, as Michelet says "n'aimait le beau sexe qu'à l'état sanglant." The stories concerning him are extremely unpleasant and he almost certainly served de Sade as a model in his extant works, as well as in the lost *Journées de Florbelle*, in which he appeared under his own name.

more so to punish him for not following them. The only action which has been blamed in this category is suicide which it is idiotic to call a crime.

"The long-established habit of supporting despotism had completely enervated our courage; our morals had been depraved but we are born again; soon people will see of what sublime actions the genius and character of the French are capable, now they are free; let us uphold at the price of our fortunes and our lives that liberty which has already cost us so many victims; we will not regret any of them if we reach our aim; they sacrificed themselves voluntarily; do not let their blood be uselessly spilt; but we must stand united . . . united, or the fruits of our efforts are lost; let us erect excellent laws on the victories we have just gained; our first legislators, still slaves of the tyrant we have finally thrown down, only gave us laws worthy of the tyrant they still revered; let us redo their task, let us think that it is for republicans that we are working; let our laws be as mild as the people they are to sway.

"In demonstrating as I have done the nullity and indifference of a multitude of actions which our ancestors, biased by a false religion, regarded as crimes, I have reduced our work to very little. Let us have few laws, but good ones—it is not a question of multiplying restraints, but merely giving to those we do use the quality of indestructibility—and see that the laws that we do make aim only at the peace and happiness of the citizen and the glory of the republic; but once you have chased the enemy from your country, Frenchmen, I would not wish that the ardour of your principles should carry you further; you can only carry them to the ends of the world with fire and the sword. Before you try to do this, remember the unhappy success of the Crusades. Once

the enemy is the other side of the Rhine fortify your frontiers and stay at home; revive your trade, give your manufactures energy and markets; help the arts to flourish again, and encourage agriculture which is so important in a government like yours; your object should be to be able to furnish all the world without having need of anybody. Let the thrones of Europe fall down of their own accord; your example and your prosperity will soon overturn them without the necessity of your interference.

"Invincible in the interior and a model to all people by your police and your good laws, every government in the world will try to imitate you and will be honoured by alliance with you; but if for the vain honour of carrying your principles afar you abandon the care of your own prosperity, that despotism which is merely asleep will reawake, internal dissensions will rend you, you will exhaust your finances and your army; and all that so that on your return you can kiss the chains that tyrants who will have conquered you in your absence will load you with; all that you want can be done without leaving your homes; let other nations see you happy and they will hurry to seek prosperity by the route that you have traced for them."[6]

This pamphlet was reprinted separately and anonymously as propaganda for the Commune in 1848.

. . . . .

I have thought it best to present de Sade's constructive political thought over the fateful years 1788–1795 without comment, in historical order, and as much as was possible in de Sade's own words, so that readers could observe for themselves the development through the thesis of political equality and subordination to the State (Sections i and ii) and the antithesis of complete individual

freedom (Section iii) to the synthesis of the practical programme of the last Section.

As a revolutionary thinker de Sade was in complete opposition to all his contemporaries firstly in his complete and continual denial of a right to property, and secondly in his view of the struggle as being—not between the Crown, the bourgeoisie, the aristocracy or the clergy, or sectional interests of any of these against one another (the view of all his contemporaries)—but of all these more or less united against the proletariat. By holding these views he cuts himself off entirely from the revolutionary thinkers of his time to join those of the mid-nineteenth century. For this reason he can with some justice be called the first reasoned socialist. In his attempt to conciliate the conflicting demands of the individual with political fairness for all he still stands alone, despite Kropotkin and the anarchists.

Writers about de Sade invariably reproach him for the mild way in which he conducted himself during the Revolution and call him merely a parlour socialist. Apparently they expected this man of over fifty to indulge in the torture and rapine that legend has associated with his name; they would not understand that a person who could analyse so clearly the brutality of others should find such brutality disgusting and abhorrent. As a matter of fact de Sade did all that was humanly possible in the way of speaking and writing to persuade his fellow-citizens to follow him in his well-developed plans; but he spoke a language which none then, and too few now, can understand.

It was inevitable that he should be merely a theoretical and Utopian socialist. It was only his experience and that of the earlier nineteenth century which allowed practical socialism to be born. But as a theoretical

socialist he saw extraordinarily justly, as can be seen by his prophetic deductions concerning the immediate future of France, and also his extremely apt criticism of the League of Nations which another century would realise with all the inherent faults he detected. There are considerable correspondences between the legislation he suggested and that actually adopted by Russia in 1919.

Ethically de Sade was more revolutionary still in his attempt to effect a complete cleavage with judeo-Christian morality and its conception of human nature. Here, too, we are slowly catching up with him; of the proposals that were so paradoxical in 1795 I imagine that only two are shocking to-day—the justification of murder, and the concept of universal brothels and general promiscuity.

The justification of murder comes from the fact that de Sade was a logician and not a casuist. Foreign counter-revolutionaries were on French soil and must be driven off, if the Republic were to live. But murder is taking life, no matter what the circumstances or excuse. Therefore murder must be unfortunately justifiable, for all citizens are equal on all occasions. His logic of course becomes paradoxical as logic pushed to extremes always does.

His plan for universal brothels and promiscuity is not mere paradoxical perversity but is a considered solution for the problems which arise from his view of sex and allied instincts, a view which will be examined in the following chapters. Meanwhile there is one point I would like to remark on.

The claim that citizens of a free republic must be immoral seems to be a non-sequitur. But since I first noticed this point I have remarked that it is the most reactionary people and the most reactionary governments —such as Germany and Italy—which put the greatest emphasis on purity and morality. In Hitler's Germany,

probably the most savage of contemporary countries, a woman is not allowed in any Nazi meeting if she employs rouge or powder (*Daily Telegraph*, page 11, 8/9/33) and the continual emphasis on sexual and racial purity from such sources leads me to believe that de Sade's observation is justified. It is with regret that I note the growing puritanism of the communists in Russia since the abandonment of war-time communism.

CHAPTER VII

SEX, PLEASURE AND LOVE

Children of the future age,
Reading this indignant page
Know that in a former time
Love, sweet love, was thought a crime!

W. BLAKE,
Songs of Experience.

Love seeketh only Self to please,
To bind another to its delight,
Joy's in another's loss of ease,
And builds a Hell in Heaven's despite.

W. Blake,
Songs of Experience.

Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires.

W. BLAKE,
Marriage of Heaven and Hell.

I

IN writing about sexual matters the great difficulty is vocabulary. There are in English half-a-dozen small words which are absolutely essential to the matter and which lie under one of the strongest taboos that we acknowledge. These three nouns and three verbs are supposed not to exist, as far as public speech or writing are concerned, though in conversation generally they receive a good deal of currency, both in their real meaning and in their mystical apotropaic significance. One word indeed is so charged with evil that even the thirteen

volumes of the New Oxford Dictionary are not a strong enough exorcism, although the word in question has at least three hundred years of literary history.

So strong is the magic contained in these groupings of letters that we have had within the last few years the curious spectacle of a book published in two editions, the only difference as far as I know being the alteration of one letter in the words 'muck' and 'beggar'; but the edition in which this alteration was made cost about six times as much as the vulgar text.

. . . . .

The natives of the Trobriand Islands, who are in so many respects a model to us all, consider eating as private as any other bodily function. Should a science of dietetics arise among these people presumably the expounders of this new knowledge would speak about 'ingurgitation,' 'imbibing,' and 'the buccal orifice,' so that the ears and eyes of the nice might not be offended by the sight or sound of the crude monosyllables so full of associations and magic, which had till then been used only for rude talk or swearing.

. . . . .

When in the middle of the last century a few bold professors came to the conclusion that sex was neither an obscene mystery nor a dirty joke on the part of Nature they invented for its discussion an aseptic polysyllabic Greco-Latin vocabulary, completely free from associations of any sort. From that time onwards they were able to describe and talk about sexual matters in terms which showed clearly enough that the subject could have no possible contact either with the writer or his readers. After the war this licence was seized upon by lay authors and people now can and do write and talk about 'homo-

sexuality' until one is driven to wish that this habit was still only referred to "by that foul word which crowns the seaman's phrase," as the Byronic author of *Don Leon* so chastely says.

Despite the asepsis of the professors, sex does still play a part in our lives, and the scientific aura they have given to these unscientific manifestations of vitality has produced a complete distortion of human life. They aver that we are brought into the world by 'copulation,' but surely nobody thinks of themselves as 'copulating,' not even the most astringent scientists—unless maybe Christian Scientists do.

The late D. H. Lawrence felt this contradiction so strongly that he risked his established reputation to employ four out of the six tabooed words. (Incidentally the two words he did not use will tell the perspicacious more about this writer than the deluge of volumes since his death.) Like de Sade, he felt that "'sex' is as important as eating or drinking and we ought to allow the one appetite to be satisfied with as little restraint or false modesty as the other."[1]

De Sade was fully conscious of the choice of vocabularies before him—the choice between the poetic circumlocution, the scientific asepsis, and the crude monosyllables—and consciously chose the last. ". . . .This isn't an indecent anecdote . . . . but a part of human history which we are going to learn, and the developments of morals; if you wish to learn from it you must be exact, which things swathed in gauze never are. Dirty minds are offended at everything. . . . . Obscenity may revolt, disgust and instruct, but does not excite . . ."[2]

I am as convinced as either of these authors of the desirability of using everyday language for everyday acts, but I lack their heroic courage. I shall therefore

take refuge behind the sanctified terms of the scientists, making my protest against this falsification by the use of inverted commas, in the hope that readers will retranslate such terms into healthier Anglo-Saxon.

II

De Sade gives such an extension to the idea of sex that it becomes practically synonymous with the idea of pleasure, and sex at times means simply the stimulus of agreeable sensation; all physical and most mental sensations of a positive nature are grouped under this term. That all physical sensations should be so qualified is a fairly obvious notion; the extension to the imagination and the intellect was a further step which was unheard of when he made his investigations, but is now also generally acepted. He considered the pursuit of pleasure to be the object of human life, and thought that physical satisfaction was stronger than mental[3]; consequently "it is only by enlarging the scope of one's tastes and one's fantasies, by sacrificing everything to pleasure, that that unfortunate individual called man, thrown despite himself into this sad world, can succeed in gathering a few roses among life's thorns."[4] He was the first to formulate the now generally accepted conception of the overwhelming importance of sex. "Sex is to the other passions what the nervous fluid is to life; it supports them all, lends strength to them all . . . . ambition, cruelty, avarice, revenge, are all founded on sex."[5]

According to de Sade, very young children are shameless, sexually inquisitive and endowed with strong sexual feelings.[6] Children are naturally polymorphous perverts. "Everyone is born with dispositions more or less great for perversions and all are more or less differently con-

stituted; and love, which comes after these first received impressions bends them to its service, corresponding to their activity. If the impressions are weak, love, which is fostered by them, becomes stronger than them and is sweet and reasonable; if on the contrary they are strong, passion like a whirlwind . . . . breaks, tears and devours all that opposes it; it becomes a fiery flame which burns all that it meets, and finds only further fuel in all that is presented to stifle it. All these are the results of love; the naughty child breaks its toy; he has pleasure in smashing it to bits and soon weeps bitter tears on the ruins his temper has made. Such is love and its effects; such are its incredible extravagances, sometimes impure and sometimes cruel, but always natural . . . which the fool doesn't know about, the thick-headed puritan punishes, and the philosopher respects because he alone knows the human heart and holds the key. Other people are always being surprised at the combined effects of the heart and the instincts; and as it is extremely common for the one to be good and the other evil, when both are in action together there are often seen in the same person a number of virtues and vices mixed; people fall back on human contradiction without seeing that the results are not due to inconsequence but simply to the united effects of two necessarily different principles, with consequently different effects. Hadrian loved Antinous just as Abélard loved Héloïse; one had bad instincts, the other a good heart."[7]

De Sade also believed that deep family affections, especially when the loved member was of the opposite sex, contained deeply hidden incest desires.[8] These are his chief points of contact with the Viennese school of psychoanalysis.

As far as adult sex-life was concerned de Sade divided

people into three categories. The first, and much the largest, consisted of people whose imagination, courage or desires were weak or repressed and therefore their lives sexually were without remarkable incident. In this connexion he says that "continence is far from being the virtue it is supposed to be; it has many dangers and no good effects; it is as harmful for men as for women; it is bad for the health. . . ."[9] The second category consists of natural perverts, and the third of libertines who consciously imitate the obsessions of the second class to enlarge their experience. It is almost exclusively with these two categories that de Sade deals, though the first class furnishes the vile bodies with which the experiments are made. Since the habits of the third class are the same as the second—with the difference that the perversions are wilful instead of congenital—it is de Sade's investigation of that class which we must now examine.

He insists strongly that perversions are congenital and involuntary in most cases. "What man wouldn't change his tastes at once if he could and wouldn't prefer to be like the rest of mankind instead of being peculiar if he had the power? It is the most stupid and barbarous intolerance to prosecute such a person; he is no more to blame . . . . than a man who is born lame or hump-backed. It is as unjust to make fun of or to punish a man like that as it is to mock or insult a cripple. A man with strange tastes is really an invalid. . . . ."[10]

Perversions may be divided into two groups, mental and physical; and the second group be further divided into four sub-groups, according as to whether the perversion lies in the action, the object of affection, the type of person, or the pantomime ritual performed. To be a little clearer, a person may get most pleasure from some

action other than normal 'copulation,' from some person, animal or object other than a member of the opposite sex, from an exclusive type or dress (blondes, ballet dancers, guardsmen, parlour-maids or people dressed up to look like any of these, etc., etc.), or from the re-enacting of some fixed scene, with the partner, however often varied in fact, always playing the same rôle. The first two categories obviously overlap.

In *Les 120 Journées de Sodome* de Sade has fixed permanently almost every variety of perversion in each of these categories. How he was able to do this seems quite inexplicable, for though he had led a life of considerable and varied debauchery for at least fifteen years—to my mind he was as a physiologist might say 'being his own rabbit'—it is quite impossible for any one man to have experienced personally the six hundred often mutually contradictory perversions he lists. Both his examples and explanations show considerable similarity with those of Professor Krafft-Ebing, Mr. Havelock Ellis and other modern anthologists, though his range is far larger and more inclusive. He describes the perversions with the greatest economy and in the simplest language, so that his 'histories' lack the human interest of Ellis's and the coy latin of Krafft-Ebing's. He tried fitfully and unsuccessfully to recapture these details in *Justine* and *Juliette* after the loss of the earlier manuscript, but with indifferent success.

Among intellectual perversions he describes, besides the more obvious class such as 'voyeurs' and 'exhibitionists,' many with less physical effects, such as the pleasure of moral seduction,[11] without the enjoyment of the result, kleptomania, which he explains as a substitute for rape[12] and fetishes for smells, colours, and stuffs, of a sort that one had thought known only to the editor

of that strangely innocent English paper for perverts. Some of his cases have very peculiar reactions to money; one person cannot enjoy pleasure unless combined with stealing or cheating,[13] another can only enjoy bought pleasures[14] while yet a third insists on paying those he believes to be richer than himself and in robbing those he believes poorer.[15] Students of Dr. Ernest Jones will realise the accuracy of these observations.

I think de Sade's description of perverse actions is absolutely complete, ranging from the pleasure of combing hair to lust-murder, through every possible gradation from the ridiculous to the revolting, from the pleasure to be got from snotty little girls to the enjoyment of the greatest ugliness, infirmity and corruption, from foot fetishism to 'coprophagy.' Beyond calling attention to the fact that this was by almost exactly a century the first objective study of sexual phenomena, I do not think there is any need for further elaboration.

In the class of perverse objects, 'homosexuality' is by far the most conspicuous. De Sade's observations on this subject are curious. Firstly he considers natural homosexuality—as opposed to that suggested by satiety—a rare phenomenon; I do not think there are more than five male 'homosexuals' in the whole of his thickly peopled works; of these, two are almost exclusively pathics. He states categorically that they all vary in their secondary sexual characteristics from more normal males, as well as in their voice and character.[16] The attitude of society has forced them to be somewhat false and treacherous.

There are even fewer exclusive 'female homosexuals'; I can only recollect three; but then as now it was a disorder much less marked and exclusive than its male counterpart. De Sade has a certain admiration for these women, finding them more intelligent and witty than the average.

I have an impression on the other hand that he disliked the males, for he makes them nearly all slightly ridiculous, with their assumption of being a nation within the nation; he emphasises, however, their cruel position in society and stresses their lack of responsibility for their habits. I am completely at a loss to understand the reasonings of those critics who suggest that de Sade was himself 'homosexual'; for though he and his libertines have this habit, they also have all others; and the well-attested presence of mistresses through nearly the whole of his life in freedom makes it appear that this suggestion was considered by its authors to be merely another and gratuitous insult.

If de Sade were to return to life to-day I think that he would find the greatest change in sexual life, after the use of drugs, in the great spread of male 'homosexuality,' especially among the bourgeoisie. This I imagine to be partly due to the respectability of the new nomenclature, and the aura of martyred literary merit which Wilde, Gide and Cocteau have invested it with, but chiefly to a neurotic fear of life and responsibility. As far as my observation goes it is commonest, or at least most open, in those countries in which the War and its sequels—the economical and political crises—have had the severest effect.

De Sade also dealt with the obsession of types—one case only likes red-headed women, another blonde sewing-hands[17]—and the desire for various pantomimes.[18] Among other generalisations he remarks that impotents, or almost-impotents, are always spiteful and cruel, that degradation grows with age, and that all sexual activity, especially when repressed or when carried to excess, can produce obsession amounting to monomania.

For de Sade, as has already been said, human hap-

piness depends upon the greatest possible extension of pleasure. But since our constitution and nature would most probably keep us to one range of experience, either normal or perverted, it is only wilfully and by an intellectual effort that we can extend our possibilities for pleasure. This idea of deliberately cultivating our taste for sexual pleasures is indescribably shocking to us, to whom, with very few exceptions judeo-Christian morality is still a very strong prejudice; and it is because de Sade did this and sincerely advised others to do it that his reputation is surrounded by an aura of horror far greater than that of the most repulsive lust-murderers, from Gilles de Retz* to Jack the Ripper. But it is only in the sexual sphere that this is considered reprehensible; in all other human activities the cultivation of a wider taste is held to be most praiseworthy. The study and development of the arts has no other aim than to enable us to perceive beauty and harmony in shapes sounds and colours that were before either meaningless or repulsive. And an English country parson, who would faint with horror if it were suggested that he or his wife should try to extend in any way their sexual pleasures, will have no hesitation in smearing his child with the bloody tail of a newly killed fox and encouraging him to enjoy such activity, or in feeding on such stomach-turning delicacies as putrescent game or cheese. And not only will he manage to swallow such naturally revolting food, he will consider it more enjoyable than more ordinary nourishment, and will refuse fresh game or cheese as flat and tasteless. "The greatest pleasures are born from conquered repugnances."[19]

* Or so reputed. There seems reason, however, to believe that de Retz was a self-immolated witch, rather than a monster. See Murray *God of the Witches*, also Fleuret *De Gilles de Rais à Guillaume Apollinaire.*

I have used this metaphor purposely as being the most apt; de Sade himself employs it often: "Do we not see every day people who have accustomed their palate to an irritation which pleases them, alongside people who could not for a moment support such irritation?"[20]

It follows that the sphere of sexual pleasures can only be extended by overcoming the reactions of disgust or pain. These two notions are so intimately linked that it is difficult to tell where moral fear ends and physical fear begins. To continue the gastronomic metaphor I do not know whether I am more repelled by the notion of eating rotten meat or by the fear that the experience will be physically unpleasant. It needs both courage and imagination to overcome these natural reactions; for encouragement there is the obvious and great pleasure taken by other people in what seems to be unpleasant or meaningless activity.

Courage is a temperamental quality and little can be done to supply its absence, save by demonstration and argument to show that what is feared is weak or meaningless. This de Sade does at enormous length, using every argument to show that the religious or moral inhibitions applied to certain acts are unfounded; from the moment the result is pleasure the proceeding must be natural, for pleasure is a stimulus of nature exclusively.

But such courage, whether natural or instilled, is useless without imagination. "Imagination is pleasure's spur . . . . directs everything, is the motive of everything; is it not thence that our pleasure comes? Is it not from that that the sharpest pleasures arise?"[21] And again, "Didn't you tell me that the pleasantest moral sensations come from the imagination? Well, if we allow that imagination to wander freely, if we let it cross the

last frontiers which religion, decency, humanity, virtue, in a word all our so-called duties would erect to it, would not its divagations become prodigious? And wouldn't their very immensity irritate us the more? In which case the more we wish to be moved, to feel violently, the more must we give rein to our imagination in the most singular routes. . . ."[22]

It was de Sade's considered and very sincere opinion that pleasure, and especially physical and sexual pleasure is the chief aim of human existence; "We are born to 'copulate'" he says in almost the same words as D. H. Lawrence (incidentally had these two known of each other they would have hated and despised each other's ideas)—"We are born to 'copulate,' we accomplish Nature's laws in 'copulating,' and any human law which goes against Nature's is only worthy of disdain."[23] It is for that reason that he preaches "your body is yours and yours alone; you are the only person in the world who has a right to take pleasure from it and to permit whoever you will to get pleasure from it. Take advantage of the happiest time of your life; they are but too short those happy years of our pleasures; if we are fortunate enough to have taken advantage of them pleasant memories console and divert us in our old age. Do we waste them? . . . bitter regrets and horrible remorse rend us, and join with the torments of age to surround us with tears and thorns on the sad path to the grave . . ."[24]

It is now perhaps easier to understand why de Sade wished for legally enforced promiscuity. Happiness depends on the greatest possible extension of sexual pleasure; but his very strong regards for the rights of every individual prevents him conceiving the idea of a caste of slaves or quasi-slaves[25] (wives and whores) who will be the objects by which this extension of pleasure is

to be obtained; and therefore his only solution was to give everybody momentary rights over the body of every citizen. Logically there is something to be said for the idea, but I doubt if it is practical.

De Sade suffered from the universal human assumption that his sexual constitution was the normal type. He was possibly more justified than most people, owing to the enormous extension he had adopted. We still know so extraordinarily little of the workings of this instinct among 'normal' people, that unless our behaviour is almost criminally extravagant we cannot conceive that other people feel very differently to ourselves. Until 'normal' behaviour is statistically investigated and defined it will be almost impossible for sincere writers not to fall into this trap. The scientific works so far published almost inevitably deal with cases which by their peculiarity have been brought in touch with doctors or the law (Havelock Ellis, conscious of this contradiction tried to collect a few examples of 'normal' behaviour in the appendices of his Psychology of Sex; the insufficient results are astonishing) so that sexually humanity appears to be divided into two camps—perverts and the rest. The falseness of this dichotomy can be seen as soon as a man tries to put his conclusions sincerely on paper; and we have the curious spectacle of H. G. Wells claiming that it is normal to love several women simultaneously, confronting many writers who say passions are mutually exclusive; and Frank Harris and Bernard Shaw holding up their hands simultaneously at each other's monstrous departure from the normal—which for the former represents roughly seducing a new woman each week and for the latter a mild and barely physical flirtation about once in ten years.

III

So far we have only dealt with physical satisfactions. De Sade admits that the pleasures which can be got from the exercise of virtues, such as kindness, pity or charity are very real, but claims that for that reason they contain no special merit.[26] Moreover he considers the obligations of gratitude intolerable; "A man by a gratuitous kind action puts himself above you, hurts your pride and causes you thereby to feel an unpardonable mortification."[27] It may be remembered that charity was one of the undesirable qualities done away with by the constitution of Tamoe. He also fully acknowledges the very great pleasures which can be gained from the arts;[28] he even points out the great poetry of some parts of the bible.[29] But he does not consider such joys to be incompatible with, or superior to physical pleasure.

There are, however, three emotions very intimately connected with sex—desire, love and jealousy. For de Sade desire is sometimes as pleasurable as satisfaction ("Happiness is not in the enjoyment but in the desire, and in destroying the difficulties in the way of its accomplishment . . . ."[30]); love is misery and folly, jealousy a useless insult.

De Sade takes love very seriously indeed; there are at least three long passages, one over thirty pages, entirely devoted to its analysis. In its intensity, however, it is a rare phenomenon; I can only think of three characters in his works who persist in love after enjoyment and knowledge, with perhaps the unhappy Justine as a fourth, who naturally falls in love with a 'homosexual.' The following definition of love seems to me adequate:

"We call love that interior sentiment which draws us, as it were in spite of ourselves, towards some object, which makes us desire to unite ourselves with it, to be

ceaselessly near it, which flatters and intoxicates us when we succeed in thus uniting ourselves, and which torments us and drives us to despair when some foreign cause makes us break this union. If this extravagance never drew us to anything except pleasure taken with this ardour and intoxication it would merely be ridiculous; but since it leads us to a certain metaphysic which changes us into the loved object and makes its actions needs and desires as dear as our own, by that alone it becomes extremely dangerous by making us neglect our interests for those of the loved one; by identifying us, so to speak, with this object it makes us adopt its misfortunes and griefs and add them to the sum of our own. Besides the fear of losing this object or of seeing its affections cool disturbs us ceaselessly; and from the calmest state of mind we pass insensibly to the cruellest that can be found in the world. If the recompense and the reward of so much misery was anything other than ordinary pleasure, perhaps I would advise risking it; but all the cares, torments and thorns of love only lead to what one can easily gain without it; where then is its use?

"When I meet a beautiful woman and fall in love with her, I haven't any different aim from the man who sees and desires her without any sort of love. We both wish to go to bed with her; he only wants her body, whereas I, through a false and dangerous metaphysic, blind myself on my real motive which is exactly the same as my rival's, and persuade myself that I merely want her heart, that all idea of sex is excluded, and I persuade myself so well that I would willingly agree with that woman to love her for herself alone, and to gain her heart at the cost of sacrificing all my physical desires."[31]

Madame de Mistival says to the girl she is educating: "You talk about the bonds of love; may you never know

them! For the sake of the happiness I wish for you I pray that your heart may never know such sentiments! What is love? It can only be considered, I suppose, as the resulting effects of the qualities of a beautiful object on us; these effects carry us away and inflame us; if we possess this object we are happy; if we cannot obtain it we are in despair. But what is the basis of this sentiment? Desire. And what are its results? Madness. Let us keep to the motive and protect ourselves from the results. The motive is to possess the object; very well, let us try to succeed, but with prudence; let us take our pleasure when we possess the opportunity and console ourselves in the opposite case; a thousand other objects similar and often far better than the one we have lost will console us; all men and all women are alike. . . . What a deception that intoxication is which absorbs in us the results of our senses and puts us into such a state that we only see, we only live through the adored object! Is that living? Isn't it rather depriving ourselves voluntarily of all life's charms? Isn't it insisting in staying in a burning fever which absorbs and devours us without leaving us other happiness than metaphysical pleasures so similar to the effects of madness? If we were certain always to love the adored object, and never to be separated from it, love would still be an extravagance doubtless, but at least it would be excusable. But does that happen? Have we many examples of these eternal unions which never subside? A few months' enjoyment will soon put the object in its rightful place and make us blush for the incense which we have burned on its altars; often we cannot even conceive what was capable of so seducing us."[32]

De Sade knew what he was writing about. He was one of those comparatively rare mortals who have the

faculty of falling deeply in love, and thwarted love had made his life miserable for nine years. Not all who write in praise of this passion can say as much.

The following passage on jealousy, love and desire will complete the description of de Sade's views on these subjects. "I have sometimes heard it asked whether jealousy was a flattering or an insulting mania, as far as the woman is concerned, and I admit that I have never doubted that since this emotion was merely selfish, women have nothing to gain by the action it produces on the spirit of their lovers. One isn't jealous because one loves a woman very deeply but because one fears the humiliation which would result from her changing; and the proof that this passion is purely egoist is that there is not a single honest lover who would not agree that he would rather see his mistress dead than unfaithful. Consequently it is her inconstancy rather than her loss which afflicts us, and therefore ourselves alone whom we consult in this event. From which I conclude that after the unpardonable extravagance of being in love with a woman the greatest that one can commit is to be jealous of her. This sentiment is insulting for a woman, since it proves to her that we do not esteem her; it is painful for us and always useless, for it is a sure method of suggesting to a woman the desire to deceive us by letting her see the fear that we have of that happening. Jealousy and fear of cuckoldry are two things which clamp prejudice on to our pleasure with women; without this cursed habit of foolishly desiring to bind moral and physical things together on this subject we would soon get rid of our prejudices. Why, can't you go to bed with a woman without loving her, and can't you love her without going to bed with her? But what need is there for the heart to have a rôle in a situation in which only

the body plays a part? It seems to me that there are there two very different desires and needs. Araminta has the loveliest body in the world; her voluptuous face and her dark eyes full of fire . . . . promise the greatest pleasure. What need is there that the sentiments of my heart should accompany the act which gives me the body of this creature? It seems to me again that love and pleasure are two very different things; that not only is it not necessary to love to get pleasure, but even that it is enough to get pleasure not to love. For feelings of tenderness arise from similarities of temperament and taste, and are in no way inspired by lovely breasts or a well-burned bottom; and these objects which, according to our tastes, can excite strongly our physical affections have not, it seems to me, the same right on our moral ones. To continue my comparison: Jane is ugly, forty years old, without a single grace in all her person, not a regular feature, not a single beauty; but she is witty and has a charming character and millions of traits which agree with my sentiments and my tastes; I have no desire to go to bed with Jane but I shall nevertheless love her madly; I shall want very strongly to have Araminta, but I will detest her cordially as soon as the fever of desire has passed, because I have only found in her a body, and none of the moral qualities which could gain for her the affections of my heart."[33]

It may be added that de Sade shared the family reverence for the family poet, Petrarch, whom he several times refers to as "the sweet singer of Vaucluse."

CHAPTER VIII

SADISM AND ALGOLAGNIA

Cruelty has a human heart,
And Jealousy a human face;
Terror the human form divine
And Secrecy the human dress.

The human dress is forgèd iron,
The human form a fiery forge,
The human face a furnace seal'd,
The human heart its hungry gorge.

W. BLAKE,
Appendix to the Songs of Innocence and Experience.

"It is impossible . . . for an engineer to wreck his own machines: it would be like a parent striking a dagger into the heart of his child."

A. MONKHOUSE,
during his trial in Moscow, April, 1933.

NEARLY a century after de Sade had made his analysis of the sexual instincts and perversions a German professor called Krafft-Ebing started the work anew, and with a mixture of impropriety and ignorance took de Sade's name for one of the perversions he had described and defined Sadism as 'sexual emotion associated with the wish to inflict pain and use violence'; with even greater impertinence he took the name of a living second-rate novelist, Sacher-Masoch, to give the name Masochism to 'the desire to be treated harshly, humiliated and ill-used.' Incidentally the idea of taking the names of living writers for naming sexual perversions could be

an amusing game, but one which for fear of libel I shall not pursue.

Although these definitions were so unsatisfactory that they have been altered and amended by nearly every writer on the subject since, the words have passed into almost universal use and have indeed been so extended as to become nearly meaningless. Sadism now, at any rate for lay writers, is practically a synonym for cruelty, and masochism for unhappiness with a slight suggestion of pleasure; as such they are useless additions to an already overloaded vocabulary and merely serve to give a false impression of objective detachment and an aura of non-existent science.

Seeing that the connection between sexual pleasure and pain is a single manifestation without clear dividing marks between the active and passive attitudes Havelock Ellis followed Schrenck-Notzing in using the term Algolagnia for all activities in which sex and external pain were united. I would like to continue the use of this term for such manifestations and keep the word Sadism for the special group of instincts which de Sade was the first, and almost the only person to describe and which constitutes by far his most important contribution to psychology. I am aware of the obvious ambiguity of using a word which has already so many meanings, but I cannot see any way out of the dilemma; for it is de Sade's contribution to analysis and there is no existing word to cover the points evolved and I have neither the qualifications nor the desire to invent another hybrid term.

I should like to recall here the passage already quoted in Chapter III on cause and effect in which he says, "Since all things act and react on one another incessantly they produce and undergo change at the same time."

For Sadism and sex are two instincts strongly joined and as strongly separated; they each modify the other considerably but it cannot be said that either causes the other; they act and react incessantly on one another.

Sadism, as described by its analyst I would define as *the pleasure felt from the observed modifications on the external world produced by the observer.* This is a universal instinct and very strong, only following the instinct for self-preservation, and the sex instincts, of which it is a manifestation and which are a manifestation of it. It might also be defined as 'pleasure in the ego's modifications of the external world,' but I think the first definition is clearer.

It will be seen that this definition is extremely wide and covers an enormous range of human activity from the creation of works of art to the blowing up of bridges, from making little girls happy by giving them sweets to making them cry by slapping them. It would be incorrect however to say that it covers all human activities for there are two essential clauses; there must be sensible modifications of the external world, and they must be the willed production of the agent. That is to say that there can be Sadistic satisfaction in painting a picture, but not in painting a house under another person's orders and following another person's taste; there can be Sadistic pleasure in killing a person, but not if that killing is ordered and independent of the killer.

Like all human emotions this is ambivalent, and can be either constructive or destructive. It can be applied to people or things, but obviously the greatest and most marked modifications can be made on other human beings; and emotional connections with other human beings are liable to be more or less sexual. In sexual intercourse itself the modifications are very strong and

obvious; by your actions exclusively a person *like the* rest of the world is changed into a writhing, panting, often almost speechless animal in an ecstasy of pleasure-pain.

Which is it? Pleasure or pain? Could an uninstructed observer watching human beings or animals 'copulate' tell whether the couple were making love or fighting, whether the spasms were unbearable pleasure or unbearable pain?

To my mind it is a question of degree, not of difference. All pleasure is bounded by pain in its excess, sometimes on both sides, sometimes on one side only. The pleasures of temperature for instance are confined within a very narrow limit with unnumbered degrees of pain on either side. Some people can push back the limits of pleasure a little; they can train themselves to enjoy bathing in water so cold or so hot that to most others it would be agony; but the limits of pain are still there. The same standard is applicable to the pleasures of the other senses:

> Pleasure is pain diminished,
> Pain is the absolute.

What is certain is that you can produce far greater, more varied, and more obvious modifications on other people by pain than by pleasure, and therefore greater satisfaction for the agent; and it is because de Sade described also these satisfactions that his name and his reputation have received their present stigma from people who can understand the letter, even if they completely ignore the spirit.

It is because pain and destruction are easier and more spectacular that de Sade principally described such actions in his characters, which he described as portraying "not man as he is or pretends to be, but as he can be, as he is

influenced by vice and all passions' shocks"; and because of his pessimistic view of human nature he made destructive Sadism far more common than constructive. This is particularly true of *La Nouvelle Justine*, the work by which he is most often judged; in a number of his other works this feature is barely stressed at all. *La Nouvelle Justine* is above everything an attempt to explain why the revolution failed and is throughout coloured by the fact of de Sade's imprisonment for moderantism. His conclusion is that by far the greater number of people desire to hurt and oppress their fellows; the desire to aid and assist them is far less common—though by no means absent from this work, as many commentators suggest. To illustrate this point he allows his characters to do whatever their imaginations suggest; and it follows from his view of human nature that they mostly tend to torture, cruelty and murder. His literary conscience prevents him presenting this for him almost universal human trait with too great a monotony—in all his works the gradation and development of his revelations are most cunningly revealed bit by bit; consequently his imagination and knowledge lead him to describe an astounding collection of tortures. Both his personal experience and his historical researches were called into play; many of the acts described have direct historical parallels in the Revolutionary butcheries; a number of others are taken directly from the amusements of such people as Charolais, Blaise Ferrage, Count Potocki, Bullion, the Duke de Richelieu and many others both of his own and former epochs. It might indeed be claimed that as far as the scenes of cruelty in *Justine* and *Juliette* are concerned that de Sade was acting less as an imaginative writer than as an anthologist. Although this description of tortures and murders is usually supposed to be de Sade's chief

originality, there is actually very little which could not be paralleled in Foxe's or Wright's *Book of Martyrs;* the horrors described and illustrated in this pious book are as frightful as those of de Sade; he merely collected the facts in the form of fiction and arranged them to create a crescendo; but if he had only done this he would have made a work of little use, and one which moreover would not have been condemned but which might well have served for the secret gloatings and morbid imaginations of the humanitarian, as Foxe for the pious protestant. The description of the acts of Bishop Bonner, for example, by Wright is almost to the vocabulary identical with that of the clergy by de Sade. It is because he went behind the religious, political or legal excuses for these acts and described with accuracy and insight the real motives of the butchers and persecutors that his work becomes extraordinarily original and important; and it is for the same reason that the authorities who still use the same excuses for the same brutalities have condemned and pursued his work with a vigour they have never applied to any other writer. The people who imagine that de Sade intended *Justine* and *Juliette* to be incitements to cruelty show extraordinarily little insight, unless indeed they are speaking from personal experience, and find even the coldest and most objective descriptions exciting.

Even in these works de Sade did not entirely ignore constructive Sadism, though, except for a couple of scientists, it is mostly manifested by kindness and decoration.

A more mental side of this destructive Sadism is the destruction of barriers, moral or legal, and the pleasure of knowing that one's actions or words would cause extreme distress to other people. The search for this pleasure—the reputation of dare-devilry—will often

lead to seemingly paradoxical results—the sinking of the ego in self-sought humiliation. The most obvious expression of this is the constant confession of the guilt of notorious crimes by actually innocent people.

The amount of satisfaction this instinct seeks naturally varies with the individual character and circumstances. But it is a strong and universal instinct, and if not granted any direct satisfaction will seek it in devious and usually socially more harmful ways. Like the sexual instinct chance may determine for the individual a fixation for one special form of satisfaction.

The most direct methods of satisfaction are constructive work of any sort, and domineering, either sexually, individually, or socially; the most spectacular—'motiveless' crimes of destruction, particularly arson and murder. For most people sufficient direct satisfaction is impossible to obtain, and the lack is supplied by imaginative fantasy, either self-inspired or suggested by entertainment.

It can be argued that mass production by machinofacture has eliminated a great deal of constructive Sadistic pleasure to-day. This is in part compensated by the introduction of mechanical tools for private amusement—cars, wireless, cameras—which enable some people to have the pleasure of 'doing things with their hands,' of constructively modifying their environment. But these pleasures are too narrowly distributed to make a counterbalance. Very little direct destructive Sadism is allowed usually; lovers carve their initials on trees when they've got trees, and Nazis carve reversed swastikas on the faces of Jews, when they've got Jews; but on the whole people have to seek satisfaction either by identifying themselves with some larger group in the community—the party, the army, the empire—or by fantasy.

The amount of Sadistic satisfaction afforded by popular

entertainment is as astounding as it is historically unparalleled. The most direct are those entertainments in which death—Sadistic destruction at its most complete—plays a potential, and often an actual part—speed-racing in various dangerous machines, perilous acrobatics and so on. But the forms which touch the greatest public are the exteriorised fantasies, the cinema and the popular novel.

The cinema is becoming more and more Sadistic. Film after film is engaged in the contemplation of successful crime and murder, or of beauty and virtue in distress —the themes of *Justine* and *Juliette*. What is probably the best American, and therefore the best film ever made, *I am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang*, was a complete essay in the various forms of Sadism. It was probably an accident, but a very significant accident, that the protagonist was changed from a real estate agent in the autobiography to a constructive engineer in the film—that his chief desire was not to make money, but to build. The Russian film, and indeed Russian propaganda generally, is trying to concentrate the energies of the spectators on constructive Sadism—Dnieperstroy instead of Al Capone.

But it is in literature that the most spectacular change has taken place. The elaborate contemplation of murder and crime and especially gangsters in the Press is I imagine a fairly new but very popular phenomenon. But the fantasy of Sadistic crime in recent years has dominated the novel in unexampled fashion. Before the war the novel of crime or detection was not much occupied comparatively with destruction—Sherlock Holmes was far more engaged with robberies, coining, kidnapping, lost documents, etc., than he was with murder; and the novels of Phillips Oppenheim, which are fairly typical of the

period, are mostly concerned with lost documents. But to-day a detective story means a story about murder. I should think the words 'death' or 'murder' occur in the title of a quarter of the books published—far more frequently than any other noun; the novels in question range from the classical contemplation of evidence with one corpse in the first chapter to orgies of blood-letting, with a mechanical triumph of law in the end. The most popular books—of the *Sexton Blake* variety—reduce detection to a minimum. The happy weakening of the bonds of Christian 'morality' and the spread of contraceptive knowledge has made the demands for vicarious sexual satisfaction less strong; the conditions of modern life have made the demands for vicarious Sadistic satisfaction far stronger, and so Charles Garvice and Elinor Glyn have given place to Edgar Wallace and Agatha Christie as the most popular dream manufacturers. It is a curious comment on the minds of ministers of the Church that they should think the contemplation of murder more moral than the contemplation of love; for clergymen frequently state in the Press that the detective story is far healthier than the 'sex' novel.

There is one wide-spread type of Sadist to-day that de Sade didn't foresee, the only type as far as I know; and that is the animal lover. To be the master tyrant and destiny of any animal is already direct Sadistic satisfaction; but it is apparently not sufficient. The anti-vivisectionists protest against the use of animals for the relief of human suffering; and often they say, with unconscious self-revelation, that if such experiments must be made, they should be performed on other humans—murderers, communists, huns. And their continuous charge of Sadism (meaning pleasurable cruelty) against scientists is equally damning; "I have always remarked

that people who are very quick to suspect a certain sort of crime are those who are addicted to it themselves; it is very easy to conceive what one admits, but not so easy to understand what is repugnant."[1] This generalisation of de Sade's is very widely applicable.

There is one other pleasure which is usually classed as Sadistic, but I think incorrectly—the pleasure that comes from the contemplation of the pain, misery or discomfort of others which cannot possibly be considered the work of the contemplator (this must not be confused with fantasy in which the spectator temporarily identifies himself with the active Sadist); this is a very real and general pleasure for which there is no name in English but which the Germans call *Schadenfreude*. I do not think this pleasure is Sadistic but as it were the opposite face of pity. The one is sorrow for ills that might have touched us, but did not, the other joy for ills that might have touched us, but have not. It is therefore to my mind more closely connected with the instinct for self-preservation than with that of construction-destruction. De Sade considered this pleasure the most barbarous of all: "I learned then that if there are some men who can get pleasure from the pains of others under the impulsion of revenge or loathsome lust, there are others so barbarously organised that they enjoy these same pleasures without other motives than the satisfaction of pride or the most horrible curiosity. Man is then naturally evil, in the delirium of his passions as much as when they are calm, and in both cases the ills of his fellow can become the source of execrable pleasures for him."[2]

The criminal Noirceuil, in advising Juliette how to treat a ward who has been entrusted to her analyses and distinguishes the two pleasures. "What I should do in your place," he says, "would be to amuse myself as much

as I wanted with this girl, and steal her fortune, and then place her in such an unhappy position that you can at every moment increase your happiness by the charms of watching her languish; as far as pleasure is concerned that will be better than killing her. The happiness I advise will be far stronger; for you will have both the physical satisfaction from the pleasures you have had with her and the intellectual satisfaction of comparing her lot with yours; for happiness consists more in those sorts of comparisons than in actual pleasures. It is a thousand times sweeter to say when you see miserable people, 'I am not like them and that is what puts me above them,' than merely to say, 'I am enjoying myself, but I am enjoying myself in the midst of people as happy as I am.' It is the privations of others which make our pleasures felt; in the midst of equals we could never be content; that is why it is said so rightly that to be happy one should always look down, not up. If then it is the spectacle of others' misery whose comparison must complete our happiness one must obviously not relieve them. . . . Not only that: we must create unfortunates whenever the opportunity occurs to multiply that class and to compose one which, *since it is your own work*, will make far sharper the pleasures provided. So . . . . you should reduce this girl to asking charity and then refuse her, and thereby increase your pleasure by a comparison the more striking and enjoyable since it will be your doing."[3]

The distinction between accidental misfortune and that caused by voluntary action is I think valid. Incidentally this passage will help explain the (probably unconscious) reactions of people emotionally opposed to any form of egalitarian socialism. The writer who seems to excite this sort of opposition more than any

other is H. G. Wells in his 'prophetic' writings; from Max Beerbohm to the current reviewers of *The Shape of Things to Come* we get the continual complaint that a State in which everybody could be happy and healthy would be unpleasant and uninteresting; until I read this passage of de Sade I was always at a loss to understand why such comparatively benevolent people should oppose so passionately the fancied abolition of ignorance, disease, and poverty, and that reviewers should attack what seemed to me the unquestionably desirable aims of Wells' work, rather than the political prejudice in favour of a sort of liberal fascism and the blind optimism which has to posit a miraculous comet or a discriminating plague to achieve these aims; but I now realise that the genteel intellectual when threatened in his one point of superiority is to be reckoned with as an anti-social obstructionist. It should not now be necessary to point out that the passage quoted above comes from a novel in which de Sade is describing the thoughts and actions of his characters, not his own.

II

In the works of de Sade that are left to us there is no complete definition of Sadism. Whether it existed in any of his lost philosophical works can only be a matter of speculation; it is possible that it did not, for psychology as a study had still to be invented. But as I will try to show he got very near to defining it; and in *Juliette* he wrote a novel of Sadism in action. I should have thought the completely non-sexual acts from which the actors of this novel get satisfaction would have been enough to show other readers that Sadism wasn't merely a branch of sex; for though he uses the same physiological terms for the satisfaction felt, he also does so for gluttony.

The best possible example will be an extract from the book. The following is an incident which occurred when Juliette was about twenty-one; she was at that time at the height of her prosperity as Saint-Fond's mistress; she was left alone by him in his country house; after seven years of decreasingly unpleasant experience she was enjoying for the first time a little independence. The story is told by her.

"But in what sort of a moral state had so much wealth left me? That, my friends, is what I do not dare to admit and what I must yet confess to you. The extreme debauchery in which all my senses were daily drowned had so dulled the reactions of my heart that I do not believe I would have given a farthing of my treasures to save an unhappy life. About that time there was a famine in the neighbourhood, accompanied with the greatest distress. . . . My charity was asked for, and I refused, pointing out the enormous expenses my gardens were causing me. . . . . Analysing my sensations, I discovered, as my teachers had told me, that instead of the unpleasant sentiment of pity, a certain pleasure produced by the ill I thought I was doing in refusing these unfortunates, which circulated in my nerves a feeling like that one gets each time one breaks a restraint or overcomes a prejudice. . . . . I felt pleasure in simply refusing to relieve unhappiness, what would I not feel if I were myself the real cause of this unhappiness? . . . . .

"A quarter of a mile from my house there was a wretched cottage belonging to a poor peasant called Martin Des Granges, who had eight children and a wife whose sense and economy justified her being called a treasure. . . . .

"Elvire, my maid, and I brought some Boulogne

phosphorus with us; I had charged this intelligent girl to distract the attention of the family while I went and hid the phosphorus carefully in the straw of an attic above the poor room. On my return I petted the children, chatted with the mother about domestic details; the father pressed refreshment on me, received me as best he could . . . Nothing made me hesitate . . . . and I left after giving the mother some ribbons and the children sweets. On my returning home I was in such a state that I had to ask Elvire for relief. . . . . When I got home I was in an indescribable condition; it seemed as though all disorders and vices had combined together to come and debauch my heart, I felt as though I were in a sort of drunkenness, a sort of madness: there was nothing I wouldn't have done, no sort of vice with which I would not have soiled myself. I was in despair that I had affected so small a portion of humanity; I would have liked the whole of Nature to have felt the effects of my influence. I threw myself naked on a sopha in one of my boudoirs and ordered Elvire to bring all my men to me and to let them do what they liked, provided they cursed me and treated me like a whore. . . . . And I was happy; the more I wallowed in filth and infamy, the more my mind was fired and the more my delirium increased. . . . .

"Returning to my boudoir we saw the sky lit up. 'Oh, madame,' said Elvire, opening a window, look, look! There's a fire . . . a fire where we were this morning.' I almost fainted. . . . . 'Let us go out,' I said to her, 'I think I hear cries, let us go and enjoy the delicious spectacle. It is my doing, Elvire, my doing. I must see everything, hear everything, nothing must escape me.' We went out with our hair flowing, our dresses disordered, intoxicated; we seemed like two

bacchantes. At twenty yards from this scene of horror, hidden behind a low mound which prevented us being seen without hiding anything from us, I fell again into the arms of Elvire who was almost as moved as I was. Illuminated by the murderous flames which my ferocity had kindled, hearing the shrill cries of misery and despair which my lust called forth I was the happiest of women.

"At last we went to see the details of my crime. I was sorry to see that two of my victims had escaped; I recognised the other corpses and turned them over with my feet. 'All these people were living this morning,' I said to myself, 'I have destroyed them all in a few hours for my pleasure . . . and so that is what murder is: a little matter disorganised, a few combinations changed, some atoms broken and returned to Nature's crucible from whence they will return in a few days in another form; where is the evil in that? Are women or children more precious to Nature than flies or worms? If I take life from the one, I give it to the other; where is the crime in what I do?' This little revolt of my head against my feelings caused me another strong sensation. . . . . If I had been alone I don't know where my madness would have carried me. Like the negroes I might have devoured my victims. They were all heaped there . . . only the father and one of the children had escaped; the mother and the seven others were under my eyes; and I said to myself as I looked at them, touched them even . . . 'It is *I* who have just committed these murders, it is *my* work and *mine alone*.' No traces were left of the house; one could hardly guess where it had stood.

"Will you believe me, my friends, that when I told Clairwil what I had done she told me that I had only

played at crime and had committed several grave mistakes.

"'First of all,' she said . . . . 'you behaved stupidly, and if anyone had come you would have given yourself away. . . . . Secondly you did the thing in a small way, only setting fire to a cottage when there are big villages just by . . . . . and you are left with the unpleasant remorse of having been able to do more and not having done it; . . . . . and even considering what you did do there is still another big mistake. I would have had Des Granges prosecuted. He was in the position to be prosecuted as incendiary. . . . . When a fire starts in the house of one of the lower orders on your land you have a right to have the case looked into by the local magistrates to be sure that he isn't guilty. How do you know that that man didn't want to get rid of his wife and children to go and cadge elsewhere? As soon as his back was turned you should have had him arrested as a fugitive and an incendiary and given him up to justice. With a few pounds you could find witnesses, Elvire herself would have been of use; she could bear witness that in the morning she had seen the man wandering in his attic without any purpose; that she had asked him about it and he hadn't been able to reply; and in eight days you would have been given the pleasure of seeing this man burned at your door."[4]

This typical passage is interesting for many reasons; it is even more revolting than most in its very probability; it is as revolting as the burning of the Reichstag in Berlin, on February 27th, 1933, to which it has such a striking resemblance. (I must apologise for the constant references to Nazi Germany, but its history in all its details is so similar to the conditions de Sade describes that it almost seems as though one were reading the

plot of an unknown novel of his, and the apt comparisons spring spontaneously.)

In this incident can be seen all the typical features of the destructive Sadism as described by this author and perpetrated by so many lesser men; its independence of and interdependence with sex; its continuous emphasis on the personal nature of the act; the preference given to the influence of personality on other people rather than on objects; and the desire for voluntary humiliation. It also contains the continual dilemma of the Sadistic hero—the impossibility of real crime. "I have rationalised my fantasies too well," Clairwil complains. "It would have been a thousand times better if I had never done so; if I had left them in their envelope of crime they would at least have excited me, but the indifference my philosophy gives them prevents them touching me any more."[5] As Proust and Huysmans have both pointed out this is the final misery of evil.

Torture, murder and arson are the most satisfying as they are the most complete acts of destructive Sadism; de Sade, who had seen the uncontrolled excesses of the nobles before the Revolution and of the masses during it knew to what lengths unfettered human nature can go; and consequently they form the chief diversions of the vile characters he writes about. But not the only ones; he also notes the pleasures to be got by frightening people by banging doors, or from making little girls cry, from scandal-mongering or from shocking people; "There is a petty triumph for one's amour propre in shocking people, which is not to be despised."[6]

De Sade considered that this human instinct, especially when deprived of direct satisfaction was the most dangerous of all anti-social forces; to prevent its destructive forces from causing too much havoc he wanted it to be

canalised into sexual activity. "There is not a single man who doesn't want to be a despot when he is excited . . . . he would like to be alone in the world . . . . . any sort of equality would destroy the despotism he enjoys then; . . . . if he makes others suffer he tastes all the charms which a nervous individual feels in the exercise of his forces; he dominates then, he is a tyrant; what a pleasure for his amour propre!"[7] "I would like women to employ active flagellation, by which means cruel men get rid of their ferocity. A few do, I know, but not as many as I should like. Society would profit by means of this issue given to female cruelty; for if they cannot be cruel in this way they are in another and spread their poison in the world and drive their husbands and children to distraction. . . . The other means by which they could calm their passions are dangerous."[8]

It was for this reason—as a sort of social insurance—that de Sade wished for the universal brothels and for the visitors to find therein "the most complete subordination with the right to punish arbitrarily, under the eyes of the guardians, any disobedience." It would be interesting to find out whether such a policy would have the desired result.

It was for a similar reason that he proposed the adoption of cruel spectacles like bullfights, gladiators, boxing and wrestling. "People would be frightened at first glance I realise, at the project of such inhuman sports. But can you doubt that they would soon be as popular as your balls and comedies? Can you doubt that your fine ladies with their nerves and their vapours would not come to dissipate them at these popular massacres? The Porcias and Cornelias wept at the tragedies of Sophocles and yet went just as readily to the excitements of the Roman Circus. . . . . Such spectacles worthy of a great nation

would only be revolting for us because our eyes are not accustomed to them; perhaps one would shudder at the former (the tragedies); one would crush one another to be present at the latter. Aren't our public places crowded every time a judicial murder takes place? (What is very strange is that it is mostly women; they have then more leaning to cruelty than we, and that because their organisation is more sensitive. That is what fools don't understand.) It would be exactly the same case here. We would be consistent indeed to take objection to such things, while we allow so many secret atrocities. And who knows if, by thus giving issue to human cruelty, we wouldn't dry up at the source their mysterious crimes? The celebrated Maréchal de Retz would perhaps not have murdered four or five hundred children, if there had been spectacles where his lust could have found satisfaction. . . ."[9] It was probably with the same intention that he drew up a plan for a spectacle of gladiators. This meeting-ground of the catharsis of Aristotle and the sublimation of Freud is curious.

From the moment when he started his analysis of human behaviour de Sade stressed this desire for domination, which if it does not find an outlet sexually will create one elsewhere; in the 120 *Journées* he makes his characters speak of "the importance of despotism in the pleasures we enjoy," "the unhappy perversion which makes us take pleasure in the misfortunes we cause others"; in the castle where the orgies take place the sight of the instruments of torture alone was sufficient to maintain "the subordination so essential in such cases, subordination from which derives nearly all the pleasures of the persecutors."[10] And in *Justine* the murderous innkeeper asks, "What is crime? It is an action which subordinates men to us and raises us infallibly above them; it is the

action which makes us the master of others' lives and fortunes. . . ."[11]

At this point, where the discussion of destructive Sadism leads into that of algolagnia it may be as well to remark that though de Sade practised the latter both actively and passively there is no reason whatsoever to suppose that he either practised or desired to practise the former; he described with an accuracy and a verve which is unequalled the mechanism of criminals, tyrants, oppressors and persecutors; but he was not therefore a criminal or a persecutor himself. He deliberately stated that such objective description was intended to be scientific; he claims that the portrayal of "Man's character, completely naked, furnishes all the necessary tints for the philosopher who cares to seize them, and after having seen him thus, one can surely divine the result of the spasms of his loathsome heart and fearful passions."[12] His work, far from being a justification of crime is a horrified analysis and indictment of human nature similar to, but more dispassionate and at the same time more violent than Swift's.

Algolagnia—the intimate connexion of sex and pain—is the meeting-place of the sexual and the constructive-destructive (Sadistic) instincts. From de Sade's analysis it would be incorrect to give either instinct the priority, to say that either was the cause of the other. All direct sexual manifestations can be considered as Sadistic acts; all creative and destructive manifestations are considered by the Viennese psycho-analysts to be of sexual origin. According to de Sade—and to my mind correctly—these two instincts are of potentially equal strength. The part played by cruelty in 'normal' sexual intercourse has been sufficiently dealt with by learned people who have made a study in such subjects, so that it is unneces-

sary to recapitulate their findings about love-bites and similar acts. Of cruelty de Sade says, "Far from being a vice, it is the first sentiment that Nature impresses on us. The child breaks his rattle, bites his nurse's breast, kills his pets long before he reaches the age of reason. Cruelty is instinctive in animals, in whom the laws of Nature are far more obvious than in us, and in savages who are nearer to Nature than civilised people; it would therefore be absurd to claim that it is a result of depravity. . . . Cruelty is in Nature; we are all born with a portion of cruelty that only education modifies; but education is not natural; it contravenes Nature as much as cultivation does trees . . . . . cruelty is then nothing else than man's energy, uncorrupted by civilisation. . . . ."[13]

He continues: "We generally distinguish two sorts of cruelty; that which is born from stupidity, which is never analysed and never reasoned about and likens the person with such a constitution to a wild beast . . . . . and the other, which is the result of excessive sensitiveness of the organs, is only known to extremely delicate people, and the excesses which it carries them to are merely the refinements of their delicacy, too quickly disturbed by their excessive sensibility and which, to make their feelings more acute employs all the resources of cruelty. How few people conceive these distinctions . . . How few feel them! But they exist and are unquestionable."[14]

It is possible that de Sade was describing himself in this last passage. There is no question that his sensibility was excessive; his extreme devotion to and appreciation of the arts would alone show that. And it was his excessive horror for even minor and usually unnoticed cruelties apart from sexual excitement which drove him to the sweeping condemnation of humanity in *Justine* and *Juliette*, and to the endless attacks on the Church and

the State. The cynicism was a badly fitting protective mask.

His attempt to analyse algolagnia is for us to a great extent invalidated by his ideas of physics and anatomy; it is nevertheless I think of sufficient interest to give in some detail. Saint-Fond asks Noirceuil to explain how it is possible to obtain pleasure either by seeing others suffer or by suffering oneself. He replies as follows:

"According to the definition of logic, 'Pain is merely a sentiment of aversion which the soul conceives for some movements contrary to the construction of the body it animates.' That is what Nicole says; he distinguished in man an airy substance which he called soul from the material substance which we call body. Since I do not admit this edification and only see in man a completely material animal I will say that pain is the result of the lack of connexion of foreign bodies with the organic molecules of which we are composed; so that instead of the atoms given out by these foreign bodies linking themselves with those of our nervous fluid, as they do in the commotion of pleasure, they only present their rough sides and prick and repel those of our nervous fluid and never mingle with them. Yet, although the effects are repellent, they are always effects, so that whether pleasure or pain is presented to us there is always a certain commotion of the nervous fluid. Well, what will prevent this commotion of pain, far stronger and more active than the other, eventually exciting in this fluid the same warmth which arises from the mingling of the atoms given off by the objects of pleasure? And being moved for the sake of the emotion, what is to prevent me from getting accustomed by habit to be as satisfied by the emotion produced by the repellent as by the sympathetic atoms? Made blasé by the effects of those which merely produce

a simple sensation, why should I not accustom myself to receive the same pleasure from those whose effect is *poignant*? Both emotions are received in the same place; the only difference is that one is mild and the other violent; but for blasé people isn't the latter far preferable to the former? Do not we see daily people who have accustomed their palate to an irritation which pleases them, beside others who could not for a moment support such irritation? Now is it not true (once my hypothesis is admitted) that it is the habit of man in his pleasures to try to move the objects which serve these pleasures in the same way as he himself is moved, and that these actions are what is called in the metaphysic of pleasure 'the effects of his delicacy'? Then is it not simple that a man with an organisation such as we have described, by the same processes as ordinary people and by the same principles of delicacy imagines that he will cause emotion to his partner by the same means which affect him? He is acting in just the same way as others; I agree that the results are different but the original motives are the same . . . . both use on their partner the same means they themselves employ to procure pleasure.

"'But,' replies to this the person moved by a brutal pleasure, 'that doesn't please me.' Very well; it remains to be seen whether I can compel you or not. If I cannot, go away and leave me; if on the contrary my money, my credit or my position give me either some authority over you or some certainty of quashing your complaints, endure all that it pleases me to impose upon you without saying a word, because I must have my pleasure and I cannot get it without tormenting you and seeing your tears flow. But in any case do not be astonished or blame me, because I am following the movement that Nature has placed in me, and by forcing you to share my hard

and cruel pleasures, the only ones which can lift me to the summit of happiness, I am acting with the same principle as the effeminate lover who only knows the roses of a sentiment of which I only admit the thorns; for in tormenting you I am doing the only thing which moves me, just as he does in making sad love to his mistress. . . . .

"It is not pleasure which you want to make your partner feel, but impressions you want to produce; that of pain is far stronger than that of pleasure, and it is incontestable that it is better that the commotion produced on our nerves by this foreign spectacle should be produced by pain rather than by pleasure. . . . . One wants to give one's nerves a violent commotion; one realises that that of pain will be far stronger than that of pleasure; one uses it and is satisfied.

"'But,' a fool will object, 'beauty softens the heart, is interesting; it is an invitation to mildness, to pardon; how can you resist the tears of a pretty girl who begs mercy from her executioner with joined hands?' But actually . . . it is from this condition that the sort of libertine we are talking about gets his greatest pleasure; he would be very upset if he was working on an inanimate object which felt nothing; the objection is as absurd as if a man were to tell me one should never eat mutton, because the sheep is a mild animal. (The passion of lust wishes to be served; it is exigent, tyrannous, it must be satisfied with the complete abstraction of any other consideration. Beauty, virtue, innocence, candour, poverty, none of these can serve as protection to the object we covet.) (On the contrary, beauty excites us more; innocence, candour, virtue add further charms; poverty gives us our victim and makes it pliant; so that all these qualities only serve to inflame us the more and can only

be regarded as further vehicles to our passions. There is here, moreover, a further barrier to break; there is the sort of pleasure which is got from sacrilege or the profanation of objects offered to our worship. That beautiful girl is an object for the homage of others; by making her the object of my sharpest and cruellest passions I have the double pleasure of sacrificing to this passion a beautiful object and an object worthy of public esteem. Is it necessary to dally longer over this thought to feel the delirium it provokes? But one has not such an object to hand every day; yet one is accustomed to play at being a tyrant and would like to be always; very well, one must learn to compensate oneself by other little pleasures; hard-heartedness towards unfortunates, the refusal to relieve them, the action of plunging them oneself into misfortune are in a way substitutes. . . . ."[15]

This long speech, put into the mouth of a criminal has several interesting points. The most curious is that passive is supposed to precede active algolagnia. It is also interesting to observe the transition, very cunningly marked and developed, from active algolagnia to destructive Sadism; when from direct sensual satisfaction Noirceuil passes to the consideration of the effect such an act would have on other people; until in the last paragraph he reaches completely sexless Sadistic satisfaction.

I have already said that the conception of constructive-destructive Sadism is de Sade's most important contribution to psychology. It has also an extremely wide application. By admitting its existence together with that of sex we get an understandable explanation of a great deal of human behaviour and human misery. It will explain the firebug and the motiveless murderer; it will explain the nagging harshness and malicious scandal-mongering of wives and teachers, the cruelty of

fathers, imperialists and revolutionaries. It will explain the horrible fact that whenever men get unrestrained power over their fellows—whether in revolution or counter-revolution, in prisons in America, Guiana, Morocco, Poland, Hungary, Germany, or through their position among races they are allowed to believe inferior—in the colonies, in Putumayo, in the Belgian Congo, in Polish Ukraine or among non-Aryans in Germany, or through position and wealth as in Cuba or the native Indian States, they will practise on their victims the most revolting tortures, and tortures which receive a greater or lesser, and usually greater sexual tinge. And not only does it explain these horrors, it suggests a possible solution; if you can give to all people the education and opportunity for constructive Sadism, you may perhaps do away with the unnecessary miseries that human beings now delight in inflicting on their fellows.

ANOTHER JUDGMENT

ANOTHER JUDGMENT

It is necessary to consider de Sade in three different aspects to be able to pass any sort of judgment about him—as a man, as a writer, and as a thinker. Of his life we know too little to be able without presumption to make any final pronouncement; his chief qualities seem to have been great charm, courage, a quick temper, kindness, greed, very strong idealism coupled with a sensibility that was harrowed by the smallest attempts against the individuality of anyone, an adventurous and extremely highly developed erotic temperament and a passionate love of justice. It was these last two qualities which got him into trouble, trouble completely out of proportion with any offence. All the harm that has ever been recorded against him is that he made a few women unwell or uncomfortable for a few days; I do not wish to whitewash him, but twenty-seven years' imprisonment and a "bitch of a life" as his valet called it are so completely out of proportion to his offences that it has taken away for ever from posterity the right to condemn. He treated his wife, who loved and helped him according to her lights, very shabbily; but with good reason he considered her the indirect cause of all his misfortunes. The phrenologists came nearer the truth than they usually do when they said that his skull showed the usual mixtures of vices and virtues, of benevolence and crime but that the bumps of tenderness and love of children were developed to an almost unparalleled degree.

As a writer de Sade suffered from three serious faults, too great a facility, excessive prolixity, and the inability

to shorten his work. A person who can write more than adequately in all styles will write very well in none. But his prolixity was his chief bane; he would develop, re-develop and expand the same themes again and again in his works; and at every turn he would add to his books till they swelled to prodigious size. Too rarely he would cut out an incident. That is the chief reason why, despite their unparalleled sombre grandeur, his works are frequently boring, and also perhaps the cause why his rough sketches are from the literary point of view the most satisfying of his works.

Of his width of interest and great originality as a thinker I hope that this book is sufficient evidence. As much as any man he could adopt the device from Terence—*Nihil humani a me alienum puto.*

II

A speculation which has often exercised me is what de Sade would be and do to-day, were he alive and at the height of his power. The influence of judeo-Christianity, though still sufficiently sinister, is now on the defensive; for an ever-growing number of people and in nearly all branches of knowledge it has disappeared as a force to be reckoned with; he would no longer need to expend so much vitality and energy on this attack. The uncharted lands of scientific socialism, psychology and the study of sex which he first explored are now well-developed and built over; indeed in some parts they resemble slums. Since his interests were entirely concerned with man as an individual and as a social being he would probably still continue the study of these three subjects, no longer outlawed and taboo. The only living person I can think of who at all resembles him in his width of interest—and I mean this as a compliment to both people—is

Havelock Ellis; but as far as I know the latter has never been much occupied with politics.

I cannot decide whether the communism of Lenin and Stalin would be sympathetic to him. From the political point of view it is attempting to accomplish nearly a. his favourite ideas; and it has in many respects made the life of the Soviet citizen freer from unnecessary trouble and worry than any other system. I do not know if he would consider these gains sufficient to compensate the almost complete sinking of individuality in the State.

What is quite certain is that it would still be his duty to write *Justine* and *Juliette*. The century and a half which have passed since their first writing have more than justified his gloomiest prognostications; Fate, who always treated him with high irony, was never more pointed than when she marked the centenary of his death with the outbreak of the European war. It would no longer be necessary for him to rake classical literature for examples of gratuitous cruelty and oppression; the daily Press would furnish him with sufficient examples. The two following cuttings, taken at hazard from a number which have occurred while I have been writing this book, give the outlines of complete plots for further Sadistic works. The first is from the *Week-End Review* of August 19th, 1933, the second from *Reynold's* of an illegible date later in the same month.

"A great part of German post-war political history has been darkened by the shadows of these men, who, shrinking from no crime whatsoever, are almost all pathological cases, sadists, drug-addicts, homosexuals. One of them is Edmund Heines, leader of the Silesian S.A., who was sentenced to death for murder in Stettin. . . Heines organised the sensational bomb outrages in Silesia in July, 1932, and the bestial murder at Potempa, where a worker was tortured to death before his wife's eyes. Another is

Ober-Leutnant Schultz, leader of the Berlin S.A., former commander of the 'Black Reichswehr,' proved by the German courts to have been responsible for at least half-a-dozen murders, who was in prison for a long time. A third is Captain von Killinger, leader of the S.A., in Saxony, who participated in the murders of Erzberger and Rathenau, and is famous for his book *Lights and Serious Sidelights on the Putsch* in which he describes in unprintable (*sic*) terms how he ordered the whipping of a young girl. To the same circle belong the S.A. leader, Graf Helldorf, Chief of Staff of the S.A., in Munich, Roehm (renowned for his homosexual affairs with children of tender years) and others, including till recently the Bavarian S.A. leader George Bell. . . . . Bell later came into conflict with the remaining accomplices (of the burning of the Reichstag), fled to Austria, and was murdered there by pursuing agents sent by Heines."

The second cutting refers to the Maharajah of Patiala.

"This document, on the basis of an ex-parte statement made by witnesses, alleged that the Maharajah put pressure, tantamount to kidnapping, on the wives and girls of poor families to induce them to enter his harem.

Husbands and fathers who protested were imprisoned and in some cases tortured.

The Maharajah and his European friends hunted over growing crops and prohibited the destruction of wild animals, so that two-thirds of the country's agricultural produce was wasted.

Following the publication of the indictment a statement was issued by the Government of Patiala on April 14, 1930, declaring that the charges were so serious that they would not be allowed to pass unchallenged, and that steps would be taken to vindicate the Maharajah's honour at an early date.

On his visits to London the Maharajah has always spent money lavishly on luxury, contrasting deeply with the dire poverty of his dominion, where masses of people say they are "too poor to marry."

Out of curiosity I started making a collection of pertinent cuttings from the very unsensational one daily and four weekly papers I receive, but within a very short time the collection became too unwieldy, even

though I excluded crimes against which a legal charge was made. Industrial Sadism alone, particularly, during this period, in America, reached orgiastic heights. The chief difference since de Sade's time is firstly the scale of operations, and secondly that his millionaires excused the means by which they got their fortunes by employing their loot for their pleasures, whereas ours accumulate for the sake of accumulation. It is perhaps significant that most of our millionaires are Protestant.

More than ever it would to-day be de Sade's duty to bring his black indictment against man and against society, and to-day, as earlier, the only answer he would get would be persecution, and the suppression and destruction of his works.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES.

I do not propose to give a complete bibliography of the various editions and unpublished manuscripts of de Sade as that has already been very adequately done in the three standard reference books about him:

Eugène Dühren (Ivan Bloch):

Der Marquis de Sade unde Seine Zeit: Le Marquis de Sade et son Temps. (Harsdorf, 1901, in French and German.) *Neue Forschungen über dem Marquis de Sade.* (Harsdorf, 1904, in German only.)

Guillaume Apollinaire:

L'Œuvre du Marquis de Sade. (Bibliothèque des Curieux, Collection Les Maîtres d'Amour, Paris, 1909.) Besides a very good introduction and bibliography this volume contains the only available selection of de Sade's work. Its quality is hampered by the tone of the series in which it appeared but it contains good examples, and particularly the very important pamphlet *Français, encore un effort si vous voulez être Républicains!* in full.

C. R. Dawes:

The Marquis de Sade. (Holden, London, 1927.)

The numerous other works about him contain little that is true or relevant which are not contained in these three.

The following list comprises, as far as I know, all of de Sade's published work. I have given it as far as I can ascertain in the order in which it was written. The capital letters indicate the editions I have used, so that references may be checked. It will be seen that there are a few works I have not been able to trace. The British Museum contains some of his books, but uncatalogued and under bond and seals which, I am told, require the presence of the Archbishop of Canterbury and two other trustees to be loosed.

1. Plot of play *Zélonide.* Written 1782. Not intended to be published. The play, under the title *Sophie et Desfrancs* was unanimously accepted by the Comédie Française in 1790 but never acted. PUBLISHED BY MAURICE HEINE IN *MINOTAURE*, No. 1, MARCH, 1933.

2. *Dialogue entre un prêtre et un moribond.* Written 1782. EDITED BY MAURICE HEINE, PUBLISHED BY STENDHAL ET CIE., 1926.

3. *Les 120 Journées de Sodome ou L'Ecole du Libertinage,* written August and September, 1785. First published by Eugène Dühren, 1904. RE-EDITED BY MAURICE HEINE, PUBLISHED BY STENDHAL ET CIE., 1931. Vol 1 only.

4. *Les Infortunes de la Vertu*—the first version of *Justine* written in June and July 1787, and not intended for publication. EDITED BY MAURICE HEINE, PUBLISHED BY EDITIONS FOURCADE 1930.

5. *Justine, ou les Malheurs de la Vertu,* written 1788, first published 1791. Two vols.

6. *Contes et Fabliaux d'un Troubadour Provençal du XVIIIème Siècle.* Fifty stories written before October, 1788. Of these eleven were published in his lifetime under the title *Les Crimes de l'Amour,* a twelfth by Anatole France in 1881, and twenty-five more were EDITED BY MAURICE HEINE AND PUBLISHED BY SIMON KRA under the title HISTORIETTES, CONTES ET FABLIAUX, 1927. I have also read ERNESTINE and *La Double Epreuve* (CABINET DU LIVRE 1926), *Juliette et Raunai* in LES CRIMES DE L'AMOUR, BRUXELLES, GAY ET DOUCE 1881, and *Miss Henriette Stralson* in the work edited by Apollinaire quoted above.

7. *Aline et Valcour ou le Roman Philosophique.* Written 1788, first published 1792. PUBLISHED BY J. J. GAY, BRUXELLES 1883, four vols.

8. *Oxtiern ou le Malheur du Libertinage* play acted in 1791, published 1801.

9. *Discours prononcé à la fête décernée par la Section des Piques aux mânes de Marat et Le Pelletier,* 1793. QUOTED BY DAWES.

10. *Petition de la section des Piques aux représentants du peuple rançais.*

11. *Idée sur le mode de la sanction des lois.* 1795? QUOTED 3Y APOLLINAIRE.

12. *Juliette ou les Prosperités du Vice.* Written 1790?-1796? First published 1796, definitive edition 1797. My copy is an JNDATABLE REPRINT, shown by the presence of the uthor's name on the frontispiece, but the pagination is the same s the definitive edition. Six vols.

13. *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir.* First edition 1795. My opy is an UNDATABLE POOR AND UNPLEASANT REPRINT of two vols. in-16, of 206 and 247 pages. In Vol. I, Dialogue I starts p. 9, Dialogue II p. 27, Dialogue III p. 30, and Dialogue IV p. 188; Vol. II opens with Dialogue V (the pamphlet occupying pp. 83-179), Dialogue VI starts p. 202, and Dialogue VII p. 209.

14. *La Nouvelle Justine.* Written and published 1797. My copy is, if not the first, a VERY EARLY EDITION. The pagination is the same as the definitive edition. Four vols.

15. *Idée sur les Romans.* Published as preface to *Les Crimes de l'Amour.* 1800. This and the following pamphlet are reprinted in LES CRIMES DE L'AMOUR, GAY ET DOUCE, BRUXELLES, 1881.

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18. *Couplets chantés à Son Eminence le Cardinal Maury, le 5 octobre 1812, à la maison de Santé près de Charenton.* QUOTED BY DÜHREN.

19. *La Marquise de Gange.* Published 1813. (Except that this novel concerns a notorious law-case of the beginning of the seventeenth century, I have been able to find out nothing about it. I do not know if it is de Sade's work or not.)

The correspondence of de Sade was collected and edited by Paul Bourdin in 1929, that of his wife by Paul Ginisty in 1901.

The preponderating place in the references of *Juliette* and *Aline et Valcour* is due partly to the wider scope of these works, and partly to the fact that they were the first I annotated. De Sade repeats himself considerably.

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