



L'Ingénu, histoire véritable tirée des manuscrits du P. Quesnel

VOLTAIRE

Plain English Translation

MOUSEIA



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Translated by Michael Berardi

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THIS EDITION

Complete machine-assisted Plain English translation made independently and directly from the French, not from the Musean edition. All twenty chapters and Voltaire's three author notes are retained; Beuchot's editorial apparatus is omitted.

TRANSLATOR

Michael Berardi

THE WORK

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GAPS AND UNCERTAINTIES

The French base is Project Gutenberg's transcription of Beuchot's 1829 edition, compared with Garnier and selected same-edition page images, not a full facsimile collation. Four transcription slips are repaired against the 1829 images with recorded evidence.

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Chapter I



How the prior of Notre-Dame de la Montagne and his sister met a Huron.

One day Saint Dunstan, Irish by nationality and a saint by profession, left Ireland on a little mountain. It floated toward the coast of France and carried him to the bay of Saint-Malo. When he reached shore, he blessed his mountain. It bowed low to him and went back to Ireland by the same route it had come.

Dunstan founded a little priory in that area and named it the Priory of the Mountain. As everyone knows, it still has that name.

On the evening of July 15, 1689, the abbé de Kerkabon, prior of Notre-Dame de la Montagne, was walking along the seashore with his sister, Mademoiselle de Kerkabon, to enjoy the cool air. The prior was getting on in years. He was a very good churchman, loved by his male neighbors, as he had once been loved by his female neighbors. Above all, he owed his great reputation to being the only holder of a church benefice in the district who did not have to be carried to bed after dining with his fellow clergy. He knew a fair amount of theology. When he got tired of reading Saint Augustine, he amused himself with Rabelais. So everyone spoke well of him.

Mademoiselle de Kerkabon had never married, although she had badly wanted to. At forty-five she still looked fresh. She was kind and sensitive, fond of pleasure, and devout.

Looking out to sea, the prior said to his sister, “Sadly, this is where our poor brother sailed on the frigate *l’Hirondelle* in 1669 to serve in Canada, with our dear sister-in-law, Madame de Kerkabon, his wife. If he hadn’t been killed, we could still hope to see him again.”

“Do you think,” said Mademoiselle de Kerkabon, “that our sister-in-law was eaten by the Iroquois, as we were told? She certainly would have come home if she hadn’t been eaten. I’ll mourn her all my life. She was a lovely woman. And our brother was so clever, he would surely have made a great fortune.”

As these memories moved them both, they saw a little ship coming into the bay of Rance on the tide. It carried Englishmen who had come to sell some goods from their country. They jumped ashore without looking at the prior or his sister. She was very offended at being given so little attention.

But one very handsome young man behaved differently. He leaped over his companions’ heads and landed in front of her. He nodded to her, since he was not used to bowing. His appearance and clothes caught the attention of both brother and sister. His head and legs were bare, and he wore little sandals. His long hair was braided, and a short jacket fitted closely around his slim, graceful waist. He looked both warlike and gentle. In one hand he held a small bottle of Barbados liquor, and in the other a kind of pouch containing a cup and some very good ship’s biscuits. His French was easy to understand. He offered some of his Barbados liquor to Mademoiselle de Kerkabon and her brother and drank with them. He gave them another drink, all with such simple, natural manners that they were delighted. They offered to help him and asked who he was and where he was going. The young man answered that he didn’t know. He was curious, had wanted to see what the French coast looked like, had come, and was going back again.

The prior could tell from his accent that he was not English, so he took the liberty of asking what country he came from. “I’m a Huron,” the young man answered.

Amazed and delighted to see a Huron who had been polite to her, Mademoiselle de Kerkabon invited the young man to supper. He didn't need to be asked twice, and all three went together to the priory of Notre-Dame de la Montagne.

The short, round lady stared at him with all the strength of her little eyes. Every so often she said to the prior, "That tall boy has a complexion of lilies and roses! What beautiful skin for a Huron!" "You're right, sister," said the prior. She asked a hundred questions, one after another, and the traveler always gave sensible answers.

Word soon spread that there was a Huron at the priory. The local people of standing hurried over for supper. The abbé de Saint-Yves came with his sister, a very pretty, well-brought-up young woman from Lower Brittany. The bailiff, the collector of the land tax, and their wives joined them. They seated the stranger between Mademoiselle de Kerkabon and Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves. Everyone looked at him in admiration. Everyone talked to him and questioned him at once. The Huron stayed calm. He seemed to have adopted Lord Bolingbroke's motto, *Be surprised at nothing*. At last, worn out by all the noise, he said gently but firmly, "Gentlemen, in my country we speak one at a time. How do you expect me to answer when you won't let me hear you?" Reason always makes people stop and think for a few moments. A deep silence fell. The bailiff always took possession of strangers in any house he visited and was the greatest questioner in the province. Opening his mouth half a foot wide, he said, "Sir, what is your name?" "People have always called me the Ingénu," the Huron replied. "They confirmed that name in England, because I always say candidly what I think, just as I always do what I want."

"Since you were born a Huron, sir, how did you get to England?" "They took me there. The English captured me in a battle, after I'd put up a pretty good fight. The English value courage because they're brave themselves, and they're as decent as we are. They offered either to send me back to my relatives or to take me to England. I chose England because I've always had a passion for seeing other countries."

“But, sir,” the bailiff said in his commanding voice, “how could you abandon your father and mother like that?” “Because I’ve never known either my father or my mother,” said the stranger. Everyone was moved and kept repeating, “*Neither father nor mother!*” “We’ll take their place,” the lady of the house told her brother the prior. “What an appealing man this Huron is!” The Ingénu thanked her with warm, proud dignity and made her understand that he needed nothing.

“I notice, Monsieur Ingénu,” said the solemn bailiff, “that you speak better French than a Huron ought to.” “A Frenchman we captured when I was very young in Huron country taught me his language,” he said. “I became very fond of him. I learn very quickly when I want to learn something. When I arrived in Plymouth, I met one of your French refugees whom you call *Huguenots*, I don’t know why. He helped me improve my knowledge of your language. As soon as I could make myself understood, I came to see your country, because I rather like French people when they don’t ask too many questions.”

Despite this little warning, the abbé de Saint-Yves asked which of the three languages he liked best: Huron, English, or French. “Huron, without question,” the Ingénu answered. “Can that be possible?” cried Mademoiselle de Kerkabon. “I always thought French was the finest of all languages, after the language of Lower Brittany.”

Then everyone competed to ask the Ingénu the Huron word for tobacco. He answered, “*taya*.” They asked the word for eating, and he answered, “*essen-ten*.” Mademoiselle de Kerkabon insisted on knowing the word for making love. He answered, “*trovander*”[a]. He maintained, with some reason, that these words were every bit as good as their French and English equivalents. All the guests thought *trovander* was very pretty.

[a] All these words are in fact Huron.

The prior had a Huron grammar in his library, a gift from the Reverend Father Sagar Théodat, a Recollect friar and famous missionary. He left the table for a moment to consult it. He came back breathless with affection and joy: he

recognized the Ingénu as a genuine Huron. They debated the great number of languages for a while and agreed that, without the incident at the Tower of Babel, the whole world would have spoken French.

The questioning bailiff had been a little suspicious of the stranger until then. Now he felt deep respect for him and spoke more politely than before. The Ingénu did not notice.

Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves was very curious to know how people made love in Huron country. "By doing fine deeds," he answered, "to please people like you." All the guests applauded in surprise. Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves blushed and felt very pleased. Mademoiselle de Kerkabon also blushed, but she was not so pleased. She was a little hurt that the compliment was not meant for her. Still, she was such a good person that her affection for the Huron did not change at all. Very kindly, she asked how many sweethearts he'd had in Huron country. "I've only ever had one," said the Ingénu. "She was Mademoiselle Abacaba, my dear nurse's good friend. Reeds aren't straighter, ermine isn't whiter, sheep are less gentle, eagles less proud, and deer aren't as swift as Abacaba was. One day she was chasing a hare in our neighborhood, about fifty leagues from our home. A rude Algonquin who lived a hundred leagues farther away came and took her hare. I heard about it and ran there. I knocked the Algonquin down with one blow of my club, tied his hands and feet, and brought him to my sweetheart's feet. Abacaba's relatives wanted to eat him, but I've never liked that kind of feast. I set him free and made him my friend. Abacaba was so touched by what I'd done that she chose me over all her other admirers. She would still love me if a bear hadn't eaten her. I punished the bear and wore its skin for a long time, but that didn't comfort me."

Hearing this story, Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves felt secretly pleased to learn that the Ingénu had had only one sweetheart and that Abacaba was dead. But she could not work out why it pleased her. Everyone stared at the Ingénu and praised him warmly for stopping his companions from eating an Algonquin.

The relentless bailiff could not hold back his mania for questions. At last he went so far as to ask what religion the Huron followed. Had he chosen the Anglican religion, the Gallican, or the Huguenot? "I follow my own religion,"

he said, “just as you follow yours.” “Oh dear!” cried Mademoiselle de Kerkabon. “I can see those wretched Englishmen never even thought of baptizing him.” “Oh, my God,” said Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves, “how can the Hurons not be Catholics? Haven’t the reverend Jesuit fathers converted them all?” The Ingénu assured her that no one was converted in his country. No true Huron had ever changed his opinion, and their language did not even have a word meaning *inconstancy*. These last words pleased Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves very much.

“We’ll baptize him, we’ll baptize him,” Mademoiselle de Kerkabon told the prior. “You’ll have the honor, my dear brother. I absolutely insist on being his godmother. The abbé de Saint-Yves will present him at the font. It will be a splendid ceremony. People will talk about it all over Lower Brittany, and it will bring us endless honor.” Everyone supported the lady of the house. All the guests shouted, “We’ll baptize him!” The Ingénu answered that in England people were allowed to live as they pleased. He made it clear that he did not like the suggestion at all and that the Hurons’ law was at least as good as the law of Lower Brittany. Finally he said he was leaving the next day. They finished his bottle of Barbados liquor, and everyone went to bed.

After the Ingénu had been shown to his room, Mademoiselle de Kerkabon and her friend Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves could not resist looking through a large keyhole to see how a Huron slept. They saw that he had spread the bed-cover on the floor and was resting in the most beautiful pose in the world.

Chapter II



The Huron called the Ingénu is recognized by his relatives.

As usual, the Ingénu woke at sunrise to the sound of the rooster, called *the trumpet of the day* in England and Huron country. He was not like fashionable people, who lie idle in bed until the sun has finished half its journey. They can neither sleep nor get up. They waste precious hours in this state halfway between life and death, and still complain that life is too short.

He had already walked two or three leagues and killed thirty pieces of game, using single bullets, when he came back. He found the prior of Notre-Dame de la Montagne and his discreet sister walking in their little garden in nightcaps. He gave them everything he had shot. Then he pulled from his shirt a kind of small charm that he always wore around his neck and asked them to accept it in thanks for their welcome. "It's the most precious thing I own," he told them. "I've been assured that I'll always be happy as long as I carry this little trinket. I'm giving it to you so that you'll always be happy."

The prior and his sister smiled, touched by the Ingénu's simple trust. The gift was two small, poorly painted portraits tied together with a very greasy strap.

Mademoiselle de Kerkabon asked him whether there were painters in Huron country. "No," said the Ingénu. "This rare object came from my nurse. Her husband got it as war loot when he stripped some Frenchmen in Canada who had fought against us. That's all I've ever known about it."

The prior looked closely at the portraits. His color changed, he grew agitated, and his hands shook. "By Our Lady of the Mountain!" he cried. "I think these are the faces of my brother the captain and his wife!" His sister examined them with the same emotion and came to the same conclusion. Both were overwhelmed with surprise and joy mixed with sorrow. Both were deeply moved; both cried. Their hearts pounded, and they shouted. They snatched the portraits from each other, each taking them and giving them back twenty times in a second. Their eyes devoured the portraits and the Huron. One after the other, and both at once, they asked him where, when, and how these miniatures had come into his nurse's hands. They compared dates and counted the years since the captain had left. They remembered hearing that he had traveled as far as Huron country, and they had heard nothing of him since.

The Ingénu had told them he had never known either his father or his mother. The prior, a sensible man, noticed that the Ingénu had a little beard. He knew very well that Hurons had none. "He has down on his chin, so his father must have been European. My brother and sister-in-law disappeared after the expedition against the Hurons in 1669. My nephew must have been a nursing baby then. His Huron nurse saved his life and acted as his mother." At last, after a hundred questions and a hundred answers, the prior and his sister concluded that the Huron was their own nephew. They hugged him, crying, while the Ingénu laughed. He could not imagine a Huron being the nephew of a prior from Lower Brittany.

All the guests came downstairs. Monsieur de Saint-Yves, a great judge of faces, compared the two portraits with the Ingénu's face. He very skillfully pointed out that he had his mother's eyes, the forehead and nose of the late Captain de Kerkabon, and cheeks that resembled both parents.

Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves, who had never seen either parent, declared that the Ingénu looked exactly like them. Everyone admired Providence and the chain of events in this world. In the end, they were so sure, so convinced about the Ingénu's birth, that he himself agreed to be the prior's nephew. He said he would as soon have him for an uncle as anyone else.

They went to thank God in the church of Notre-Dame de la Montagne. Meanwhile the Huron stayed in the house, unconcerned, and amused himself by drinking.

The Englishmen who had brought him were ready to sail and came to tell him it was time to leave. "Apparently you haven't found your uncles and aunts," he told them. "I'm staying here. Go back to Plymouth. I'll give you all my clothes. I don't need anything else in the world now that I'm a prior's nephew." The Englishmen sailed away, caring very little whether the Ingénu had relatives in Lower Brittany or not.

The uncle, the aunt, and their guests sang the *Te Deum*. The bailiff overwhelmed the Ingénu with more questions. They exhausted everything that surprise, joy, and affection could make them say. Then the prior of the Mountain and the abbé de Saint-Yves decided to have the Ingénu baptized as soon as possible. But a full-grown Huron of twenty-two was not like a baby who is born again without knowing anything about it. He had to be taught, and that seemed difficult. The abbé de Saint-Yves assumed that anyone not born in France had no common sense.

The prior pointed out to the guests that, although his nephew Monsieur Ingénu had not had the good fortune to be born in Lower Brittany, he was no less intelligent for that. They could judge this from all his answers. Nature had certainly been very generous to him, on both his father's and his mother's side.

First they asked him if he had ever read a book. He said he had read Rabelais in English translation and some passages of Shakespeare that he knew by heart. He had found these books among the belongings of the captain who brought him from America to Plymouth, and he had liked them very much. Of course the bailiff questioned him about these books. "I admit," said the Ingénu, "that I thought I could guess at some of it, and I didn't understand the rest."

Hearing this, the abbé de Saint-Yves reflected that this was how he himself had always read, and that most people hardly read any other way. "You've read the *Bible*, of course?" he asked the Huron. "Not at all, Father. It wasn't among my captain's books. I've never heard of it." "That's what those damned Englishmen are like!" cried Mademoiselle de Kerkabon. "They'll think more of

a play by Shakespeare, a plum pudding, and a bottle of rum than of the Pentateuch. That's why they've never converted anyone in America. God has certainly cursed them, and before long we'll take Jamaica and Virginia from them."

Anyway, they sent for the best tailor in Saint-Malo to dress the Ingénu from head to foot. The guests went their separate ways. The bailiff went to ask his questions somewhere else. As Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves left, she turned around several times to look at the Ingénu. He bowed to her more deeply than he had ever bowed to anyone in his life.

Before saying goodbye, the bailiff introduced his son to Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves: a big oaf just out of school. But she barely looked at him, she was so taken up with the Huron's polite attentions.

Chapter III



The Huron called the Ingénu is converted.

The prior saw that he was getting on in years and that God had sent him a nephew to comfort him. He began to think he could hand over his church benefice to the young man if he managed to have him baptized and ordained.

The Ingénu had an excellent memory. The sturdy constitution he had inherited from Lower Brittany, strengthened by Canada's climate, had given him such a tough head that he barely felt a blow to it. And once something was engraved inside it, nothing rubbed it out. He had never forgotten anything. His understanding was all the quicker and clearer because his childhood had not been weighed down with the useless things and nonsense that burden ours. Things entered his brain without a cloud in the way. The prior finally decided to have him read the New *Testament*. The Ingénu devoured it with great pleasure. But he did not know when or where all the events in the book had happened. He had no doubt that the setting was Lower Brittany, and he swore he would cut off the noses and ears of Caiaphas and Pilate if he ever met those scoundrels.

His uncle was delighted by these promising attitudes and soon explained the facts to him. He praised his zeal but told him it was useless, since those men had been dead for about sixteen hundred and ninety years. The Ingénu soon knew almost the whole book by heart. Sometimes he raised problems that

greatly troubled the prior. The prior often had to consult the abbé de Saint-Yves, who did not know what to answer either. He sent for a Jesuit from Lower Brittany to finish converting the Huron.

At last grace did its work. The Ingénu promised to become a Christian. He had no doubt that he must begin by being circumcised. “In the book you had me read,” he said, “I don’t see a single person who wasn’t circumcised. So clearly I have to sacrifice my foreskin, and the sooner the better.” He did not hesitate. He sent for the village surgeon and asked him to perform the operation. He expected Mademoiselle de Kerkabon and everyone else to be delighted once it was done. The barber-surgeon had never performed this operation. He warned the family, who cried out in horror. Good Mademoiselle de Kerkabon trembled at the thought that her nephew, who seemed determined and quick to act, might clumsily operate on himself. It might have unfortunate consequences, which ladies always take an interest in out of the goodness of their hearts.

The prior corrected the Huron’s ideas. He explained that circumcision had gone out of fashion, that baptism was much gentler and better for salvation, and that the law of grace was not like the law of severity. The Ingénu had plenty of common sense and honesty. He argued, but admitted his mistake—a fairly rare thing among people who argue in Europe. In the end he promised to be baptized whenever they wanted.

First he had to confess, and this was the hardest part. The Ingénu always carried the book his uncle had given him in his pocket. He could not find a single apostle in it who had gone to confession, and this made him very unwilling. The prior silenced him by showing him these words in the Epistle of Saint James the Less, which cause heretics so much trouble: *Confess your sins to one another*. The Huron said no more and confessed to a Recollect friar. When he finished, he pulled the friar out of the confessional, seized him with a powerful arm, took his place, and made him kneel in front of him. “Come on, my friend. It says, *Confess to one another*. I’ve told you my sins. You aren’t leaving until you’ve told me yours.” As he spoke, he pressed his broad knee against his opponent’s chest. The Recollect gave howls that echoed through the church. People

rushed toward the noise and saw the man preparing for baptism manhandling the monk in the name of Saint James the Less. Their delight at baptizing a Huron who was also Breton and English was so great that they overlooked these oddities. Many theologians even thought confession was unnecessary, since baptism took the place of everything else.

They fixed a day with the bishop of Saint-Malo. As you can imagine, he was flattered to be baptizing a Huron. He arrived in a splendid carriage with his clergy following him. Blessing God, Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves put on her finest dress and sent for a hairdresser from Saint-Malo so that she would shine at the ceremony. The questioning bailiff hurried over with everyone in the district. The church was magnificently decorated. But when the time came to take the Huron to the baptismal font, he could not be found.

His uncle and aunt looked for him everywhere. They thought he had gone hunting as usual. All the guests invited to the celebration searched the woods and nearby villages. There was no news of the Huron.

They began to fear he had gone back to England. They remembered hearing him say how much he liked that country. The prior and his sister were convinced that nobody was baptized there, and they trembled for their nephew's soul. The bishop was bewildered and ready to leave. The prior and the abbé de Saint-Yves were in despair. The bailiff questioned every passerby with his usual solemnity. Mademoiselle de Kerkabon cried. Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves did not cry, but she gave deep sighs that seemed to show her fondness for the sacraments. The two women were walking sadly beside the willows and reeds along the little Rance River when they saw a tall, rather white figure in the middle of the water, with his hands crossed on his chest. They gave a loud cry and turned away. But curiosity soon overcame every other consideration. They slipped quietly among the reeds, and once they were quite sure they could not be seen, they wanted to see what was going on.

Chapter IV



The Ingénu is baptized.

The prior and the abbé hurried over and asked the Ingénu what he was doing there. “Well, good God, gentlemen! I’m waiting to be baptized. I’ve been standing up to my neck in water for an hour. It isn’t decent to leave me here freezing.”

“My dear nephew,” the prior told him affectionately, “that isn’t how people are baptized in Lower Brittany. Get dressed again and come with us.” Hearing this, Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves whispered to her companion, “Do you think he’ll get dressed again so soon?”

But the Huron answered the prior, “You won’t fool me this time the way you did before. I’ve studied carefully since then, and I’m quite certain there’s no other way to be baptized. Queen Candace’s[a] eunuch was baptized in a stream. I challenge you to show me anywhere in the book you gave me that it was ever done differently. Either I’ll be baptized in the river or I won’t be baptized at all.” They explained in vain that customs had changed. The Ingénu was stubborn, being both Breton and Huron. He kept coming back to Queen Candace’s eunuch. His aunt and Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves had watched him from among the willows and were entitled to tell him that he was hardly the man to cite such an example. But they said nothing, so great was their discretion. The bishop himself came to speak to him, which was quite something. But he achieved nothing. The Huron argued with the bishop.

[a] *N. B.* “How could Father Quesnel have been unaware that the beautiful queens of Ethiopia were named Candace, in the same way that Egypt’s kings had the title Pharaoh or Pharon?”

“Show me a single man in the book my uncle gave me who wasn’t baptized in a river,” he told him, “and I’ll do anything you want.”

His desperate aunt had noticed that when her nephew first began bowing, he had bowed more deeply to *Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves* than to anyone else there. He had not even greeted the bishop with the respect mixed with warmth that he had shown this beautiful young woman. Faced with this great difficulty, his aunt decided to turn to her. She asked her to use her influence to persuade the Huron to be baptized in the same way as the Bretons. She did not believe her nephew could ever be a Christian if he insisted on being baptized in running water.

Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves blushed at her secret pleasure in being entrusted with such an important mission. She approached the *Ingénu* modestly, took his hand with great dignity, and said, “Won’t you do anything for me?” As she spoke, she lowered her eyes and raised them again with a touching grace. “Oh, anything you want, *mademoiselle*, anything you command. Baptism by water, by fire, by blood—there’s nothing I’ll refuse you.” *Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves* had the glory of accomplishing in two words what neither the prior’s eager efforts, nor the bailiff’s repeated questions, nor even the bishop’s arguments had achieved. She felt her triumph, but she did not yet understand its full extent.

The baptism was given and received with all possible dignity, splendor, and charm. The uncle and aunt gave up to the abbé de Saint-Yves and his sister the honor of serving as the *Ingénu*’s godparents at the font. *Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves* glowed with joy at being a godmother. She did not know what restrictions that grand title placed on her. She accepted the honor without knowing its disastrous consequences.

Since no ceremony has ever taken place without a great dinner afterward, they sat down to eat when the baptism was over. The jokers of Lower Brittany said they mustn’t baptize their wine with water. The prior said that wine,

according to Solomon, gladdens the human heart. The bishop added that the patriarch Judah was to tie his donkey to the vine and dip his cloak in the blood of grapes. It was very sad that no one could do the same in Lower Brittany, where God had denied them vines. Everyone tried to make a witty remark about the Ingénu's baptism and pay a compliment to his godmother. Still asking questions, the bailiff asked the Huron whether he would keep his promises. "How could I break my promises," the Huron replied, "when I placed them in Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves's hands?"

The Huron grew animated and drank many toasts to his godmother's health. "If you'd baptized me yourself," he said, "I feel sure the cold water poured on the back of my head would have burned me." The bailiff thought this too poetic. He did not know how familiar figurative language was in Canada. But the godmother was extremely pleased.

The newly baptized man had been named Hercules. The bishop of Saint-Malo kept asking who this patron saint was, since he had never heard of him. The Jesuit, who was very learned, told him he was a saint who had performed twelve miracles. There was a thirteenth worth all the other twelve, but it was not proper for a Jesuit to mention it: he had turned fifty girls into women in a single night. A joker who was there spoke up enthusiastically about this miracle. All the ladies lowered their eyes and judged from the Ingénu's appearance that he was worthy of the saint whose name he bore.

Chapter V



The Ingénu falls in love.

It must be admitted that after the baptism and dinner, Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves passionately wished the bishop would let her share another lovely sacrament with Monsieur Hercules the Ingénu. But she was well brought up and very modest, so she did not dare fully admit her tender feelings even to herself. If a look, a word, a gesture, or a thought escaped her, she covered it all with a veil of wonderfully charming modesty. She was affectionate, lively, and sensible.

As soon as the bishop left, the Ingénu and Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves met without having realized they were looking for each other. They began talking without having imagined what they would say. The Ingénu immediately told her that he loved her with all his heart. The beautiful Abacaba, whom he had been mad about in his own country, came nowhere near her. With her usual modesty, she answered that he must speak as soon as possible to his uncle the prior and to his aunt. For her part, she would say a few words to her dear brother, the abbé de Saint-Yves, and she hoped they would all agree.

The Ingénu answered that he needed nobody's consent. It seemed completely ridiculous to him to go and ask other people what you should do. When two people agreed, they did not need a third to settle things between them. "I don't consult anyone," he said, "when I want to eat breakfast, hunt, or sleep. I understand that in love it's a good idea to get the consent of the person you're

after. But I'm not in love with either my uncle or my aunt, so they're not the people I need to speak to about this. And if you take my advice, you'll do without the abbé de Saint-Yves as well."

You can imagine how the beautiful Breton used all her tact and intelligence to bring her Huron into line with proper behavior. She even became angry, then soon softened again. In the end, there is no knowing how the conversation would have finished if the abbé had not taken his sister home to his abbey as daylight faded. The Ingénu let his uncle and aunt go to bed. They were a little tired from the ceremony and their long dinner. He spent part of the night composing verses in Huron for his beloved. For you should know that there is no country on earth where love has not turned lovers into poets.

The next morning after breakfast, his uncle spoke to him in front of a deeply moved Mademoiselle de Kerkabon. "Heaven be praised, my dear nephew, that you have the honor of being a Christian and a Breton of Lower Brittany! But that isn't enough. I'm getting on in years. My brother left only a little patch of land, which is worth very little. I have a good priory. If you'll just become a subdeacon, as I hope you will, I'll hand my priory over to you. You'll live very comfortably, after having comforted me in my old age."

The Ingénu answered, "Uncle, may it do you good! Live as long as you can. I don't know what being a subdeacon or handing over a priory means. But anything will suit me, as long as I can have Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves to myself." "Oh, my God, nephew, what are you saying? Are you madly in love with that beautiful young woman?" "Yes, uncle." "Sadly, my nephew, it's impossible for you to marry her." "It's quite possible, uncle. Not only did she squeeze my hand when we parted, she promised to ask to marry me. And I certainly will marry her." "It's impossible, I tell you. She's your godmother. It's a dreadful sin for a godmother to squeeze her godson's hand. You aren't allowed to marry your godmother. Divine and human laws forbid it." "Damn it, uncle, you're making fun of me! Why should it be forbidden to marry your godmother when she's young and pretty? I didn't see anything in the book you gave me saying it was wrong to marry girls who have helped people get baptized. Every day I notice that people here do an endless number of things that aren't in your

book, and they don't do any of the things it says. I admit that surprises me and makes me angry. If you take the beautiful Saint-Yves away from me because of my baptism, I'm warning you: I'll carry her off and get myself unbaptized."

The prior was speechless. His sister cried. "My dear brother," she said, "we mustn't let our nephew be damned. Our Holy Father the pope can give him a dispensation, and then he can be happy as a Christian with the woman he loves." The Ingénu hugged his aunt. "Who is this delightful man," he asked, "who so kindly helps boys and girls with their love affairs? I want to go and speak to him right now."

They explained what the pope was, and the Ingénu was even more amazed than before. "There's not a word about any of this in your book, my dear uncle. I've traveled. I know the sea. We're here on the coast of the ocean. And I'm supposed to leave Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves to ask permission to love her from a man who lives near the Mediterranean, four hundred leagues away, and whose language I don't understand! That's so ridiculous I can't make sense of it. I'm going straight to the abbé de Saint-Yves, who lives only a league from you. I promise you I'll marry my sweetheart today."

He was still speaking when the bailiff came in and, as usual, asked where he was going. "I'm going to get married," said the Ingénu, running off. Within a quarter of an hour he was already at the home of his dear, beautiful girl from Lower Brittany, who was still asleep. "Oh, brother," Mademoiselle de Kerkabon told the prior, "you'll never make our nephew a subdeacon."

The bailiff was very unhappy about this visit. He intended his son to marry Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves, and this son was even more stupid and unbearable than his father.

Chapter VI



The Ingénu rushes to his sweetheart's home and becomes furious.

As soon as the Ingénu arrived, he asked an elderly servant where his sweetheart's room was. He pushed hard against the badly closed door and sprang toward the bed. Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves woke with a start and cried, "What! It's you! Oh, it's you! Stop! What are you doing?" He answered, "I'm marrying you." And he would indeed have married her if she had not struggled with all the decency of a well-brought-up person.

The Ingénu was not joking. He found all this behavior extremely improper. "Mademoiselle Abacaba, my first sweetheart, didn't behave like this. You aren't honest. You promised to marry me, and you don't want to go through with it. That breaks the most basic rules of honor. I'll teach you to keep your word and put you back on the path of virtue."

The Ingénu's virtue was manly and fearless, worthy of his patron Hercules, whose name he had been given at his baptism. He was about to use it to its fullest extent when the piercing cries of the more discreetly virtuous young woman brought the wise abbé de Saint-Yves running. With him came his housekeeper, a devout old manservant, and a parish priest. The sight of them dampened the attacker's courage. "Oh, my God, my dear neighbor!" the abbé said. "What are you doing?" "My duty," the young man answered. "I'm keeping my promises, which are sacred."

Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves put her clothes in order, blushing. They took the Ingénu into another room. The abbé explained how outrageous his behavior was. The Ingénu defended himself by appealing to the rights of natural law, which he knew perfectly. The abbé tried to prove that established law must always take priority, and that without agreements between people, the law of nature would almost always be nothing but natural robbery. "We need notaries," he told him, "priests, witnesses, contracts, dispensations." The Ingénu answered with the observation that native peoples have always made: "Then you must be very dishonest people, since you need so many precautions among yourselves."

The abbé had trouble answering this objection. "I admit," he said, "that there are many fickle people and rogues among us. There would be just as many among the Hurons if they were gathered in a great city. But there are also wise, honest, enlightened people, and they're the ones who made the laws. The better a person is, the more he should obey them. He sets an example for the wicked, who respect a restraint that virtue has imposed on itself."

This answer struck the Ingénu. We have already noted that he had good judgment. They soothed him with flattering words and gave him hope: the two traps that catch people in both hemispheres. They even brought Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves to him once she had finished dressing. Everything was completely proper. But despite this propriety, Hercules the Ingénu's blazing eyes still made his sweetheart lower hers and everyone else tremble.

They had a very hard time sending him home to his relatives. Once again they had to use the beautiful Saint-Yves's influence. The more she felt her power over him, the more she loved him. She made him leave and was deeply upset by it. Finally, once he had gone, the abbé decided to protect his ward from the eager attentions of this terrifying lover. He was not only Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves's much older brother but also her guardian. He went to consult the bailiff, who still intended his son to marry the abbé's sister and advised him to put the poor girl in a convent. This was a terrible blow.

Even a woman who was not in love would cry out at being shut in a convent. But a woman in love, and one as sensible as she was affectionate! It was enough to drive her to despair.

Back at the prior's house, the Ingénu told the whole story with his usual candor. He received the same lectures. They had some effect on his mind and none on his senses. But the next day, when he wanted to return to his lovely sweetheart to reason with her about natural law and the law of agreement, the bailiff told him with insulting delight that she was in a convent. "All right," he said, "I'll go and reason in that convent." "That isn't possible," said the bailiff. He explained at great length what a convent, or religious community, was, and that the word came from the Latin *conventus*, meaning a gathering. The Huron could not understand why he could not be admitted to the gathering. As soon as he learned that this gathering was a kind of prison where girls were kept locked up—a horrible thing, unknown among the Hurons and the English—he became as furious as his patron Hercules had been when Eurytus, king of Oechalia, refused to give him his beautiful daughter Iole. Eurytus was no less cruel than the abbé de Saint-Yves, and Iole no less beautiful than the abbé's sister. The Ingénu wanted to set fire to the convent, carry off his sweetheart, or burn himself to death with her. Terrified, Mademoiselle de Kerkabon gave up more completely than ever on her hopes of seeing her nephew become a sub-deacon. She said in tears that the devil had got into him since he was baptized.

Chapter VII



The Ingénu drives back the English.

Sunk in deep, dark sadness, the Ingénu walked toward the seashore with his two-shot gun over his shoulder and his large cutlass at his side. Now and then he fired at birds, and often he was tempted to shoot himself. But he still loved life because of Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves. Sometimes he cursed his uncle, his aunt, all of Lower Brittany, and his baptism. Sometimes he blessed them, since they had brought him to know the woman he loved. He made up his mind to burn down the convent, then stopped short for fear of burning his sweetheart. The waves of the English Channel are no more troubled by east and west winds than his heart was by so many opposing feelings.

He was striding along without knowing where he was going when he heard a drum. In the distance he saw a whole crowd, half running toward the shore and half running away.

A thousand cries rose from every side. Curiosity and courage immediately sent him rushing toward the place they came from. He reached it in four bounds. The militia commander, who had eaten supper with him at the prior's, recognized him at once and ran toward him with open arms. "Ah, it's the Ingénu! He'll fight for us." The militiamen, who were dying of fear, felt reassured and shouted too, "It's the Ingénu! It's the Ingénu!"

“Gentlemen,” he said, “what’s going on? Why are you so frightened? Have your sweethearts been put in convents?” A hundred confused voices shouted, “Can’t you see the English coming ashore?” “Well,” the Huron replied, “they’re good people. They haven’t taken my sweetheart away.”

The commander explained that the English were coming to plunder the abbey of the Mountain, drink his uncle’s wine, and perhaps carry off Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves. The little ship on which he had landed in Brittany had only come to scout the coast. The English were committing hostile acts without having declared war on the king of France, and the province was unprotected. “Ah, if that’s true, they’re breaking natural law. Leave it to me. I lived among them for a long time, and I know their language. I’ll speak to them. I can’t believe they mean to do anything so wicked.”

While they were talking, the English squadron was drawing closer. The Huron ran toward it, jumped into a little boat, reached the flagship, and climbed aboard. He asked whether it was true that they had come to lay waste to the country without having honestly declared war. The admiral and everyone aboard burst out laughing, gave him some punch, and sent him back.

Stung, the Ingénu now thought only of fighting hard against his former friends for his countrymen and the prior. Local gentlemen were hurrying in from all directions. He joined them. They had a few cannons; he loaded, aimed, and fired them one after another. The English landed. He ran at them, killed three with his own hands, and even wounded the admiral who had laughed at him. His bravery stirred the courage of the whole militia. The English went back aboard their ships, and the whole coast rang with cries of victory: “Long live the king! Long live the Ingénu!” Everyone hugged him. Everyone hurried to stop the bleeding from the few slight wounds he had received. “Oh,” he said, “if Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves were here, she’d put a dressing on me.”

The bailiff had hidden in his cellar during the battle. Now he came to congratulate him like everyone else. But he was very surprised to hear Hercules the Ingénu tell a dozen willing young men gathered around him, “My friends, freeing the abbey of the Mountain is nothing. We have to free a girl.” Those few words set all these hotheaded young men on fire. A crowd was already follow-

ing him, and they were running toward the convent. If the bailiff had not warned the commander at once, and if they had not run after this cheerful band, it would have been all over. They brought the Ingénu back to his uncle and aunt, who covered him with affectionate tears.

“I can see you’ll never be a subdeacon or a prior,” his uncle told him. “You’ll be an even braver officer than my brother the captain, and probably just as poor.” Mademoiselle de Kerkabon kept crying as she hugged him and said, “He’ll get himself killed like my brother. It would be much better if he became a subdeacon.”

During the battle, the Ingénu had picked up a large purse full of guineas, probably dropped by the admiral. He had no doubt that with this purse he could buy all of Lower Brittany and, above all, make Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves a great lady. Everyone urged him to go to Versailles to receive a reward for his services. The commander and the senior officers showered him with certificates. His uncle and aunt approved their nephew’s journey. He was sure to be presented to the king, and that alone would give him tremendous standing in the province. The good couple added a substantial gift from their savings to the English purse. The Ingénu said to himself, “When I see the king, I’ll ask him for Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves’s hand in marriage, and he certainly won’t refuse me.” So he left to the cheers of the whole district, smothered in embraces, drenched with his aunt’s tears, blessed by his uncle, and entrusting himself to the beautiful Saint-Yves.

Chapter VIII



The Ingénu heads for court. On the way, he has supper with Huguenots.

The Ingénu traveled toward Saumur by coach, since there was no other transport available then. At Saumur he was surprised to find the town nearly empty, with several families moving out. He learned that six years earlier it had contained over fifteen thousand people, whereas now it had fewer than six thousand. Naturally, he brought this up at supper in his inn. Several Protestants were eating there. Some complained bitterly, some shook with anger, and others said through their tears,

“... We leave our pleasant fields,
We flee our homeland.”

The Ingénu knew no Latin, so he asked what these words meant. They mean: We are leaving our pleasant countryside; we are fleeing our own country.

“Why are you fleeing your own country, gentlemen?” “Because they want us to recognize the pope.” “Why shouldn’t you recognize him? Don’t you have any godmothers you want to marry? I’ve been told he’s the one who gives permission for that.” “Oh, sir, this pope says he is master of the kings’ lands.” “But what do you do for a living?” “Most of us are cloth merchants and manufacturers.” “If your pope says he’s master of your cloth and your factories, you’re quite right not to recognize him. But as for the kings, that’s their business. Why interfere?” A small man dressed in black then spoke up and gave a very learned account of the company’s grievances. He spoke so forcefully about the revoca-

tion of the Edict of Nantes, and so movingly about the fate of fifty thousand families driven into exile and fifty thousand more converted by dragoons, that the Ingénu began to cry too. "Why," he asked, "does such a great king, whose fame has reached even the Hurons, deprive himself of so many hearts that would have loved him and so many arms that would have served him?"

"Because he's been deceived, like other great kings," answered the man in black. "They've made him believe that as soon as he says a word, everyone will think as he does. They say he can make us change our religion as quickly as his musician Lulli changes the scenery in his operas. Not only is he already losing five hundred to six hundred thousand very useful subjects, but he's turning them into enemies. King William, who now rules England, has formed several regiments from these very Frenchmen who would have fought for their own king."

"This disaster is all the more astonishing because the present pope, to whom Louis XIV is sacrificing part of his people, is his declared enemy. The two have been in a bitter quarrel for nine years. It has gone so far that France at last hoped to see the yoke broken that has subjected her to this foreigner for so many centuries, and above all to stop giving him money, the chief driving force behind this world's affairs. Clearly, then, this great king has been misled about his own interests as well as the extent of his power, and the greatness of his heart has been injured."

More and more moved, the Ingénu asked which Frenchmen were deceiving a king so dear to the Hurons. "The Jesuits," they answered, "especially Father de La Chaise, His Majesty's confessor. We must hope God will punish them one day and that they'll be driven out as they're driving us out. Has anyone suffered as we have? Monsieur de Louvois sends Jesuits and dragoons at us from every direction."

"Well, gentlemen," replied the Ingénu, unable to hold back any longer, "I'm going to Versailles to receive the reward my services deserve. I'll speak to this Monsieur de Louvois. I've been told he runs the war from his study. I'll see the king and tell him the truth. Once people feel that truth, they can't help accept-

ing it. I'll be back soon to marry Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves, and you're all invited to the wedding." These good people now took him for a great lord traveling *incognito* by coach. Some took him for the king's fool.

A Jesuit in disguise was at the table, acting as a spy for the Reverend Father de La Chaise. He reported everything to him, and Father de La Chaise passed it on to Monsieur de Louvois. The spy wrote. The Ingénu and the letter reached Versailles at almost the same time.

Chapter IX



The Ingénu reaches Versailles and is received at court.

The Ingénu gets out of a “chamber pot”[a] in the kitchen courtyard. He asks the chair carriers what time people can see the king. They laugh in his face, just as the English admiral did. He treats them the same way and beats them. They try to hit back, and there would have been bloodshed if a royal bodyguard, a Breton gentleman, had not passed by and driven the rabble off. “Sir,” the traveler says, “you look like a good man. I’m the nephew of the prior of Our Lady of the Mountain. I’ve killed Englishmen, and I’ve come to speak to the king. Please take me to his room.” Delighted to find a brave man from his own province, who seemed not to know court customs, the guard explained that people did not speak to the king like that. They had to be introduced by His Lordship de Louvois. “Then take me to this Lord de Louvois. He’ll surely take me to His Majesty.” “Speaking to Lord de Louvois is even harder than speaking to His Majesty,” the guard replied. “But I’ll take you to Monsieur Alexandre, the chief clerk for war. It’s as good as speaking to the minister.” They go to Monsieur Alexandre, the chief clerk, but cannot get in. He was occupied with a lady of the court, and nobody was to be admitted. “Well, nothing’s lost,” said the guard. “Let’s see Monsieur Alexandre’s chief clerk. It’s as good as speaking to Monsieur Alexandre himself.”

[a] This is a carriage running between Paris and Versailles, shaped like a small covered tipcart.

The astonished Huron follows him. They spend half an hour together in a little waiting room. "What does all this mean?" the Ingénu asks. "Is everyone invisible in this country? Fighting Englishmen in Lower Brittany is much easier than finding the people you need to deal with at Versailles." He passed the time by telling his fellow Breton about his love. But the clock struck and called the bodyguard back to his post. They promised to meet again the next day. The Ingénu spent another half hour in the waiting room, thinking about Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves and how hard it was to speak to kings and chief clerks.

At last the man in charge appeared. "Sir," the Ingénu told him, "if I'd waited to drive the English back as long as you've made me wait to see you, they'd now be ravaging Lower Brittany at their leisure." This struck the clerk. Finally he asked the Breton, "What do you want?" "A reward. Here are my credentials." He spread out all his certificates. The clerk read them and said he would probably be allowed to buy a lieutenant's commission. "What! Pay money for having driven back the English? Pay for the right to get killed for you while you sit here calmly receiving visitors? You must be joking. I want command of a cavalry company for nothing. I want the king to have Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves released from the convent and give her to me in marriage. I want to speak to him on behalf of fifty thousand families I intend to bring back to him. In short, I want to be useful. Give me a job and promote me."

"What's your name, sir, who speaks so loudly?" "Oh!" the Ingénu answered. "So you haven't read my certificates? Is that how things are done? My name is Hercules de Kerkabon. I've been baptized. I'm staying at the Cadran bleu, and I'll complain about you to the king." Like the people of Saumur, the clerk decided he was not quite right in the head and paid him little attention.

That same day, the Reverend Father de La Chaise, Louis XIV's confessor, had received his spy's letter. It accused the Breton Kerkabon of secretly supporting the Huguenots and condemning the Jesuits' conduct. Monsieur de

Louvois, meanwhile, had received a letter from the questioning bailiff. It described the Ingénu as a scoundrel who wanted to burn convents and carry off girls.

After walking in the gardens of Versailles, where he was bored, and eating supper like a Huron and a Lower Breton, the Ingénu had gone to bed. He happily hoped to see the king the next day, win Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves in marriage, get at least a cavalry company to command, and stop the persecution of the Huguenots. He was soothing himself with these pleasant thoughts when the mounted police entered his room. First they seized his two-shot gun and his large saber. They made an inventory of his cash and took him to the castle that King Charles V, son of John II, had built near the rue Saint-Antoine, at the Tournelles gate.

You can imagine his astonishment on the way. At first he thought it was a dream. He remained stunned. Then, suddenly filled with a rage that doubled his strength, he grabs two of the men escorting him in the carriage by the throat and throws them out through the door. He jumps out after them, dragging along a third who tries to hold him back. The effort brings him down. They tie him up and put him back in the carriage. "So this is what you get," he said, "for driving the English out of Lower Brittany! Beautiful Saint-Yves, what would you say if you saw me like this?"

At last they reach the lodging chosen for him. They carry him silently into the room where he is to be locked up, like a dead man being carried into a cemetery. An old recluse from Port-Royal named Gordon was already there. He had been wasting away in that room for two years. "Here," the leader of the guards told him, "I've brought you company." Immediately they closed the huge bolts on the thick door, reinforced with broad bars. The two prisoners were cut off from the entire world.

Chapter X



The Ingénu is locked in the Bastille with a Jansenist.

Monsieur Gordon was a healthy, calm old man who knew two important things: how to endure hardship and how to comfort people in distress. With an open, sympathetic expression, he approached his companion, embraced him, and said, “Whoever you are, coming here to share my tomb, you can be sure I’ll always put myself aside to ease your suffering in this hellish pit we’ve been thrown into. Let’s worship the Providence that brought us here, endure it peacefully, and hope.” These words affected the Ingénu’s heart like English drops that bring a dying man back to life and make him open his eyes a little in surprise.

After their first greetings, Gordon did not press him to explain his misfortune. Instead, his gentle conversation, and the concern two unhappy people feel for each other, made the young man want to open his heart and lay down the burden crushing him. But he could not guess the reason for his imprisonment. It seemed to him an effect without a cause, and good old Gordon was just as astonished as he was.

“God must have great plans for you,” the Jansenist told the Huron, “since he brought you from Lake Ontario to England and France, had you baptized in Lower Brittany, and put you here for your salvation.” “Honestly,” the Ingénu answered, “I think the devil alone has been managing my fate. My fellow countrymen in America would never have treated me with the cruelty I’m suffering

here. They wouldn't even think of it. People call them *savages*. They're decent people with rough manners; the men here are polished scoundrels. I certainly am surprised to have come from another world only to be locked up in this one behind four bolts with a priest. But then I think of the enormous number of people who leave one hemisphere to get killed in the other, or are shipwrecked on the way and eaten by fish. I can't see God's gracious plans for all those people."

Dinner was passed in through a hatch. They talked about Providence, royal orders of imprisonment, and the art of not giving in to the misfortunes everyone faces in this world. "I've been here for two years," the old man said, "with no comfort except myself and books. I haven't had a single moment of bad temper."

"Oh, Monsieur Gordon!" the Ingénu cried. "Then you aren't in love with your godmother? If you knew Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves as I do, you'd be in despair." At this he could not hold back his tears, and he felt a little less weighed down. "But why do tears bring relief?" he asked. "I'd have thought they would do the opposite." "My son," the good old man said, "everything in us is physical. Every secretion does the body good, and whatever relieves it relieves the soul. We're Providence's machines."

The Ingénu, who, as we have said several times, had a very capable mind, thought deeply about this idea. It seemed he had already carried its seed within him. Then he asked his companion why his machine had been behind four bolts for two years. "Because of efficacious grace," Gordon replied. "I'm considered a Jansenist. I knew Arnauld and Nicole; the Jesuits persecuted us. We believe the pope is only a bishop like any other. That's why Father de La Chaise got the king, whose confessions he hears, to order me deprived of humanity's most precious possession, freedom, without any legal proceedings." "That's very strange," said the Ingénu. "All the unfortunate people I've met owe their troubles to the pope."

"As for your efficacious grace, I admit I don't understand it. But I consider it a great grace that God has let me find, in my suffering, someone like you. You fill my heart with a comfort I thought I could never feel."

Their conversations became more interesting and instructive every day. The two prisoners grew deeply attached to each other. The old man knew a great deal; the young man badly wanted to learn. After a month he began studying geometry and devoured it. Gordon had him read Rohault's physics, which was still fashionable. He showed good judgment by finding only uncertainty in it.

Next he read the first volume of *The Search for Truth*. This new light helped him see. "What!" he said. "Our imagination and senses deceive us that much? Objects don't form our ideas, and we can't give them to ourselves?" After reading the second volume, he was less pleased. He concluded that tearing down is easier than building.

His companion was surprised to hear an uneducated young man make a reflection that normally belongs to experienced minds. He formed a high opinion of his intelligence and grew still more attached to him.

"Your Malebranche," the Ingénu told him one day, "seems to have written half his book with his reason and the other half with his imagination and prejudices."

A few days later Gordon asked, "What do you think about the soul, the way we receive our ideas, our will, grace, and free will?" "Nothing," the Ingénu replied. "If I thought anything, it would be that we're under the power of the eternal Being, like the stars and the elements; that he does everything in us; that we're little wheels in the immense machine of which he is the soul; and that he acts through general laws, not particular intentions. That's all that seems understandable to me. Everything else is a dark abyss."

"But, my son, that would make God the author of sin." "But, Father, your efficacious grace would make him the author of sin too. Everyone denied that grace would certainly sin. Isn't whoever hands us over to evil the author of evil?"

This straightforwardness greatly embarrassed the good man. He felt his efforts to get out of this bog were useless. He piled up so many words that seemed to mean something but meant nothing—along the lines of physical pre-motion—that the Ingénu pitied him. This question clearly led to the origin of good and evil. Poor Gordon then had to review Pandora's box, Orosmade's egg

pierced by Arimane, the hatred between Typhon and Osiris, and finally original sin. Both ran about in that deep darkness without ever meeting. But in the end this novel about the soul took their eyes off their own misery. By a strange enchantment, the mass of disasters spread over the universe dulled their sense of their own troubles. They did not dare complain when everything was suffering.

But in the quiet of night, the image of beautiful Saint-Yves erased every thought of metaphysics and morals from her lover's mind. He woke with his eyes wet with tears. The old Jansenist forgot his efficacious grace, the abbé de Saint-Cyran, and Jansenius, to comfort a young man he believed to be in mortal sin.

After their reading and reasoning, they talked again about their adventures. When that talk had achieved nothing, they read together or separately. The young man's mind grew stronger and stronger. He would have gone especially far in mathematics if Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves had not distracted him.

He read histories, and they saddened him. The world seemed too wicked and too miserable. History is, in fact, nothing but a picture of crimes and disasters. The great mass of innocent, peaceful people always disappears on these vast stages. The characters are nothing but wicked, ambitious people. History seems to please only as tragedy does, and tragedy drags unless passions, crimes, and great misfortunes bring it to life. Clio, like Melpomene, must be armed with a dagger.

French history, like every other history, was full of horrors. Yet its beginnings seemed so revolting, its middle so dry, and even the time of Henry IV so petty, always so lacking in great monuments and so untouched by the fine discoveries that had brought fame to other nations, that he had to fight boredom to read all these obscure disasters crowded into one corner of the world.

Gordon agreed. Both laughed with pity whenever the rulers of Fezensac, Fesansaguet, and Astarac came up. Studying them would really be useful only to their heirs, if they had any. The great ages of the Roman republic made him indifferent to the rest of the earth for a while. The sight of Rome, victorious

and giving laws to nations, filled his whole soul. He grew excited as he thought about this people, ruled for seven hundred years by a passion for freedom and glory.

So the days, weeks, and months went by. He would have thought himself happy in that home of despair if he had not been in love.

His kind heart also felt for the prior of Our Lady of the Mountain and tenderhearted Kerkabon. "What will they think," he often said, "when they get no news of me? They'll think I'm ungrateful." This thought tormented him. He pitied the people who loved him much more than he pitied himself.

Chapter XI



How the Ingénu develops his abilities.

Reading broadens the soul, and a knowledgeable friend comforts it. Our prisoner had both these advantages, which he had never imagined before. “I’m tempted to believe in transformations,” he said, “because I’ve been changed from a beast into a human being.” He used some of the money he was allowed to spend to build a carefully chosen library. His friend encouraged him to write down his thoughts. Here is what he wrote about ancient history:

“I imagine nations were like me for a long time. They learned things only very late. For centuries they concerned themselves only with the passing moment, very little with the past, and never with the future. I’ve traveled five or six hundred leagues through Canada without finding a single monument. Nobody there knows anything about what his great-grandfather did. Could this be humanity’s natural condition? The people of this continent seem superior to those of the other. For several centuries, arts and knowledge have enlarged their lives. Is it because they have beards on their chins, while God denied beards to Americans? I don’t think so. I see that the Chinese have almost no beards, yet have practiced the arts for over five thousand years. Indeed, if they have over four thousand years of written records, their nation must have been united and flourishing for more than fifty centuries.

“One thing especially strikes me in this ancient Chinese history: almost everything in it is believable and natural. I admire it because it has nothing miraculous in it.

“Why have all the other nations given themselves imaginary origins? The old chroniclers of French history, who aren’t very old themselves, trace the French back to Francus, a son of Hector. The Romans claimed descent from a Phrygian, although their language had not a single word with the slightest connection to the language of Phrygia. Gods had lived in Egypt for ten thousand years, and devils lived in Scythia, where they fathered the Huns. Before Thucydides I see only romances like the Amadis stories, but much less entertaining. Everywhere there are apparitions, oracles, miracles, spells, transformations, and interpreted dreams that decide the fate of the greatest empires and smallest states. Here animals speak; there animals are worshiped. Gods turn into men, and men turn into gods. Oh, if we must have fables, at least let them represent truth! I like philosophers’ fables, laugh at children’s, and hate those of frauds.”

One day he came across a history of the emperor Justinian. It said that some uneducated men in Constantinople had issued, in very bad Greek, a decree against the greatest military commander of the age. In the heat of conversation this hero had said, “Truth shines by its own light. You don’t enlighten minds with the flames of burning stakes.” The uneducated men declared this statement heretical and smelling of heresy. They declared its opposite Catholic, universal, and Greek: “Only the flames of burning stakes enlighten minds, and truth cannot shine by its own light.” These linen-robed men condemned several statements by the commander in this way and issued a decree.

“What!” the Ingénu cried. “Those people issued decrees?” “Not decrees,” Gordon replied, “counter-decrees. Everyone in Constantinople laughed at them, the emperor most of all. He was a wise prince who had managed to restrict these uneducated, linen-robed men to doing good. He knew that these gentlemen and various other long-robed priests had worn out his predecessors’ patience with counter-decrees on more serious subjects.” “He did very well,” said the Ingénu. “Priests should be supported and kept under control.”

He wrote down many more thoughts that alarmed old Gordon. "What!" Gordon said to himself. "I've spent fifty years learning, and I'm afraid I can't reach the natural good sense of this almost uncivilized boy! I tremble to think I may have worked hard at strengthening prejudices. He listens only to nature."

The good man had a few of those little books of criticism, those regular pamphlets where people incapable of producing anything run down other people's work, where Visés insult Racines and Faydits insult Fénelons. The Ingénu looked through some. "I compare them," he said, "to certain little flies that lay their eggs in the backsides of the finest horses. That doesn't stop the horses running." The two philosophers scarcely bothered to glance at this literary excrement.

Soon they read the basics of astronomy together. The Ingénu sent for globes of the heavens. This great sight delighted him. "How hard it is," he said, "to begin learning about the sky only when I'm robbed of the right to look at it! Jupiter and Saturn travel through those immense spaces. Millions of suns light billions of worlds. And in the corner of earth I've been thrown into, there are beings who deprive me, a being who sees and thinks, of all those worlds my eyes could reach, and of the world where God had me born! The light made for the whole universe is lost to me. Nobody hid it from me in the northern skies where I spent my childhood and youth. Without you, dear Gordon, I'd be living here in nothingness."

Chapter XII



What the Ingénu thinks about plays.

The young Ingénu was like a strong tree grown in poor soil: once moved to good ground, it quickly spreads its roots and branches. It was remarkable that a prison should be that good ground.

Among the books the two prisoners read in their free time were poems, translations of Greek tragedies, and some French plays. Verses about love brought the Ingénu both pleasure and pain. They all spoke to him of his dear Saint-Yves. The fable of the Two Pigeons pierced his heart. He was very far from being able to return to his own dovecote.

Molière delighted him. He showed him the ways of Paris and of humanity. “Which of his comedies do you like best?” “*Tartuffe*, without question.” “I agree,” said Gordon. “A tartuffe put me in this dungeon, and perhaps tartuffes caused your troubles too.”

“What do you think of these Greek tragedies?” “Good for Greeks,” said the Ingénu. But when he read the modern *Iphigenia*, *Phaedra*, *Andromache*, and *Athalie*, he was carried away. He sighed and cried. He knew them by heart without trying to learn them.

“Read *Rodogune*,” Gordon told him. “They say it’s the theater’s masterpiece. The other plays that gave you so much pleasure are little beside it.” On the very first page the young man said, “This isn’t by the same author.” “How

can you tell?" "I don't know yet. But these verses reach neither my ear nor my heart." "Oh, verse is nothing," Gordon replied. "Then why write it?" the Ingénu answered.

He read the play very carefully, wanting nothing but pleasure. Then he looked at his friend with dry, astonished eyes, not knowing what to say. At last, pressed to explain what he had felt, he answered, "I hardly understood the beginning. The middle disgusted me. The last scene moved me a great deal, though I don't find it very believable. I cared about nobody, and I haven't remembered twenty lines, although I remember every line when I like them."

"Yet it's considered our best play." "If so," he replied, "perhaps it's like many people who don't deserve their positions. After all, this is a question of taste. Mine can't be developed yet. I may be wrong, but you know I'm fairly used to saying what I think, or rather what I feel. I suspect people's judgments often contain illusion, fashion, and whim. I've spoken from nature. Perhaps nature in me is very imperfect. But perhaps most people sometimes pay too little attention to it." Then he recited verses from *Iphigenia*, which filled his mind. Although he did not deliver them well, he put so much truth and feeling into them that he made the old Jansenist cry. Next he read *Cinna*. He did not cry, but he admired it.

Chapter XIII



Beautiful Saint-Yves goes to Versailles.

While our unfortunate young man gained more knowledge than comfort, while his abilities, held back for so long, developed with such speed and strength, and while nature, improving within him, took revenge for fortune's insults, what happened to the prior, his good sister, and beautiful Saint-Yves in her confinement? For the first month they worried; by the third they were deep in grief. False guesses and unfounded rumors frightened them. After six months they thought he was dead. At last Monsieur and Mademoiselle de Kerkabon learned from an old letter, written to Brittany by one of the king's guards, that a young man like the Ingénu had reached Versailles one evening. He had been taken away during the night, and nobody had heard of him since.

"Oh dear!" said Mademoiselle de Kerkabon. "Our nephew must have done something foolish and got himself into trouble. He's young and from Lower Brittany. He can't know how to behave at court. Dear brother, I've never seen Versailles or Paris. Here's a fine chance. Perhaps we'll find our poor nephew. He's our brother's son, and helping him is our duty. Who knows whether we might finally manage to make him a subdeacon, once his youthful excitement has cooled? He had a real gift for learning. Do you remember how he reasoned about the Old and New *Testaments*? We're responsible for his soul. We're the ones who had him baptized. His dear sweetheart Saint-Yves spends her days cry-

ing. We really must go to Paris. If he's hiding in one of those wicked houses of pleasure I've heard so much about, we'll get him out." Her words moved the prior. He went to the bishop of Saint-Malo, who had baptized the Huron, to ask for his protection and advice. The bishop approved the journey. He gave the prior letters of introduction to Father de La Chaise, the king's confessor, who held the kingdom's highest office; to Harlay, archbishop of Paris; and to Bossuet, bishop of Meaux.

At last brother and sister set out. But in Paris they felt lost in an enormous maze, with no thread to guide them and no way out. They had little money. Every day they needed carriages to go looking for information, and they found nothing.

The prior went to see the Reverend Father de La Chaise. He was with Mademoiselle Du Tron and could not receive priors. He went to the archbishop's door. The bishop was shut away with beautiful Madame de Lesdiguières on Church business. He hurried to the bishop of Meaux's country house. That bishop was examining Madame Guyon's mystical love with Mademoiselle de Mauléon. Still, he managed to get a hearing from these two bishops. Both told him they could not get involved with his nephew because he was not a subdeacon.

At last he saw the Jesuit. He welcomed the prior with open arms and assured him he had always held him in special regard, although he had never known him. He swore the Society had always been devoted to Lower Bretons. "But could your nephew have the misfortune to be a Huguenot?" "Certainly not, Reverend Father." "Perhaps a Jansenist?" "I can assure Your Reverence he's hardly a Christian yet. We baptized him about eleven months ago." "Very good, very good. We'll look after him. Is your benefice a large one?" "Oh, it's very little, and our nephew costs us a great deal." "Are there any Jansenists nearby? Be very careful, dear prior. They're more dangerous than Huguenots and atheists." "Reverend Father, we have none. At Our Lady of the Mountain, nobody knows what Jansenism is." "So much the better. Go now. There's nothing I won't do for you." He sent the prior away affectionately and never thought about him again.

Time went by. The prior and his good sister were losing hope.

Meanwhile, the cursed bailiff was pushing ahead with the marriage of his great fool of a son to beautiful Saint-Yves. She had been brought out of the convent especially for it. She still loved her dear godson as much as she hated the husband offered to her. The insult of being put in a convent had made her love stronger; the order to marry the bailiff's son brought it to its height. Regret, love, and horror threw her soul into turmoil. As everyone knows, love makes a young woman much more inventive and daring than affection makes an old prior or an aunt over forty-five. Besides, the novels she had secretly read in the convent had taught her a great deal. Beautiful Saint-Yves remembered the body-guard's letter to Lower Brittany, which people had discussed throughout the province. She decided to go to Versailles herself to make inquiries. If her husband was in prison, as people said, she would throw herself at the ministers' feet and get justice for him. Something secretly told her that at court a pretty girl is refused nothing. But she did not know the price.

Once she has decided, she feels comforted and calm. She no longer pushes her foolish suitor away. She welcomes the hateful prospective father-in-law, treats her brother lovingly, and fills the house with happiness. Then, on the day of the ceremony, she leaves secretly at four in the morning with her little wedding gifts and everything she has managed to gather. She had planned so well that she was already more than ten leagues away when they entered her room around noon. They were greatly surprised and dismayed. The questioning bailiff asked more questions that day than he had all week. The bridegroom looked more foolish than ever. Furious, the abbé de Saint-Yves decided to chase his sister. The bailiff and his son wanted to come too. So fate was bringing almost that whole district of Lower Brittany to Paris.

Beautiful Saint-Yves expected to be followed. She rode on horseback and cleverly asked couriers whether they had met a fat abbé, an enormous bailiff, and a young fool hurrying along the Paris road. On the third day she learned they were close behind. She took another route and was skillful and lucky enough to reach Versailles while they searched Paris for her in vain.

But what could she do at Versailles? Young and beautiful, unknown, with nobody to advise or support her and exposed to every danger, how could she dare look for one of the king's guards? She thought of approaching a lower-ranking Jesuit. There were Jesuits for every station in life. Just as God, they said, had given different foods to different species of animals, he had given the king his confessor, whom everyone seeking a benefice called *the head of the Gallican Church*. Then came the princesses' confessors. Ministers had none; they were not that foolish. There were Jesuits for the common royal household, and especially Jesuits for chambermaids, through whom their mistresses' secrets became known. That was no small job. Beautiful Saint-Yves approached one of these last, named Father Tout-à-tous. She confessed to him, explained her adventures, her situation, and her danger, and begged him to find her a room with some good devout woman who would keep her safe from temptation.

Father Tout-à-tous took her to the wife of an officer in the royal cup service, one of the penitents he trusted most. Once there, she quickly tried to win the woman's trust and friendship. She asked about the Breton guardsman and sent a request for him to visit her. He told her that her lover had been taken away after speaking to a chief clerk. She rushes to that clerk. The sight of a beautiful woman softens him, for we must admit that God created women only to tame men.

The softened pen-pusher told her everything. "Your lover has been in the Bastille for nearly a year. Without you he might stay there all his life." Loving Saint-Yves fainted. When she came to, the pen-pusher said, "I have no influence to do good. All my power amounts to doing harm now and then. Take my advice and see Monsieur de Saint-Pouange, who does both good and harm. He's Lord de Louvois's cousin and favorite. This minister has two souls: Monsieur de Saint-Pouange is one, Madame Dufresnoy the other. But she's not at Versailles just now. Your only option is to win over the protector I've named." Beautiful Saint-Yves hurried to Monsieur de Saint-Pouange, torn between a little joy and terrible grief, between some hope and sad fears, pursued by her brother, adoring her lover, wiping her tears and shedding more, trembling and weak, yet gathering courage again.

Chapter XIV



The Ingénu's mind develops.

The Ingénu quickly advanced in the sciences, especially the study of human beings. His mind developed so quickly almost as much because of his upbringing outside civilization as because of his character. Having learned nothing as a child, he had learned no prejudices. His understanding had never been bent by error and had stayed entirely straight. He saw things as they are, whereas the ideas given to us in childhood make us see them throughout life as they are not. "Your persecutors are horrible," he told his friend Gordon. "I feel sorry for you because you're oppressed, but I also feel sorry for you because you're a Jansenist. Every sect seems to me a gathering around error. Tell me, are there sects in geometry?" "No, my dear boy," good Gordon said with a sigh. "Everyone agrees about truth when it's proved, but people are too divided about obscure truths." "Call them obscure falsehoods. If a single truth had been hidden in those heaps of arguments people have gone over for so many centuries, surely it would have been found. The whole world would at least have agreed on that point. If this truth were as necessary as the sun is to the earth, it would shine like the sun. It's absurd, an insult to humanity, an attack on the infinite and supreme Being, to say there's a truth essential to human beings and God has hidden it." Everything this ignorant young man, taught by nature, said deeply affected the unfortunate old scholar. "Can it really be," he cried, "that I've made myself miserable over fantasies? I'm much more certain of my misery

than of efficacious grace. I've used up my days arguing about God's freedom and humanity's, but I've lost my own. Neither Saint Augustine nor Saint Prosper will get me out of the pit I'm in."

At last the Ingénu spoke in his usual way. "May I speak to you with bold frankness? People who get themselves persecuted over these pointless academic disputes seem unwise to me. The persecutors seem like monsters."

The two prisoners agreed completely that their imprisonment was unjust. "I deserve a hundred times more pity than you," the Ingénu said. "I was born free as the air. I had two lives: freedom and the person I love. They've taken both away. Here we both are in chains, without knowing why or being allowed to ask. I lived as a Huron for twenty years. People call them barbarians because they take revenge on their enemies, but they've never oppressed their friends. I'd hardly set foot in France before I shed my blood for her. I may have saved a province. My reward is to be swallowed up in this tomb for the living, where I'd have died of rage without you. Are there no laws in this country? People are condemned without a hearing! It isn't like that in England. Oh, I shouldn't have been fighting the English." His new philosophy could not subdue a nature violated in its most basic right, and it let his justified anger run free.

His companion did not disagree. Absence always strengthens love that has not been satisfied, and philosophy does not lessen it. He spoke about his dear Saint-Yves as often as about morals and metaphysics. As his feelings became purer, his love grew. He read some new novels but found few that pictured what was happening in his soul. He felt his heart always went beyond what he read. "Oh," he said, "nearly all these writers have nothing but cleverness and skill." Gradually, the good Jansenist priest became the person he confided in about his love. Before this, Gordon had known love only as a sin people admit in confession. He learned to know it as a feeling both noble and tender, able to raise the soul as well as soften it, and even sometimes to produce virtues. Finally, one last marvel: a Huron was converting a Jansenist.

Chapter XV



The beautiful Saint-Yves resists some delicate proposals.

The beautiful Saint-Yves, even more loving than her lover, went to see Monsieur de Saint-Pouange with the friend she was staying with. Both women kept their faces hidden under their hoods. The first person she saw at the door was her brother, the abbé de Saint-Yves, coming out. This frightened her, but her devout friend reassured her. “It’s precisely because someone has spoken against you that you need to speak for yourself. You can be sure that in this country the accusers are always right unless you hurry to prove them wrong. Besides, unless I’m badly mistaken, your presence will have more effect than your brother’s words.”

A woman passionately in love needs only a little encouragement to become fearless. Saint-Yves presented herself at the audience. Her youth, her beauty, and her tender eyes, wet with a few tears, drew everyone’s attention. Every courtier around the deputy minister forgot the idol of power for a moment to gaze at the idol of beauty. Saint-Pouange took her into a private room. She spoke with feeling and grace. Saint-Pouange felt moved. She was trembling, and he reassured her. “Come back this evening,” he told her. “Your affairs deserve some thought and a leisurely discussion. There are too many people here, and audiences are rushed through. I need to talk to you fully about everything that concerns you.” Then, after praising her beauty and her feelings, he told her to come at seven that evening.

She came on time. Her devout friend went with her again, but stayed in the sitting room and read *The Christian Educator* while Saint-Pouange and the beautiful Saint-Yves were in the inner room. "Would you believe, mademoiselle," he began, "that your brother came to ask me for a royal warrant to imprison you? Honestly, I'd sooner issue one to send him back to Lower Brittany." "Oh, sir! Your offices must hand out these warrants very freely, if people come asking for them from the far end of the kingdom, as if they were pensions. I would never ask for one against my brother. I have a great deal to complain of in his behavior, but I respect people's freedom. I'm asking for the freedom of a man I want to marry. The king owes it to him that a province was saved. He can serve the king well, and he is the son of an officer killed in the king's service. What is he accused of? How could anyone treat him so cruelly without hearing him?"

Then the deputy minister showed her the letter from the Jesuit spy and the one from the treacherous bailiff. "What! Can there be monsters like this on earth? And this is how they mean to force me to marry the ridiculous son of a ridiculous, wicked man! Is this the sort of report you use here to decide people's fate?" She fell to her knees and, sobbing, begged for the freedom of the brave man who adored her. In this position her beauty showed to its greatest advantage. She was so beautiful that Saint-Pouange lost all shame. He hinted that she would succeed if she began by letting him be the first to enjoy what she was saving for her lover. Saint-Yves, horrified and embarrassed, pretended for a long time not to understand him. He had to make himself clearer. One word, spoken cautiously at first, led to a stronger one, then another more explicit still. He offered not only to cancel the royal warrant, but also rewards, money, honors, and secure positions. The more he promised, the more desperate he became not to be refused.

Saint-Yves was crying and gasping for breath, half collapsed on a sofa. She could hardly believe what she saw and heard. Saint-Pouange, in his turn, fell to his knees before her. He was not without charm, and might not have frightened off a heart less firmly committed. But Saint-Yves adored her lover and thought it would be a terrible crime to betray him in order to help him. Saint-Pouange

doubled his pleas and promises. At last he became so carried away that he declared this was the only way to get the man she cared for so deeply and tenderly out of prison. This strange conversation dragged on. In the next room, the devout woman said as she read her *Christian Educator*, "My God! What can they have been doing in there for two hours? His lordship Saint-Pouange has never given such a long audience. Perhaps he has refused that poor girl everything, since she's still pleading with him."

At last her companion came out of the inner room, distraught and unable to speak. She was thinking deeply about the character of the great and the not-so-great, who so casually sacrifice men's freedom and women's honor.

She said nothing all the way back. Once they reached her friend's home, she burst out and told her everything. The devout woman made many signs of the cross. "My dear friend, first thing tomorrow we must consult Father Tout-à-tous, our spiritual adviser. He has a great deal of influence with Monsieur de Saint-Pouange. He hears the confessions of several maids in his household. He's a devout, accommodating man who also guides women of high rank. Put yourself in his hands. That's what I do, and it has always worked out well for me. We poor women need a man to guide us." "Well then, my dear friend, I'll go and see Father Tout-à-tous tomorrow."

Chapter XVI



She consults a Jesuit.

As soon as the beautiful, miserable Saint-Yves was with her good confessor, she told him that a powerful, pleasure-loving man had offered to free the man she was to marry legally. In return, he demanded a great price. She felt a terrible disgust at the thought of being unfaithful in this way. If only her own life were at stake, she would give it up rather than give in.

“What an abominable sinner!” Father Tout-à-tous told her. “You really should tell me this wicked man’s name. He’s certainly some Jansenist. I’ll report him to His Reverence Father de La Chaise, who will have him put in the same lodgings as the dear person you’re to marry.”

After much embarrassment and a long struggle to make up her mind, the poor girl finally named Saint-Pouange.

“His lordship Saint-Pouange!” the Jesuit cried. “Ah, my daughter, that’s quite another matter. He’s a cousin of the greatest minister we’ve ever had—a good man, a protector of the good cause, a good Christian. He can’t have had any such thought. You must have misunderstood.” “Oh, Father, I understood only too well. I’m lost whatever I do. I can only choose between misery and shame. Either my lover must stay buried alive, or I must make myself unworthy to live. I can’t let him die, and I can’t save him.”

Father Tout-à-tous tried to calm her with these gentle words:

“First, my daughter, never use that expression, *my lover*. There’s something worldly about it that might offend God. Say *my husband*. Although he isn’t your husband yet, you think of him as such, and nothing could be more proper.

“Second, although he is your husband in your thoughts and hopes, he isn’t in fact. So you wouldn’t be committing adultery, a dreadful sin that must always be avoided as far as possible.

“Third, actions don’t carry the guilt of sin when the intention is pure. And nothing could be purer than freeing your husband.

“Fourth, you have examples from the early days of the Church that can be wonderfully helpful in guiding your conduct. Saint Augustine tells us that under the proconsul Septimius Acyndinus, in the year 340 of our salvation, a poor man couldn’t pay Caesar what belonged to Caesar. He was sentenced to death, as was right, despite the saying, *Where there is nothing, the king loses his rights*. The sum involved was a pound of gold. The condemned man had a wife whom God had made beautiful and wise. A rich old man promised to give the woman a pound of gold, or even more, on condition that he commit the filthy sin with her. The woman didn’t think she was doing wrong by saving her husband. Saint Augustine warmly approves of her generous submission. It’s true that the rich old man cheated her, and perhaps her husband was hanged just the same. But she had done everything in her power to save his life.

“Be sure, my daughter, that when a Jesuit quotes Saint Augustine to you, that saint must be completely right. I’m not advising you to do anything. You’re sensible. Presumably you’ll be of help to your husband. His lordship Saint-Pouange is an honorable man. He won’t deceive you. That’s all I can tell you. I’ll pray to God for you, and I hope everything will turn out to his greater glory.”

The beautiful Saint-Yves was as frightened by the Jesuit’s words as by the deputy minister’s proposals. She went back to her friend’s house in despair. She was tempted to escape through death both the horror of leaving the lover she adored in a dreadful prison and the shame of freeing him at the price of what she valued most—what should belong only to that unfortunate lover.

Chapter XVII



She gives in out of virtue.

She begged her friend to kill her. But this woman, as willing to make allowances as the Jesuit, spoke even more plainly. “Sadly,” she said, “that’s how nearly everything gets done at this court, so charming, so gallant, so famous. Both the lowest and the highest positions have often been given only at the price they’re demanding from you. Listen, you’ve made me feel friendship and trust toward you. I’ll admit that if I’d been as hard to persuade as you are, my husband wouldn’t have the little post that supports him. He knows it. Far from being angry, he sees me as his benefactor and considers himself someone who owes his position to me. Do you think everyone who has governed a province or even commanded an army owed his honors and fortune to his service alone? Some owe them to their wives. Love has been used to ask for military ranks, and the post has gone to the prettiest woman’s husband.

“Your situation is much more compelling. You need to bring your lover back into the daylight and marry him. That’s a sacred duty you must carry out. No one blamed the beautiful, high-ranking ladies I’m telling you about. People will applaud you. They’ll say you allowed yourself a moment of weakness only because you had too much virtue.” “Oh, what virtue!” cried the beautiful Saint-Yves. “What a maze of wickedness! What a country! And how I’m learning to understand people! A Father de La Chaise and a ridiculous bailiff have my lover put in prison. My family persecutes me. The only helping hand I’m

offered in my misery is meant to dishonor me. One Jesuit has ruined a brave man, and another wants to ruin me. There are traps all around me, and I'm on the point of falling into destitution. I must kill myself or speak to the king. I'll throw myself at his feet as he passes on his way to Mass or the theater."

"They won't let you near him," her good friend told her. "And if you did have the misfortune to speak, Monsieur de Louvois and the Reverend Father de La Chaise could bury you in the depths of a convent for the rest of your life."

While this worthy woman was making the desperate girl's confusion still worse and driving the dagger into her heart, a special messenger arrived from Monsieur de Saint-Pouange with a letter and two beautiful earrings. Saint-Yves rejected everything in tears, but her friend took charge of it all.

As soon as the messenger left, her confidante read the letter, which invited both friends to a small supper that evening. Saint-Yves swore she wouldn't go. The devout woman wanted to try the two diamond earrings on her. Saint-Yves wouldn't allow it. She struggled all day. At last, thinking only of her lover, defeated and swept along, not knowing where she was being taken, she let herself be led to the fatal supper. Nothing had persuaded her to wear the earrings. Her confidante brought them and put them on her against her will before they sat down at the table. Saint-Yves was so embarrassed and so upset that she let herself be tormented. Her patron took this as a very encouraging sign. Toward the end of the meal, her confidante discreetly withdrew. The patron then showed her the order canceling the royal warrant for imprisonment, a document granting a large payment, and another granting command of a company. He was generous with his promises. "Oh!" Saint-Yves told him. "How I would love you if you didn't want to be loved so much!"

At last, after a long resistance, after sobs, cries, and tears, exhausted by the struggle, distraught and faint, she had to give in. Her only comfort was to promise herself that she would think only of the Ingénu while the cruel man ruthlessly enjoyed the desperate situation she had been forced into.

Chapter XVIII



She frees her lover and a Jansenist.

At daybreak she rushed to Paris with the minister's order. It's hard to describe what was happening in her heart during that journey. Imagine a noble, virtuous soul, humiliated by her disgrace, drunk with love, torn by remorse for betraying her lover, and filled with the joy of freeing the man she adored! Her bitter feelings, her struggles, and her success all competed for her thoughts. She was no longer the simple girl whose provincial upbringing had kept her ideas narrow. Love and suffering had educated her. Her feelings had developed as much as reason had developed in her unfortunate lover's mind. Girls learn to feel more easily than men learn to think. Her experience had taught her more than four years in a convent.

She was dressed very simply. She looked with horror on the finery she had worn before her disastrous benefactor. She had left her diamond earrings with her companion without even looking at them. Ashamed and delighted, worshipping the Ingénu and hating herself, she finally arrived at the gate of ... that terrible castle, a palace of revenge,
Where the guilty and the innocent are often held.

When it was time to get out of the carriage, her strength failed. Someone helped her. She went in with her heart pounding, her eyes wet, and her face full of distress. She was taken to the governor. She tried to speak to him, but her voice died away. She showed him her order, barely managing a few words. The

governor liked his prisoner and was very glad he was being freed. His heart hadn't hardened like those of some of his honorable fellow jailers. Thinking only of the payment they received for guarding their captives, basing their income on their victims, and living off other people's misery, those men took a dreadful, secret pleasure in the tears of the unfortunate.

He had the prisoner brought to his rooms. The two lovers saw each other, and both fainted. The beautiful Saint-Yves lay motionless and lifeless for a long time. The Ingénu soon recovered his strength of mind. "This is your wife, I assume," the governor told him. "You hadn't told me you were married. I'm informed that you owe your release to her generous efforts." "Oh, I'm not worthy to be his wife," said the beautiful Saint-Yves in a trembling voice, and she fainted again.

When she came to, she showed him, still trembling, the document granting the payment and the written promise of command of a company. The Ingénu, as astonished as he was moved, seemed to wake from one dream only to fall into another. "Why was I locked up here? How did you manage to get me out? Where are the monsters who put me here? You're a goddess coming down from heaven to help me."

The beautiful Saint-Yves lowered her eyes, looked at her lover, blushed, and a moment later turned her tearful eyes away. At last she told him everything she knew and everything she had gone through, except what she wished she could hide from herself forever. Anyone but the Ingénu, anyone with more experience of the world and more knowledge of the ways of the court, would easily have guessed it.

"Can a wretch like that bailiff really have had the power to take my freedom away? Oh, I see that people are like the lowest animals: all of them can do harm. But can a monk, a Jesuit who hears the king's confessions, really have done as much to cause my suffering as that bailiff? I can't even imagine what excuse that hateful scoundrel used to persecute me. Did he claim I was a Jansenist? And how did you remember me? I didn't deserve it. I was only a savage then. What!

With no advice and no help, you managed to set out for Versailles! You appeared there, and my chains were broken! Then beauty and virtue do have an irresistible charm that brings down iron doors and softens hearts of bronze!”

At the word *virtue*, the beautiful Saint-Yves broke into sobs. She didn’t know how virtuous she had been in committing the crime she blamed herself for.

Her lover went on: “Angel who broke my chains, if you had enough influence to get justice for me—something I still don’t understand—please get it for an old man too. He first taught me to think, just as you taught me to love. Misery brought us together. I love him like a father. I can’t live without either you or him.”

“Me! Ask a favor of the same man who...” “Yes, I want to owe everything to you, and never owe anything to anyone else. Write to that powerful man. Shower me with your kindness. Finish what you’ve begun. Complete your miracles.” She felt she had to do everything her lover asked. She tried to write, but her hand wouldn’t obey. Three times she began her letter again, and three times she tore it up. At last she wrote it, and the two lovers left after embracing the old martyr to efficacious grace.

Saint-Yves, happy and miserable, knew where her brother was staying and went there. Her lover took rooms in the same house.

Hardly had they arrived when her protector sent her the order for good old Gordon’s release and asked to meet her the next day. So her dishonor was the price of every decent, generous act she performed. She looked with disgust on this practice of selling human misery and happiness. She gave her lover the release order and refused to meet a benefactor she could no longer see without dying of sorrow and shame. The Ingénu could leave her only to free a friend. He rushed there. As he fulfilled this duty, he reflected on the strange events of this world and admired the courageous virtue of a young woman to whom two unhappy men owed more than their lives.

Chapter XIX



The Ingénu, the beautiful Saint-Yves, and their relatives come together.

The generous, admirable woman who had been unfaithful was with her brother, the abbé de Saint-Yves, the good prior of Our Lady of the Mountain, and Mademoiselle de Kerkabon. They were all equally astonished, but their situations and feelings were very different. The abbé de Saint-Yves wept over his wrongdoing at his sister's feet, and she forgave him. The prior and his loving sister were crying too, but with joy. The wicked bailiff and his unbearable son didn't disturb this moving scene. They had left at the first news that their enemy was being freed. They were hurrying back to bury their foolishness and fear in their province.

Stirred by a hundred different feelings, the four of them waited for the young man to return with the friend he was going to free. The abbé de Saint-Yves didn't dare look his sister in the eye. Good Mademoiselle de Kerkabon said, "So I'll see my dear nephew again!" "You will," said the lovely Saint-Yves, "but he isn't the same man anymore. His manner, his way of speaking, his ideas, his mind—everything has changed. He has become as worthy of respect as he used to be naïve and unfamiliar with everything. He'll bring honor and comfort to your family. If only I could make mine happy too!" "You aren't the same either," said the prior. "What has happened to change you so much?"

In the middle of this conversation, the Ingénu arrived, holding his Jansenist's hand. The scene now became still more unusual and moving. It began with loving embraces from his uncle and aunt. The abbé de Saint-Yves almost went down on his knees before the Ingénu, who was no longer so naïve. The two lovers spoke to each other through looks that expressed all the feelings filling their hearts. Joy and gratitude shone on his face. Uneasiness showed in her tender, slightly bewildered eyes. Everyone was surprised that she mixed sorrow with so much joy.

In a few moments, old Gordon became dear to the whole family. He had suffered with the young prisoner, and that was a great claim on their affection. He owed his release to the two lovers. That alone reconciled him to love. The harshness of his former beliefs was leaving his heart. Like the Huron, he had become a new man. Before supper, everyone told their adventures. The two abbés and the aunt listened like children hearing ghost stories, and like people who all cared about so many disasters. "Sadly," said Gordon, "there may be more than five hundred virtuous people at this moment in the same chains Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves has broken. Their sufferings are unknown. There are plenty of hands to strike the mass of unhappy people, but rarely one to help." This thought, so true, deepened his compassion and gratitude. Everything added to the beautiful Saint-Yves's triumph. Everyone admired her noble, resolute spirit. Their admiration was mixed with the respect people can't help feeling for someone they believe has influence at court. But the abbé de Saint-Yves sometimes asked, "How did my sister manage to gain this influence so quickly?"

They were about to sit down to a very early supper when the good friend from Versailles arrived, knowing nothing of what had happened. She was in a carriage drawn by six horses, and it was easy to see who owned it. She came in with the imposing air of someone from court who had important business, barely greeted the company, and pulled the beautiful Saint-Yves aside. "Why keep us waiting so long? Come with me. Here are your diamonds, which you forgot." She couldn't say this quietly enough to keep the Ingénu from hearing. He saw the diamonds. Her brother was dumbfounded. The uncle and aunt felt

only the surprise of simple people who had never seen such splendor. The young man, whose mind had developed through a year of reflection, couldn't help thinking about it and looked troubled for a moment. His lover noticed. A deathly paleness spread over her beautiful face. She shuddered and could barely stand. "Oh, madam," she told that disastrous friend, "you've ruined me! You're killing me!" These words pierced the Ingénu's heart. But he had already learned self-control. He didn't comment on them, for fear of upsetting his beloved in front of her brother, but he turned as pale as she did.

Saint-Yves, distraught at the change she saw in her lover's face, pulled the woman out of the room into a small passage and threw the diamonds on the ground in front of her. "Oh, they weren't what tempted me. You know that. But the man who gave them will never see me again." Her friend was picking them up, and Saint-Yves added, "Let him take them back or give them to you. Go away. Don't make me feel ashamed of myself anymore." At last the messenger went back, unable to understand the remorse she had witnessed.

The beautiful Saint-Yves, weighed down and feeling a violent disturbance in her body that made it hard to breathe, had to go to bed. But she didn't want to alarm anyone, so she said nothing about her suffering. Saying only that she was tired, she asked permission to rest. First, though, she reassured everyone with comforting, affectionate words and gave her lover looks that set his soul on fire.

Without her to bring life to it, supper was sad at first. But it was the kind of moving sadness that produces absorbing, useful conversations, far better than the frivolous gaiety people seek, which is usually nothing but tiresome noise.

In a few words Gordon told the history of Jansenism and Molinism, the persecutions one party inflicted on the other, and the stubbornness of both. The Ingénu criticized them and pitied people who weren't content with all the conflicts their interests stirred up, but made new troubles for themselves over imaginary interests and incomprehensible absurdities. Gordon told the story, and the other judged it. Their fellow diners listened with feeling and gained new understanding. They spoke of how long our troubles last and how short life is. They observed that every profession has its own vice and danger, and that everyone, from a prince to the lowest beggar, seems to accuse nature. How

can there be so many people willing, for so little money, to persecute, hunt down, and execute other people? With what inhuman indifference a man in office signs an order to destroy a family, and with what still more barbarous joy hired men carry it out!

“In my youth,” said good old Gordon, “I knew a relative of Marshal de Marillac. He was being hunted in his province for supporting that famous, unfortunate man, and was hiding in Paris under a false name. He was seventy-two years old. His wife, who was with him, was about the same age. They had had a dissolute son who ran away from home at fourteen. He became a soldier, then a deserter, and went through every stage of debauchery and poverty. At last he adopted the name of an estate and joined Cardinal de Richelieu’s guards—for that priest, like Mazarin, had guards. He had obtained an exempt officer’s baton in this band of henchmen. This adventurer was ordered to arrest the old man and his wife. He carried it out with all the brutality of a man eager to please his master. As he led them away, he heard these two victims lament the long series of misfortunes they had suffered since birth. The father and mother counted their son’s waywardness and loss among their greatest sorrows. He recognized them, but took them to prison just the same, assuring them that serving His Eminence must come before everything else. His Eminence rewarded his zeal.

“I saw a spy working for Father de La Chaise betray his own brother in hopes of getting a small church benefice, which he never received. And I saw him die, not of remorse, but of grief at having been cheated by the Jesuit.

“My work as a confessor, which I did for a long time, let me see inside families. I hardly saw one that wasn’t sunk in misery, while outwardly, behind a mask of happiness, they seemed to be swimming in joy. And I always noticed that our greatest sorrows came from our uncontrolled greed.”

“For my part,” said the Ingénu, “I think a noble, grateful, loving soul can live happily. I fully expect to enjoy complete happiness with the beautiful, generous Saint-Yves. For I hope,” he added, turning to her brother with a friendly

smile, “that you won’t refuse me as you did last year, and I’ll go about it more properly.” The abbé poured out apologies for the past and promises of lasting affection.

Uncle Kerkabon said it would be the happiest day of his life. Overjoyed and crying with happiness, the good aunt exclaimed, “I told you that you’d never be a subdeacon! This sacrament is better than the other one. I wish to God I’d been honored with it! But I’ll be a mother to you.” Then they all tried to outdo each other in praising the loving Saint-Yves.

Her lover’s heart was too full of what she had done for him, and he loved her too much, for the affair of the diamonds to dominate his feelings. But those words he had heard only too clearly, *you’re killing me*, still frightened him in secret and spoiled all his joy, while the praise of his beautiful beloved made his love grow still stronger. At last everyone was thinking only of her. They spoke only of the happiness the two lovers deserved. They made plans to live together in Paris, plans for wealth and advancement. They gave themselves over to all the hopes that the smallest glimmer of happiness so easily brings to life. But deep in his heart the Ingénu felt something that resisted this illusion. He reread the promises signed by Saint-Pouange and the official grants signed by Louvois. They described these two men to him as they were, or as people believed them to be. Everyone spoke about the ministers and the government with that freedom of the dinner table which, in France, is considered the most precious freedom anyone can enjoy on earth.

“If I were king of France,” said the Ingénu, “this is the kind of war minister I’d choose. I’d want a man of the highest birth, because he gives orders to the nobility. I’d require him to have been an officer himself, to have passed through every rank, to be at least a lieutenant general in the army and worthy of becoming a marshal of France. Doesn’t he need to have served himself to understand the details of military service better? And won’t officers obey a soldier who has shown his courage, just as they have, a hundred times more gladly than an office worker who, however clever he is, can at best only guess at the operations of a campaign? I wouldn’t mind my minister being generous, even if it sometimes made things a little difficult for the keeper of my royal treasury. I’d like him to

work with ease and even be known for the cheerful spirit of a man who is on top of his business. That pleases the nation so much and makes every duty less painful.” He wanted the minister to have this character because he had always noticed that such good humor is incompatible with cruelty.

Monsieur de Louvois might not have been satisfied with the Ingénu’s wishes. His merits were of another kind.

But while they were at the table, the unhappy girl’s illness was taking a dangerous turn. Her blood had become inflamed, and a consuming fever had set in. She suffered without complaining, careful not to disturb the diners’ happiness.

Her brother, knowing she wasn’t asleep, went to her bedside. He was startled by her condition. Everyone hurried in, her lover following her brother. He was certainly the most alarmed and the most deeply moved of them all. But he had learned to add discretion to all the fine gifts nature had showered on him, and a quick sense of proper behavior was beginning to guide him.

They immediately sent for a neighborhood doctor. He was one of those who rush through their visits, confusing the illness they have just seen with the one they are looking at now. They follow blind routine in a science whose uncertainties and dangers can’t be removed even by the most mature, sound, thoughtful judgment. He made the illness twice as bad by hastily prescribing a remedy then in fashion. Fashion, even in medicine! This craze was all too common in Paris.

The sorrowful Saint-Yves did even more than her doctor to make her illness dangerous. Her mind was killing her body. The crowd of thoughts tormenting her put a poison into her veins more dangerous than the poison of the most burning fever.

Chapter XX



The beautiful Saint-Yves dies, and what follows.

They called another doctor. Instead of helping nature and letting it do its work in a young woman whose every organ was struggling to restore life, he thought only of opposing his colleague. Within two days the illness became fatal. The brain, believed to be the seat of understanding, was attacked as violently as the heart, said to be the seat of the passions.

“What incomprehensible mechanism has made our organs subject to feeling and thought? How does a single painful idea disturb the flow of blood? And how does the blood, in turn, pass its disorders on to the human mind? What is this unknown fluid, whose existence is certain, which moves faster and more actively than light, rushing through all the channels of life in less than the blink of an eye? It produces sensations, memory, sadness or joy, reason or confusion. It brings back in horror what we wish we could forget and makes a thinking animal either an object of admiration or a subject for pity and tears.”

This was what good Gordon said. This very natural reflection, which people rarely make, took nothing away from his tenderness. He wasn't one of those wretched philosophers who try to feel nothing. He was moved by this young woman's fate like a father watching his beloved child slowly die. The abbé de Saint-Yves was in despair. The prior and his sister shed streams of tears. But who could describe her lover's condition? No language has words equal to such extreme pain. Languages are too imperfect.

The aunt, almost lifeless herself, held the dying woman's head in her weak arms. Her brother knelt at the foot of the bed. Her lover clasped her hand, bathing it in tears and breaking into sobs. He called her his benefactor, his hope, his life, half of himself, his beloved, his wife. At the word "wife," she sighed and looked at him with indescribable tenderness, then suddenly gave a cry of horror. Then, in one of those intervals when crushing exhaustion, dulled senses, and pain briefly held back leave the mind free and strong, she cried, "Me, your wife! Oh, dear lover, that name, that happiness, that reward were no longer meant for me. I'm dying, and I deserve it. Oh, god of my heart! You whom I sacrificed to demons from hell! It's over. I'm being punished. Live happily." No one could understand these tender, terrible words, but they filled every heart with fear and compassion. She found the courage to explain. Every word made everyone present shudder with astonishment, sorrow, and pity. They all joined in hating the powerful man who had corrected a horrible injustice only by committing a crime, and had forced the most admirable innocence to become his accomplice.

"What? You, guilty?" her lover told her. "No, you aren't. Crime can exist only in the heart. Yours belongs to virtue and to me."

He supported this thought with words that seemed to bring the beautiful Saint-Yves back to life. She felt comforted and was surprised that she was still loved. Old Gordon would have condemned her when he was only a Jansenist. But now that he had become wise, he respected her and wept.

Amid so many tears and fears, while the danger facing this beloved girl filled every heart and everyone was in distress, a messenger from court was announced. A messenger! From whom? And why? He came on behalf of the king's confessor, for the prior of Kerkabon. It wasn't Father de La Chaise who had written, but Brother Vadbled, his personal servant. He was a very important man at the time: he informed archbishops of the reverend father's wishes, gave audiences, promised church benefices, and sometimes had royal warrants for imprisonment issued. He wrote to the prior "that His Reverence had been informed of his nephew's adventures; that his imprisonment was only a mistake; that these little misfortunes happened frequently and shouldn't be taken

seriously; that, in short, the prior should come and present his nephew the next day; that he should bring good old Gordon with him; and that he, Brother Vaddled, would introduce them to His Reverence and to Monsieur de Louvois, who would say a word to them in his anteroom.”

He added that the king had been told the Ingénu’s story and how he had fought the English. The king would surely be gracious enough to notice him when passing through the gallery, and might even nod to him. The letter ended by holding out the pleasing hope that all the ladies of the court would be eager to invite his nephew to attend them while they dressed. Several would say, “Good morning, Monsieur Ingénu,” and he would certainly be talked about at the king’s supper. The letter was signed, “Your affectionate Vaddled, Jesuit brother.”

When the prior read the letter aloud, his furious nephew controlled his anger for a moment and said nothing to the messenger. Instead, he turned to the companion of his sufferings and asked what he thought of this way of writing. Gordon answered, “So this is how they treat people like monkeys! They beat them and make them dance.” The Ingénu’s original character returned, as it always does when the soul is deeply stirred. He tore the letter into pieces and threw them in the messenger’s face. “There’s my answer.” His terrified uncle thought he saw a thunderbolt and twenty royal warrants for imprisonment falling on him. He hurried off to write and excuse as best he could what he took for a young man’s temper, but which was really the outburst of a great soul.

But more painful concerns took hold of every heart. The beautiful, unfortunate Saint-Yves could already feel her end approaching. She was calm, but with the dreadful calm of a body that has collapsed and no longer has the strength to fight. “Oh, my dear lover!” she said in a fading voice. “Death is punishing me for my weakness. But I die with the comfort of knowing you’re free.

“I adored you while betraying you, and I adore you as I say goodbye forever.”

She didn’t put on an empty show of firmness. She couldn’t understand the miserable glory of making a few neighbors say, “She died bravely.” Who, at twenty, can lose her lover, her life, and what is called *honor*, without regret and

anguish? She felt all the horror of her condition and made it felt through those words and those dying looks that speak so powerfully. In short, she cried like the others whenever she had the strength to cry.

Let others praise the showy deaths of people who meet destruction without feeling. That's the fate of all animals. We die with indifference, as they do, only when age or illness dulls our organs and makes us like them. Anyone who suffers a great loss feels great regret. If he suppresses it, that's because he carries his vanity even into the arms of death.

When the fatal moment came, everyone there broke into tears and cries. The Ingénu lost consciousness. Strong souls, when they are tender, feel things much more violently than others. Good Gordon knew him well enough to fear that he would kill himself when he came to. They removed all the weapons. The unhappy young man noticed. Without tears, groans, or any sign of agitation, he said to his relatives and Gordon, "Do you think there's anyone on earth with the right and power to stop me from ending my life?" Gordon was careful not to parade those tiresome commonplaces used to try to prove that people aren't allowed to use their freedom to stop existing when they are horribly unhappy; that they mustn't leave their house when they can no longer live in it; that a person is on earth like a soldier at his post—as though it mattered to the Being of beings whether a collection of a few pieces of matter was in one place or another. These are powerless arguments which firm, thoughtful despair refuses to hear, and which Cato answered only with a stab of his dagger.

The Ingénu's bleak, terrible silence, his dark eyes, his trembling lips, and his shuddering body filled everyone who looked at him with a mixture of pity and fear. It froze every power of the mind, made speech impossible, and could show itself only in broken words. The landlady and her family had hurried in. They trembled at his despair, kept him in sight, and watched his every movement. The cold body of the beautiful Saint-Yves had already been taken to a downstairs room, away from the eyes of her lover, who seemed to be searching for her still, though he could no longer really see anything.

In the middle of this scene of death, while the body lay on display at the door of the house, while two priests beside a basin of holy water recited prayers distractedly, while some passersby idly sprinkled a few drops of holy water on the coffin and others went on their way without caring, while the relatives wept and a lover was about to take his own life, Saint-Pouange arrived with the friend from Versailles.

His passing desire, satisfied only once, had become love. The refusal of his favors had stung him. Father de La Chaise would never have thought of coming to this house. But Saint-Pouange saw the beautiful Saint-Yves's image before him every day. He burned to satisfy a passion that had driven the sharp point of desire into his heart after just one encounter. He didn't hesitate to come in person to seek the woman he might not have wanted to see even three times if she had come willingly.

He got out of his carriage. The first thing he saw was a coffin. He turned his eyes away with the simple disgust of a man raised among pleasures, who thinks he should be spared any sight that might bring him back to thinking about human misery. He was about to go upstairs. Out of curiosity, the woman from Versailles asked who was to be buried. Someone said the name of Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves. At that name she went pale and gave a dreadful cry. Saint-Pouange turned around. Astonishment and grief filled his heart. Good Gordon was there, his eyes full of tears. He broke off his sorrowful prayers to tell the courtier about the whole horrible disaster. He spoke with the authority that sorrow and virtue give. Saint-Pouange hadn't been born wicked. The rush of business and amusement had swept away his soul before it had come to know itself. He wasn't yet approaching old age, which usually hardens ministers' hearts. He listened to Gordon with his eyes lowered, wiping away a few tears that he was surprised to shed. He came to know repentance.

"I absolutely must see this extraordinary man you've told me about," he said. "He moves me almost as much as the innocent victim whose death I caused." Gordon followed him to the room where the prior, Mademoiselle de Kerkabon, the abbé de Saint-Yves, and a few neighbors were bringing the young man around after he had fainted again.

“I’ve caused your misery,” the deputy minister told him. “I’ll spend my life making it right.” The Ingénu’s first thought was to kill him and then kill himself. Nothing could have been more fitting. But he had no weapons and was closely watched. Saint-Pouange wasn’t put off by the refusals, with all the reproach, contempt, and horror he deserved and received in abundance. Time softens everything. Monsieur de Louvois eventually managed to make an excellent officer of the Ingénu. Under another name he appeared in Paris and in the armies, winning the approval of all decent people, and was both a fearless soldier and a fearless philosopher.

He never spoke of this experience without a groan, yet speaking of it was his comfort. He cherished the memory of the loving Saint-Yves to the last moment of his life. The abbé de Saint-Yves and the prior each received a good church benefice. Good Mademoiselle de Kerkabon preferred seeing her nephew with military honors to seeing him a subdeacon. The devout woman from Versailles kept the diamond earrings and received another handsome gift. Father Tout-à-tous received boxes of chocolate, coffee, rock candy, and candied lemons, along with the *Meditations of the Reverend Father Croiset* and *The Flower of the Saints*, bound in morocco leather. Good Gordon lived with the Ingénu in the closest friendship until his death. He too received a benefice and forgot efficacious grace and concomitant concurrence forever. He took as his motto, *Misfortune is good for something*. How many decent people in the world have been able to say, *Misfortune is good for nothing!*