

that are unknown or believed [163] to be so, it is up to history, if available, to provide the facts that connect them; about how, in the absence of history, it is up to Philosophy to ascertain similar facts that might connect them; finally about this, that with respect to outcomes, similarity reduces facts to a much smaller number of different classes than people imagine. It is enough for me to submit these issues for consideration to my Judges: it is enough for me to have seen to it that vulgar Readers need not consider them.

PART II

[1] The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, to whom it occurred to say *this is mine*, and found people sufficiently simple to believe him, was the true founder of civil society. How many crimes, wars, murders, how many miseries and horrors Mankind would have been spared by him who, pulling up the stakes or filling in the ditch, had cried out to his kind: Beware of listening to this impostor; You are lost if you forget that the fruits are everyone's and the Earth no one's: But in all likelihood things had by then reached a point where they could not continue as they were; for this idea of property, depending as it does on many prior ideas which could only arise successively, did not take shape all at once in man's mind: Much progress had to have been made, industry and enlightenment acquired, transmitted, and increased from one age to the next, before this last stage of the state of Nature was reached. Let us therefore take up the thread earlier, and try to fit this slow succession of events and of knowledge together from a single point of view, and in their most natural order.

[2] Man's first sentiment was that of his existence, his first care that for his preservation. The Earth's products provided him with all necessary support, instinct moved him to use them. Hunger, other appetites causing him by turns to experience different ways of existing, there was one that prompted him to perpetuate his species; and this blind inclination, devoid of any sentiment of the heart, produced only a purely animal act. The need satisfied, the two sexes no longer recognized one another, and even the child no longer meant anything to the Mother as soon as it could do without her.

[3] Such was the condition of nascent man; such was the life of an animal at first restricted to pure sensations, [165] and scarcely profiting from the gifts Nature offered him, let alone dreaming of wresting anything from it; but difficulties soon presented themselves; it became necessary to learn to overcome them: the height of Trees which prevented him from reaching their fruits, competition from the animals trying to eat these fruits, the ferociousness of the animals that threatened his very life, everything obliged him to attend to bodily exercise; he had to become agile, run fast, fight vigorously. The natural weapons, branches and stones, were soon

at hand. He learned to overcome the obstacles of Nature, fight other animals when necessary, contend even with men for his subsistence, or make up for what had to be yielded to the stronger.

[4] In proportion as Mankind spread, difficulties multiplied together with men. Differences of terrain, Climate, seasons, could have forced them to introduce differences into their ways of living. Barren years, long and harsh winters, scorching all-consuming Summers, required renewed industry on their part. On seashores and Riverbanks they invented line and hook; and became fishermen and Fish-eaters. In forests they made bows and arrows, and became Hunters and Warriors; In cold Countries they covered themselves with the skins of the beasts they had killed; Lightning, a Volcano, or some happy accident acquainted them with fire, a new resource against the rigors of winter: They learned to conserve this element, then to reproduce it, and finally to prepare the meats they had previously devoured raw.

[5] This repeated interaction of the various beings with himself as well as with one another must naturally have engendered in man's mind perceptions of certain relations. The relations which we express by the words great, small, strong, weak, fast, slow, fearful, bold, and other such ideas, compared as need required and almost without thinking about it, finally produced in him some sort of reflection, or rather a mechanical prudence that suggested to him the precautions most necessary for his safety.

[6] The new enlightenment that resulted from this development increased his superiority over the other animals by acquainting him with it. He practiced setting [166] traps for them, he tricked them in a thousand ways, and although a number of them might surpass him in strength at fighting, or in speed at running; in time he became the master of those that could be useful, and the scourge of those that could be harmful to him. This is how his first look at himself aroused the first movement of pride in him; this is how, while as yet scarcely able to discriminate ranks, and considering himself in the first rank as a species, he was from afar preparing to claim first rank as an individual.

[7] Although others of his kind were not for him what they are for us, and he had scarcely more dealings with them than with the other animals, they were not neglected in his observations. The conformities which time may have led him to perceive between

them, his female, and himself, led him to judge regarding those he did not perceive, and seeing that they all behaved as he would have done in similar circumstances, he concluded that their way of thinking and of feeling fully corresponded to his own, and this important truth, once it was firmly settled in his mind, made him follow, by a premonition as sure as Dialectics and more rapid, the best rules of conduct to observe with them for his advantage and safety.

[8] Taught by experience that love of well-being is the sole spring of human actions, he was in a position to distinguish between the rare occasions when common interest should make him count on the help of his kind, and the even rarer occasions when competition should make him suspicious of them. In the first case he united with them in a herd, or at most in some kind of free association that obligated no one and lasted only as long as the transient need that had formed it. In the second case everyone sought to seize his own advantage, either by open force if he believed that he could do so; or by skill and cunning, if he felt he was the weaker.

[9] This is how men might imperceptibly have acquired some crude idea of mutual engagements and of the advantage of fulfilling them, but only as far as present and perceptible interest could require; for foresight was nothing to them and, far from being concerned with a distant future, they did not even give thought to the next day. If a Deer was to be caught, everyone [167] clearly sensed that this required him faithfully to keep his post; but if a hare happened to pass within reach of one of them, he will, without a doubt, have chased after it without a scruple and, after catching his prey, have cared very little about having caused his Companions to miss theirs.

[10] It is easy to understand that such dealings did not require a language much more refined than that of Crows or of Monkeys, which troop together in approximately the same way. Some inarticulate cries, many gestures, and a few imitative noises must, for a long time, have made up the universal Language, [and] the addition to it, in every Region, of a few articulated and conventional sounds – the institution of which is, as I have already said, none too easy to explain – made for particular languages, crude, imperfect and more or less such as various Savage Nations have now. I cover multitudes of Centuries in a flash, forced by time running out, the abundance of things I have to say, and the almost imperceptible

progress of the beginnings; for the more slowly events succeeded one another, the more quickly can they be described.

[11] This initial progress finally enabled man to make more rapid progress. The more the mind became enlightened, the more industry was perfected. Soon ceasing to fall asleep underneath the first tree or to withdraw into Caves, they found they could use hard, sharp stones as hatchets to cut wood, dig in the ground, and make huts of branches which it later occurred to them to daub with clay and mud. This was the period of a first revolution which brought about the establishment and the differentiation of families, and introduced a sort of property; from which there perhaps already arose a good many quarrels and Fights. However, since the stronger were probably the first to make themselves dwellings they felt they could defend, it seems plausible that the weak found it simpler and safer to imitate them than to try to dislodge them: and as for those who already had Huts, a man must rarely have tried to appropriate his neighbor's, not so much because it did not belong to him as because it was of no use to him, and he could not get hold of it without risking a very lively fight with the family that occupied it. [168]

[12] The first developments of the heart were the effect of a new situation that brought husbands and Wives, Fathers and Children together in a common dwelling; the habit of living together gave rise to the sweetest sentiments known to man, conjugal love, and Paternal love. Each family became a small Society, all the better united as mutual attachment and freedom were its only bonds; and this is when the first difference was established in the ways of living of the two Sexes, which until then had had but one. Women became more sedentary and grew accustomed to looking after the Hut and Children, while the man went in quest of the common subsistence. As a result of their slightly softer life, both Sexes also began to lose something of their ferociousness and vigor: but while each separately grew less fit to fight wild beasts, in exchange it became easier to assemble in order to resist them together.

[13] In this new state, with a simple and solitary life, very limited needs, and the implements they had invented to provide for them, men enjoyed a great deal of leisure which they used to acquire several sorts of conveniences unknown to their Fathers; and this was the first yoke which, without thinking of it, they imposed on themselves, and the first source of evils they prepared for their

Descendants; for not only did they, in this way, continue to weaken body and mind, but since these conveniences, by becoming habitual, had almost entirely ceased to be enjoyable, and at the same time had degenerated into true needs, it became much more cruel to be deprived of them than to possess them was sweet, and men were unhappy to lose them without being happy to possess them.

[14] Here one gets a somewhat better view of how the use of speech is imperceptibly established or perfected in the bosom of each family, and one can further conjecture how various particular causes could enlarge language, and accelerate its progress by making it more necessary. Great floods or earthquakes surrounded inhabited Areas with waters or precipices; Revolutions of the Globe broke off portions of the Continent and carved them into Islands. It seems likely that a common Idiom was formed earlier among men brought into closer proximity with one another in this fashion, and forced [169] to live together, than among those who roamed freely through the forests of the Mainland. Thus it is very possible that Islanders, after their first attempts at Navigation, introduced the use of speech among us; and it is at least very likely that Society and languages arose in Islands and were perfected there before they were known on the Continent.

[15] Everything begins to change in appearance. Men, who until now had roamed in the Woods, having become more settled, gradually come together, unite in various troops, and finally in every region form a particular Nation united in morals and character, not by Rules or Laws, but by the same kind of life and of foods, and the influence of a shared Climate. Permanent proximity cannot fail in the end to give rise to some bond between different families. Young people of the opposite sex live in adjoining Huts, the transient dealings demanded by Nature soon lead to others, no less sweet and more permanent as a result of mutual visits. They grow accustomed to attend to different objects and to make comparisons; imperceptibly they acquire ideas of merit and of beauty which produce sentiments of preference. The more they see one another, the less they can do without seeing one another more. A tender and sweet sentiment steals into the soul, and at the least obstacle becomes an impetuous frenzy; jealousy awakens together with love; Discord triumphs, and the gentlest of all passions receives sacrifices of human blood.

[16] As ideas and sentiments succeed one another, as the mind and the heart grow active, Mankind continues to grow tame, contacts expand and bonds tighten. It became customary to gather in front of the Huts or around a large Tree: song and dance, true children of love and leisure, became the amusement or rather the occupation of idle men and women gathered together. Everyone began to look at everyone else and to wish to be looked at himself, and public esteem acquired a price. The one who sang or danced best; the handsomest, the strongest, the most skillful, or the most eloquent came to be the most highly regarded, and this was the first step at once toward inequality and vice: [170] from these first preferences arose vanity and contempt on the one hand, shame and envy on the other; and the fermentation caused by these new leavens eventually produced compounds fatal to happiness and innocence.

[17] As soon as men had begun to appreciate one another and the idea of consideration had taken shape in their mind, everyone claimed a right to it, and one could no longer deprive anyone of it with impunity. From here arose the first duties of civility even among Savages, and from it any intentional wrong became an affront because, together with the harm resulting from the injury, the offended party saw in it contempt for his person, often more unbearable than the harm itself. Thus everyone punishing the contempt shown him in a manner proportionate to the stock he set by himself, vengeance became terrible, and men bloodthirsty and cruel. This is precisely the stage reached by most of the Savage Peoples known to us; and it is for want of drawing adequate distinctions between ideas, and noticing how far these Peoples already were from the first state of Nature, that many hastened to conclude that man is naturally cruel and that he needs political order in order to be made gentle, whereas nothing is as gentle as he in his primitive state when, placed by Nature at equal distance from the stupidity of the brutes and the fatal enlightenment of civil man, and restricted by instinct and by reason alike to protecting himself against the harm that threatens him, he is restrained by Natural pity from doing anyone harm, without being moved to it by anything, even after it has been done to him. For, according to the axiom of the wise Locke, "*Where there is no property, there can be no injury.*"

[18] But it should be noted that beginning Society and the already established relations among men required in them qualities different

from those they derived from their primitive constitution; that, since morality was beginning to enter into human Actions and since, before there were Laws, everyone was sole judge and avenger of the offenses he had received, the goodness suited to the pure state of Nature was no longer the goodness suited to nascent Society; that punishments had to become more severe in proportion as the opportunities to offend became more frequent, and that the terror of vengeance had [171] to take the place of the Laws' restraint. Thus, although men now had less endurance, and natural pity had already undergone some attenuation, this period in the development of human faculties, occupying a just mean between the indolence of the primitive state and the petulant activity of our amour propre, must have been the happiest and the most lasting epoch. The more one reflects on it, the more one finds that this state was the least subject to revolutions, the best for man (xvi), and that he must have left it only by some fatal accident which, for the sake of the common utility, should never have occurred. The example of the Savages, almost all of whom have been found at this point, seems to confirm that Mankind was made always to remain in it, that this state is the genuine youth of the World, and that all subsequent progress has been so many steps in appearance toward the perfection of the individual, and in effect toward the decrepitude of the species.

[19] So long as men were content with their rustic huts, so long as they confined themselves to sewing their clothes of skins with thorns or fish bones, to adorning themselves with feathers and shells, to painting their bodies different colors, to perfecting or embellishing their bows and arrows, to carving a few fishing Canoes or a few crude Musical instruments with sharp stones; In a word, so long as they applied themselves only to tasks a single individual could perform, and to arts that did not require the collaboration of several hands, they lived free, healthy, good, and happy as far as they could by their Nature be, and continued to enjoy the gentleness of independent dealings with one another; but the moment one man needed the help of another; as soon as it was found to be useful for one to have provisions for two, equality disappeared, property appeared, work became necessary, and the vast forests changed into smiling Fields that had to be watered with the sweat of men, and where slavery and misery were soon seen to sprout and grow together with the harvests.

[20] Metallurgy and agriculture were the two arts the invention of which brought about this great revolution. For the Poet it is gold and silver; but for the Philosopher it is iron and wheat that civilized men, and ruined Mankind. Indeed, both were [172] unknown to the Savages of America who have therefore always remained such; even other Peoples seem to have remained Barbarians as long as they engaged in one of these Arts without the other; and perhaps one of the best reasons why Europe had political order, if not earlier then at least more continuously and better than the other parts of the world, is that it is both the most abundant in iron and the most fertile in wheat.

[21] It is very difficult to conjecture how men came to know and to use iron: for it is not plausible that they imagined on their own extracting ore from the mine and doing what is required to prepare it for smelting, before they knew what the outcome would be. On the other hand, it is even less plausible to attribute this discovery to some accidental fire, as mines are formed only in arid places bare of trees and plants, so that it might seem that Nature had taken precautions to withhold this fatal secret from us. The only remaining alternative, then, is that some extraordinary event, such as a Volcano throwing up molten metal, will have given its Witnesses the idea of imitating this operation of Nature; even then, they must also be assumed to have had a good deal of courage and foresight to undertake such strenuous labor and to anticipate so far in advance the advantages they might derive from it; which really only accords with minds already more skilled than these must have been.

[22] As for agriculture, its principle was known long before its practice was established, and it is scarcely possible that men constantly engaged in drawing their subsistence from trees and plants would not fairly soon have the idea of how Nature proceeds in the generation of Plants; but their industry probably turned in that direction only rather late, either because trees which, together with hunting and fishing, provided their food, did not require their care, or for want of knowing the use of wheat, or for want of implements to cultivate it, or for want of anticipating future need, or, finally, for want of means to prevent others from appropriating the fruit of their labor. Once they had become more industrious, they probably began by cultivating a few vegetables or roots with sharp stones or pointed sticks [173] around their Huts, long before they knew

how to thresh and grind wheat, and had the implements necessary for large-scale cultivation, to say nothing of the fact that, in order to devote oneself to this occupation and sow fields, one has to decide to take an initial loss for the sake of great future gain; a foresight that is very alien to the turn of mind of Savage man who, as I have said, has trouble giving thought in the morning to his needs in the evening.

[23] The Invention of the other arts was therefore necessary to force Mankind to attend to the art of agriculture. As soon as men were needed to melt and forge iron, others were needed to feed them. The more the number of workers increased, the fewer hands were engaged in providing for the common subsistence, without there being any fewer mouths to consume it; and as some had to have foods in exchange for their iron, the others finally discovered the secret of using iron to increase foods. Thus arose on the one hand Plowing and agriculture, and on the other the art of working metals and multiplying their uses.

[24] From the cultivation of land, its division necessarily followed; and from property, once recognized, the first rules of justice necessarily followed: for in order to render to each his own, each must be able to have something; moreover, as men began to extend their views to the future and all saw that they had some goods to lose, there was no one who did not have to fear reprisals against himself for the wrongs he might do to another. This origin is all the more natural as it is impossible to conceive the idea of nascent property in any other way than in terms of manual labor: for it is not clear what, more than his labor, man can put into things he has not made, in order to appropriate them. Since labor alone gives the Cultivator the right to the produce of the land he has tilled, it consequently also gives him a right to the land, at least until the harvest, and thus from one year to the next, which, as it makes for continuous possession, is easily transformed into property. When the Ancients, says Grotius, gave Ceres the title *legislatrix* and a festival celebrated in her honor the name *Thesmophoria*, they thereby indicated that the division [174] of land produced a new kind of right. Namely the right of property different from that which follows from natural Law.

[25] Things in this state could have remained equal if talents had been equal and if, for example, the use of iron and the consumption

of foods had always been exactly balanced; but this proportion, which nothing maintained, was soon upset; the stronger did more work; the more skillful used his work to better advantage; the more ingenious found ways to reduce his labor; the Plowman had greater need of iron, or the smith greater need of wheat, and by working equally, the one earned much while the other had trouble staying alive. This is how natural inequality imperceptibly unfolds together with unequal associations, and the differences between men, developed by their different circumstances, become more perceptible, more permanent in their effects, and begin to exercise a corresponding influence on the fate of individuals.

[26] Things having reached this point, it is easy to imagine the rest. I shall not pause to describe the successive invention of the other arts, the progress of languages, the testing and exercise of talents, the inequalities of fortune, the use or abuse of Wealth, nor all the details that attend them and which everyone can easily add. I shall limit myself to a brief glance at Mankind placed in this new order of things.

[27] Here, then, are all our faculties developed, memory and imagination brought into play, amour propre interested, reason become active, and the mind almost at the limit of the perfection of which it is capable. Here are all natural qualities set in action, every man's rank and fate set, not only as to the amount of their goods and the power to help or to hurt, but also as to mind, beauty, strength or skill, as to merit or talents, and, since these are the only qualities that could attract consideration, one soon had to have or to affect them; for one's own advantage one had to seem other than one in fact was. To be and to appear became two entirely different things, and from this distinction arose ostentatious display, deceitful cunning, and all the vices that follow in their wake. Looked at in another way, man, who had previously been free and independent, is now so to speak subjugated by a [175] multitude of new needs to the whole of Nature, and especially to those of his kind, whose slave he in a sense becomes even by becoming their master; rich, he needs their services; poor, he needs their help, and moderate means do not enable him to do without them. He must therefore constantly try to interest them in his fate and to make them really or apparently find their own profit in working for his: which makes him knavish and artful with some, imperious and harsh with the

rest, and places him under the necessity of deceiving all those he needs if he cannot get them to fear him and does not find it in his interest to make himself useful to them. Finally, consuming ambition, the ardent desire to raise one's relative fortune less out of genuine need than in order to place oneself above others, instills in all men a black inclination to harm one another, a secret jealousy that is all the more dangerous as it often assumes the mask of benevolence in order to strike its blow in greater safety: in a word, competition and rivalry on the one hand, conflict of interests on the other, and always the hidden desire to profit at another's expense; all these evils are the first effect of property, and the inseparable train of nascent inequality.

[28] Before its representative signs were invented, wealth could scarcely consist in anything but land and livestock, the only real goods that men can possess. Now, once inheritances had increased in number and size to the point where they covered all the land and all adjoined one another, men could no longer aggrandize themselves except at one another's expense, and the supernumeraries whom weakness or indolence had kept from acquiring an inheritance of their own, grown poor without having lost anything because they alone had not changed while everything was changing around them, were obliged to receive or to seize their subsistence from the hands of the rich; and from this began to arise, according to the different characters of the poor and the rich, domination and servitude, or violence and plunder. The rich, for their part, had scarcely become acquainted with the pleasure of dominating than they disdained all other pleasures, and using their old Slaves to subject new ones, they thought only of subjugating and enslaving their neighbors; like those ravenous wolves which once they have tasted human flesh [176] scorn all other food, and from then on want to devour only men.

[29] Thus, as the most powerful or the most miserable claimed, on the basis of their strength or of their needs, a kind of right to another person's goods, equivalent, according to them, to the right of property, the breakdown of equality was followed by the most frightful disorder: thus the usurpations of the rich, the Banditry of the Poor, the unbridled passions of all, stifling natural pity and the still weak voice of justice, made men greedy, ambitious, and wicked. A perpetual conflict arose between the right of the stronger and the

right of the first occupant, which only led to fights and murders (xvii). Nascent Society gave way to the most horrible state of war: Humankind, debased and devastated, no longer able to turn back or to renounce its wretched acquisitions, and working only to its shame by the abuse of the faculties that do it honor, brought itself to the brink of ruin.

*Shocked by the novelty of the evil,
at once rich and miserable,
He seeks to escape his wealth,
and hates what he had just prayed for.*

[30] It is not possible that men should not at last have reflected on such a miserable situation, and on the calamities besetting them. The rich, above all, must soon have sensed how disadvantageous to them was a perpetual war of which they alone bore the full cost, and in which everyone risked his life while only some also risked goods. Besides, regardless of how they painted their usurpations, they realized well enough that they were only based on a precarious and abusive right, and that since they had been acquired solely by force, force could deprive them of them without their having any reason for complaint. Even those whom industriousness alone had enriched could scarcely base their property on better titles. No matter if they said: It is I who built this wall; I earned this plot by my labor. Who set its boundaries for you, they could be answered; and by virtue of what do you lay claim to being paid at our expense for labor we did not impose on you? Do you not know that a great many of your brothers perish or suffer from need of what you have in excess, and that you required the express and unanimous [177] consent of Humankind to appropriate for yourself anything from the common subsistence above and beyond your own? Lacking valid reasons to justify and sufficient strength to defend himself; easily crushing an individual, but himself crushed by troops of bandits; alone against all, and unable, because of their mutual jealousies, to unite with his equals against enemies united by the common hope of plunder, the rich, under the pressure of necessity, at last conceived the most well-considered project ever to enter the human mind; to use even his attackers' forces in his favor, to make his adversaries his defenders, to instill in them other maxims and to

give them different institutions, as favorable to himself as natural Right was contrary to him.

[31] To this end, after exhibiting to his neighbors the horror of a situation that armed all of them against one another, that made their possessions as burdensome to them as their needs, and in which no one found safety in either poverty or wealth, he easily invented specious reasons to bring them around to his goal: "Let us unite," he told them, "to protect the weak from oppression, restrain the ambitious, and secure for everyone the possession of what belongs to him: Let us institute rules of Justice and peace to which all are obliged to conform, which favor no one, and which in a way make up for the vagaries of fortune by subjecting the powerful and the weak alike to mutual duties. In a word, instead of turning our forces against one another, let us gather them into a supreme power that might govern us according to wise Laws, protect and defend all the members of the association, repulse common enemies, and preserve us in everlasting concord."

[32] Much less than the equivalent of this Discourse was needed to sway crude, easily seduced men who, in any event, had too much business to sort out among themselves to be able to do without arbiters, and too much greed and ambition to be able to do for long without Masters. All ran toward their chains in the belief that they were securing their freedom; for while they had enough reason to sense the advantages of a political establishment, [178] they had not enough experience to foresee its dangers; those most capable of anticipating the abuses were precisely those who counted on profiting from them, and even the wise saw that they had to make up their mind to sacrifice one part of their freedom to preserve the other, as a wounded man has his arm cut off to save the rest of his Body.

[33] Such was, or must have been, the origin of Society and of Laws, which gave the weak new fetters and the rich new forces (xviii), irreversibly destroyed natural freedom, forever fixed the Law of property and inequality, transformed a skillful usurpation into an irrevocable right, and for the profit of a few ambitious men henceforth subjugated the whole of Mankind to labor, servitude and misery. It is easy to see how the establishment of a single Society made the establishment of all the others indispensable, and how, in

order to stand up to united forces, it became necessary to unite in turn. Societies, multiplying and expanding rapidly, soon covered the entire face of the earth, and it was no longer possible to find a single corner anywhere in the universe where one might cast off the yoke and withdraw one's head out of the way of the often ill-guided sword everyone perpetually saw suspended over it. Civil right having thus become the common rule of the Citizens, the Law of Nature no longer obtained except between different Societies where, under the name of Right of nations, it was tempered by a few tacit conventions in order to make commerce possible and to replace natural commiseration which, losing in the relations between one Society and another almost all the force it had in the relations between one man and another, lives on only in a few great Cosmopolitan Souls who cross the imaginary boundaries that separate Peoples and, following the example of the sovereign being that created them, embrace the whole of Mankind in their benevolence.

[34] The Bodies Politic thus remaining in the state of Nature among themselves soon experienced the inconveniences that had forced individuals to leave it, and this state became even more fatal among these great Bodies than it had previously been among the individuals who made them up. From it arose the National Wars, Battles, murders, reprisals that [179] make Nature tremble and that shock reason, and all those horrible prejudices that rank among the virtues the honor of spilling human blood. The most honest men learned to count it as one of their duties to slay their kind; in time men were seen to massacre one another by the thousands without knowing why; and more murders were committed in a single day's fighting, and more horrors at the capture of a single town, than had been committed in the state of Nature for centuries together over the entire face of the earth. Such are the first discernible effects of the division of Mankind into different Societies. Let us return to their institution.

[35] I know that some have attributed other origins to Political Societies, such as conquest by the more powerful, or the union of the weak; and the choice between these causes does not make a difference to what I want to establish: however, the cause of their origin which I have just given seems to me the most natural for the following reasons: 1. That, in the first case, the Right of conquest, since it is not a Right, could not have served as the foun-

dation for any other Right, for the Conqueror and the conquered Peoples always remain in a state of War with one another unless the Nation, restored to full freedom, voluntarily chooses its Victor as its Chief. Until that time, regardless of what may have been the terms of capitulation, as they were based on nothing but violence and are consequently null by this very fact, there can, on this hypothesis, be neither genuine Society, nor Body Politic, nor any Law other than that of the stronger. 2. That, in the second case, the words *strong* and *weak* are equivocal; that during the interval that separates the establishment of the Right of property or of the first occupant and the establishment of political Governments, the meaning of these terms is better conveyed by the terms *poor* and *rich*, because in fact, prior to the Laws, a man had no other means of subjugating his equals than by attacking their goods or making some of his own over to them. 3. That the Poor having nothing to lose but their freedom, it would have been a great folly for them to deprive themselves voluntarily of the only good they had left without gaining anything in exchange; that the rich, on the contrary, being so to speak sensitive in every part of their Goods, it was much easier to hurt them, and that they consequently [180] had to take more precautions to protect themselves against getting hurt; and that, finally, it is reasonable to believe that a thing was invented by those to whom it is useful rather than by those whom it harms.

[36] Nascent Government had no constant and regular form. For want of Philosophy and of experience, only present inconveniences were noticed, and men gave thought to remedying the others only as they became manifest. Despite all the labors of the wisest Law-givers, the Political state always remained imperfect because it was almost a product of chance and because, having begun badly, time revealed its flaws and suggested remedies but could never repair the vices of the Constitution; it was constantly being patched; whereas the thing to do would have been to begin by purging the threshing floor and setting aside all the old materials, as Lycurgus did in Sparta, in order afterwards to erect a good Building. Initially Society consisted of but a few general conventions which all individuals pledged to observe, and of which the Community made itself the guarantor toward each one of them. Experience had to show how weak such a constitution was, and how easily offenders could escape conviction or punishment for wrongs of which the Public

alone was to be both witness and judge; the Law had to be eluded in a thousand ways, inconveniences and disorders had to keep multiplying, before it finally occurred to them to entrust the dangerous custody of the public authority to private individuals, and to commit to Magistrates the task of getting the People's deliberations heeded: for to say that the Chiefs were chosen before the confederation was established, and that the Ministers of the Laws existed before the Laws themselves, is an assumption not worthy of serious refutation.

[37] It would be no more reasonable to believe that Peoples initially threw themselves unconditionally and irrevocably into the arms of an absolute Master, and that the first means of providing for the common safety that proud and untamed men imagined was to rush headlong into slavery. Indeed, why did they give themselves superiors if not to defend them against oppression, and to protect their goods, their freedoms and their lives, which are, so to speak, the constitutive [181] elements of their being? Now since in the relations between man and man the worst that can happen to one is to find himself at the other's discretion, would it not have been against good sense to begin by surrendering into the hands of a Chief the only things they needed his help to preserve? What equivalent could he have offered them for the concession of so fine a Right; and if he had dared to exact it on the pretext of defending them, would he not straightway have received the answer of the Fable: What more will the enemy do to us? It is therefore incontrovertible, and it is the fundamental maxim of all Political Right, that Peoples gave themselves Chiefs to defend their freedom, and not to enslave them. *If he have a Prince*, said Pliny to Trajan, *it is so that he may preserve us from having a Master*.

[38] Politicians propound the same sophisms about the love of freedom that Philosophers propounded about the state of Nature; on the basis of the things they see, they judge of very different things which they have not seen, and they attribute to men a natural inclination to servitude because of the patience with which the men they have before their eyes bear theirs, not realizing that it is as true of freedom as it is of innocence and virtue that one appreciates their worth only as long as one enjoys them oneself, and loses the taste for them as soon as they are lost. I know the delights of your Country, said Brasidas to a Satrap who was comparing the life of

Sparta with that of Persepolis, but you cannot know the pleasures of mine.

[39] As an untamed Steed bristles its mane, stamps the ground with its hoof, and struggles impetuously at the very sight of the bit, while a trained horse patiently suffers whip and spur, so barbarous man will not bend his head to the yoke which civilized man bears without a murmur, and he prefers the most tempestuous freedom to a tranquil subjection. Man's natural dispositions for or against servitude therefore have to be judged not by the degradation of enslaved Peoples but by the prodigious feats of all free Peoples to guard against oppression. I know that the former do nothing but incessantly boast of the peace and quiet they enjoy in their chains, and that *they call the most miserable servitude peace*: but when I see the others sacrifice pleasures, rest, wealth, [182] power, and life itself for the sake of preserving this one good which those who have lost it hold in such contempt; when I see Animals born free and abhorring captivity smash their heads against the bars of their prison; when I see multitudes of completely naked Savages scorn European voluptuousness and brave hunger, fire, the sword, and death in order to preserve nothing but their independence, I feel that it is not for Slaves to reason about freedom.

[40] As for Paternal authority, from which some have derived absolute Government and the whole of Society, without invoking Locke's or Sidney's proofs to the contrary, it suffices to note that nothing in the world is farther from the ferocious spirit of Despotism than the gentleness of this authority which looks more to the advantage of the one who obeys than to the utility of the one who commands; that by the Law of Nature the Father is the Child's master only as long as it needs his assistance, that beyond that point they become equal, and that then the son, perfectly independent of the Father, owes him only respect and not obedience; for gratitude is indeed a duty that ought to be performed, but it is not a right that can be exacted. Instead of saying that civil Society is derived from Paternal power, it should, on the contrary, be said that this power derives its principal force from civil Society: an individual was recognized as the Father of many only once they remained assembled around him; the Father's goods, of which he is genuinely the Master, are the bonds that keep his children dependent on him, and he may [choose to] give them no more of a share of his estate

than is proportional to how well they have deserved of him by constant deference to his wishes. Now subjects, far from being in a position to expect a similar favor from their Despot – since they belong to him as his own, they and everything they possess, or at least since that is what he claims – are reduced to receiving as a favor whatever portion of their goods he leaves them; he dispenses justice when he despoils them; he dispenses grace when he lets them live.

[41] If one continued thus to examine the facts in terms of Right, the voluntary establishment of Tyranny would prove to be no more substantial than it is true, and it would be difficult to show the validity of a contract which obligated [183] only one of the parties, in which one side granted everything and the other nothing, and which could only prove prejudicial to the one who commits himself. This odious System is very far from being even today that of Wise and good Monarchs, and especially of the Kings of France, as may be seen in various places in their Edicts, and in particular in the following passage of a famous Text published in 1667 in the name and by the orders of Louis XIV. *Let it therefore not be said that the Sovereign is not subject to the Laws of his State, since the contrary proposition is a truth of the Right of Nations, which flattery has sometimes challenged, but which good Princes have always defended as a tutelary divinity of their States. How much more legitimate it is to say with the Wise Plato that the perfect felicity of a Kingdom is that a Prince be obeyed by his Subjects, that the Prince obey the Law, and that the Law be right and always directed to the public good.* I shall not pause to inquire whether, since freedom is man's noblest faculty, it is not to debase one's Nature, to place oneself at the level of Beasts that are the slaves of instinct, even to offend the Author of one's being, if one unconditionally renounces the most precious of all his gifts, if one submits to committing all the crimes he forbids us, in order to comply with a ferocious and insane Master, nor whether this sublime workman ought to be more irritated at seeing his finest work destroyed than at seeing it dishonored. I shall ignore, if one wishes, the authority of Barbeyrac who, following Locke, explicitly declares that no one may sell his freedom to the point of submitting to an arbitrary power that treats him according to its fancy: *For*, he adds, *that would be to sell one's very life, of which one is not master.* I shall only ask by what Right those who were not afraid to debase themselves to this point could subject their posterity to the same

ignominy, and on its behalf renounce goods which it does not owe to their liberality and without which life itself is a burden to all who are worthy of it?

[42] Pufendorf says that just as one transfers one's goods to another by conventions and Contracts, so too can one divest oneself of one's freedom in favor of someone else. This seems to me to be a very bad argument; for, first of all, the goods I alienate become something altogether foreign to me, and their abuse is a matter of indifference [184] to me; but it is important to me that my freedom not be abused, and I cannot risk becoming the instrument of a crime without incurring the guilt of the evil I shall be forced to commit: Moreover, since the Right of property is only by convention and human institution, every man can dispose of what he possesses as he pleases: but the same does not hold for the essential Gifts of Nature, such as life and freedom, which everyone is permitted to enjoy and of which it is at least doubtful that one has the Right to divest oneself; in depriving oneself of the one, one debases one's being; In depriving oneself of the other one annihilates it as much as in one lies; and as no temporal good can compensate for life or freedom, it would be an offense against both Nature and reason to renounce them at any price whatsoever. But even if one could alienate one's freedom as one can one's goods, the difference would be very great for Children who enjoy the Father's goods only by the transfer of his right, whereas freedom, since it is a gift they have from Nature in their capacity as human beings, their Parents had no Right to divest them of it; so that just as violence had to be done to Nature in order to establish Slavery, Nature had to be altered in order to perpetuate this Right; And the Jurists who have gravely pronounced that the child of a Slave would be born a Slave have in other words decided that a man would not be born a man.

[43] It therefore seems to me certain not only that Governments did not begin with Arbitrary Power, which is but their corruption, their ultimate stage, and which at last returns them to the sole Law of the stronger for which they initially were the remedy, but also that even if this is how they did begin, Arbitrary Power, being by its Nature illegitimate, cannot have served as the foundation for the Rights of Society nor, consequently, for instituted inequality.

[44] Without at present entering into the inquiries that still remain to be pursued about the Nature of the fundamental Pact of all Government, I restrict myself in accordance with the common

opinion to consider here the establishment of the Body Politic as a true Contract between the People and the Chiefs it chooses for itself; a Contract by which both Parties obligate themselves to observe the Laws stipulated in it and which form the bonds of their union. The People having, in regard to Social relations, united all their [185] wills into a single one, all the articles about which this will pronounces become so many fundamental Laws that obligate all the members of the State without exception, and one of which regulates the selection and the power of the Magistrates charged with attending to the execution of the other Laws. This power extends to everything that can preserve the Constitution, without going so far as to change it. To it are joined honors that render the Laws and their Ministers respectable and, for the Ministers personally, prerogatives compensating them for the strenuous labors which good administration requires. The Magistrate, for his part, obligates himself to use the power entrusted to him only in conformity with the intention of the Constituents, to maintain everyone in the peaceful enjoyment of what belongs to him, and on all occasions to prefer the public utility to his self-interest.

[45] Before experience had shown or knowledge of the human heart had led [men] to anticipate the inevitable abuses of such a constitution, it must have appeared all the better, as those assigned to see to its preservation themselves had the greatest interest in its being preserved; for since the Magistracy and its Rights were established only by the fundamental Laws, as soon as these are destroyed, the Magistrates would cease to be legitimate, the People would no longer be bound to obey them, and since it would have been the Law and not the Magistrate that constituted the essence of the State, everyone would by Right revert to his Natural freedom.

[46] If one but paused to reflect about it attentively, this would be confirmed by new reasons, and it would be evident from the Nature of the Contract that it could not be irrevocable: for if there were no superior power capable of guaranteeing the Contracting parties' fidelity or of forcing them to fulfill their reciprocal engagements, the Parties would remain sole judges in their own case, and each would always have the Right to renounce the Contract whenever it found that the other had violated its terms, or that these terms ceased to suit it. This is the principle on which the Right to abdicate could, it would seem, be founded. Now, considering, as

we are doing, only human institution, if the Magistrate, who has all the power in hand, and appropriates to himself all the advantages of the Contract, nevertheless had the right to renounce his autho[186]rity; then there is all the more reason that the People, who pay for all of the Chiefs' failings, should have the Right to renounce Dependence. But the frightful dissensions, the infinite disorders which this dangerous power would necessarily entail, show more than anything else does how much human Governments needed a more solid base than reason alone, and how necessary it was for the public repose that the divine will intervene to endow the Sovereign authority with a sacred and inviolable character that might deprive subjects of the fatal Right to dispose of it. If Religion had performed only this good for men, it would be enough for them all to have to cherish and adopt it, even with its abuses, since it still spares more blood than fanaticism causes to flow: but let us follow the thread of our hypothesis.

[47] The different forms of Governments owe their origin to the greater or lesser differences between individuals at the time of Institution. Was one man preeminent in power, wealth, or prestige? he alone was elected Magistrate, and the State became Monarchic; if several, nearly equal among themselves, surpassed all the others, they were elected together, and there was an Aristocracy; those whose fortunes or talents were less disparate, and who had moved least far from the state of Nature, retained the supreme Administration in common, and formed a Democracy. Time confirmed which one of these forms was the most advantageous to men. Some remained exclusively subject to Laws, the others were soon obeying Masters. Citizens wanted only to keep their freedom, subjects thought only of depriving their neighbors of theirs, because they found it insufferable that others enjoy a good which they themselves no longer enjoyed. In a word, on one side were wealth and Conquests, and on the other happiness and virtue.

[48] In these various Governments all Magistracies were at first Elective; and when Wealth did not prevail, preference was accorded to merit, which confers a Natural Ascendancy, and to age, which confers experience in business and equanimity in deliberations. The Hebrews' elders, Sparta's Gerontes, Rome's Senate, and the very Etymology of our word *Seigneur*, show how [187] respected Old Age formerly was. The more Elections settled on men of advanced

age, the more frequent they became, and the more their cumber-someness made itself felt; intrigues arose, factions formed, the parties grew embittered, civil Wars flared up, at last the blood of Citizens was sacrificed to the supposed happiness of the State, and men were on the verge of relapsing into the Anarchy of former times. The ambition of the most Preeminent men took advantage of these circumstances to perpetuate their offices within their families: The People, already accustomed to dependence, repose, and the comforts of life, and already past the state where they could break their chains, consented to let their servitude increase in order to consolidate their tranquility, and that is how Chiefs, having become hereditary, grew accustomed to regard their Magistracy as a family possession, to regard themselves the owners of the State of which they at first were only the Officers, to calling their Fellow-Citizens their Slaves, to counting them like Cattle among the things that belonged to them, and to calling themselves equals to the Gods and Kings of Kings.

[49] If we follow the progress of inequality through these different revolutions, we will find that the establishment of the Law and Right of property was its first term; the institution of Magistracy, the second; the conversion of legitimate into arbitrary power the third and last; so that the state of rich and poor was authorized by the first Epoch, that of powerful and weak by the second, and by the third that of Master and Slave, which is the last degree of inequality, and the state to which all the others finally lead, until new revolutions either dissolve the Government entirely, or bring it closer to legitimate institution.

[50] To understand the necessity of this progress one has to consider not so much the motives for the establishment of the Body Politic, as the form it assumes in its implementation, and the inconveniences it entails: for the same vices that make social institutions necessary make their abuse inevitable; and since, with the sole exception of Sparta where the Law primarily attended to the Children's education, and where Lycurgus established morals that almost made the addition of [188] Laws unnecessary, Laws, in general less strong than the passions, contain men without changing them; it would be easy to prove that any Government that invariably worked exactly in accordance with the end for which it had been instituted, without disintegrating or deteriorating, would

have been instituted unnecessarily, and a Country where no one eluded the Laws and abused the Magistracy would need neither Magistrates nor Laws.

[51] Political distinctions necessarily bring about civil distinctions. Growing inequality between the People and its Chiefs soon manifests itself among private individuals, where it undergoes a thousand modifications according to passions, talents, and circumstances. The Magistrate could not usurp illegitimate power without creating clients to whom he is forced to yield some share of it. Besides, Citizens let themselves be oppressed only so far as they are swept up by blind ambition and, looking below more than above themselves, come to hold Domination dearer than independence, and consent to bear chains so that they might impose chains [on others] in turn. It is very difficult to reduce to obedience someone who does not seek to command, and the cleverest Politician would never succeed in subjugating men whose only wish was to be Free; but inequality readily spreads among ambitious and pusillanimous souls, ever ready to take their chance on fortune, and almost equally prepared to rule or to serve depending on whether it favors or foils them. Thus a time must have come when the eyes of the People were so dazzled that their leaders only had to say to the least of men, be Great, you and your entire race, and at once he appeared great in everyone else's eyes as well as in his own, and his Descendants were exalted still further in proportion to their distance from him; the more remote and uncertain the cause, the greater the effect; the more idlers could be counted in a family, the more illustrious it became.

[52] If this were the place to go into details, I could easily show how, even without the Government's intervention, inequality of prestige and authority becomes inevitable among Private Individuals (XIX) as soon as, united in one Society, they are forced to [189] compare themselves one with the other and, in the continual use they have to make of one another, to take account of the differences they find. These differences are of several kinds; but since wealth, nobility or rank, Power and personal merit are generally the principal distinctions by which one is measured in Society, I would prove that the concord or conflict between these various forces is the surest indication of a well or a badly constituted State: I would show that of these four sorts of inequality, as personal qualities are

the origin of all the others, riches is the last to which they are finally reduced, because, being the most immediately useful to well-being and the easiest to transmit, it can readily be used to buy all the rest. This observation makes it possible to tell rather accurately the extent to which each People has moved from its original institution, and how far it has gone toward the ultimate stage of corruption. I would show how much this universal desire for reputation, honors, and preferment which consumes us all exercises and compares talents and strengths, how much it excites and multiplies the passions and, in making all men competitors, rivals, or rather enemies, how many reverses, how many successes, how many catastrophes of every kind it daily causes by leading so many Contenders to enter the same lists: I would show that it is to this ardor to be talked about, to this frenzy to achieve distinction which almost always keeps us outside ourselves, that we owe what is best and what is worst among men, our virtues and our vices, our Sciences and our errors, our Conquerors and our Philosophers, that is to say a multitude of bad things for a small number of good things. Finally, I would prove that if one sees a handful of powerful and rich men at the pinnacle of greatness and fortune while the masses grovel in obscurity and misery, it is because the former value the things they enjoy only to the extent that the others are deprived of them, and they would cease to be happy if, without any change in their own state, the People ceased to be miserable.

[53] But these details alone would provide material for a substantial work that weighed the advantages and inconveniences of all Government relative to the Rights of the state of Nature, and laid bare all [190] the different guises inequality has assumed to this day and may in future Centuries assume according to the Nature of these Governments and to the revolutions time will necessarily bring about in them. One would see the multitude oppressed from within as a consequence of the very precautions it had taken against threats from without; One would see oppression constantly grow without the oppressed ever being able to know where it might end, or what legitimate means they have left to halt it. One would see the Rights of Citizens and National freedoms die out little by little, and the protests of the weak treated as seditious grumblings. One would see politics restrict the honor of defending the common cause to a mercenary portion of the People: One would see as a result

taxes become necessary, the discouraged Cultivator leave his field even in Peacetime, and abandon his plow to gird on the sword. One would see arise the fatal and bizarre rules regarding the point of honor: One would see the defenders of the Fatherland sooner or later become its Enemies, forever holding the dagger raised over their fellow-citizens, and a time would come when they would be heard to say to their Country's oppressor

*If you order me to plunge the sword into my brother's breast,
Or my father's throat, or even my pregnant wife's womb,
I shall do so, though my right arm be unwilling.*

[54] From the extreme inequality of Conditions and fortunes, from the diversity of passions and talents, from the useless arts, the pernicious arts, the frivolous Sciences, would arise masses of prejudices equally contrary to reason, happiness and virtue; one would see Chiefs foment everything that can weaken assembled men by disuniting them; everything that can give Society an air of apparent concord while sowing seeds of real division; everything that can inspire mistrust and mutual hatred in the different estates by setting their Rights and interests at odds, and so strengthen the Power that contains them all.

[55] From amidst this disorder and these revolutions Despotism, gradually rearing its hideous head [191] and devouring everything good and wholesome it may have seen anywhere in the State, would finally succeed in trampling Laws and People underfoot, and in establishing itself on the ruins of the Republic. The times preceding this last change would be times of troubles and calamities; but in the end everything would be swallowed up by the Monster; and Peoples would no longer have Chiefs or Laws, but only Tyrants. From that moment on there would also no longer be any question of morals and virtue; for wherever Despotism rules, *where honesty offers no hope*, it suffers no other master; as soon as it speaks, there is no consulting probity or duty, and the blindest obedience is the only virtue left to Slaves.

[56] Here is the last stage of inequality, and the ultimate point that closes the Circle and meets the point from which we set out: Here all private individuals again become equal because they are nothing and, since the Subjects have no other Law left than the will of the Master, and the Master no other rule than his passions,

the notions of the good and the principles of justice again vanish. Here everything reverts to the sole Law of the stronger and consequently to a new State of Nature, different from that with which we began in that the first was the state of Nature in its purity, whereas this last is the fruit of an excess of corruption. There is, in any event, so little difference between the two states, and the Contract of Government is so utterly dissolved by Despotism, that the Despot is Master only so long as he is the stronger, and that as soon as he can be expelled he cannot object to violence. The uprising that finally strangles or dethrones a Sultan is as lawful an action as those by which, the day before, he disposed of his Subjects' lives and goods. Force alone maintains him, force alone overthrows him; things thus proceed according to the Natural order; and whatever may be the outcome of these brief and frequent revolutions, no one can complain of another's injustice, but only of his own imprudence or misfortune.

[57] In thus discovering and retracing the forgotten and lost paths that must have led man from the Natural state to the Civil state; in restoring, in addition to the intermediary [192] stages I have just indicated, those which the pressure of time made me omit or the imagination failed to suggest to me; any attentive Reader cannot but be struck by the immense distance that separates these two states. It is in this slow succession of things that he will find the solution to an infinite number of problems of ethics and of Politics which Philosophers are unable to solve. He will sense that, since the Mankind of one age is not the Mankind of another age, the reason why Diogenes did not find a man is that he was looking among his contemporaries for the man of a time that was no more: Cato, he will say, perished with Rome and freedom, because he was out of place in his century, and the greatest of men only amazed the world he would have governed five hundred years earlier. In a word, he will explain how the human soul and passions, by imperceptible adulterations, so to speak change in Nature; why in the long run the objects of our needs and of our pleasures change; why, as original man gradually vanishes, Society no longer offers to the eyes of the wise man anything but an assemblage of artificial men and factitious passions which are the product of all these new relationships, and have no true foundation in Nature. Observation fully confirms what reflection teaches us on this subject: Savage

man and civilized man differ so much in their inmost heart and inclinations that what constitutes the supreme happiness of the one would reduce the other to despair. The first breathes nothing but repose and freedom, he wants only to live and to remain idle, and even the Stoic's ataraxia does not approximate his profound indifference to everything else. By contrast, the Citizen, forever active, sweats, scurries, constantly agonizes in search of ever more strenuous occupations: he works to the death, even rushes toward it in order to be in a position to live, or renounces life in order to acquire immortality. He courts the great whom he hates, and the rich whom he despises; he spares nothing to attain the honor of serving them; he vaingloriously boasts of his baseness and of their protection and, proud of his slavery, he speaks contemptuously of those who have not the honor of sharing it. What a Sight the difficult and envied labors of a European Statesman must be for a Carib! How many cruel deaths would not [193] this indolent Savage prefer to the horror of such a life, which is often not even sweetened by the pleasure of doing well? But in order to see the purpose of so many cares, these words, *power* and *reputation*, would have to have some meaning in his mind; he would have to learn that there is a sort of men who count how they are looked upon by the rest of the universe for something, who can be happy and satisfied with themselves on the testimony of others rather than on their own. This, indeed, is the genuine cause of all these differences: the Savage lives within himself; sociable man, always outside himself, is capable of living only in the opinion of others and, so to speak, derives the sentiment of his own existence solely from their judgment. It is not part of my subject to show how such a disposition engenders so much indifference to good and evil together with such fine discourses on morality; how everything being reduced to appearances, everything becomes factitious and play-acting: honor, friendship, virtue, and often even vices in which one at length discovers the secret of glorying; how, in a word, forever asking of others what we are, without ever daring to ask it of ourselves, in the midst of so much Philosophy, humanity, politeness, and Sublime maxims, we have nothing more than a deceiving and frivolous exterior, honor without virtue, reason without wisdom, and pleasure without happiness. It is enough for me to have proved that this is not man's original state, and that it is only the spirit of Society, together with the inequality

society engenders, that changes and corrupts all our natural inclinations this way.

[58] I have tried to give an account of the origin and the progress of inequality, the establishment and the abuse of political Societies, in so far as these things can be deduced from the Nature of man by the light of reason alone, and independently of the sacred Dogmas that endow Sovereign authority with the Sanction of Divine Right. It follows from this account that inequality, being almost nonexistent in the state of Nature, owes its force and growth to the development of our faculties and the progress of the human Mind, and finally becomes stable and legitimate by the establishment of property and Laws. It follows, further, that moral inequality, authorized by positive right alone, is contrary to Natural Right whenever it is not [194] directly proportional to Physical inequality; a distinction which sufficiently determines what one ought to think in this respect of the sort of inequality that prevails among all civilized Peoples; since it is manifestly against the Law of Nature, however defined, that a child command an old man, an imbecile lead a wise man, and a handful of people abound in superfluities while the starving multitude lacks in necessities.

ROUSSEAU'S NOTES

Epistle Dedicatory (page 115)

Note I Herodotus relates that after the murder of the false Smerdis, when the seven liberators of Persia gathered to deliberate about the form of Government they would give the State, Otanes strongly favored a republic; an opinion all the more extraordinary in the mouth of a Satrap as, in addition to any claim he might have had to the Empire, the great fear more than death any sort of Government that forces them to respect men. Otanes, as might be expected, was not heeded, and seeing that they were going to proceed to the election of a Monarch he, who wanted neither to obey nor to command, freely yielded to the other Contenders his right to the crown, asking in return only that he himself and his posterity be free and independent; which was granted him. Even if Herodotus did not tell us the restriction placed on this Privilege, it would necessarily have to be assumed; otherwise Otanes, not recognizing any sort of Law and not having to account to anyone, would have been all-powerful in the State, and more powerful than the King himself. But it was scarcely likely that a man capable in a case like this of being satisfied with such a prerogative was capable of abusing it. Indeed, there is no evidence that this right ever caused the least trouble in the Kingdom, due either to the wise Otanes, or to any one of his descendants.

Preface (page 124)

Note II [1] With the very first step I take, I confidently rely on one of those authorities that are respectable to Philosophers because they come from a solid and sublime reason which they alone are capable of discovering and appreciating.

[2] "However great may be our interest in knowing ourselves, I wonder whether we do not know better everything that is not ourselves. Provided by Nature with organs destined exclusively for our preservation, we use them only to receive foreign impressions, we seek only to spread outward, and to exist outside ourselves; too busy [196] multiplying the functions of our senses and extending the external scope of our being, we rarely use that internal sense