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EMILE OR ON EDUCATION

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

This is the second period of life, and now infancy, strictly speaking, has ended. For the words *infans* and *puer* are not synonymous. The former is contained in the latter and signifies “one who cannot speak”; this is why *puerum infantem* is found in Valerius Maximus. But I shall continue to use this word according to the usage of our language until I reach an age for which it has another name.

When children begin to speak, they cry less. This is a natural progress. One language is substituted for the other. As soon as they can say with words that they are in pain, why would they say it with cries, except when the pain is too intense for speech to express it? If they continue to cry then, it is the fault of the people around them. As soon as Emile has once said, “It hurts,” very intense pains indeed will be needed to force him to cry.

If the child is delicate, sensitive, if naturally he starts crying for nothing, by making his cries useless and ineffective, I will soon dry up their source. So long as he cries, I do not go to him. I run as soon as he has stopped. Soon his way of calling me will be to keep quiet or, at the most, to let out a single cry. It is by the effect they sense their cries make that children judge their own senses. There is no other convention for them. Whatever injury a child may do to himself, it is very rare that he cries when he is alone, unless he hopes to be heard.

If he falls, if he bumps his head, if his nose bleeds, if he cuts his fingers, instead of fussing around him as though I were alarmed, I will remain calm, at least for a short time. The harm is done; it is a necessity that he endure it; all my fussing would only serve to frighten him more and increase his sensitivity. At bottom, it is less the blow than the fear which torments when one has been hurt. I will at least spare him this latter anxiety, for quite certainly he will judge of his

injury as he sees me judge of it. If he sees me run in agitation to console and pity him, he will consider himself lost. If he sees me keep my composure, he will soon regain his and will believe the injury cured when he no longer feels it. It is at this age that one gets the first lessons in courage, and that, bearing slight pains without terror, one gradually learns to bear great pains.

Far from being attentive to protecting Emile from injury, I would be most distressed if he were never hurt and grew up without knowing pain. To suffer is the first thing he ought to learn and the thing he will most need to know. It seems that children are little and weak only in order that they may get these important lessons without danger. If the child falls down, he will not break his leg; if he hits himself with a stick, he will not break his arm; if he grabs a knife, he will hardly tighten his grip and will not cut himself very deeply. I do not know of a child at liberty who was ever seen to kill, cripple, or do himself any considerable harm, unless he was carelessly exposed on high places or alone near fire, or dangerous instruments were left in his reach. What is to be said about these arsenals of machines set up around a child to arm him at all points against pain, so that when he is grown, he is at its mercy without courage and without experience, believes he is dead at the first prick, and faints on seeing the first drop of his blood?

Our didactic and pedantic craze is always to teach children what they would learn much better by themselves and to forget what we alone could teach them. Is there anything more foolish than the effort made to teach them to walk, as if anyone were ever seen who, due to his nurse's negligence, did not when grown know how to walk? How many people, on the contrary, does one see walk badly for their whole lives because they were badly taught how to walk?

Emile will not have padded bonnets, strollers, buggies, or leading strings; or, at least, as soon as he begins to know how to put one foot before the other, he will be supported only in paved places, and we shall hastily pass them by.* Instead of letting him stagnate in the stale air of a room, let him be taken daily to the middle of a field. There let him run and frisk about; let him fall a hundred times a day. So much the better. That way he will learn how to get up sooner. The well-being of freedom makes up for many wounds. My pupil will often have bruises. But, in compensation, he will always be gay. If your pupils have fewer bruises, they are always hindered, always enchained, always sad. I doubt whether the advantage is theirs.

*There is nothing more ridiculous and more lacking in assurance than the step of people who were led too much by leading strings when they were little. This is another of those observations that are trivial by dint of being accurate and that are accurate in more than one sense.

Another progress makes complaint less necessary to children; this is the progress of their strength. Able to do more by themselves, they need to have recourse to others less frequently. With their strength develops the knowledge which puts them in a condition to direct it. It is at this second stage that, strictly speaking, the life of the individual begins. It is then that he gains consciousness of himself. Memory extends the sentiment of identity to all the moments of his existence; he becomes truly one, the same, and consequently already capable of happiness or unhappiness. It is important, therefore, to begin to consider him here as a moral being.

Although the furthest limit of human life can be pretty nearly determined, as well as one's probabilities at each age of approaching that limit, nothing is more uncertain than the duration of each man's life in particular. Very few attain this furthest limit. Life's greatest risks are in its beginnings; the less one has lived, the less one ought to hope to live. Of the children born, half, at the most, reach adolescence; and it is probable that your pupil will not reach the age of manhood.

What, then, must be thought of that barbarous education which sacrifices the present to an uncertain future, which burdens a child with chains of every sort and begins by making him miserable in order to prepare him from afar for I know not what pretended happiness which it is to be believed he will never enjoy? Even if I were to suppose this education reasonable in its object, how can one without indignation see poor unfortunates submitted to an unbearable yoke and condemned to continual labor like galley slaves, without any assurance that so many efforts will ever be useful to them? The age of gaiety passes amidst tears, punishments, threats, and slavery. The unlucky fellow is tormented for his own good; and the death that is being summoned is unseen, the death which is going to seize him in the midst of this gloomy setup. Who knows how many children perish victims of a father's or a master's extravagant wisdom? Happy to escape his cruelty, the only advantage they get from the ills he has made them suffer is to die without regretting life, of which they knew only the torments.

Men, be humane. This is your first duty. Be humane with every station, every age, everything which is not alien to man. What wisdom is there for you save humanity? Love childhood; promote its games, its pleasures, its amiable instinct. Who among you has not sometimes regretted that age when a laugh is always on the lips and the soul is always at peace? Why do you want to deprive these little innocents of the enjoyment of a time so short which escapes them and of a good so precious which they do not know how to abuse? Why do you want to fill with bitterness and pains these first years which go by so rapidly and can return no more for them than they can for you? Fathers, do you know the moment when

death awaits your children? Do not prepare regrets for yourself in depriving them of the few instants nature gives them. As soon as they can sense the pleasure of being, arrange it so that they can enjoy it, arrange it so that at whatever hour God summons them they do not die without having tasted life.

How many voices are going to be raised against me! I hear from afar the clamors of that false wisdom which incessantly projects us outside of ourselves, which always counts the present for nothing, and which, pursuing without respite a future that retreats in proportion as we advance, by dint of transporting us where we are not, transports us where we shall never be.

This is, you answer me, the time to correct man's bad inclinations; it is during the age of childhood, when we are least sensitive to pains, that they must be multiplied so as to spare them in the age of reason. But who tells you that this whole arrangement is at your disposition, and that all this fair instruction with which you overwhelm the child's feeble mind will not one day be more pernicious to him than useful? Who assures you that you are sparing him something by the sorrows you lavish on him? Why do you give him more ills than his condition entails without being sure that these present ills are for the relief of the future? And how will you prove to me that these bad inclinations, of which you claim you are curing him, do not come to him from your ill-considered care far more than from nature? Unhappy foresight which makes a being unhappy now in the hope, well or ill founded, of making him happy one day! In case these vulgar reasoners confuse license with liberty and the child one makes happy with the child one spoils, let us teach them to distinguish the two.

In order not to pursue chimeras let us not forget what is appropriate to our situation. Humanity has its place in the order of things; childhood has its in the order of human life. The man must be considered in the man, and the child in the child. To assign each his place and settle him in it, to order the human passions according to man's constitution is all that we can do for his well-being. The rest depends on alien causes which are in no way in our power.

We do not know what absolute happiness or unhappiness is. Everything is mixed in this life; in it one tastes no pure sentiment; in it one does not stay two moments in the same state. The affections of our souls, as well as the states of our bodies, are in a continual flux. The good and the bad are common to us all, but in different measures. The happiest is he who suffers the least pain; the unhappiest is he who feels the least pleasure. Always more suffering than enjoyment; this relation between the two is common to all men. Man's felicity on earth is, hence, only a negative condition; the smallest number of ills he can suffer ought to constitute its measure.

Every feeling of pain is inseparable from the desire to be delivered from it; every idea of pleasure is inseparable from the desire to enjoy it; every desire supposes privation, and all sensed privations are painful. Our unhappiness consists, therefore, in the disproportion between our desires and our faculties. A being endowed with senses whose faculties equaled his desires would be an absolutely happy being.

In what, then, consists human wisdom or the road of true happiness? It is not precisely in diminishing our desires, for if they were beneath our power, a part of our faculties would remain idle, and we would not enjoy our whole being. Neither is it in extending our faculties, for if, proportionate to them, our desires were more extended, we would as a result only become unhappier. But it is in diminishing the excess of the desires over the faculties and putting power and will in perfect equality. It is only then that, with all the powers in action, the soul will nevertheless remain peaceful and that man will be well ordered.

It is thus that nature, which does everything for the best, constituted him in the beginning. It gives him with immediacy only the desires necessary to his preservation and the faculties sufficient to satisfy them. It put all the others, as it were, in reserve in the depth of his soul, to be developed there when needed. Only in this original state are power and desire in equilibrium and man is not unhappy. As soon as his potential faculties are put in action, imagination, the most active of all, is awakened and outstrips them. It is imagination which extends for us the measure of the possible, whether for good or bad, and which consequently excites and nourishes the desires by the hope of satisfying them. But the object which at first appeared to be at hand flees more quickly than it can be pursued. When one believes that one has reached it, it transforms and reveals itself in the distance ahead of us. No longer seeing the country we have already crossed, we count it for nothing; what remains to cross ceaselessly grows and extends. Thus one exhausts oneself without getting to the end, and the more one gains on enjoyment, the further happiness gets from us.

On the contrary, the closer to his natural condition man has stayed, the smaller is the difference between his faculties and his desires, and consequently the less removed he is from being happy. He is never less unhappy than when he appears entirely destitute, for unhappiness consists not in the privation of things but in the need that is felt for them.

The real world has its limits; the imaginary world is infinite. Unable to enlarge the one, let us restrict the other, for it is from the difference between the two alone that are born all the pains which make us truly unhappy. Take away strength, health, and good witness of oneself, all the goods of this life are in opinion; take

away the pains of the body and the remorse of conscience, all our ills are imaginary. This principle is common, it will be said. I agree. But its practical application is not common, and we are dealing solely with practice here.

When it is said that man is weak, what is meant? This word *weak* indicates a relation, a relation obtaining within the being to which one applies it. He whose strength surpasses his needs, be he an insect or a worm, is a strong being. He whose needs surpass his strength, be he an elephant or a lion, be he a conqueror or a hero, be he a god, is a weak being. The rebellious angel who misapprehended his nature was weaker than the happy mortal who lives in peace according to his nature. Man is very strong when he is contented with being what he is; he is very weak when he wants to raise himself above humanity. Therefore, do not fancy that in extending your faculties you extend your strength. On the contrary, you diminish your strength if your pride is extended farther than it. Let us measure the radius of our sphere and stay in the center like the insect in the middle of his web; we shall always be sufficient unto ourselves; and we shall not have to complain of our weakness, for we shall never feel it.

All the animals have exactly the faculties necessary to preserve themselves. Man alone has superfluous faculties. Is it not very strange that this superfluity should be the instrument of his unhappiness? In every country the arms of a man are worth more than his subsistence. If he were wise enough to count this superfluity for nothing, he would always have what is necessary because he would never have anything too much. The great needs, said Favorinus,* are born of great possessions; and often the best way to provide oneself with the things one lacks is to give up those that one has. It is by dint of agitating ourselves to increase our happiness that we convert it into unhappiness. Any man who only wanted to live would live happily. Consequently he would live as a good man, for what advantage would there be for him in being wicked?

If we were immortal, we would be most unhappy beings. It is hard to die doubtless; but it is sweet to hope that one will not live forever, and that a better life will end the pains of this one. If we were to be offered immortality on the earth, who would want to accept this dreary present? What resource, what hope, what consolation would remain to us against the rigors of fate and the injustices of men? The ignorant man, who foresees nothing, little senses the value of life and little fears the loss of it; the enlightened man sees goods of a greater value which he prefers to this good. It is only half knowledge and false wisdom which, prolonging our views up to the point of death and not beyond, make it the worst

*Noct. attic. B. IX. c.8.

of evils for us. The necessity of dying is for the wise man only a reason for bearing the pains of life. If one were not certain of losing life sometime, it would cost too much to preserve.

Our moral ills are all matters of opinion, except for a single one—crime; and this ill depends on us. Our physical ills are themselves destroyed or destroy us. Time or death is our remedy. But we suffer more the less we know how to suffer; and we give ourselves more torment in curing our maladies than we would have in enduring them. Live according to nature, be patient, and drive away the doctors. You will not avoid death, but you will feel it only once, while they bring it every day into your troubled imagination; and their lying art, instead of prolonging your days, deprives you of the enjoyment of them. I shall always ask what true good this art has done for men. Some of those it cures would die, it is true, but the millions it kills would remain alive. Man of sense, do not wager in this lottery where too many chances are against you. Suffer, die, or get well; but, above all, live until your last hour.

Everything is only folly and contradiction in human institutions. We worry about our life more in proportion to its losing its value. Old men regret it more than young people; they do not want to lose the preparations they have made for enjoying it. At the age of sixty it is most cruel to die before having begun to live. It is believed that man has an intense love for his own preservation, and that is true. But it is not seen that this love, in the way in which we feel it, is in large part the work of men. Naturally man worries about his preservation only insofar as the means to it are in his power. As soon as these means escape him, he becomes calm and dies without tormenting himself uselessly. The first law of resignation comes to us from nature. Savages as well as beasts struggle very little against death and endure it almost without complaint. When this law is destroyed, another one which comes from reason takes shape; but few know how to derive it, and this artificial resignation is never so full and complete as the primary one.

Foresight! Foresight, which takes us ceaselessly beyond ourselves and often places us where we shall never arrive. This is the true source of all our miseries. What madness for a fleeting being like man always to look far into a future which comes so rarely and to neglect the present of which he is sure. It is a madness all the more destructive since it increases continuously with age; and old men, always distrustful, full of foresight, and miserly, prefer to deny themselves what is necessary today so as not to lack it a hundred years from now. Thus, we are attached to everything, we cling to everything—times, places, men, things; everything which is, everything which will be, is important to each of us. Our individual persons are now only the least part of ourselves. Each one extends himself,

so to speak, over the whole earth and becomes sensitive over this entire large surface. Is it surprising that our ills are multiplied by all the points where we can be wounded? How many princes grieve over the loss of a country they have never seen? How many merchants are there whom it suffices to touch in India in order to make them scream in Paris?

Is it nature which thus carries men so far from themselves? Is it nature which wants each to learn of his destiny from others and sometimes to be the last to learn it? Thus, a man dies happy or miserable without ever knowing it. I see a man, fresh, gay, vigorous, healthy, his presence inspires joy, his eyes proclaim contentment, well-being; he brings with him the image of happiness. A letter comes in the post; the happy man looks at it; it is addressed to him; he opens it, reads it. Instantly his aspect changes. He becomes pale and faints. Coming to, he weeps, writhes, moans, tears his hair, makes the air resound with his cries, seems to have a frightful fit of convulsions. Senseless man, what ill has this piece of paper done to you then? Of what limb has it deprived you? What crime has it made you commit? Altogether, what has it changed in you yourself to put you in the state in which I see you?

If the letter had gone astray, if a charitable hand had thrown it into the fire, the fate of this mortal, happy and unhappy at once, would have been, it seems to me, a strange problem. His unhappiness, you will say, was real. Very well, but he did not feel it; where was it then? His happiness was imaginary. I understand. Health, gaiety, well-being, contentment of mind are no longer anything but visions. We no longer exist where we are; we only exist where we are not. Is it worth the effort to have so great a fear of death if what we live off of remains?

O man, draw your existence up within yourself, and you will no longer be miserable. Remain in the place which nature assigns to you in the chain of being. Nothing will be able to make you leave it. Do not rebel against the hard law of necessity; and do not exhaust your strength by your will to resist that law—strength which heaven gave you not for extending or prolonging your existence but only for preserving it as heaven pleases and for as long as heaven pleases. Your freedom and your power extend only as far as your natural strength, and not beyond. All the rest is only slavery, illusion, and deception. Even domination is servile when it is connected with opinion, for you depend on the prejudices of those you govern by prejudices. To lead them as you please, you must conduct yourself as they please. They have only to change their way of thinking, and you must perforce change your way of acting. Those who come near you have only to know how to govern the opinions of the people whom you believe you govern, or of the favorites who govern you, or those of your family, or your own.

These viziers, courtiers, priests, soldiers, valets, babblers, and even babies—were you a Themistocles in genius*—are going to lead you like a baby yourself in the very midst of your legions. You can do what you like: never will your real authority go farther than your real faculties. As soon as one must see with the eyes of others, one must will with their wills. “My peoples are my subjects,” you say proudly. So be it. But you, what are you? The subject of your ministers; and your ministers, in turn, what are they? The subjects of their clerks, their mistresses, the valets of their valets. Take everything, usurp everything; and then pour out handfuls of money, set up batteries of cannon, erect gallows and wheels, give laws and edicts, multiply spies, soldiers, hangmen, prisons, chains. Poor little men, what does all that do for you? You will be neither better served, nor less robbed, nor less deceived, nor more absolute. You will always say, “We want,” and you will always do what others want.

The only one who does his own will is he who, in order to do it, has no need to put another’s arms at the end of his own; from which it follows that the first of all goods is not authority but freedom. The truly free man wants only what he can do and does what he pleases. That is my fundamental maxim. It need only be applied to childhood for all the rules of education to flow from it.

Society has made man weaker not only in taking from him the right he had over his own strength but, above all, in making his strength insufficient for him. That is why his desires are multiplied along with his weakness, and that is what constitutes the weakness of childhood compared to manhood. If the man is a strong being and the child is a weak being, this is not because the former has more strength absolutely than the latter, but it is because the former can naturally be sufficient unto himself and the latter cannot. The man should, hence, have more will and the child more whim, a word by which I mean all desires which are not true needs and which can only be satisfied with another’s help.

I have given the reason for this state of weakness. Nature provides for it by the attachment of fathers and mothers; but this attachment can have its excess, its defect, its abuses. Parents who live in the civil state transport their child into it before the proper age. In giving him more needs than he has, they do not relieve his weakness; they increase it. They increase it still more by exacting from him what nature did not exact. They do so by subjecting to their will the bit of

*“This little boy that you see there,” said Themistocles to his friends, “Is the master of Greece, for he governs his mother, his mother governs me, I govern the Athenians, and the Athenians govern Greece.” O what little leaders would often be found in the greatest empires, if from the prince one descended by degrees to the first hand which secretly sets things in motion!

strength which he has for serving his own, by changing into slavery on one side or the other the reciprocal dependence in which his weakness keeps him and their attachment keeps them.

The wise man knows how to stay in his place; but the child, who does not know his place, would not be able to keep to it. Among us he is given a thousand exits by which to leave it. It is for those who govern him to keep him in his place, and this is not an easy task. He ought to be neither beast nor man, but child. It is necessary that he feel his weakness and not that he suffer from it. It is necessary that he be dependent and not that he obey. It is necessary that he ask and not that he command. He is only subject to others by virtue of his needs, and because they see better than he does what is useful to him, what can contribute to, or be harmful to, his preservation. No one, not even the father, has a right to command the child what is not for his good.

Before prejudices and human institutions have corrupted our natural inclinations, the happiness of children, like that of men, consists in the use of their freedom. But in the case of children this freedom is limited by their weakness. Whoever does what he wants is happy if he is self-sufficient; this is the case of the man living in the state of nature. Whoever does what he wants is not happy if his needs surpass his strength; this is the case of the child in the same state. Children, even in the state of nature, enjoy only an imperfect freedom, similar to that enjoyed by men in the civil state. No longer able to do without others, each of us becomes in this respect weak and miserable again. We were made to be men; laws and society have plunged us once more into childhood. The rich, the nobles, the kings are all children who, seeing that men are eager to relieve their misery, derive a puerile vanity from that very fact and are very proud of care that one would not give to them if they were grown men.

These considerations are important and serve to resolve all the contradictions of the social system. There are two sorts of dependence: dependence on things, which is from nature; dependence on men, which is from society. Dependence on things, since it has no morality, is in no way detrimental to freedom and engenders no vices. Dependence on men, since it is without order,* engenders all the vices, and by it, master and slave are mutually corrupted. If there is any means of remedying this ill in society, it is to substitute law for man and to arm the general wills with a real strength superior to the action of every particular will. If the laws of nations could, like those of nature, have an inflexibility that no human

*In *my Principles of Political Right* it is demonstrated that no particular will can be ordered in the social system.

force could ever conquer, dependence on men would then become dependence on things again; in the republic all of the advantages of the natural state would be united with those of the civil state, and freedom which keeps man exempt from vices would be joined to morality which raises him to virtue.

Keep the child in dependence only on things. You will have followed the order of nature in the progress of his education. Never present to his indiscriminating will anything but physical obstacles or punishments which stem from the actions themselves and which he will recall on the proper occasion. Without forbidding him to do harm, it suffices to prevent him from doing it. Experience or impotence alone ought to take the place of law for him. Grant nothing to his desires because he asks for it but because he needs it. Let him not know what obedience is when he acts nor what dominion is when one acts for him. Let him sense his liberty equally in his actions and yours. Add to the strength he lacks exactly as much as he needs in order to be free but not imperious; do so in such a way that he receives your services as a sort of humiliation and longs for the moment when he can do without them and have the honor of serving himself.

Nature has, for strengthening the body and making it grow, means that ought never be opposed. A child must not be constrained to stay when he wants to go nor to go when he wants to stay. When children's wills are not spoiled by our fault, children want nothing uselessly. They have to jump, run, and shout when they wish. All their movements are needs of their constitution seeking to strengthen itself. But one should distrust what they desire but are unable to do for themselves and others have to do for them. Then true need, natural need, must be carefully distinguished from the need which stems from nascent whim or from the need which comes only from the superabundance of life of which I have spoken.

I have already said what must be done when a child cries to have this or that. I shall only add that as soon as he can ask by saying what he desires, and, to get it more quickly or overcome a refusal, he supports his request with tears, it ought to be irrevocably refused him. If need has made him speak, you ought to know it and do immediately what he asks. But to cede anything to his tears is to incite him to shed them, is to teach him to doubt your good will and to believe that importunity can have more effect on you than benevolence. If he does not believe you are good, soon he will be wicked; if he believes you are weak, soon he will be stubborn. It is important always to grant at the first sign what one does not want to refuse. Do not be prodigal with refusal, but revoke it never.

Guard, above all, against giving the child vain formulas of politeness which serve at need as magic words for him to submit to his will everything which

surrounds him and to obtain instantly what he pleases. The fancy education of the rich never fails to leave them politely imperious, by prescribing to them the terms they are to use in order that no one dare resist them. Their children have neither the tones nor the wiles of supplication; they are as arrogant when they beg as when they command—indeed, even more so—since they are all the more sure of being obeyed. One sees from the first that in their mouths “If you please” signifies “I please” and that “I beg you” signifies “I order you.” Admirable politeness which results only in their changing the sense of words and never being able to speak other than in the accents of dominion! As for me who am less afraid that Emile be coarse than that he be arrogant, I much prefer him to beg by saying, “Do this!” than to command by saying, “I beg you.” It is not the term he uses which is important to me but rather the meaning he gives to it.

There is an excess of rigor and an excess of indulgence, both equally to be avoided. If you let children suffer, you expose their health, their life. You make them miserable in the present. If by too much care you spare them every kind of discomfort, you are preparing great miseries for them; you make them delicate, sensitive; you cause them to leave man’s estate to which they will return one day in spite of you. So as not to expose them to some ills of nature, you are the artisan of those nature did not give them. You will tell me that I fall into the class of those bad fathers whom I reproached with sacrificing children’s happiness to the consideration of a distant time which may never be.

Not at all, for the freedom I give my pupil amply compensates him for the slight discomforts to which I leave him exposed. I see little rascals playing in the snow, blue and numb with cold, hardly able to move their fingers. Nothing prevents them from going to get warm; they will have none of it. If they were forced to do so, they would feel the rigors of constraint a hundred times more than they feel those of the cold. What then do you complain about? Shall I make your child miserable by not exposing him to discomforts he wants to suffer? I act for his good in the present moment by leaving him free; I act for his good in the future by arming him against the ills he must bear. If he had the choice of being my pupil or yours, do you think he would hesitate for an instant?

Can you conceive of some true happiness possible for any being outside of its constitution? And is not wanting to exempt man from all the ills of his species equally to make him quit his constitution? Yes, I maintain that to feel the great goods he must know the little ills. Such is his nature. If the physical prospers, the moral is corrupted. The man who did not know pain would know neither the tenderness of humanity nor the sweetness of commiseration. His heart would be

moved by nothing. He would not be sociable; he would be a monster among his kind.

Do you know the surest means of making your child miserable? It is to accustom him to getting everything; since his desires grow constantly due to the ease of satisfying them, sooner or later powerlessness will force you, in spite of yourself, to end up with a refusal. And this unaccustomed refusal will give him more torment than being deprived of what he desires. First, he will want the cane you are holding; soon he will want your watch; after that he will want the bird flying by; he will want the star he sees shining; he will want everything he sees. Without being God, how will you content him?

It is a disposition natural to man to regard everything in his power as his. In this sense Hobbes's principle is true up to a certain point. Multiply not only our desires but the means of satisfying them, and each will make himself the master of everything. Hence, the child who has only to want in order to get believes himself to be the owner of the universe; he regards all men as his slaves. When one is finally forced to refuse him something, he, believing that at his command everything is possible, takes this refusal for an act of rebellion. All reasons given him at an age when he is incapable of reasoning are to his mind only pretexts. He sees ill will everywhere. The feeling of an alleged injustice souring his nature, he develops hatred toward everyone; and, without ever being grateful for helpfulness, he is indignant at every opposition.

How could I conceive that a child thus dominated by anger and devoured by the most irascible passions might ever be happy? Happy, he! He is a despot. He is at once the most vile of slaves and the most miserable of creatures. I have seen children raised in this way who wanted that the house be turned over by a bump of the shoulder, that they be given the weathercock they see on a steeple, that a marching regiment be stopped so that the drums could be heard longer; who pierced the air with their cries, unwilling to listen to anyone, as soon as there was a delay in their being obeyed. All hastened vainly to oblige them. With their desires exacerbated by the ease of getting, they were obstinate about impossible things and found everywhere only contradiction, obstacles, efforts, pains. Always grumbling, always rebellious, always furious, they spent their days in screaming, in complaining. Were those very fortunate beings? Weakness and domination joined engender only folly and misery. Of two spoiled children, one beats the table and the other has the sea whipped. They will have to do a lot of whipping and beating before they will live contentedly.

If these ideas of dominion and tyranny make them miserable already in their childhood, what will it be when they grow up and their relations with other men

begin to extend and multiply? Accustomed to seeing everything give way before them, what a surprise on entering into the world to feel that everything resists them and to find themselves crushed by the weight of this universe they thought they moved at their pleasure! Their insolent airs, their puerile vanity, attract to them only mortification, disdain, and mockery. They drink affronts like water; cruel experiences soon teach them that they know neither their situation nor their strength. Not omnipotent, they believe they are impotent. So many unaccustomed obstacles dishearten them; so much contempt debases them. They become cowardly, fearful, and fawning and fall as far below themselves as they had previously been raised above themselves.

Let us return to the primary rule. Nature has made children to be loved and helped, but has it made them to be obeyed and feared? Has it given them an imposing air, a severe eye, a rough and threatening voice to make them dreaded? I understand that a lion's roar scares animals and that they tremble on seeing his terrible head. But if an indecent, odious, laughable spectacle has ever been seen, it is a body of magistrates, in ceremonial robes and headed by its chief, prostrate before a child in swaddling whom they harangue in stately terms and who screams and drools as his only response.

To consider childhood in itself, is there in the world a weaker being, a more miserable one, one more at the mercy of everything surrounding him, who has a greater need of pity, care, and protection, than a child? Does it not seem that he presents so sweet a face and so touching a manner only so that all who come near him will take an interest in his weakness and hasten to help him? What is there, then, more shocking, more contrary to order than to see an imperious and rebellious child command all that surrounds him and impudently take on the tone of a master with those who have only to abandon him to make him perish?

On the other hand, who does not see that the weakness of the first age enchains children in so many ways that it is barbarous to add to this subjection a further subjection—that of our caprices—by taking from them a freedom so limited, which they are so little capable of abusing and the deprivation of which is of so little utility to them and to us? If there is no object so worthy of ridicule as a haughty child, there is no object so worthy of pity as a fearful child. Since with the age of reason civil servitude begins, why anticipate it with private servitude? Let us suffer that a moment of life be exempt from this yoke which nature did not impose on us, and leave to childhood the exercise of natural freedom that keeps at a distance, for a time at least, vices contracted in slavery. Let these severe teachers and these fathers subjugated by their children both come, then, with

their frivolous objections and, before vaunting their methods, learn for once the method of nature.

I return to practice. I have already said that your child ought to get a thing not because he asks for it but because he needs it,* and do a thing not out of obedience but only out of necessity. Thus the words *obey* and *command* will be proscribed from his lexicon, and even more so *duty* and *obligation*. But *strength*, *necessity*, *impotence*, and *constraint* should play a great role in it. Before the age of reason one cannot have any idea of moral beings or of social relations. Hence so far as possible words which express them must be avoided, for fear that the child in the beginning attach to these words false ideas which you will not know about or will no longer be able to destroy. The first false idea which enters his head is the germ in him of error and vice. It is to this first step above all that attention must be paid. Arrange it so that as long as he is struck only by objects of sense, all his ideas stop at sensations; arrange it so that on all sides he perceive around him only the physical world. Without that, you may be sure that he will not listen to you at all, or that he will get fantastic notions of the moral world of which you speak to him, notions that you will never in your life be able to blot out.

To reason with children was Locke's great maxim. It is the one most in vogue today. Its success, however, does not appear to me such as to establish its reputation; and, as for me, I see nothing more stupid than these children who have been reasoned with so much. Of all the faculties of man, reason, which is, so to speak, only a composite of all the others, is the one that develops with the most difficulty and latest. And it is this one which they want to use in order to develop the first faculties! The masterpiece of a good education is to make a reasonable man, and they claim they raise a child by reason! This is to begin with the end, to want to make the product the instrument. If children understood reason, they would not need to be raised. But by speaking to them from an early age a language which they do not understand, one accustoms them to show off with words, to control all that is said to them, to believe themselves as wise as their masters, to become disputatious and rebellious; and everything that is thought to be gotten from them out of reasonable motives is never obtained other than out of motives of covetousness or fear or vanity which are always perforce joined to the others.

*It ought to be sensed that just as pain is often a necessity, pleasure is sometimes a need. There is, therefore, only one single desire of children which ought never be satisfied: that of being obeyed. From this it follows that in everything they ask for, attention must above all be paid to the motive which leads them to ask for it. So, as far as possible, grant them everything that can give them a real pleasure; always refuse them what they ask for only due to whim or in order to assert their authority.

This is the formula to which all the lessons in morality that are given, and can be given, to children can just about be reduced:

MASTER: You must not do that.

CHILD: And why must I not do it?

MASTER: Because it is bad to do.

CHILD: Bad to do! What is bad to do?

MASTER: What you are forbidden to do.

CHILD: What is bad about doing what I am forbidden to do?

MASTER: You are punished for having disobeyed.

CHILD: I shall fix it so that nothing is known about it.

MASTER: You will be spied on.

CHILD: I shall hide.

MASTER: You will be questioned.

CHILD: I shall lie.

MASTER: You must not lie.

CHILD: Why must I not lie?

MASTER: Because it is bad to do, etc.

This is the inevitable circle. Get out of it, and the child does not understand you any longer. Is this not most useful instruction? I would be quite curious to know what could be put in the place of this dialogue. Locke himself would certainly have been very much at a loss. To know good and bad, to sense the reason for man's duties, is not a child's affair.

Nature wants children to be children before being men. If we want to pervert this order, we shall produce precocious fruits which will be immature and insipid and will not be long in rotting. We shall have young doctors and old children. Childhood has its ways of seeing, thinking, and feeling which are proper to it. Nothing is less sensible than to want to substitute ours for theirs, and I would like as little to insist that a ten-year-old be five feet tall as that he possess judgment. Actually, what would reason do for him at that age? It is the bridle of strength, and the child does not need this bridle.

In trying to persuade your pupils of the duty of obedience, you join to this alleged persuasion force and threats or, what is worse, flattery and promises. In this way, therefore, lured by profit or constrained by force, they pretend to be convinced by reason. They see quite well that obedience is advantageous to them

and rebellion harmful when you notice either. But since everything you insist on is unpleasant and, further, it is always irksome to do another's will, they arrange to do their own will covertly. They are persuaded that what they do is right if their disobedience is unknown, but are ready on being caught—in order to avoid a worse evil—to admit that what they do is wrong. Since the reason for duty cannot be grasped at their age, there is not a man in the world who could succeed in giving duty a truly palpable sense for them. But the fear of punishment, the hope of pardon, importunity, awkwardness in answering, wrest all the confessions from them that are demanded; and it is believed that they have been convinced when they have only been pestered or intimidated.

What results from this? Firstly, by imposing on them a duty they do not feel, you set them against your tyranny and turn them away from loving you. Secondly, you teach them to become dissemblers, fakers, and liars in order to extort rewards or escape punishments. Finally, by accustoming them always to cover a secret motive with an apparent motive, you yourselves give them the means of deceiving you ceaselessly, of depriving you of the knowledge of their true character, and of fobbing you and others off with vain words when the occasion serves. Laws, you will say, although they obligate conscience, nevertheless also use constraint with grown men. I admit it, but what are these men if not children spoiled by education? This is precisely what must be prevented. Use force with children, and reason with men. Such is the natural order. The wise man does not need laws.

Treat your pupil according to his age. At the outset put him in his place, and hold him there so well that he no longer tries to leave it. Then, before knowing what wisdom is, he will practice its most important lesson. Command him nothing, whatever in the world it might be, absolutely nothing. Do not even allow him to imagine that you might pretend to have any authority over him. Let him know only that he is weak and you are strong, that by his condition and yours he is necessarily at your mercy. Let him know it, learn it, feel it. Let his haughty head at an early date feel the harsh yoke which nature imposes on man, the heavy yoke of necessity under which every finite being must bend. Let him see this necessity in things, never in the caprice* of men. Let the bridle that restrains him be force and not authority. Do not forbid him to do that from which he should abstain; prevent him from doing it without explanations, without reasonings. What you

*One should be sure that the child will treat as a caprice every will opposed to his own when he does not appreciate the reason for it. Now a child does not appreciate the reason for anything which clashes with his whims.

grant him, grant at his first word, without solicitations, without prayers—above all, without conditions. Grant with pleasure; refuse only with repugnance. But let all your refusals be irrevocable; let no importunity shake you; let “no,” once pronounced, be a wall of bronze against which the child will have to exhaust his strength at most five or six times in order to abandon any further attempts to overturn it.

It is thus that you will make him patient, steady, resigned, calm, even when he has not got what he wanted, for it is in the nature of man to endure patiently the necessity of things but not the ill will of others. The phrase “There is no more” is a response against which no child has ever rebelled unless he believed that it was a lie. Besides, there is no middle point here: nothing must be demanded from him at all, or he must be bent from the outset to the most perfect obedience. The worst education is to leave him floating between his will and yours and to dispute endlessly between you and him as to which of the two will be the master. I would a hundred times prefer that it were always he.

It is quite strange that since people first became involved with raising children, no instrument for guiding them has been imagined other than emulation, jealousy, envy, vanity, avidity, and vile fear—all the most dangerous passions, the quickest to ferment and the most appropriate to corrupt the soul, even before the body has been formed. With each lesson that one wants to put into their heads before its proper time, a vice is planted in the depth of their hearts. Senseless teachers think they work wonders when they make children wicked in order to teach them what goodness is. And then they solemnly tell us, “Such is man.” Yes, such is the man you have made.

All the instruments have been tried save one, the only one precisely that can succeed: well-regulated freedom. One ought not to get involved with raising a child if one does not know how to guide him where one wants by the laws of the possible and the impossible alone. The sphere of both being equally unknown to him, they can be expanded and contracted around him as one wants. One enchains, pushes, and restrains him with the bond of necessity alone without his letting out a peep. He is made supple and docile by the force of things alone without any vice having the occasion to germinate in him, for the passions never become animated so long as they are of no effect.

Do not give your pupil any kind of verbal lessons; he ought to receive them only from experience. Inflict no kind of punishment on him, for he does not know what it is to be at fault. Never make him beg pardon, for he could not know how to offend you. Devoid of all morality in his actions, he can do nothing which is morally bad and which merits either punishment or reprimand.

I already see the startled reader judging this child by our children. He is mistaken. The perpetual constraint in which you keep your pupils exacerbates their vivacity. The more they are held in check under your eyes, the more they are turbulent the moment they get away. They have to compensate themselves when they can for the harsh constraint in which you keep them. Two schoolboys from the city will do more damage in a place than the young of an entire village. Close up a little gentleman and a little peasant in a room. The former will have turned everything upside down, broken everything, before the latter has left his place. Why is this, if it is not because the one hastens to abuse a moment of license, while the other, always sure of his freedom, is never in a hurry to make use of it? And nevertheless the children of the village people, themselves often indulged or opposed, are still quite far from the state in which I want them kept.

Let us set down as an incontestable maxim that the first movements of nature are always right. There is no original perversity in the human heart. There is not a single vice to be found in it of which it cannot be said how and whence it entered. The sole passion natural to man is *amour de soi* or *amour-propre* taken in an extended sense. This *amour-propre* in itself or relative to us is good and useful; and since it has no necessary relation to others, it is in this respect naturally neutral. It becomes good or bad only by the application made of it and the relations given to it. Therefore, up to the time when the guide of *amour-propre*, which is reason, can be born, it is important for a child to do nothing because he is seen or heard—nothing, in a word, in relation to others; he must respond only to what nature asks of him, and then he will do nothing but good.

I do not mean that he will never do damage, that he will not hurt himself, that he will not perhaps break a valuable piece of furniture if he finds it in his reach. He could do a considerable amount of wrong without wrongdoing, because the bad action depends on the intention of doing harm, and he will never have this intention. If he had it one single time, all would be lost already; he would be wicked almost beyond recall.

Some things are bad in the eyes of avarice which are not so in the eyes of reason. In leaving children full freedom to exercise their giddiness, it is proper to put away from them everything that could make it costly and to leave nothing fragile and precious within their reach. Let their quarters be fitted with coarse and solid furniture, no mirrors, no china, no objects of quality. As for my Emile, whom I am raising in the country, his room will have nothing which distinguishes it from a peasant's. What is the use of decorating it so carefully, since he is going to stay in it so little? But I am mistaken. He will decorate it himself, and we shall soon see with what.

If in spite of your precautions, the child succeeds in creating some disorder, in breaking some useful piece, do not punish him for your negligence; do not chide him; let him hear not a single word of reproach; do not permit him even to glimpse that he has brought you grief; act exactly as if the thing had been broken of itself. In short, believe you have accomplished a lot if you can say nothing.

Dare I expose the greatest, the most important, the most useful rule of all education? It is not to gain time but to lose it. Common readers, pardon me my paradoxes. When one reflects, they are necessary and, whatever you may say, I prefer to be a paradoxical man than a prejudiced one. The most dangerous period of human life is that from birth to the age of twelve. This is the time when errors and vices germinate without one's yet having any instrument for destroying them; and by the time the instrument comes, the roots are so deep that it is too late to rip them out. If children jumped all at once from the breast to the age of reason, the education they are given might be suitable for them. But, according to the natural progress, they need an entirely contrary one. They ought to do nothing with their soul until all of its faculties have developed, because while the soul is yet blind, it cannot perceive the torch you are presenting to it or follow the path reason maps out across the vast plain of ideas, a path which is so faint even to the best of eyes.

Thus, the first education ought to be purely negative. It consists not at all in teaching virtue or truth but in securing the heart from vice and the mind from error. If you could do nothing and let nothing be done, if you could bring your pupil healthy and robust to the age of twelve without his knowing how to distinguish his right hand from his left, at your first lessons the eyes of his understanding would open up to reason. Without prejudice, without habit, he would have nothing in him which could hinder the effect of your care. Soon he would become in your hands the wisest of men; and in beginning by doing nothing, you would have worked an educational marvel.

Take the opposite of the practiced path, and you will almost always do well. Since what is wanted is not to make a child out of a child but a doctor out of a child, fathers and masters can never soon enough scold, correct, reprimand, flatter, threaten, promise, instruct, talk reason. Do better: be reasonable, and do not reason with your pupil, especially to get his approbation for what displeases him. Bringing reason to bear on unpleasant things only makes reason tedious for him and discredits it early in a mind not yet in a condition to understand it. Exercise his body, his organs, his senses, his strength, but keep his soul idle for as long as possible. Be afraid of all sentiments anterior to the judgment which evaluates them. Restrain, arrest alien impressions; and in order to prevent the birth of evil,

do not hurry to do good, for good is only truly such when reason enlightens it. Regard all delays as advantages; to advance toward the end without losing anything is to gain a lot. Let childhood ripen in children. And what if some lesson finally becomes necessary to them? Keep yourself from giving it today if you can without danger put it off until tomorrow.

Another consideration confirms the utility of this method. One must know well the particular genius of the child in order to know what moral diet suits him. Each mind has its own form, according to which it needs to be governed; the success of one's care depends on governing it by this form and not by another. Prudent man, spy out nature for a long time; observe your pupil well before saying the first word to him. To start with, let the germ of his character reveal itself freely; constrain it in no way whatsoever in order better to see the whole of it. Do you think this time of freedom is lost for him? Not at all. This is the best way to use it, for you are learning now not to lose a single moment in a more valuable time; while if you begin to act before knowing what must be done, you will act haphazardly. Subject to error, you will have to retrace your steps; you will be farther removed from the goal than if you had been in less of a rush to reach it. Do not therefore act like the miser who loses a great deal for wanting not to lose anything. In the earliest age sacrifice time that you will regain with interest at a more advanced age. The wise doctor does not at first sight giddily give prescriptions but in the first place studies the constitution of his patient before prescribing anything to him. He may begin to treat the patient late but he cures him, whereas the doctor who is in too much of a rush kills him.

But where will we put this child to raise him like a being without sensation, like an automaton? Will we keep him in the moon's orb or on a desert island? Will we keep him away from all human beings? Will he not constantly have in the world the spectacle and the example of others' passions? Will he never see other children of his age? Will he not see his parents, his neighbors, his nurse, his governess, his lackey, even his governor who, after all, will not be an angel?

This objection is strong and solid. But did I tell you that a natural education was an easy undertaking? O men, is it my fault if you have made everything good difficult? I sense these difficulties; I agree that they are difficulties. Perhaps they are insurmountable. But it is still certain that in applying oneself to overcoming them, one does overcome them up to a certain point. I show the goal that must be set; I do not say that it can be reached. But I do say that he who comes nearest to it will have succeeded best.

Remember that before daring to undertake the formation of a man, one must have made oneself a man. One must find within oneself the example the pupil

ought to take for his own. While the child is still without knowledge, there is time to prepare everything that comes near him in order that only objects suitable for him to see meet his first glances. Make yourself respectable to everyone. Begin by making yourself loved so that each will seek to please you. You will not be the child's master if you are not the master of all that surrounds him; and this authority will never be sufficient if it is not founded on the esteem for virtue. It is not a question of emptying one's purse and spending money by the handful. I have never seen that money has made anyone loved. One ought not to be miserly and hard nor merely pity the poverty that one can relieve. But you can open your coffers all you want; if you do not also open your heart, others' hearts will always remain closed to you. It is your time, your care, your affection, it is you yourself that must be given. For no matter what you do, people never feel that your money is you. There are tokens of interest and benevolence which produce a greater effect and are really more useful than any gifts. How many unfortunate people, how many sick people need consolation more than alms! How many oppressed people need protection more than money! Reconcile people who have quarreled; forestall litigations; bring children to their duty, fathers to indulgence; encourage happy marriages; prevent harassment; use, lavish the influence of your pupil's parents in favor of the weak man to whom justice is denied and who is crushed by the powerful man. Loudly proclaim yourself the protector of the unfortunate. Be just, humane, and beneficent. Give not only alms; give charity. Works of mercy relieve more ills than does money. Love others, and they will love you. Serve them, and they will serve you. Be their brother, and they will be your children.

This is again one of the reasons why I want to raise Emile in the country far from the rabble of valets—who are, after their masters, the lowest of men—far from the black morals of cities which are covered with a veneer seductive and contagious for children, unlike peasants' vices which, unadorned and in all their coarseness, are more fit to repel than to seduce when there is no advantage in imitating them.

In a village a governor will be much more the master of the objects he wants to present the child. His reputation, his speeches, and his example will have an authority which they could not have in the city. Since he is useful to everyone, all will be eager to oblige him, to be esteemed by him, to show themselves to the disciple as the master would want them really to be. And if they do not actually reform, they will at least abstain from scandal; this is all we need for our project.

Stop blaming others for your own faults; the evil children see corrupts them less than that which you teach them. Always sermonizers, always moralists,

always pedants, for one idea you give them, believing it to be good, you give them at the same time twenty that are worthless. Full of what is going on in your head, you do not see the effect you are producing in theirs. In this long stream of words with which you constantly exasperate them, do you think there is not one which they misapprehend? Do you think that they do not make their own commentaries on your diffuse explanations, and that they do not find in these explanations the material for setting up a system on their own level, which they will know how to use against you when the occasion demands?

Listen to a little fellow who has just been indoctrinated. Let him chatter, question, utter foolishness at his ease, and you are going to be surprised at the strange turn your reasonings have taken in his mind. He mixes up everything, turns everything upside down; he makes you lose your patience, sometimes grieves you by unforeseen objections. He reduces you to silence or to silencing him, and what can he think of this silence on the part of a man who likes to talk so much? If ever he gains this advantage and notices it, farewell to education. Everything is finished from this moment: he no longer seeks to learn; he seeks to refute you.

Zealous masters, be simple, discreet, restrained; never hasten to act except to prevent others from acting. I shall repeat it endlessly: put off, if possible, a good lesson for fear of giving a bad one. On this earth, out of which nature has made man's first paradise, dread exercising the tempter's function in wanting to give innocence the knowledge of good and evil. Unable to prevent the child's learning from examples out of doors, limit your vigilance to impressing these examples upon his mind accompanied by the images suitable for him.

Impetuous passions produce a great effect on the child who is witness to them because their manifestations are such as to strike his senses and force him to pay attention. Anger, in particular, is so noisy in its transports that one cannot fail to notice it if one is within its range. It need not be asked whether this is the occasion for a pedagogue to start out on a fine speech. Now, no fine speeches! Nothing at all; not a single word. Let the child come; surprised at the spectacle, he will not fail to question you. The response is simple; it is drawn from the very objects which strike his senses. He sees an inflamed face, glittering eyes, threatening gestures; he hears shouts—all signs that the body is out of kilter. Tell him calmly, without affectation and without mystery, "This poor man is sick; he is in a fit of fever." On this basis you can find occasions to give him, but in a few words, an idea of illnesses and their effects, for that, too, belongs to nature and is one of the bonds of necessity to which he should feel himself subjected.

Is it possible that from this idea, which is not false, he will not early on contract a certain repugnance to abandoning himself to the excesses of the passions,

which he will regard as diseases? And do you believe that some such notion, given apropos, will not produce an effect as salutary as the most boring moral sermon? Moreover, just consider the future ramifications of this notion! Now you are authorized, if you are ever forced to do so, to treat a rebellious child as a sick child, to shut him up in his room, in his bed if necessary, to keep him on a diet, to frighten him with his own nascent vices, to render them odious and redoubtable to him, without his ever being able to regard as a chastisement the severity you will perhaps be forced to use to cure him of them. If it should happen that you yourself, in a moment of heat, lose that coolness and moderation which you should make your study, do not seek to disguise your mistake before him, but tell him frankly with a tender reproach, "My friend, you hurt me."

Furthermore, it is important that none of a child's naïve statements—the products of the simplicity of the ideas on which he feeds—ever be picked up in his presence or quoted in such a way that he can learn of it. An indiscreet outburst of laughter can ruin the work of six months and do irreparable harm for the whole of life. I cannot repeat often enough that to be the child's master one must be one's own master. I see my little Emile, at the height of a fracas between two neighbors, approaching the more furious of the two and saying to her in a tone of commiseration, "My good woman, you are sick. I am so sorry about it." This sally will surely not remain without effect on the spectators or perhaps on the actresses. Without laughing, without scolding him, without praising him, I take him away willingly or forcibly before he can see this effect, or at least before he thinks about it, and I hasten to distract him with other objects which make him forget it right away.

It is my design not to enter into all the details but only to expound the general maxims and to give examples for difficult occasions. I hold it to be impossible to bring a child along to the age of twelve in the bosom of society without giving him some idea of the relations of man to man and of the morality of human actions. It is enough if one takes pains to ensure that these notions become necessary to him as late as possible and, when their presentation is unavoidable, to limit them to immediate utility, with the sole intention of preventing him from believing himself master of everything and from doing harm to others without scruple and without knowing it. There are gentle and quiet characters whom one can take a long way in their first innocence without danger. But there are also violent natures whose ferocity develops early and whom one must hasten to make into men so as not to be obliged to put them in chains.

Our first duties are to ourselves; our primary sentiments are centered on ourselves; all our natural movements relate in the first instance to our preservation

and our well-being. Thus, the first sentiment of justice does not come to us from the justice we owe but from that which is owed us; and it is again one of the mistakes of ordinary educations that, speaking at first to children of their duties, never of their rights, one begins by telling them the opposite of what is necessary, what they cannot understand, and what cannot interest them.

If, therefore, I had to guide one of those children I just mentioned, I would say to myself, "A child does not attack persons* but things; and soon he learns by experience to respect whoever surpasses him in age and strength. But things do not defend themselves. The first idea which must be given him is therefore less that of liberty than that of property; and for him to be able to have this idea, he must have something that belongs to him. To mention to him his clothing, his furniture, his toys, is to say nothing to him, since, although he disposes of these things, he knows neither why nor how he came by them. To say to him that he has them because they were given to him is hardly to do better, for, in order to give, one must have. Here is, therefore, a property anterior to his, and it is the principle of property one wants to explain to him, not to mention that a gift is a convention and that the child cannot know yet what convention is."† Readers, in this example and in a hundred thousand others, I beg you to note how we stuff children's heads with words which have no meaning within their reach and then believe we have instructed them very well.

The thing to do therefore is to go back to the origin of property, for it is there that the first idea of it ought to be born. The child, living in the country, will have gotten some notion of labor in the fields. For this only eyes and leisure are necessary; he will have both. It belongs to every age, especially his, to want to create, imitate, produce, give signs of power and activity. It will not take two experiences of seeing a garden plowed, sowed, sprouting, and growing vegetables for him to want to garden in his turn.

*One ought never to permit a child to play with grownups as with his inferiors or even as with his equals. If he seriously dares to strike someone, be it his lackey, be it the hangman, arrange that his blows be always returned with interest and in such a way as to destroy the desire to revert to the practice, I have seen imprudent governesses animate the unruliness of a child, incite him to strike, let themselves be struck, and laugh at his feeble blows, without thinking that in the intention of the little enraged one these blows were so many murders and that he who wants to strike when young will want to kill when grown.

†This is why most children want to have back what they have given and cry when one does not want to return it to them. This no longer occurs when they have gotten a good conception of what a gift is, but then they are more circumspect about giving.

According to the principles previously established, I in no way oppose his desire. On the contrary, I encourage it, I share his taste. I work with him, not for his pleasure, but for mine; at least he believes it to be so. I become his gardener's helper. Until he has arms I plow the earth for him. He takes possession of it by planting a bean in it. And surely this possession is more sacred and more respectable than that taken of South America when Núñez Balboa in the name of the King of Spain planted his standard on the shore of the South Sea.

We come every day to water the beans; with transports of joy we see them sprout. I increase this joy by saying to him: "This belongs to you." And then, explaining to him this term "belong," I make him feel that he has put his time, his labor, his effort, finally his person there; that there is in this earth something of himself that he can claim against anyone whomsoever, just as he could withdraw his arm from the hand of another man who wanted to hold on to it in spite of him.

One fine day he arrives eagerly with the watering can in his hand. O what a sight! O pain! All the beans are rooted out, the plot is torn up, the very spot is not to be recognized. O, what has become of my labor, my product, the sweet fruit of my care and my sweat? Who has stolen my goods? Who took my beans from me? This young heart is aroused. The first sentiment of injustice comes to shed its sad bitterness in it. Tears flow in streams. The grieving child fills the air with moans and cries. I partake of his pain, his indignation. We look; we investigate; we make searches. Finally we discover that the gardener did the deed. He is summoned.

But we certainly do not get what we expect. The gardener, learning what we are complaining about, begins to complain more loudly than we do. "What, sirs! Is it you who have thus ruined my work? I had sowed Maltese melons there, the seeds of which had been given me as a treasure and with which I hoped to regale you when they were ripe. But now, in order to plant your miserable beans there, you destroyed my melons for me when they were already sprouting, and they can never be replaced. You have done me an irreparable wrong, and you have deprived yourselves of the pleasure of eating exquisite melons."

JEAN-JACQUES: Excuse us, my poor Robert. You had put your labor, your effort there. I see clearly that we did wrong in ruining your work. But we will have other Maltese seeds sent to you. And we will never again work the land before knowing whether someone has put his hand to it before us.

ROBERT: Very well, sirs! You can then take your rest. There is hardly any fallow land left. I work what my father improved. Each in turn does the same, and all the lands you see have been occupied for a long time.

EMILE: Monsieur Robert, are melon seeds often lost then?

ROBERT: Pardon me, my young fellow, but little gentlemen as giddy as you do not often come our way. No one touches his neighbor's garden. Each respects the labor of others so that his own will be secure.

EMILE: But I don't have a garden.

ROBERT: What do I care? If you ruin mine, I won't let you go around in it any more, for, you see, I don't want to waste my effort.

JEAN-JACQUES: Couldn't we propose an arrangement with the good Robert? Let him grant us, my little friend and me, a corner of his garden to cultivate on the condition that he will have half the produce.

ROBERT: I grant it to you without condition. But remember that I will go and plow up your beans if you touch my melons.

In this model of the way of inculcating primary notions in children one sees how the idea of property naturally goes back to the right of the first occupant by labor. That is clear, distinct, simple, and within the child's reach. From there to the right of property and to exchange there is only a step, after which one must simply stop short.

One sees further that an explanation that I enclose here in two pages of writing will perhaps take a year to put into practice, for in the career of moral ideas one cannot advance too slowly nor consolidate oneself too well at each step. Young masters, think, I beg you, about this example, and remember that in everything your lessons ought to be more in actions than in speeches; for children easily forget what they have said and what has been said to them, but not what they have done and what has been done to them.

Instruction of the kind ought, as I have said, to be given sooner or later as the peaceful or turbulent nature of the pupil accelerates or delays the need. How it should be given is obvious; but so as to leave out nothing of importance in difficult matters, let us give yet another example.

Your ill-tempered child ruins everything he touches. Do not get angry; put what he can damage out of his reach. He breaks the furniture he uses. Do not hurry to replace it for him. Let him feel the disadvantage of being deprived of it. He breaks the windows of his room; let the wind blow on him night and day without worrying about colds, for it is better that he have a cold than that he be crazy. Never complain about the inconveniences he causes you, but make him be the one to feel those inconveniences first. Finally, you have the windows repaired, continuing to say nothing about it. He breaks them again. Then change method. Tell

him curtly but without anger, "The windows are mine; they were put there by my efforts; I want to protect them." Then you will close him up in darkness in a place without windows. In response to such a new procedure he begins by crying and ranting. No one listens to him. Soon he tires and changes tone. He moans and groans. A domestic turns up; the rebel begs him for deliverance. Without seeking pretexts for not doing it, the domestic responds, "I too have windows to protect," and leaves. Finally, after the child has remained there several hours, long enough to get bored and to remember it, someone will suggest to him that he propose an agreement by means of which you will give him back his freedom if he no longer breaks windows. He will not ask for better. He will have you asked to come and see him. You will come. He will make you his proposition, and you will accept it on the instant, saying to him, "That is very well thought out; we will both be gainers by it. Why didn't you have this good idea sooner?" And then, without asking that he declare or confirm his promise, you will embrace him with joy and take him to his room right away, regarding this agreement as sacred and inviolable as if an oath had been given on it. What idea do you think he will get from this procedure about the faith of commitments and their utility? I am mistaken if there is a single child on earth, not already spoiled, who would be proof against this conduct and take it into his head after that to break a window intentionally.* Follow all the links of this chain. The naughty child hardly dreamed, while making a hole for planting his bean, that he was digging for himself a dungeon where his science would not be long in shutting him up.

Here we are in the moral world; here the door on vice opens. With conventions and duties are born deceit and lying. As soon as one can do what one ought not, one wants to hide what one ought not to have done. As soon as an interest causes a promise, a greater interest can cause the violation of the promise. The only concern now is to violate it with impunity. The means are natural; one conceals and one lies. Not having been able to forestall vice, we are now already

*Moreover, if this duty to keep commitments were not consolidated in the child's mind by the weight of its utility, soon the inner sentiment, beginning to sprout, would impose it on him like a law of conscience, like an innate principle which awaits in order to bloom only the kinds of knowledge to which it applies. This first sketch is not drawn by the hand of man but is graven in our hearts by the Author of all justice. Take away the primary law of conventions and the obligation it imposes, and everything is illusory and vain in human society. He who keeps his promise only for profit is hardly more bound than if he had promised nothing, or, at most, he is in the position to violate it like the tennis players who put off using a *bisque* only in order to wait for the moment to use it most advantageously. This principle is of the utmost importance and merits deeper study. For it is here that man begins to set himself in contradiction to himself.

reduced to punishing it. Here are the miseries of human life which begin with its errors.

I have said enough to make it understood that punishment as punishment must never be inflicted on children, but it should always happen to them as a natural consequence of their bad action. Thus you will not declaim against lying; you will not precisely punish them for having lied; but you will arrange it so that all the bad effects of lying—such as not being believed when one tells the truth, of being accused of the evil that one did not do although one denies it—come in league against them when they have lied. But let us explain what lying is for children.

There are two sorts of lies: the *de facto* lie, which is with respect to the past; the *de jure*, which is with respect to the future. The former takes place when one denies having done what one has done, or when one affirms having done what one has not done, and in general when one knowingly speaks contrary to the truth of things. The other takes place when one makes a promise that one does not plan to keep, and, in general, when one gives evidence of an intention contrary to the intention one has. These two lies can sometimes be joined in a single one,* but I am considering them here under the aspect of their difference.

He who is aware of the need he has of others' help, and who never fails to experience their benevolence, has no interest in deceiving them; on the contrary, he has a palpable interest in their seeing things as they are, for fear that they might make a mistake prejudicial to him. It is, therefore, clear that the *de facto* lie is not natural to children. But it is the law of obedience which produces the necessity of lying, because since obedience is irksome, it is secretly dispensed with as much as possible, and the present interest in avoiding punishment or reproach wins out over the distant interest of revealing the truth. In the natural and free education why would your child lie to you? What has he to hide from you? You do not reprove him; you punish him for nothing; you exact nothing from him. Why would he not tell you everything he has done as naïvely as he would his little comrade? He can see in this admission no more danger from one direction than the other.

The *de jure* lie is still less natural, since promises to do or to forbear are conventional acts which depart from the state of nature and impair freedom. What is more, all commitments of children are in themselves null, because, since their limited view cannot extend beyond the present, in committing themselves they

*Such as, when accused of a bad action, the guilty party defends himself by claiming he is an honest man. His lie is then *de facto* and *de jure*.

do not know what they are doing. The child hardly can lie when he commits himself; for, thinking only how to get through a situation at the present moment, every means which does not have a present effect becomes the same for him. In promising for a future time, he promises nothing, and his imagination, still dormant, does not know how to extend his being over two different times. If he could avoid the whip or get a bag of sugared almonds by promising to throw himself out of the window tomorrow, he would make the promise on the spot. This is why laws take no account of children's commitments; and when, more severe, fathers and masters exact their fulfillment, it is only in those things the child ought to do even if he had not promised.

Since the child does not know what he is doing when he commits himself, then he cannot lie in committing himself. It is not the same when he breaks his promise, which is now a kind of retroactive lie, for he remembers very well having made this promise; but what he does not see is the importance of keeping it. Not in a condition to read the future, he cannot foresee the consequences of things, and when he violates his commitments, he does nothing contrary to the reason of his age.

It follows from this that children's lies are all the work of masters, and that to want to teach them to tell the truth is nothing other than to teach them to lie. In one's eagerness to control them, to govern them, to instruct them, one finds one never has sufficient means for reaching the goal. One wants to give oneself new holds on their minds by means of maxims without foundation and precepts without reason; one prefers that they know their lessons and lie, rather than remain ignorant and true.

For us who give our pupils only lessons in practice and who prefer that they be good rather than learned—we do not exact the truth from them lest they disguise it, and we make them give no promises that they would be tempted not to keep. If in my absence something bad were to happen and I did not know the author of it, I would take care not to accuse Emile and say to him, "Was it you?"*—for what else would I be doing by this than teaching him to deny it? If his difficult natural disposition compels me to come to some agreement with him, I will arrange things so carefully that the suggestion always comes from him, never from me; that when he has committed himself, he always has a present and

*Nothing is more indiscreet than such a question, especially when the child is guilty: then if he believes that you know that he did it, he will see that you are setting a trap for him, and this opinion cannot fail to turn him against you. If he does not believe it, he will say to himself, "Why should I reveal my offense?" And this is the first temptation to lie, the effect of your imprudent question.

palpable interest in fulfilling his commitment; and that if he ever fails to do so, the lie attracts evils to him which he sees as coming from the very order of things and not from the vengeance of his governor. But, far from needing to resort to expedients so cruel, I am almost sure that Emile will learn quite late what it is to lie and that, in learning, he will be quite surprised, unable to conceive what a lie might be good for. It is quite clear that the more I make his well-being independent of either the will or the judgments of others, the more I reduce any interest in him to lie.

When one is not in a hurry to instruct, one is not in a hurry to demand and takes one's time so as to demand nothing except opportunely. Then, the child is formed by the very fact of not being spoiled. But when a giddy preceptor, not knowing how to go about it, makes him promise this or that at every instant, without distinction, selectivity, or moderation, the child, bored, overburdened with all these promises, neglects them, forgets them, finally despises them, and, regarding them as so many vain formulas, makes a game out of making them and breaking them. Do you want, then, that he be faithful to his word? Be discreet in exacting it.

The detail I have just gone into about lying can in many respects be applied to all the other duties, which are never prescribed to children except in such a way as to make them not only hateful but impracticable. Appearing to preach virtue to children, one makes them love all the vices. The vices are given to them by forbidding them to have them. Does one want to make them pious? They are taken to church to be bored. Constantly made to mumble prayers, they are driven to aspire to the happiness of no longer praying to God. That charity be inspired in them, they are made to give alms—as if one despised giving them oneself. Oh no, it is not the child who ought to give; it is the master. To the extent that he is attached to his pupil, he ought to dispute this honor with him; he ought to make the pupil judge that at his age one is not yet worthy of it. Alms giving is an action for a man who knows the value of what he gives and the need that his fellow man has of it. In the child, who knows nothing about that, giving cannot be a merit. He gives without charity, without beneficence. He is almost ashamed to give when, based on his example and yours, he believes that it is only children who give and that, grown up, one no longer gives alms.

Note that the child is always made to give only things of whose value he is ignorant—some pieces of metal which he has in his pocket and which he uses only for giving. A child would rather give a hundred louis than a cake. But commit this prodigal distributor to give things which are dear to him—toys, candies, his snack—and we shall soon know if you have made him truly liberal.

A remedy for this, too, is found: it is at once to return to the child what he gave, so that he gets accustomed to giving everything which he is certain of getting back. I have scarcely seen in children any but these two kinds of generosity: giving what is good for nothing for them, or giving what they are sure is going to be returned to them. Arrange it so, says Locke, that they be convinced by experience that the most liberal man always comes off best. That is to make a child in appearance liberal and in fact a miser. Locke adds that children will contract in this way the habit of liberality. Yes, of a usurious liberality which gives an egg to have a cow. But when the case involves straightforward giving, farewell to the habit. When one stops returning, they will soon stop giving. One must look to the habit of the soul rather than to that of the hands. All the other virtues which are taught children resemble this one, and it is to preach these solid virtues to them that one uses up their young years in gloom. Is this not an informed education!

Masters, leave off pretenses. Be virtuous and good. Let your examples be graven in your pupils' memories until they can enter their hearts. Instead of hastening to exact acts of charity from my pupil, I prefer to do them in his presence and to deprive him of even the means of imitating me in this, as an honor which is not for his age; for it is important that he not get accustomed to regarding the duties of men as only the duties of children. If, seeing me assisting the poor, he questions me about it, and it is time to answer him,* I shall say to him: "My friend, this is because, when the poor were willing to let there be rich men, the rich promised to sustain all those who do not have the means of life, either from their goods or from their labor." "Then did you, too, promise that?" he will rejoin. "Certainly, I am master of the wealth that passes through my hands only on the condition attached to its being property."

After having heard this speech (and it has been seen how a child can be put in a condition to understand it), another than Emile would be tempted to imitate me and to behave like a rich man. In such a case I would at least prevent him from doing so ostentatiously. I would prefer his robbing me of my right and covertly giving. This is a fraud appropriate to his age, and the only one I would pardon him.

I know that all these virtues by imitation are the virtues of apes, and that no good action is morally good except when it is done because it is good and not

*It should be grasped that I do not answer his questions when he pleases but when I please; otherwise I would be the servant of his will and put myself in the most dangerous dependence in which a governor can be in relation to his pupil.

because others do it. But at an age when the heart feels nothing yet, children just have to be made to imitate the acts whose habit one wants to give them, until the time when they can do them out of discernment and love of the good. Man is an imitator. Even animals are. The taste for imitation belongs to well-ordered nature, but in society it degenerates into vice. The ape imitates man whom he fears and does not imitate the animals whom he despises. He judges to be good what is done by a being better than he. Among us, on the other hand, our Harlequins of every sort imitate the beautiful to degrade it, to make it ridiculous. They seek, in the feeling of their own baseness, to level what surpasses them in worth. Or if they make efforts to imitate what they admire, one sees in the choice of objects the false taste of the imitators. They want to make an impression on others or to get applause for their talent far more than to make themselves better or wiser. The foundation of imitation among us comes from the desire always to be transported out of ourselves. If I succeed in my enterprise, Emile surely will not have this desire. We must, therefore, give up the apparent good which imitation can produce.

Think through all the rules of your education; you will find them misconceived, especially those that concern virtues and morals. The only lesson of morality appropriate to childhood, and the most important for every age, is never to harm anyone. The very precept of doing good, if it is not subordinated to this one, is dangerous, false, and contradictory. Who does not do good? Everybody does it—the wicked man as well as others. He makes one man happy at the expense of making a hundred men miserable; and this is the source of all our calamities. The most sublime virtues are negative. They are also the most difficult, because they are without ostentation and above even that pleasure so sweet to the heart of man, the pleasure of sending someone away satisfied with us, O what good is necessarily done to his fellows by the one among them, if there is such a one, who never does them harm! What an intrepid soul, what a vigorous character he needs for that! It is not in reasoning about this maxim, but in trying to put it into practice, that one feels how great it is and how difficult of success.*

*The precept of never hurting another carries with it that of being attached to human society as little as possible, for in the social state the good of one necessarily constitutes the harm of another. This relation is in the essence of the thing, and nothing can change it. On the basis of this principle, let one investigate who is the better; the social man or the solitary man. An illustrious author says it is only the wicked man who is alone. I say that it is only the good man who is alone. If this proposition is less sententious, it is truer and better reasoned than the former one. If the wicked man were alone, what harm would he do? It is in society that he sets up his devices for hurting others. If one wishes to turn this argument around to apply to the good man, I answer with the passage to which this note belongs.

These are but a few feeble ideas of the precautions I would wish to see taken in giving children instruction that one sometimes cannot refuse them without exposing them to harming themselves and others—and especially to contracting bad habits which would be hard to correct in them later. But we can be sure that this necessity will rarely present itself for children raised as they ought to be. Because it is impossible for them to become intractable, wicked, lying, greedy, when one has not sowed in their hearts the vices which make them such. Thus, what I have said on this point serves more for the exception than the rule. But to the extent that children have more occasions to step out of their condition and contract the vices of men, exceptions of this kind are the more frequent. Those raised in the midst of men must of necessity have earlier instruction than those raised in an out-of-the-way place. This solitary education would, therefore, be preferable even if its only effect were to give childhood the time for ripening.

There is on the other side another kind of exception for those whom a happy nature raises above their age. As there are men who never leave childhood, there are others who, so to speak, do not go through it and who are men almost at birth. The difficulty is that this latter exception is very rare, very hard to recognize, and that every mother, imagining that a child might be a prodigy, has no doubt that hers is one. Mothers go yet farther; they take as marks of extraordinary promise the very things which point to the accustomed order: vivacity, flashes of wit, giddiness, piquant naïveté—all the most characteristic and telling signs that a child is only a child. Is it surprising that he who is made to talk a lot, who is permitted to say everything, and who is not hindered by deference or propriety, should by chance make some lucky hit? It would be far more surprising if he never did, just as it would be if along with a thousand lies an astrologer never predicted a single truth. They will lie so much, said Henri IV, that finally they will tell the truth. Whoever wishes to come up with a certain number of *bons mots* has only to say many stupid things. God save the fashionable folk who have no other claim to fame.

The most brilliant thoughts can come into children's brains, or, rather, the best lines into their mouths, as diamonds of the greatest value might come into their hands, without either the thoughts or the diamonds thereby belonging to them. There is no true property of any kind at that age. The things a child says are not to him what they are to us; he does not attach the same ideas to them. His ideas, if indeed he has any at all, will have neither order nor connection in his head—nothing fixed, nothing certain in all that he thinks. Examine your alleged prodigy. At certain moments you will find in him an extremely taut main-spring, a clarity of mind which can pierce the clouds. Most often this same mind

will seem lax to you, soggy, and, as it were, surrounded by a thick fog. At one time it gets ahead of you, the next, it remains immobile. At one moment you would say, "He's a genius," and at the next, "He's a fool." You would be mistaken in both cases: what he is is a child. He is an eaglet who for an instant cleaves the air and then falls back into his eyrie.

Treat him, then, according to his age, in spite of the appearances, and be afraid of exhausting his strength for having wanted to exercise it too much. If this young brain warms up, if you see it beginning to boil, let it ferment freely at first, but never stimulate it lest it expend itself. And when the first spirits have evaporated, retain and compress the others until, over the years, all turns into heat and true strength. Otherwise, you will waste your time and your effort. You will destroy your own work; and after having intoxicated yourself out of season on all these inflammable vapors, you will be left with only a *marc* without vigor.

From giddy children come vulgar men. I know of no observation more universal and more certain than this one. Nothing is more difficult in respect of childhood than to distinguish real stupidity from that merely apparent and deceptive stupidity which is the presage of strong souls. It seems strange at first that the two extremes should have such similar signs. Nevertheless, it is properly so; for at an age when man as yet has nothing that is truly an idea, the entire difference between one who has genius and one who does not is that the latter accepts only false ideas, and the former, finding only such, accepts none. Thus the genius resembles the stupid child in that the latter is capable of nothing while nothing is suitable for the former. The only sign which permits the two to be distinguished depends on chance, which may present the genius some idea within his reach, while the stupid child is always the same everywhere. Cato the Younger during his childhood seemed an imbecile at home. He was taciturn and stubborn—this is all he was judged to be. It was only in Sulla's antechamber that his uncle learned to know him. If he had not entered that antechamber, perhaps he would have passed for a brute until the age of reason. If Caesar had not lived, perhaps they would always have treated as a visionary this very Cato who discerned Caesar's fatal genius and foresaw all his projects so far in advance. O how those who make such hasty judgments about children are liable to mistakes! They are often more children than the children. I have seen a man who honored me with his friendship taken, at a rather advanced age, to be a limited mind by his family and his friends. This excellent head ripened in silence. Suddenly he proved to be a philosopher, and I do not doubt that posterity will give him an honorable and distinguished place among the best reasoners and the most profound metaphysicians of his age.

Respect childhood, and do not hurry to judge it, either for good or for ill. Let the exceptional children show themselves, be proved, and be confirmed for a long time before adopting special methods for them. Leave nature to act for a long time before you get involved with acting in its place, lest you impede its operations. You know, you say, the value of time and do not want to waste any of it? You do not see that using time badly wastes time far more than doing nothing with it and that a badly instructed child is farther from wisdom than the one who has not been instructed at all. You are alarmed to see him consume his early years in doing nothing. What? Is it nothing to be happy? Is it nothing to jump, play, and run all day? He will never be so busy in his life. Plato in his republic, believed to be so austere, raises the children only by festivals, games, songs, and pastimes; one could say that he has done everything when he has taught them well how to enjoy themselves. And Seneca, speaking of the old Roman youth, says: "They were always on their feet; they were taught nothing that had to be taught sitting." Were they for that worth any the less on reaching manhood? Therefore, do not be overly frightened by this alleged idleness. What would you say of a man who, in order to profit from his whole life, never wanted to sleep? You would say, "That man is crazy; he does not gain time for his joy; he deprives himself of it. To flee sleep, he races toward death." Be aware, then, that we have here the same thing and that childhood is reason's sleep.

Apparent facility at learning is the cause of children's ruin. It is not seen that this very facility is the proof they learn nothing. Their brain, smooth and polished, returns, like a mirror, the objects presented to it. But nothing remains; nothing penetrates. The child retains the words; the ideas are reflected off of him. Those who hear him understand them; only he does not understand them.

Although memory and reasoning are two essentially different faculties, nevertheless the one develops truly only with the other. Before the age of reason the child receives not ideas but images; and the difference between the two is that images are only absolute depictions of sensible objects, while ideas are notions of objects determined by relations. An image can stand all alone in the mind which represents it, but every idea supposes other ideas. When one imagines, one does nothing but see; when one conceives, one is comparing. Our sensations are purely passive, while all our perceptions or ideas are born out of an active principle which judges. This will be demonstrated hereafter.

Therefore I say that children, not being capable of judgment, do not have true memory. They retain sounds, figures, sensations, ideas rarely, the connections between ideas more rarely. Those who object, saying that children learn some elements of geometry, believe this to be good proof against me; whereas on the

contrary, it is proof for my case. It is demonstrable that, far from knowing how to reason by themselves, little geometers do not even know how to retain the reasonings of others. For follow them in their method, and you see immediately that they have retained only the exact impression of the figure and the terms of the demonstration. At the least new objection they can no longer follow. Turn the figure upside down, they can no longer follow. Their entire learning is in sensation; nothing has gone through to the understanding. Their memory itself is hardly more perfect than their other faculties, since they must almost always, when they are grown, relearn the things for which they learned the words in childhood.

I am, however, very far from thinking that children have no kind of reasoning.* On the contrary, I see that they reason very well in everything they know that relates to their immediate and palpable interest. But one is mistaken about their knowledge, ascribing to them knowledge they do not have and making them reason about what they could not understand. One is again mistaken in wanting to make them pay attention to considerations which do not touch them in any way, such as their future concerns, their happiness when they are men, the esteem in which they will be held as adults—speeches which, given to beings unendowed with any foresight, signify absolutely nothing to them. Now all the studies forced on these poor unfortunates are directed to these objects entirely alien to their minds. You can judge of the attention they can pay to them!

The pedagogues who present such a showy display of the instruction they give their disciples are paid for using other language than mine. However, one sees by their very conduct that they think exactly as I do, for what do they teach them after all? Words, more words, always words. Among the various sciences that they boast of teaching their pupils, they are quite careful not to include those which would be truly useful to them, because they would be sciences of things, and with these they would not succeed. Rather they choose those sciences one appears to

*I have a hundred times in writing made the reflection that it is impossible in a long work always to give the same meanings to the same words. There is no language rich enough to furnish as many terms, turns, and phrases as our ideas can have modifications. The method of defining all the terms and constantly substituting the definition in the place of the defined is fine but impracticable, for how can a circle be avoided? Definitions could be good if words were not used to make them. In spite of that, I am persuaded that one can be clear, even in the poverty of our language, not by always giving the same meanings to the same words, but by arranging it so that as often as each word is used, the meaning given it be sufficiently determined by the ideas related to it and that each period where the word is found serves it, so to speak, as a definition. One time I say children are incapable of reasoning; another time I make them reason quite keenly. I do not believe that with that I contradict myself in my ideas; but I cannot gainsay that I often contradict myself in my expressions.

know when one knows their terminology: heraldry, geography, chronology, languages, etc.—all studies so far from man, and especially from the child, that it would be a wonder if anything at all in them were of use to him a single time in his life.

People will be surprised that I number the study of languages among the useless parts of education. But remember that I am speaking here only of studies appropriate to the early years; and, whatever may be said, I do not believe that up to the age of twelve or fifteen any child, prodigies apart, has ever truly learned two languages.

I agree that if the study of languages were only the study of words—that is to say, of figures or the sounds which express them—it could be suitable for children. But in changing the signs, languages also modify the ideas which these signs represent. Minds are formed by languages; the thoughts take on the color of the idioms. Only reason is common; in each language the mind has its particular form. This is a difference which might very well be a part of the cause or of the effect of national characters; and what appears to confirm this conjecture is that in all the nations of the world language follows the vicissitudes of morals and is preserved or degenerates as they are.

Normal usage gives but one of all these various forms to the child, and it is the only one he keeps until the age of reason. To have two, he would have to know how to compare ideas, and how could he compare them when he is hardly in a condition to conceive them? Each thing can have for him a thousand different signs. But each idea can have only one form. He can, therefore, learn to speak only one language. I am told, however, that he learns several. I deny it. I have seen these little prodigies who believed that they spoke five or six languages. I have heard them speak German in Latin terms, in French terms, in Italian terms successively. They did in truth make use of five or six lexicons. But they always spoke only German. In a word, give children as many synonyms as you please; you will change the words, not the language. They will never know any but one.

It is to hide this ineptitude of theirs that they are by preference trained in the dead languages, of which there are no more judges to whom one can have recourse. The familiar usage of these languages having long been lost, one is satisfied with imitating what is found written in books. And that is what is called speaking them. If such is the masters' Greek and Latin, you can judge the children's! Hardly have they learned by heart the rudiments, of which they understand absolutely nothing, when they are first taught to render a French discourse in Latin words; then, when they are more advanced, to stitch together in prose some phrases of Cicero and in verse some morsels of Virgil. Then they believe that they speak Latin. Who will come and contradict them?

In any study whatsoever, unless one has the ideas of the things represented, the representative signs are nothing. However, one always limits the child to these signs without ever being able to make him understand any of the things which they represent. Thinking he is being taught a description of the earth, he learns only to know some maps. He is taught the names of cities, of countries, of rivers which he does not conceive as existing anywhere else but on the paper where he is showed them. I remember having seen somewhere a geography text which began thus: "What is the world? It is a cardboard globe." Such precisely is the geography of children. I set down as a fact that after two years of globe and cosmography there is not a single child of ten who, following the rules he has been given, knows how to get from Paris to Saint-Denis. I set down as a fact that there is not one who, on the basis of a map of his father's garden, is able to follow its winding paths without getting lost. These are the doctors who know on the spur of the moment where Peking, Ispahan, Mexico, and all the countries of the earth are.

I hear it said that it is suitable to busy children with studies requiring only their eyes. That might be, if there were some study in which only eyes were required. But I know of none such.

By an error even more ridiculous they are made to study history. One imagines that history is within their reach because it is only a collection of facts. But what is meant by this word *facts*? Can anyone believe that the relations which determine historical facts are so easy to grasp that ideas are effortlessly formed from the facts in children's minds? Can anyone believe that the true knowledge of events is separable from that of their causes or of their effects and that the historical is so little connected with the moral that one can be known without the other? If you see in men's actions only the exterior and purely physical movements, what do you learn from history? Absolutely nothing. And this study, devoid of all interest, gives you no more pleasure than it does instruction. If you want your pupils to appreciate such actions in their moral relations, try to make them understand these relations, and you will see then whether history is a proper study at their age.

Readers, always remember that he who speaks to you is neither a scholar nor a philosopher, but a simple man, a friend of the truth, without party, without system; a solitary who, living little among men, has less occasion to contract their prejudices and more time to reflect on what strikes him when he has commerce with them. My reasonings are founded less on principles than on facts; and I believe that I cannot better put you in a position to judge of them than often to report to you some example of the observations which suggested them to me.

I had gone to spend a few days in the country at the home of a good mother of a family who took great care of her children and their education. One morning when I was present at the lessons of the eldest, his governor, who had instructed him very well in ancient history, was reviewing the history of Alexander. He took up the famous story about Philip, the physician, which has been a subject of painting, and which was surely well worth the effort. The governor, a man of merit, made several reflections on Alexander's intrepidity, which did not please me at all, but which I avoided disputing so as not to discredit him in his pupil's mind. At table they did not fail, according to the French method, to make the little gentleman babble a great deal. The vivacity natural to his age, along with the expectation of certain applause, made him reel off countless stupidities, in the midst of which from time to time there came a few lucky words which caused the rest to be forgotten. Finally came the story of Philip, the physician. He told it quite clearly and with much grace. After the ordinary tribute of praises exacted by the mother and expected by the son, there was discussion about what he had said. The greater number blamed the temerity of Alexander; some, after the governor's example, admired his firmness and his courage—which made me understand that none of those present saw wherein lay the true beauty of this story. "As for me," I said to them, "it seems that if there is the least courage, the least firmness, in Alexander's action, it is foolhardy." Then everyone joined in and agreed that it was foolhardy. I was going to respond and was getting heated when a woman sitting beside me, who had not opened her mouth, leaned toward my ear and said softly to me, "Keep quiet, Jean-Jacques, they won't understand you." I looked at her; I was struck; and I kept quiet.

After the dinner, suspecting, on the basis of several bits of evidence, that my young doctor had understood nothing at all of the story he had told so well, I took him by the hand and went for a turn in the park with him. Having questioned him at my ease, I found that more than anyone he admired Alexander's much-vaunted courage. But do you know in what he found this courage to consist? Solely in having swallowed at a single gulp a bad-tasting potion, without hesitation, without the least sign of repugnance. The poor child, who had been made to take medicine not two weeks before, and who had taken it only after a mighty effort, still had its aftertaste in his mouth. Death and poisoning stood in his mind only for disagreeable sensations; and he did not conceive, for his part, of any other poison than senna. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that the hero's firmness had made a great impression on the boy's young heart, and that, at the next medicine he would have to swallow, he had resolved to be an Alexander. Without going into clarifications which were evidently out of his reach, I confirmed him in these

laudable dispositions; and I went back laughing to myself at the lofty wisdom of fathers and masters who think they teach history to children.

It is easy to put into their mouths the words *kings, empires, wars, conquests, revolutions, laws*. But if it is a question of attaching distinct ideas to these words, there is a long way from the conversation with Robert the gardener to all these explanations.

Some readers, discontented with the “Keep quiet, Jean-Jacques,” will, I foresee, ask what, after all, do I find so fair in Alexander’s action? Unfortunate people! If you have to be told, how will you understand it? It is that Alexander believed in virtue; it is that he staked his head, his own life on that belief; it is that his great soul was made for believing in it. Oh, what a fair profession of faith was the swallowing of that medicine! No, never did a mortal make so sublime a one. If there is some modern Alexander, let him be showed to me by like deeds.

If there is no science of words, there is no study proper for children. If they have no true ideas, they have no true memory, for I do not call by that name the mere retention of sensations. What is the use of inscribing in their heads a catalogue of signs which represent nothing for them? In learning the things, will they not learn the signs? Why put them to the useless effort of learning the signs twice? And, meanwhile, what dangerous prejudices does one not begin to inspire in them by making them take for science words which have no sense for them? It is with the first word the child uses in order to show off, it is with the first thing he takes on another’s word without seeing its utility himself, that his judgment is lost. He will have to shine in the eyes of fools for a long time in order to make up for such a loss.*

No, if nature gives the child’s brain the suppleness that fits it to receive all sorts of impressions, it is not in order to engrave on this brain the names of kings, dates, terms of heraldry, globes and geography, and all those words without any sense for the child’s age, and devoid of utility for any age whatsoever, with which his sad and sterile childhood is burdened. Rather, the suppleness is there in order

*Most learned men are learned in the way of children. Vast erudition results less from a multitude of ideas than from a multitude of images. Dates, proper names, places, all objects isolated or devoid of ideas are retained solely by memory of signs; and rarely does one recall some one of these things without at the same time seeing the page on the right- or the left-hand side where it was read or the form in which it was seen for the first time. Pretty nearly such was the science fashionable in the last ages. That of our age is something else. One no longer studies, one no longer observes, one dreams; and we are gravely presented with the dreams of some bad nights as philosophy. I will be told that I, too, dream. I agree; but I give my dreams as dreams, which others are not careful to do, leaving it to the reader to find out whether they contain something useful for people who are awake.

that all the ideas which he can conceive and are useful to him—all those which are related to his happiness and are one day going to enlighten him about his duties—may be impressed on his brain with an indelible stamp at an early age and help him during his life to behave in a way suitable to his being and his faculties.

The kind of memory a child can have does not, without his studying books, for this reason remain idle. Everything he sees, everything he hears strikes him, and he remembers it. He keeps in himself a record of the actions and the speeches of men, and all that surrounds him is the book in which, without thinking about it, he continually enriches his memory while waiting for his judgment to be able to profit from it. It is in the choice of these objects, it is in the care with which one constantly presents him the objects he can know, and hides from him those he ought not to know, that the true art of cultivating in him this first faculty consists; and it is in this way that one must try to form in him a storehouse of knowledge which serves his education during his youth and his conduct at all times. This method, it is true, does not form little prodigies and does not make governors and preceptors shine. But it forms men who are judicious, robust, healthy of body and understanding, men who, without having made themselves admired when young, make themselves honored when grown.

Emile will never learn anything by heart, not even fables, not even those of La Fontaine, as naïve, as charming as they are, for the words of fables are no more fables than the words of history are history. How can people be so blinded as to call fables the morality of children? They do not think about how the apologue, in giving enjoyment to children, deceives them; about how, seduced by the lie, they let the truth escape; and about how what is done to make the instruction agreeable to them prevents them from profiting from it. Fables can instruct men, but the naked truth has to be told to children. When one starts covering the truth with a veil, they no longer make the effort to lift it.

All children are made to learn the fables of La Fontaine; and there is not a single one who understands them. If they were to understand them, that would be still worse, for the moral in them is so mixed and so disproportionate to their age that it would lead them more to vice than to virtue. These again, you will say, are paradoxes. So be it; but let us see whether they are truths.

I say that a child does not understand the fables he is made to learn, because, no matter what effort is made to simplify them, the instruction that one wants to draw from them compels the introduction of ideas he cannot grasp; and because poetry's very skill at making them easier for him to retain makes them difficult for him to conceive, so that one buys delight at the expense of clarity.

Without citing that multitude of fables which contain nothing intelligible or useful for children and which they are made to learn along with the others indiscriminately because they are found mixed in with them, let us limit ourselves to those the author seems to have made especially for children.

I know in the whole collection of La Fontaine only five or six fables in which childish naïveté genuinely predominates. Of these five or six I take for example the very first because it is the one whose moral is most fitting to all ages, the one children grasp best, the one they learn with the most pleasure, finally the one that for this very reason the author chose to put at the head of his book. Supposing that his object were to be really understood by children, to please and instruct them, this fable is assuredly his masterpiece. Permit me then to follow it through and examine it in a few words.

THE CROW AND THE FOX

FABLE

Master Crow, on a tree perched,

Master! What does this word signify in itself? What does it signify in front of a proper name? What meaning has it on this occasion?

What is a crow?

What is *a tree perched*? One does not say: “on a tree perched”; one says: “perched on a tree.” Consequently one has to talk about poetic inversions; one has to tell what prose and verse are.

Held in his beak a cheese.

What cheese? Was it a Swiss cheese, a Brie, or a Dutch? If the child has not seen crows, what do you gain by speaking to him about them? If he has seen them, how will he conceive of their holding a cheese in their beak? Let us always make images according to nature.

Master Fox by the odor atticed

Another master! But to this one the title really belongs: he is a past-master in the tricks of his trade. One has to say what a fox is and distinguish its true nature from the conventional character it has in fables.

Atticed. This word is not current. One has to explain it; one has to say that it is not used anymore except in verse. The child will ask why one speaks differently in verse than in prose. What will you respond to him?

“Atticed by the odor of a cheese!” This cheese held by a crow perched on a tree must have quite an odor to be smelled by the fox in a copse or in his hole! Is this the way you give your pupil practice in that spirit of judicious criticism which does not allow itself to be impressed except by real likelihoods and knows how to discern truth from lie in others’ narrations?

Made to him a speech of this kind.

A speech! Foxes speak, then? They speak, then, the same language as crows? Wise preceptor, be careful. Weigh your response well before making it. It is more important than you think.

Well, good day, Monsieur Crow!

Monsieur! A title that the child sees used derisively even before he knows that it is a title of honor. Those who say “Monsieur du Crow” will have a lot of explaining to do before they explain that *du*.

How charming you are! How handsome you seem to me!

Padding, useless redundancy. The child, seeing the same things repeated in other terms, learns slovenly speech. If you say that the redundancy is part of the author’s art and belongs to the plan of the fox who wants to appear to multiply the praises with the words, this excuse will be good for me but not for my pupil.

Without lying, if your song

Without lying! One lies sometimes, then? Where will the child be if you teach him that the fox says “without lying” only because he is lying?

Corresponds to your plumage,

Corresponds! What does this word signify? Teach the child to compare qualities so different as voice and plumage. You will see how he will understand you!

You would be the Phoenix of the landlords of these woods.

The Phoenix! What is a phoenix? Here we are cast suddenly into antiquity’s lies, almost into mythology.

The landlords of these woods! What figurative speech! The flatterer ennobles his language and gives it more dignity to make it more seductive. Will a child understand this finesse? Does he so much as know, can he know, what is a noble style and a low style?

At these words the Crow cannot contain his joy.

One must have already experienced very lively passions to have a feeling for this proverbial expression.

And to show his fine voice

Do not forget that to understand this verse and the whole fable, the child ought to know what the crow's fine voice is.

He opens his big beak, lets fall his prey.

This verse is admirable. The harmony alone produces an image. I see a big ugly beak opened; I hear the cheese falling through the branches. But this sort of beauty is lost on children.

The Fox grabs it and says: My good monsieur,

Here, then, goodness is already transformed into stupidity. Assuredly, no time is lost in instructing children.

Learn that every flatterer

General maxim. We can no longer follow.

Lives at the expense of the one who listens to him.

Never did a ten-year-old child understand that verse.

This lesson is doubtless worth a cheese.

This is understandable, and the thought is very good. However, there will still be very few children who know how to compare a lesson with a cheese and who would not prefer the cheese to the lesson. One must, therefore, make them understand that this remark is only mockery. What finesse for children!

The Crow, ashamed and embarrassed,

Another pleonasm; but this one is inexcusable.

Swore, but a little late, that he would not be caught that way again.

Swore! Who is the fool of a master who dares to explain to the child what an oath is?

A lot of detail. A lot less, however, than would be required to analyze all the ideas of this fable and to reduce them to the simple and elementary ideas from

which each of them is composed. But who believes he needs this analysis to make himself understood by youth? None of us is philosophic enough to know how to put himself in a child's place. Let us now pass on to the moral.

I ask whether it is necessary to teach six-year-old children that there are men who flatter and lie for profit? One could at most teach them that there are mockers who ridicule little boys and in secret make fun of their stupid vanity. But the cheese spoils everything. They are taught less not to let it fall from their beaks than to make it fall from the beak of another. This is my second paradox; and it is not the least important.

Follow children learning their fables; and you will see that when they are in a position to apply them, they almost always do so in a way opposite to the author's intention, and that instead of looking within themselves for the shortcoming that one wants to cure or prevent, they tend to like the vice with which one takes advantage of others' shortcomings. In the preceding fable children make fun of the crow, but they all take a fancy to the fox. In the fable which follows, you believe you are giving them the cicada as an example, and it is not at all so. It is the ant they will choose. One does not like being humiliated. They will always take the advantageous role. It is the choice of *amour-propre*; it is a very natural choice. Now what a horrible lesson for childhood! The most odious of all monsters would be an avaricious and hard child who knew what was asked of him and refused. The ant does yet more; it teaches him to mix mockery with his refusal.

In all the fables where the lion is one of the personages, since he is ordinarily the most brilliant, the child does not fail to make himself a lion; and when he presides over some dividing up of portions, well instructed by his model, he takes great care to take everything for himself. But when the gnat fells the lion, the situation is entirely different; the child is then no longer a lion; he is a gnat. He learns how one day to kill with stings those he would not dare to stand and attack.

In the fable of the lean wolf and the fat dog, instead of a lesson in moderation, which is what it is claimed the child is being given, he gets one in license. I shall never forget having seen a little girl weeping bitterly, upset by this fable which was supposedly preaching docility to her. It was difficult to get at the cause of her tears. Finally we found out. The poor child was irritated by being chained. She felt her neck rubbed raw. She was crying at not being a wolf.

Thus, the moral of the first fable cited is for the child a lesson in the basest flattery; of the second, a lesson in inhumanity; of the third, a lesson in injustice; of the fourth, a lesson in satire; of the fifth, a lesson in independence. This last lesson, superfluous as it is for my pupil, is no more suitable for yours. When you

give him contradictory precepts, what fruit do you hope for from your efforts? But, perhaps, with this exception, this whole morality which serves me as an objection to fables provides as many reasons for preserving them. In society there is needed one morality in words and one in action, and these two moralities do not resemble each other. The first is in the catechism, where it is left. The other is in La Fontaine's fables for children and in his tales for mothers. The same author suffices for everything.

Let us come to terms, Monsieur de La Fontaine. I promise, for my part, to read you indiscriminately, to like you, to instruct myself in your fables, for I hope not to be deceived about their object. But, as for my pupil, permit me not to let him study a single one of them until you have proved to me that it is good for him to learn things a quarter of which he will not understand; that in those he will be able to understand, he will never be led astray; and that he will not, instead of improving himself on the dupe's example, form himself after the rascal's example.

In thus taking away all duties from children, I take away the instruments of their greatest misery—that is, books. Reading is the plague of childhood and almost the only occupation we know how to give it. At twelve Emile will hardly know what a book is. But, it will be said, he certainly must at least know how to read. I agree. He must know how to read when reading is useful to him; up to then it is only good for boring him.

If one ought to demand nothing of children through obedience, it follows that they can learn nothing of which they do not feel the real and present advantage in either pleasure or utility. Otherwise, what motive would bring them to learn it? The art of speaking to and hearing from absent people, the art of communicating our feelings, our wills, our desires to them at a distance without a mediator is an art whose utility can be rendered palpable to all ages. What wonderful means were used to turn so useful and so agreeable an art into a torment for childhood? Because the young are constrained to apply themselves to it in spite of themselves, it is put to uses of which they understand nothing. A child is not very eager to perfect the instrument with which he is tormented. But arrange things so that this instrument serves his pleasures, and soon he will apply himself to it in spite of you.

A great business is made of seeking the best methods of teaching reading. Desks and cards are invented; a child's room is made into a printing shop. Locke wants him to learn to read with dice. Now is that not a clever invention? What a pity! A means surer than all these, and the one always forgotten, is the desire to learn. Give the child this desire; then let your desks and your dice go. Any method will be good for him.

Present interest—that is the great mover, the only one which leads surely and far. Sometimes Emile receives from his father, from his mother, from his relatives, from his friends, notes of invitation for a dinner, for a walk, for an outing on the water, for watching some public festival. These notes are short, clear, distinct, well written. Someone has to be found who can read them to him. This someone either is not always to be found on the spur of the moment or is paying the child back for his unwillingness to oblige him the day before. Thus the occasion, the moment, is missed. Finally the note is read to him, but it is too late. Oh, if he had known how to read himself! Other notes are received. They are so short! Their subject is so interesting! He would like to try to decipher them. Sometimes he is given help, and sometimes he is refused it. Finally he deciphers half of a note. It has to do with going tomorrow to eat custard . . . he does not know where or with whom . . . how many efforts he makes to read the rest! I do not believe Emile will need the desk. Shall I speak now of writing? No. I am ashamed of playing with this kind of foolishness in an educational treatise.

I shall add this one word which constitutes an important maxim: it is that usually one gets very surely and quickly what one is not in a hurry to get. I am almost certain that Emile will know how to read and write perfectly before the age of ten, precisely because it makes very little difference to me that he knows how before fifteen. But I would rather that he never knew how to read if this science has to be bought at the price of all that can make it useful. Of what use will reading be to him if it has been made repulsive to him forever? *Id in primis cavere oportebit, ne studia, qui amare nondum poterit, oderit, et amaritudinem semel perceptam etiam ultra rudes annos reformidet.**

The more I insist on my inactive method, the stronger I see your objections grow. If your pupil learns nothing from you, he will learn from others. If you do not forestall error by means of truth, he will learn lies. The prejudices you are afraid of giving him, he will receive from everything around him. They will enter by all his senses: either they will corrupt his reason even before it is formed, or his mind, stupefied by long inactivity, will be engrossed in matter. The lack of the habit of thinking in childhood takes away the faculty for the rest of life.

It seems to me that I could easily answer that. But why always answers? If my method by itself answers objections, it is good. If it does not answer them, it is worthless, I shall proceed.

If, according to the plan I have begun to outline, you follow rules directly contrary to the established ones; if instead of taking your pupil's mind far away;

*Quintilian *Institutio Oratorio* I:20.

if instead of constantly leading it astray in other places, other climates, other times, at the extremities of the earth and up to the heavens, you apply yourself to keeping him always within himself and attentive to what touches him immediately, then you will find him capable of perception, memory, and even reasoning. This is nature's order. To the extent the sensitive being becomes active, he acquires a discernment proportionate to his strengths; and it is only with a surplus of strength beyond what he needs to preserve himself that there develops in him the speculative faculty fit to employ this excess of strength for other uses. Do you, then, want to cultivate your pupil's intelligence? Cultivate the strengths it ought to govern. Exercise his body continually; make him robust and healthy in order to make him wise and reasonable. Let him work, be active, run, yell, always be in motion. Let him be a man in his vigor, and soon he will be one in his reason.

You will make him sodden, it is true, by this method if you go about always giving him directions, always telling him, "Go, come, stay, do this, don't do that." If your head always controls his arms, his head becomes useless to him. But remember our conventions. If you are only a pedant, it is not worth the effort to read me.

It is a most pitiable error to imagine that the exercise of the body is harmful to the operations of the mind, as if these two activities ought not to move together in harmony and that the one ought not always to direct the other!

There are two sorts of men whose bodies are in constant activity, and who both surely think equally little of cultivating their souls—that is, peasants and savages. The former are crude, heavy, maladroit; the latter, known for their good sense, are also known for their subtlety of mind. To put it generally, nothing is duller than a peasant and nothing sharper than a savage. What is the source of this difference? It is that the former, doing always what he is ordered or what he saw his father do or what he has himself done since his youth, works only by routine; and in his life, almost an automaton's, constantly busy with the same labors, habit and obedience take the place of reason for him.

For the savage it is another story. Attached to no place, without prescribed task, obeying no one, with no other law than his will, he is forced to reason in each action of his life. He does not make a movement, not a step, without having beforehand envisaged the consequences. Thus, the more his body is exercised, the more his mind is enlightened; his strength and his reason grow together, and one is extended by the other.

Learned preceptor, let us see which of our two pupils resembles the savage and which resembles the peasant. Submitted in everything to an authority which is

always teaching, yours does nothing unless given the word. He dares not eat when he is hungry, nor laugh when he is gay, nor cry when he is sad, nor put out one hand instead of the other, nor move his foot except as has been prescribed to him. Soon he will dare to breathe only according to your rules. About what do you want him to think when you think about everything for him? Assured of your foresight, what need has he of any? Seeing that you take the responsibility for his preservation, for his well-being, he feels delivered from this care. His judgment rests on yours. Everything you do not forbid him, he does without reflection, knowing well that he does it without risk. What need does he have to foresee rain? He knows that you look at the sky for him. What need has he to organize his walk? He has no fear that you would let the dinner hour pass. So long as you do not forbid him to eat, he eats. When you forbid him, he eats no more. He no longer listens to the opinions of his stomach but yours. You may very well soften his body by inactivity, you do not for that make his understanding more flexible. All to the contrary, you complete the work of discrediting reason in his mind by making him use the little he possesses on the things which appear to him the most useless. Never seeing what it is good for, he finally makes the judgment that it is good for nothing. The worst that can happen to him from reasoning badly is to be admonished; and that happens to him so often that he hardly thinks about it; a danger so common no longer frightens him.

You find, however, that he is clever, and so he is when it comes to babbling with women in the manner about which I have already spoken. But when it comes to a case of personal risk, to his taking a position in some difficult situation, you will find him to be a hundred times stupider and more foolish than the son of the biggest yokel.

As for my pupil, or rather nature's, trained early to be as self-sufficient as possible, he is not accustomed to turning constantly to others; still less is he accustomed to displaying his great learning for them. On the other hand, he judges, he foresees, he reasons in everything immediately related to him. He does not chatter; he acts. He does not know a word of what is going on in society, but he knows very well how to do what suits him. Since he is constantly in motion, he is forced to observe many things, to know many effects. He acquires a large experience early. He gets his lessons from nature and not from men. He instructs himself so much the better because he sees nowhere the intention to instruct him. Thus his body and his mind are exercised together. Acting always according to his own thought and not someone else's, he continually unites two operations: the more he makes himself strong and robust, the more he becomes sensible and judicious. This is the way one day to have what are believed incompatible and

what are united in almost all great men: strength of body and strength of soul; a wise man's reason and an athlete's vigor.

Young teacher, I am preaching a difficult art to you, that of governing without precepts and doing everything by doing nothing. This art, I agree, is not one that goes with your age; it is not fit to make your talents conspicuous from the outset nor to make an impression on fathers. But it is the only one fit for succeeding. You will never get to the point of producing wise men if you do not in the first place produce rascals. This was the education of the Spartans: instead of being glued to books, they began by being taught how to steal their dinner. Were the Spartans as a result crude when grown? Who does not know the force and saltiness of their rejoinders? Always made to conquer, they crushed their enemies in every kind of war; and the Athenian babblers feared their words as much as their blows.

In the most careful educations the master commands and believes he governs. It is actually the child who governs. He uses what you exact from him to obtain from you what pleases him; and he always knows how to make you pay a week of obligingness for an hour of assiduity. At every instant pacts must be made with him. These treaties, which you propose in your fashion and he executes in his, always turn to the profit of his whims, especially when you are so clumsy as to promise him something as your part of the bargain which he is quite sure of getting whether or not he fulfills his part. The child usually reads the master's mind much better than the master reads the child's heart. And that is the way it should be; for all the sagacity the child would have used to provide for the preservation of his person had he been left to himself he uses to save his natural freedom from his tyrant's chains. On the other hand, the latter, having no interest so pressing for seeing through the child, sometimes finds it to his own advantage to let the child have his laziness or vanity.

Take an opposite route with your pupil. Let him always believe he is the master, and let it always be you who are. There is no subjection so perfect as that which keeps the appearance of freedom. Thus the will itself is made captive. The poor child who knows nothing, who can do nothing, who has no learning, is he not at your mercy? Do you not dispose, with respect to him, of everything which surrounds him? Are you not the master of affecting him as you please? Are not his labors, his games, his pleasures, his pains, all in your hands without his knowing it? Doubtless he ought to do only what he wants; but he ought to want only what you want him to do. He ought not to make a step without your having foreseen it; he ought not to open his mouth without your knowing what he is going to say.

It is then that he will be able to give himself over to the exercises of the body that his age demands of him without stultifying his mind. It is then that instead of sharpening his ruses for eluding your uncomfortable grip, you will see him busy himself only with taking the greatest possible advantage of everything around him for his real well-being. It is then that you will be surprised by the subtlety of his inventions for appropriating all objects he can attain and for truly enjoying things without the help of opinion.

In leaving him thus master of his will, you will not be fomenting his caprices. By never doing anything except what suits him, he will soon do only what he ought to do; and although his body is in continuous motion, so long as he is concerned only with his immediate and palpable interest, you will witness developing all the reason of which he is capable much better and in a way much more appropriate to him than it would in purely speculative studies.

Thus, not seeing you eager to oppose him, not distrusting you, with nothing to hide from you, he will not deceive you, he will not lie to you, he will fearlessly show himself precisely as he is. You will be able to study him at your complete ease and arrange all around him the lessons you want to give him without his ever thinking he is receiving any.

He will also not be spying on your morals with a curiosity motivated by jealousy and will not find a secret pleasure in catching you misbehaving. This disadvantage which we are forestalling is a very great one. One of children's first efforts, as I have said, is to discover the weakness of those who govern them. This inclination leads to wickedness but does not come from it. It comes from the need to elude an authority which importunes them. Overburdened by the yoke imposed on them, they seek to shake it off, and the shortcomings they find in the masters furnish them with good means for that. However, the habit of scrutinizing people for their shortcomings and getting pleasure at finding them grows on children. Here clearly is yet another source of vice stopped up in Emile's heart. With no interest in finding shortcomings in me, he will not look for them and will be little tempted to look for them in others.

All these practices seem difficult because one does not really consider them, but at bottom they ought not to be. I have a right to assume that you possess the enlightenment necessary for exercising the vocation you have chosen; I have to assume that you know the natural development of the human heart, that you know how to study man and the individual, that you know beforehand what will bend your pupil's will when he confronts all the objects of interest to his age that you will cause to pass before his eyes. Now, to have the instruments and to know their use well, is that not to be the master of an operation?

You raise as an objection children's caprices, and you are wrong. The capriciousness of children is never the work of nature but is the work of bad discipline. It is that they have either obeyed or commanded, and I have said a hundred times that they must do neither. Your pupil will, therefore, have only the caprices you have given him. It is only just that you pay the penalty for your mistakes. But, you will say, how can this be remedied? It is still possible with better conduct and much patience.