

LETTERS OF AN INHABITANT OF GENEVA TO HIS CONTEMPORARIES.

Henri de Saint-Simon

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FIRST LETTER.

I am no longer young. I have observed and reflected with great activity throughout my life, and your happiness has been the goal of my work. I have conceived a project that seems to me to be able to be useful to you, and I am going to present it to you.

Open a subscription in front of Newton's tomb; subscribe all indiscriminately for the sum you wish.

Let each subscriber name three mathematicians, three physicists, three chemists, three physiologists, three writers, three painters, three musicians.

Renew the subscription and the nomination every year, but leave each one the unlimited freedom to rename the same people.

Share the proceeds of the subscription between the three mathematicians, the three physicists, etc., who have obtained the most votes.

Ask the President of the Royal Society of London to receive this year's subscriptions.

The next year and the following, charge with this honorable function the person who has made the largest subscription.

Require of those you appoint that they receive neither positions, nor honors, nor money from any fraction of you, but leave them individually the absolute masters of using their forces in the manner they wish.

The men of genius will then enjoy a reward worthy of them and of you; this reward will place them in the only position that can provide them with the means to render you all the services of which they are capable; it will become the goal of ambition of the most energetic souls, which will divert them from directions harmful to your tranquility.

By this measure, finally, you will give leaders to those who work for the progress of your enlightenment, you will invest these leaders with immense consideration and you will place a great pecuniary force at their disposal.

THE RESPONSE OF A FRIEND.

You asked me to share with you my thoughts on the project you communicated to me; I will do so with all the more pleasure because the purity of the soul of its author strikes the attentive reader; because the intention is sublime, and because it must find a favorable reception among every sensitive and thinking being: finally, the author desires the happiness of humanity, he works for it, I love him.

His ideas are as new as they are philanthropic; it is with reason that he considers men of genius as the torches that enlighten humanity, the governors as well as the governed; and it is by a well-reasoned principle of justice that he engages humanity to act collectively to reward them. His project in another respect is equally good; we see that humanity acting *collectively* to reward men of genius, will divert them from occupying themselves with the *individual* interests of the fraction of it, which, in rewarding them, paralyzes a part of their forces.

This project creates positions more beautiful than all those that have existed until now; positions that will raise the man of genius to his rank, that is to say above all other men, even those who are invested with the greatest authority: at the sight of these positions genius will be stimulated, there will finally be prizes worthy of the love of glory, of this passion that makes one bear without difficulty the fatigues of study and of deep meditation, which gives the constancy necessary to distinguish oneself in the sciences and in the arts.

In the man of genius personal interest is very powerful, but the love of humanity is also capable of making him give birth to prodigies. How beautiful is the occupation of working for the good of humanity! What an august goal! Does man have a means of approaching divinity more closely? In this direction he finds in himself powerful compensation for the pains he is made to experience.

If I compare the high post in which humanity would place the man of genius to an academic chair, I note that the ELECT OF HUMANITY will find himself in a much more advantageous situation than the academician; he will enjoy the most perfect independence, and will be able to develop all the energy of his forces, without them being arrested by any particular consideration; no false consideration will be able to slow down the progress of his genius, nor hinder his works and his happiness; to maintain himself in the place he has obtained, he will become inflamed, he will view with a worried eye the works of his predecessors and he will want to surpass them, to abandon the beaten paths to open up new ones; his enthusiasm will gain by degrees, and he will arrive at the true goal, that of making progress in the human mind.

Such will be the path that genius will follow when it is placed in an independent position, while the academic spirit will continue to follow an opposite one; the academic spirit will always tend to preserve the opinions that it has admitted, regarding itself as the depository of truth; it would itself attack its supposed infallibility if it changed its opinion. It will continue to cry heresy and to become intolerant, rather than take a *retrograde* step for the benefit of the enlightenment and happiness of humanity. With what relentlessness the academies have persecuted men of genius when they have fought their opinions! Observe the path that the academic spirit has followed: you will see how proud and groveling it has been, with what skill it has stifled the debates that could enlighten humanity, whenever they could have harmed its own existence; this has come from two

causes, one that the academicians are appointed for life, the other that they are dependent on the government.

Follow the history of the progress of the human mind, and you will see that almost all of its masterpieces are due to isolated men, often persecuted. When they were made academicians, they almost always fell asleep in their armchairs, and when they wrote, it was only trembling and to produce weak truths. Independence alone can fuel the love of humanity and the desire for glory, which are the two powerful motors acting on the man of genius. The academician being a slave, is it surprising that he produces nothing? Slave though he is, he believes himself to be at the height of glory, he fears to descend, and that is precisely what prevents him from ascending.

If I cast a glance at the history of academies, I see that in England there has been no academy, and only two societies that have had any connection with academic institutions, while they swarm in monarchies and even in states given over to superstition and ignorance. However, what country has produced more great men in all genres? Where have more truths been discovered? Where have they been published more courageously, adopted more promptly? Where have the authors of useful discoveries been rewarded more generously? In that island, the love of bodily liberty and independence in opinions must have caused academies to be despised and excluded; as a citizen, the Englishman feels the dignity of his being; as a scholar, he would blush to prostitute himself to the powerful man, and to be part of a body that exists only under his protection.

The despotic Richelieu was the founder of the first academy in France: he saw that the hope of medals and armchairs would chain the writer, that the administration would use them to spread principles favorable to its views, that it would thus control public opinion, and that it would make academies so many hidden springs of its despotism; thus the event justified the views of the domineering minister; this first, this mother academy gave birth to a hundred others whose efforts have not been able to raise France to the level of England. Italy is full of academies and has very few scholars; many patents of literary gambling dens are distributed there; men are neither better nor more enlightened: if she suppressed all her academies, perhaps genius would take off more in her country.

I cannot, however, help admitting that the academies have been of some use, that their establishment, imperfect as it is, has produced some advantage to the sciences and the arts; I also recognize that there have been some academicians who have retained energy; but the academic mode is too far behind current philosophical views for it to be kept any longer; the march of the human spirit, having become bolder, seems to me to make possible the complete abolition of the obstacles of all kinds experienced by even the most learned academies. Humanity must not lose sight of the fact that it must reward the men who serve as its torches, and that it must collectively reward those of these torches who are bright enough to illuminate the whole earth.

The project strikes me in another very important respect. How many obstacles have men of genius not had to overcome until now! Almost always at the beginning they are diverted from the capital ideas by occupations to which they are obliged to devote themselves in order to provide for their subsistence. How many experiences, how many journeys necessary for the development of their views have they lacked! On how many occasions have they not been deprived of collaborators whom they would have needed to give to their works all the extension of which they would have

been capable! How many happy conceptions aborted for not having been vivified by help, encouragement and rewards!

And if, despite all these difficulties, some men of genius have succeeded in making themselves known and in obtaining a reward, this reward has always been insufficient to provide in a large way for the costs of their work, to encourage the young people in whom they find happy dispositions, and to provide for their needs when they have no fortune. The man of genius is alone capable of discovering the first germs, of developing them and of judiciously administering to them the help which they lack.

The position, or the reward that the man of genius obtains, almost always gives him functions to fulfill which divert him more or less from his work; it fixes him in one place, and consequently prevents him from traveling to see the things or the men who could become the occasion for making new discoveries: the inconstancy of the government from which he receives the reward leaves him with anxiety for his future, it often forces him to take steps to maintain his place, and to maintain himself in his place; and despite all his foresight, often a war or some disturbance in the finances leads to the suppression of his fees, or at least the suspension of their payment.

Finally, the man of genius, who for his works would need the most absolute independence, is always more or less dependent on the government which rewards him; he must adopt its spirit, subject himself to the forms and customs which it consecrates, think so to speak secondarily, instead of boldly launching the traits of his imagination; he must timidly combine the means of producing his ideas in broad daylight, and he ends up showing himself much less what he is, than what we want him to appear; in a word, we make him pay dearly for the petty reward which has been granted to him.

As for the man of genius who consents to receive particular benefits from a governor, or from any other individual, his position is even more unfortunate by the debasement into which he lets himself fall.

If we examine carefully the ideas which guide governments in all the particular directions of administration, we will see that they have all been discovered by men of genius. The men of genius therefore enlighten the rulers as well as the ruled.

I agree that often the discoveries of men of genius could not be used at their birth; but admitting that their discoveries are only useful to the generation that follows them, is this a reason why the one in which they live does not reward them? And will humanity continue to leave suffering, or at least in an unseemly position, men whom it hastens to deify after their death?

If in this respect no great changes occurred, it would be false that the human spirit had made progress.

Among educated nations, men of all ages make plantations, while among ignorant nations (among the Turks, for example), they cut down and do not plant. The tree planted by the generous old man makes him experience more enjoyment than it procures for the one who cuts it down to extract the product.

What is more beautiful, more worthy of man, than to direct his passions towards the sole goal of increasing his knowledge! Happy moments are those when ambition, seeing no greatness and glory except in the acquisition of new knowledge, will leave these impure sources where it sought to quench its thirst. Sources of misery and pride, which served to quench the thirst of the ignorant, the heroes, the conquerors, the devastators of the human species! You will dry up by

abandonment, and your philtres will no longer intoxicate these proud mortals. No more honor for the Alexanders: long live the Archimedes!

My friend, what more favorable time to produce the project that you communicate to me, than that when genius engaged in a struggle with despotism, calls all philanthropists to its aid! In the generation that has taken its development since the beginning of this struggle, the number of automatons is noticeably diminished; the project will be heard by many people, the reign of enlightenment approaches. : every intelligent man, who has one eye fixed on the past and another on the future, is convinced of it.

The project contains an elementary idea which could serve as a basis for a general organization; thus it presents to humanity a conception which will make it climb without danger a step further in abstraction.¹

How fortunate it is that Newton's tomb, this meeting place, is in England, this country which has constantly been the refuge of men of genius, and of scholars persecuted in other nations!

Could we speak of Newton without observing that he received from the government as a reward the rank of master of the mint; from then on this citizen of the world was nothing more than an Englishman, who concentrated his forces on the employment which was entrusted to him; and this star, radiant in itself, was presented to the multitude as an opaque body employed to reflect the rays of the royal light.

Let us say it boldly; all the men of genius to whom we will give places in governments, will lose in reality as in consideration; for, in order to fulfill the duties of their place, they will neglect more important works for humanity; or, if they cannot resist the impulse of genius, they will often neglect the duties of their place.

This double chance, equally unfortunate for humanity, for governments and for men of genius, can only be avoided by leaving the latter in the only place assigned to them by the well-understood interest of all; they must remain *themselves*, and humanity must be deeply imbued with this truth, that they are given to it to be its scraps, and not to be sold to particular interests which debase them and divert them from their true functions.

The number of men of genius is not considerable enough to divert them from their works, by taking them out of their sphere. The author, knowing how stingy nature is with them, proposes only about twenty places for all humanity. If, to occupy one of these places, it was indispensable to be a man of genius, it would result that there would often be vacant ones.

I approve of the annual election, with the faculty of re-electing: By this means, men of transcendent genius will be for life, and those who by their capacity come closest to it will be stimulated as much as possible.

The mode of election is such that it is impossible for *individual passions* to acquire sufficient force to dominate the *general interest*.

¹ If the Abbot of Saint-Pierre had conceived this establishment and had indicated it as a means of execution, his ideas of general peace would not have been treated as reveries.

Another reflection: This conception gives the solution to a problem that has always been an object of research for moralists; *Putting a man in a position such that his personal interest and the general interest are constantly in the same direction.*

These, my friend, are the first sensations that the reading of the project has given rise to in me. Now I will ask you two questions:

Will the project be adopted?

If the project is adopted, will it remedy the present evils of humanity, evils of which prudence forbids me to speak?

SECOND LETTER.

I have addressed my project *directly* to humanity, because it interests it *collectively*; but I have not given way to the mad hope of seeing it suddenly deliver itself to its execution; I have always thought that success depended on the more or less lively action that people having a great influence on humanity would decide to exercise on this occasion. To obtain their votes, the best way is to clarify the question as much as possible; this is the goal that I propose in addressing myself to different fractions of humanity, which I divide into three classes: the first, that to which you and I have the honor of belonging, marches under the banner of the progress of the human spirit; it is composed of scholars, artists and all men who have liberal ideas. On the banner of the second it is written: no innovation; all the proprietors who do not enter into the first are attached to the second.

The third, which rallies to the word *equality*, contains the surplus of humanity.

I will say to the first class: All the people to whom I have spoken of the project that I present to humanity, after a discussion, generally quite short, have ended up approving it; all have told me that they desired its success, but all have also let me perceive their fear that this project will not succeed.

According to the conformity that has been manifested in their opinions, it seems likely to me that I will find all men, or at least the majority of them, of the same dispositions. If this presentiment is realized, the force of *inertia* will be the only one that will oppose my views.

Scholars, artists and you also who use a portion of your strength and your means for the progress of enlightenment, you are the part of humanity that has the most cerebral energy, you are the one that has the most aptitude to receive a new idea and you are the most directly interested in the success of the subscription: it is up to you to overcome the force of inertia. Come on, mathematicians, since you are in the lead, begin. Scholars, artists, look with the eye of genius at the current situation of the human spirit; you will see that the scepter of public opinion has entered your hands; seize it then vigorously; you can make your happiness and that of your contemporaries; you can preserve posterity from the evils that we have suffered and from those that we still endure: subscribe, all of you.

I will then speak in this language to the proprietors of the second class:

GENTLEMEN,

In comparison with the non-proprietors, you are very few in number: how is it then that they submit to obey you? It is for the reason that the superiority of your knowledge gives you over them the means of making a combination of your forces, which ordinarily procures you the advantage in the struggle which, by the nature of things, necessarily always exists between them and you.

This principle once established, it is obviously in your interest to put on your side the non-proprietors who, by capital discoveries, establish the superiority of their intelligence; and it is equally evident that, the interest being *general* for your class, *each* of the members who compose it must contribute.

Gentlemen, I have lived a lot with scholars and with artists, I have observed them closely in private, and I can assure you that these people will push you to the point where you will decide to make the sacrifices of self-esteem and money necessary to put their masterpieces in the first line

of consideration in humanity, and to provide them with the pecuniary means they need for the complete exploitation of their ideas. I would be wrong, Gentlemen, towards you by exaggeration, if I let you believe that I have found the intention of which I speak to you, precise in the heads of scholars and artists; no, Gentlemen, no; I can even tell you that it has only a very vague existence; but I have assured myself, by a long series of observations, of the reality of its existence and of the influence it exercises on all their conceptions.

As long as you do not adopt, gentlemen, the measure that I propose to you, you will be exposed, each in your own country, to misfortunes of the nature of those that have just been experienced in France by the portion of your class that was established there. To convince yourself of what I am telling you, you will only need to reflect on the course of events that have taken place in this country since 1789. The first popular movement there was secretly excited by scholars and artists. As soon as the insurrection had taken on a character of legitimacy through its success, they declared themselves its leaders, the resistance that they experienced in the direction that they gave to this insurrection, that of destroying all the institutions that wounded their self-esteem, pushed them to exalt the heads of the ignorant more and more, and to break all the bonds of subordination that contained the fiery passions of the non-proprietors; they succeeded in doing what they wanted, all the institutions which they had originally intended to overthrow were necessarily overthrown; in a word, they won the battle and you lost it. This victory cost the victors dearly; but you who were defeated, you suffered even more. Some scholars and some artists, victims of the insubordination of their army, were massacred by their own soldiers. In moral terms they all had to bear the reproaches that you made to them, with an appearance of foundation, of being the authors of the atrocities committed against you, and of the disorders of all kinds which the barbaric impulse of ignorance made their troops commit.

The evil having reached its height, the remedy became possible: you no longer offered resistance. The scholars and artists, enlightened by experience, and recognizing your superiority in knowledge over the non-owners,² wanted to see the portion of power necessary to restore to your hands the regular action of social organization. The non-owners had borne almost the entire weight of the famine, which the extravagant measures they had indulged in had given rise to. They were subdued.

The population of France, although brought by force of circumstances to a strong desire for the return of order, could only be reorganized socially by a man of genius; Bonaparte undertook it; he succeeded.

Among the ideas that I have just presented to you, I put forward the one that you had lost the battle. If you still have any doubts on this subject, compare the portion of consideration and comfort that is now in France in the hands of scholars and artists, with that which they enjoyed there before 1789.

Avoid, Gentlemen, quarreling with these people, because you will be beaten in all the wars that you give them the opportunity to engage in with you, you will suffer more than they do during hostilities and peace will be disadvantageous to you. Give yourselves the merit of doing with good

² I urge the reader to weigh this observation: "The proprietors command the non-proprietors, not because they have the properties, but they have the properties and they command because, taken collectively, they have a superiority of understanding over the non-owners."

grace something that sooner or later scholars, artists and men with liberal ideas, united with non-proprietors, would make you do by force; let us all subscribe, it is the only means that you have to prevent the evils with which I see you threatened.

Since this matter has been started, let us have the courage not to abandon it without giving a glance at the political situation of the most enlightened part of the globe.

In Europe, the action of governments is not *at this moment* disturbed by any ostensible opposition on the part of the governed; but, given the state of opinions in England, Germany and Italy, it is easy to predict that this calm will not last long if the necessary precautions are not taken in time; for, Gentlemen, we must not hide from you that the crisis in which the human spirit finds itself is common to all enlightened peoples, and that the symptoms that have been observed in France, in the midst of the frightful explosion that has manifested itself there, are at this moment perceived, by the intelligent observer, among the English and even among the Germans.

Gentlemen, by adopting the project that I propose to you, you will reduce the crises that these people are called upon to endure, *without any force in the world being able to prevent it*, to simple changes in their government and in their finances, and you will avoid this general fermentation that the French population has experienced; a kind of fermentation during which all the existing relations between the individuals of the same nation, becoming precarious, anarchy, the greatest of all scourges, freely exercises its ravages, to the point at which the state of misery into which it plunges the entire nation on which it weighs, gives rise in the souls of the most ignorant of its members the desire for the reestablishment of order.

I would seem, Gentlemen, to doubt your intelligence, if I added new proofs to those that I have just submitted to you, to prove to you that it is in your interest to adopt the measure that I propose to you, in terms of the evils that it can avoid for you.

It is with pleasure that I will now present to you this project from a point of view flattering to your self-esteem; consider yourselves as the *regulators* of the march of the human mind; you can play this role; for if, by the subscription, you give to men of genius consideration and ease, one of the conditions inserted in this subscription depriving the elected of occupying any place in governments, you will guarantee yourselves, as well as the rest of humanity, from the inconvenience that there would be in placing an active power in their hands.

Experience has proven that with new, strong and just conceptions, which serve as bases for discoveries, there are ordinarily found, at the moment of their birth, very vicious ideas mixed; in spite of this, often the inventor, if he were the master of them, would demand their execution. This is a particular case of inconvenience; but there exists an absolutely general one that I am going to present to you. Whenever a discovery, in order to be put into practice, requires habits different from those existing at the time in which it appears, it is a treasure that the generation which saw its birth must enjoy only through the feeling of affection which it bears to the generation called upon to profit from it.

I end the short speech that I have permitted myself to address to you, by saying to you: Gentlemen, if you remain in the second class, it is because you wish to do so, for you are the masters of ascending to the first.

Speaking then to the third class:

MY FRIENDS,

In England there are many scholars. Educated Englishmen have more respect for scholars than for kings; everyone can read, write and count in England. Well, my friends. In this country, the workers in the cities and even those in the countryside eat meat every day.

In Russia, when a scholar displeases the emperor, they cut off his nose and ears, and send him to Siberia. In Russia, the peasants are as ignorant as their horses. Well, my friends! The Russian peasants are poorly fed, poorly clothed, and receive many blows from the stick.

Until now the rich have had little other occupation than that of ordering you around; force them to enlighten themselves and to instruct you. They make your arms work for them; make their heads work for you; render them the service of relieving them of the heavy burden of boredom. They pay you with money; pay them with consideration; it is a very precious currency, that of consideration: fortunately the poorest possesses a little of it; spend well that which is at your disposal, and your lot will improve promptly.

To put you in a position to judge the advice that I give you, to make you perceive the advantages which can result from the execution of the project that I present to humanity, it is necessary that I enter into some details: I will limit myself to those that seem indispensable to me.

A scholar, my friends, is a man who foresees; it is by reason that science provides the means of predicting what it is useful and that scholars are superior to all other men.

All the phenomena of which we are aware have been divided into different classes. Here is a way of dividing them which has been adopted: astronomical, physical, chemical, physiological phenomena. Every man who devotes himself to science attaches himself more particularly to one of these parts than to the others.

You know some of the predictions that astronomers make. You know that they announce eclipses, but they make a multitude of other predictions that you do not concern yourself with, and which I will not seek to discuss with you. I will limit myself to telling you a few words about the use that is made of them, the usefulness of which is well known to you.

It is by means of the predictions of the astronomers that we have succeeded in determining in an exact manner the respective position of the different points of the earth; it is also their predictions that provide the means of navigating on the most extensive seas. You are familiar with some of the predictions of the chemists. A chemist tells you that with such a stone you will make lime, and that with such another you will not be able to make it; he tells you that with such a quantity of ashes from a tree of such a species, you will whiten your linen as well as you could do it with a quantity so many times greater from a tree of such another species; he tells you that such a substance, mixed with such another, will give a product that will have such an appearance and which will enjoy such a quality.

The physiologist concerns himself with the phenomena of organized bodies; the physiologist, for example in the case where you are ill, tells you: You experience such a thing today. Well! Tomorrow you will be in such a state.

Do not go thinking that I wish to give you the idea that scholars can predict everything; no, surely, they cannot predict everything, and I am even certain that they can predict with exactitude only a very small number of things; but you are convinced just as I am that the scholars, each in their part, are the men who can predict the most things; and this is quite certain, since they only acquire the reputation of *scholars* by the *verifications* that are made of their *predictions*; this is at

least how it happens today, it has not always been the same. This requires that we take a look at the progress of the human mind; despite the efforts that I am going to make to express myself clearly, I am not perfectly sure that you will understand me at first reading; but by thinking about it a little you will come to the end of it.

The first phenomena that man observed in a continuous manner were astronomical phenomena; there is a good reason why he began with these, which is that they are the simplest. In the beginning of astronomical works, man *mixed* the facts that he *observed* with those that he *imagined*, and in this elementary gibberish, he made the best combinations that he could to satisfy all the demands of prediction; he successively got rid of the facts created by his imagination, and, after much work, he ended up adopting a certain course to perfect this science. Astronomers no longer *admitted* anything but the facts established by observation; they have *chosen* the system that *linked* them best and, since that time, they have not caused science to make any false steps. If a *new system* is produced, they verify, before admitting it, whether it *links* the facts better than the one they had adopted. If a new fact is produced, they ensure by *observation* whether this fact exists.

The era I am speaking of, the most memorable that the history of the progress of the human mind presents, is that at which the astronomers chased the astrologers from their society. Another remark that I must make to you is that from that time onwards astronomers have become modest, good people, no longer seeking to appear to know what they did not know, and that for your part you have ceased to make the impertinent request to them to read your destiny in the stars.

Chemical phenomena being more complicated than astronomical phenomena, man did not concern himself with them until much later. In the study of chemistry he has fallen into the errors he had committed in the study of astronomy; but finally the chemists have got rid of the alchemists.

Physiology is still in the bad position through which the astrological and chemical sciences have passed; physiologists must drive out of their society the *philosophers*, the *moralists* and the *metaphysicians*, as the astronomers have driven out the astrologers, as the chemists have driven out the alchemists.³

³ I do not intend to say that philosophers, moralists, and metaphysicians have not rendered services to physiology; but it is well known that astrologers have been useful to astronomy, that alchemists have made a great part of chemical discoveries; and yet everyone thinks that astronomers have done a good thing in separating themselves from astrologers, and chemists an equally good thing in getting rid of the alchemists.

There remains one idea to be clarified: the principal occupations of philosophers, moralists, and metaphysicians are to study the relationships that exist between phenomena called physical and those called moral. When they are successful in this part, their work must be called physiological; but they also seek to link all the observed facts by a general system; it has been demonstrated to me that this will be impossible until the time when physiology is put into the order that I have detailed on the subject of astronomy.

I will add that mathematics contains the only materials that can be used in the construction of a general system, and that if calculation is impossible to apply to phenomena that cannot be reduced to very simple considerations, it does not seem to me that we should for this reason renounce the hope of connecting, by satisfactory insights, the ideas that serve as bases for the theories of the different branches of physics, to the idea of universal gravity.

My friends, we are organized bodies; it is by considering our social relations as physiological phenomena that I have conceived the project that I present to you, and it is by considerations drawn from the system that I use to link the physiological facts that I am going to demonstrate to you the goodness of the project that I present to you.

A fact established by a long series of observations is that each man experiences to a more or less lively degree the desire to dominate all other men.⁴ One thing is clear from the reasoning, that every man who is not isolated finds himself *active and passive in domination* in his relations with others, and I urge you to make use of the small portion of domination that you exercise over rich people... But before going further, I must examine with you something that greatly upsets you: you say, *we are ten times, twenty times, a hundred times more numerous than the proprietors, and yet the owners proprietors over us a domination much greater than that which we exercise over them.* I understand, my friends, that you are very upset; but note that the proprietors, although inferior in number, possess more enlightenment than you, and that, for the general good, domination must be distributed in proportion to enlightenment. Look at what happened in France during the time that your comrades dominated there; they gave rise to famine there.

Let us return to the project that I propose to you. By adopting it and maintaining its execution, you will constantly place in the hands of the twenty-one men of humanity who will have the most enlightenment the two great means of domination: consideration and money. It will result, for a thousand reasons, that the sciences will make rapid progress. It is recognized that with each step that the sciences take forward, their study becomes easier: thus those who, like you, can devote only a little time to their education, will be able to learn more things, and by becoming more educated they will diminish the portion of domination exercised over them by the rich. You will not be long, my friends, in seeing beautiful results; but I do not want to spend time talking to you about what is found some distance away on a road that you are not yet determined to enter. Let us chat about what exists at this moment before your eyes.

You grant consideration, that is to say, you voluntarily give a portion of domination over you to men who do things that you judge to be useful to you; a fault that you share with all humanity is not to have drawn a sufficiently exact line of demarcation between things of momentary utility and those of lasting utility; between those of local interest and those of general interest, between those that procure advantages for a portion of humanity at the expense of the surplus, and those that increase the happiness of all humanity. Finally, you have not yet clearly noticed that there is only one interest common to all men, that of the progress of science.

Does the mayor of your village procure for you an advantage over neighboring villages: you are enchanted with him, you think well of him; the inhabitants of the cities manifest in the same way the desire to exercise their superiority over the neighboring cities; the provinces compete with each other, and there exist between nations, for their individual interest, struggles that are called

⁴ There are two roads that can lead a man to a position of superiority: one of these roads is common to individual interest and to the general interest; my aim is to beautify this road and to sow a few thorns on the other.

wars.⁵ In the efforts made by all these fractions of humanity, what is the portion that has a *direct* tendency to the general good? It is very small, in truth; and this is not surprising, since humanity has not yet taken any measure to grant, *collectively*, rewards to those who succeed in doing work of *general utility*. To unite as much as possible in a single bundle all these forces acting in *such varied* and *often contrary* directions; to bring them back as much as possible to the only direction that can improve the fate of humanity, I do not believe that one can find a better means than the one I propose to you. That is enough for this moment on the scholars: let us speak of the artists.

On Sundays, eloquence has charms for you; you take pleasure in reading a well-written book, in seeing beautiful paintings, beautiful statues, or even in hearing music capable of fixing your attention. To speak or to write in a way that amuses you, to make a painting or a statue that pleases you, to compose music that interests you, one must work hard. Is it not quite right, my friends, that you should reward the artists who fill the interval between your occupations with the pleasures most suited to developing your intelligence, by exercising it on the most delicate nuances of your sensations?

Subscribe all of you, my friends: however little money you put into the subscription, you are so numerous that the total sum will be considerable; moreover, the consideration with which those you name will be invested will give them incalculable strength. You will see how rich people will strive to distinguish themselves in the sciences and in the arts, when this road leads *to the highest degree of consideration*. If you would gain nothing from it but to divert them from the quarrels that idleness gives rise to among them, only to know how many of you will be under their orders, quarrels in which they always involve you, and of which you are always the dupes, that would already be a lot.

If you accept my project, there will be one thing that will trouble you, and that is the choices. I will tell you, my friends, the procedure I will follow to make mine. I will ask all the mathematicians I know who are, in their opinion, the three best mathematicians, and I will name the three mathematicians who have obtained the most votes from the people I have consulted. I will do the same for the physicists, etc.

After having divided humanity into three fractions, and having presented to each of them the reasons that seem to urge them to adopt my project, I will now, my friend, address my

⁵ The moralists contradict themselves when they forbid selfishness to man, and when they approve of patriotism; for patriotism is nothing other than national selfishness; and this selfishness causes the same injustices to be committed from nation to nation as personal selfishness between individuals.

Opinions are still divided on the question of selfishness: although the discussion is open on this subject, and has been followed with ardor since the beginning of the world, the solution of the problem consists in opening a road that is common to individual interest and to the general interest.

The preservation of organized bodies depends on selfishness; all efforts to *combine* the interests of men are attempts made in a good direction; all of that part of the reasoning of the moralists that goes beyond the combination of interests, and which tends to destroy selfishness, presents a series of errors of which it is easy to recognize the cause. *Moralists often take words for things*.

The first generation of humanity was the one in which there was the most personal selfishness, since individuals did not *combine* their interests.

contemporaries collectively, to present to them the reflections I have made on the French Revolution.

The suppression of birth privileges required efforts that had broken the bonds of the old organization, and was not an obstacle to social reorganization; but the call that had been made to all members of society, to frequently fulfill the functions of deliberators, has been without success. Independently of the frightful atrocities that this application of the principle of equality has caused to be committed by the very natural effect that it has produced, that of putting power in the hands of the ignorant, it has ended by engendering a form of government that is absolutely impracticable, for the reason that the governors, *all paid finally to admit the non-proprietors*, were so multiplied that the work of the governed could barely suffice to feed them, which led to a result absolutely opposed to the most constant desire of non-proprietors, that of paying little tax.

Here is an idea that seems to me to be just. The first needs of life are the most pressing; non-proprietors can satisfy them only incompletely. A physiologist sees clearly that their most constant desire must be that of the diminution of tax, or of the increase of salary, which amounts to the same thing.

I believe that all the classes of society would benefit from this organization: spiritual power in the hands of scholars; temporal power in the hands of proprietors; the power to appoint those called to fulfill the functions of great leaders of humanity in the hands of everyone; for the governors' salaries, consideration.

See you tomorrow, my friend; I think that is enough for today.

Is it an apparition? Is it only a dream? I do not know; but I am certain that I have experienced the sensations of which I am going to give you an account.

Last night, I heard these words:

Rome will renounce the pretension of being the chief town of my Church; the pope, the cardinals, the bishops and the priests will cease to speak in my name; man will blush at the impiety he commits in charging such improvident people to represent me.

I had forbidden Adam to distinguish between good and evil, he disobeyed me; I drove him out of paradise, but I left to his posterity a means of appeasing my anger: let him work to perfect himself in the knowledge of good and evil, and I will improve his lot; a day will come when I will make the earth a paradise.

All those who have established religions had received their power from me, but they did not understand well the instructions that I had given them; they all believed that I had entrusted them with my divine science; their self-esteem led them to draw a line of demarcation between good and evil in the most minute actions of human life, and they all neglected the most essential part of their mission, that of founding an establishment that would make human intelligence follow the shortest route to approach indefinitely my divine foresight; they all forgot to warn the ministers of my altars that I would withdraw from them the power to speak in my name when they ceased to be more learned than the flock that they would lead, and when they allowed themselves to be dominated by temporal power.

Learn that I have placed *Newton* at my side, that I have entrusted to him the direction of the enlightenment and the command of the inhabitants of all the planets.

The gathering of the twenty-one elected of humanity will take the name of Newton's council; Newton's council will represent me on earth; it will divide humanity into four divisions, which will be called English, French, German, Italian: each of these divisions will have a council composed of the same. as the chief council. Every man, whatever part of the globe he inhabits, will attach himself to one of these divisions, and will subscribe for the chief council and for that of his division.

WOMEN WILL BE ALLOWED TO SUBSCRIBE; THEY MAY BE APPOINTED.

The faithful, after their death, will be treated as they will have deserved to be treated during their life.

The members of the councils of division will take office only after having received the authorization of the chief council. This council will not admit those whom it does not judge to be up to the level of the most transcendent knowledge acquired in the part for which they have been elected.

The inhabitants of any part of the globe, whatever its situation and its size, may at any time declare themselves a section of one of the divisions, and elect a particular council of Newton. The members of this council will not be able to take

office until they have received the authorization of the division council. There will be a permanent deputation from each of the division councils to the chief council; there will also be one from each section council, to the council of its division. These deputations will be composed of seven members, one from each class.

In all the councils, *the mathematician* who has obtained the most votes will preside.

All the councils will be divided into two divisions; the first will be composed of the first four classes, and the second of the last three. When the second division shall assemble separately, it shall be presided over by *the man of letters* who shall have obtained the most votes.

Each council shall build a temple, which shall contain a mausoleum in honor of Newton. This temple shall be divided into two parts: one, which shall contain the mausoleum, shall be embellished by all the means that artists can invent; the other shall be built and decorated in such a way as to give men an idea of the abode destined for an eternity to those who shall harm the progress of science and the arts.

The first division shall regulate the *internal* worship of the mausoleum.

The second division of the council shall regulate the *external* worship; it shall combine it in a manner that presents a majestic and brilliant spectacle. All distinguished services rendered to humanity, all actions that shall have been greatly useful to the propagation of the faith, shall be honored: the assembled council shall determine the honors that shall be granted.

Distinguishing marks shall be established for the members of the councils and for the persons appointed by them. These distinctive marks will be of a nature to be ostensible or hidden, at the will of those who will have the right to wear them.

Any of the faithful who find themselves less than a day's walk from a temple will descend once a year into the mausoleum of Newton, through an opening dedicated to this destination:

Children will be brought there by their parents as soon as possible after their birth.

Any person who will not carry out this commandment will be regarded by the faithful as an enemy of religion.

If Newton judges that it is necessary, to fulfill my intentions, to transport to another planet the mortal descended into his mausoleum, he will do so.

In the vicinity of the temple, laboratories, workshops and a college will be built: all luxury will be reserved for the temple; the laboratories, workshops, the college, the lodgings of the members of the council and those intended to receive the deputations of the other councils will be built and decorated in a simple fashion. The library will never contain more than five hundred volumes.

Every year each member of the council will appoint five people.

1. A deputy, who will have the right to sit and vote, in the absence of the member by whom he will have been appointed.

2. A minister of worship, intended to officiate in the great ceremonies, taken from the five hundred strongest subscribers.

3. A person who has by his works been useful to the progress of science and the arts.

4. A person who has made useful applications of the sciences and arts.

5. A person to whom they wish to give proof of particular affection.

These nominations will only be valid after having been admitted by the majority of the council; they will take place every year, and the persons in whose favor they are made will only enjoy them for one year; they may be re-elected.

The president of each council will appoint a guardian of the sacred territory that will contain the temple and its dependencies. The guardian of the sacred territory will be responsible for the police: he will be treasurer and he will administer the expenses, all under the orders of the council. This guardian will be taken from the hundred greatest subscribers; he will have the right to sit in the council; his nomination will only be valid after having been approved by the majority of the council.

The chief council will have an establishment in each division; he will reside alternately one year in each division.

A man invested with great power will be the founder of this religion; for his reward he will have the right to enter all the councils, and that of presiding over them. He will keep this right all his life; and at his death he will be buried in Newton's tomb.

ALL THE MEN WILL WORK; they will all regard themselves as workers attached to a workshop whose work has the aim of bringing human intelligence closer to my divine foresight. Newton's chief council will direct the work; he will make his efforts to understand well the effects of universal gravity: it is the unique law to which I have subjected the universe.

All Newton's councils will respect the line of demarcation that separates spiritual power from temporal power.

As soon as the elections of the chief council and the division councils have been carried out, the scourge of war will abandon Europe never to reappear.

Learn that Europeans are the children of Abel; learn that Asia and Africa are inhabited by the posterity of Cain. See how bloodthirsty these Africans are; note the indolence of the Asians; these impure men have not followed up on the first efforts they made to approach my divine foresight. The Europeans will unite their forces, they will deliver their Greek brothers from the domination of the Turks. The founder of religion will be the chief director of the armies of the faithful. These armies will subject the children of Cain to religion, and will make throughout the earth the establishments necessary for the safety of the members of Newton's councils, in all the journeys they judge useful to make for the progress of the human spirit.

Sleep.

When I woke up I found what you have just read very distinctly engraved in my memory.

THIRD LETTER.

It is God who has spoken to me: could a man have invented a religion superior to all those that have existed? It would be necessary to suppose that none of them was instituted by the Divinity: see how clear the precept is in the religion that has been revealed to me, see how its execution is assured. The obligation is imposed on each one to constantly give to his personal forces a direction useful to humanity; the arms of the poor will continue to feed the rich, but the rich receives the command to make his brain work, and if his brain is not fit for work, he will be obliged to make his arms work; for Newton will surely not leave on this planet, one of the closest to the sun, workers voluntarily useless in the workshop.

We will no longer see religion having as ministers men endowed with the right to name the leaders of humanity; it will be all the faithful who will name their guides, and the qualities by which they will recognize those whom God has called to represent them will no longer be insignificant virtues, such as chastity and continence; they will be talents, the highest degree of talents. I will not dwell further on this subject: any man who believes in revelation will necessarily be convinced that God alone has been able to give humanity the means to force each of its members to follow the precept of the love of the neighbor.

P. S. — I intend to write you a letter in which I will consider religion as a human invention, I will consider it as being the only kind of political institution that tends to the general organization of humanity. The risks to which I feel I am about to be exposed, for having engaged you to bring down the rulers into the second line of consideration, urge me to take the precaution of communicating to you immediately the most important idea of those that must enter into the work which I announce to you.

Suppose that you have acquired knowledge of the manner in which matter was distributed at any given time, and that you have made the plan of the universe, designating by numbers the quantity of matter that was contained in each of its parts: it will be clear to your eyes that by applying to this plan the law of universal gravity, you could predict, as exactly as the state of mathematical knowledge would allow you, all the successive changes that would occur in the universe.

This supposition will place your intelligence in a position in which all phenomena will present themselves to it under the same appearances; for in examining on the plane of the universe the part of space occupied by your individual self you will not find in the phenomena that you have called moral, and in those that you have called physical, any different character.

The indication that I have just given you is sufficient for the idea to be understood by mathematicians.

I am very happy, my dear contemporaries: the most important part of my work has arrived safely, since I have placed it in your hands; you now have a plan of general organization, which requires for its execution only slight changes to the habits contracted, since it offers in all its parts only modifications to the accepted ideas: I have just told the scientists the position in which I have placed myself to make this combination; thus, whatever happens to me, if what I have conceived is good, you will be able to take advantage of it. If force majeure does not prevent the work of

writing down the intermediate ideas with a little meditation, any man for whom the conception of universal gravity is a clear sensation, and who is aware of physiological knowledge, including observations on the progress of the human mind, will be able to easily establish them.

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THE PARABLE OF SAINT-SIMON.

1819.

We suppose that France suddenly loses its fifty first physicists, its fifty first chemists, its fifty first physiologists, its fifty first mathematicians, its fifty first poets, its fifty first painters, its fifty first sculptors, its fifty first musicians, its fifty first writers;

Its fifty first mechanics, its fifty first civil and military engineers, its fifty first artillerymen, its fifty first architects, its fifty first doctors, its fifty first surgeons, its fifty first pharmacists, its fifty first sailors, its fifty first watchmakers;

Its first fifty bankers, its first two hundred merchants, its first six hundred farmers, its first fifty ironmasters, its first fifty arms manufacturers, its first fifty tanners, its first fifty dyers, its first fifty miners, its first fifty cloth manufacturers, its first fifty cotton manufacturers, its first fifty silk manufacturers, its first fifty canvas manufacturers, its first fifty hardware manufacturers, its first fifty earthenware and porcelain manufacturers, its first fifty crystal and glassware manufacturers, its first fifty shipowners, its first fifty haulage houses, its first fifty printers, its first fifty engravers, its first fifty goldsmiths and other metal workers;

Its fifty first masons, its fifty first carpenters, its fifty first joiners, its fifty first blacksmiths, its fifty first locksmiths, its fifty first cutlers, its fifty first founders, and the hundred other persons of various undesignated states, the most capable in the sciences, in the fine arts and in the arts and crafts, making in all the three thousand first scholars, artists and artisans of France.⁶

As these men are the Frenchmen who are the most essentially productive, those who produce the most important products, those who direct the works most useful to the nation, and who make it productive in the sciences, in the fine arts, and in the arts and crafts, they are truly the flower of French society; they are of all the Frenchmen the most useful to their country, those who procure it the most glory, who most hasten its civilization as well as its prosperity: the nation would become a body without a soul the moment it lost them; it would immediately fall into a state of inferiority with respect to the nations of which it is today the rival, and it would continue to remain subordinate to them as long as it had not repaired this loss, as long as it had not grown another head. France would need at least a whole generation to repair this misfortune; for men who distinguish themselves in works of positive utility are real anomalies, and nature is not generous with anomalies, especially those of this kind.

Let us pass on to another supposition. Let us admit that France retains all the men of genius that it possesses in the sciences, in the fine arts and in the arts and crafts, but that it has the misfortune to lose, on the same day, Monsieur, the brother of the king, Monseigneur the Duke of Angoulême, Monseigneur the Duke of Berry, Monseigneur the Duke of Orléans, Monseigneur the Duke of Bourbon, Madame the Duchess of Angoulême, Madame the Duchess of Berry, Madame the Duchess of Orléans, Madame the Duchess of Bourbon, and Mademoiselle de Condé;

⁶ We usually only designate as artisans simple workers. To avoid circumlocution, we understand by this expression all those who deal with material products, namely: farmers, manufacturers, merchants, bankers and all the clerks or workers they employ.

That it loses at the same time all the great officers of the Crown, all the ministers of state, with or without those of the departments, all the state councilors, all the masters of requests, all its marshals, all its cardinals, archbishops, bishops, vicars-general and canons, all the prefects and sub-prefects, all the employees in the ministries, all the judges, and, in addition to that, the ten thousand richest proprietors among those who live nobly.

This accident would certainly afflict the French, because they are good, because they could not see with indifference the sudden disappearance of such a large number of their compatriots. But this loss of the thirty thousand individuals, considered the most important of the state, would only cause them grief in a purely sentimental way, because it would not result in any political harm for the state.

First, for the reason that it would be very easy to fill the places that would have become vacant: there are a large number of French people able to exercise the functions of brother of the King as well as Monsieur; many are capable of occupying the places of princes just as suitably as Mgr. the Duke of Angoulême, as Mgr. the Duke of Orléans, as Mgr. the Duke of Bourbon; many French women would be just as good princesses as Madame la Duchess d'Angoulême, as Madame la Duchess de Berry, as Mesdames d'Orléans, de Bourbon and de Condé.

The antechambers of the castle are full of courtiers ready to occupy the places of grand officers of the crown; the army possesses a large number of military men as good captains as our current marshals. How many clerks are the equals of our ministers of state! How many administrators more able to manage the affairs of the departments than the prefects and sub-prefects currently in activity! How many lawyers are as accomplished jurists as our judges! How many curates are as capable as our cardinals, as our archbishops, as our bishops, as our grand vicars and as our canons! As for the ten thousand owners living nobly, their heirs would need no apprenticeship to do the honors in their salons as well as they do.

The prosperity of France can only take place through the effect and as a result of the progress of the sciences, the fine arts and the arts and crafts: now, the princes, the great officers of the crown, the bishops, the marshals of France, the prefects and the idle landowners, do not work directly for the progress of the sciences, the fine arts and the arts and crafts; far from contributing to it, they can only harm it, since they strive to prolong the preponderance exercised to this day by conjectural theories over positive knowledge; they necessarily harm the prosperity of the nation by depriving, as they do, scholars, artists and artisans of the first degree of consideration that legitimately belongs to them; they harm it, since they use their pecuniary means in a manner that is not directly useful to the sciences, the fine arts and the arts and crafts; they harm it, since they annually collect from the taxes paid by the nation, a sum of three to four hundred million under the title of salaries, pensions, gratuities, indemnities, etc., for the payment of their work, which is useless to it.

These suppositions highlight the most important fact of current politics; they place it in a point of view from which we discover this fact in its full extent and at a single glance. They prove clearly, although in an indirect manner, that the social organization is not very perfected; that men still allow themselves to be exploited by violence and by cunning; and that the human species, politically speaking, is still plunged into immorality:

Since the scholars, artists and artisans, who are the only men whose work is of positive use to society, and which costs it almost nothing, are subordinated by the princes and other rulers, who are only more or less incapable routine workers;

Since the dispensers of consideration and other national rewards owe, in general, the preponderance they enjoy only to the chance of birth, to flattery, to intrigue or to other actions of little estimable value;

Since those who are charged with administering public affairs share between them, every year, half of the tax, and they do not use a third of the contributions, which they do not seize personally, in a way that is useful to those administered;

These suppositions show that present-day society is truly the world turned upside down:

Since the nation has accepted as a fundamental principle that the poor should be generous to the rich, and that consequently the less well-off deprive themselves daily of a part of their necessities in order to increase the superfluity of the large proprietors;

Since the greatest culprits, the general thieves, those who squeeze the entire citizenry, and who take from them three to four hundred million per year, find themselves charged with punishing the small crimes against society;

Since ignorance, superstition, laziness and the taste for expensive pleasures form the prerogative of the supreme leaders of society, and since capable, thrifty and hard-working people are employed only as subordinates and as instruments;

Since, in a word, in all kinds of occupation, it is incapable men who find themselves charged with the care of directing capable people; since, in terms of morality, it is the most immoral men who are called upon to form virtue in citizens, and since, in terms of distributive justice, it is the seriously guilty who are appointed to punish the faults of petty criminals.

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