THE EDMUND BURKE SOCIETY

“Edmund Burke, Russell Kirk, and Revolution in the Modern Mind.”

Belmont Abbey College, November 17, 2018.

Texts relating to the afternoon panel session, 2:00pm.

Thomas More [2]

Michel Guillaume Jean de Crèvecoeur [7]

Jean-Jacques Rousseau [18]

Blessed Frédéric Ozanam [28]

Panelists:

Troy Feay received his PhD in modern French history from the University of Notre Dame. He has taught at Belmont Abbey College since 2005. His area of specialization is Catholic missionary work in the French empire. His most recent publication is the book chapter, “Creating ‘The People of God’: French Utopian Dreams and the Moralization of Africans and Slaves,” in *In God’s Empire: French Missionaries and the Modern World* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

André Gushurst-Moore is Second Master at Worth School, attached to the Benedictine abbey of Worth, in Sussex, England. He is a graduate of Oxford University and the author of *The Common Mind: Politics, Society and Christian Humanism, from Thomas More to Russell Kirk* (Angelico Press, 2013). His second book, *Glory in All Things: St Benedict and Catholic Education Today* is due to be published by Angelico in Spring 2019.

Ivone Moreira is currently Invited Professor at the Institute for Political Studies, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Lisbon, where she is a coordinator of the Masters program in Political Science and International Relations. Dr. Moreira has published in the fields of Political Philosophy, Modern Philosophy and Portuguese Philosophy.

Farrell O’Gorman is Professor of English and Chair of the English Department at Belmont Abbey College. His research primarily focuses on Christianity and American literature, and his most recent book is *Catholicism and American Borders in the Gothic Literary Imagination* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2017).

André Gushurst-Moore.

Thomas More to Thomas Cromwell, March 5, 1534.

Thomas More is a Catholic (and conservative?) mind on the cusp of modernity, and he is writing during the revolution of the times that we have come to call the English Reformation. We can see in More's life and works themes that persist into the further upheavals that come later in the modern world: innovation versus traditional order; constitutional authority versus centralizing absolutism; the common versus the private; coercive positive law versus common and natural law; prescriptive, popular rights against the manipulative will-to-power; and the limits of free speech versus the responsibilities of conscience.

Right Worshipful,

After my most hearty recommendation, it may please you to understand that I have perceived by the relation of my son Roper (for which I beseech Almighty God reward you) your most charitable labor taken for me towards the King's gracious Highness in the procuring at his most gracious hand, the relief and comfort of this woeful heaviness in which mine heart standeth, neither for the love of goodness, lands, or liberty, not of any respect either, of this kind of honesty that standeth in the opinion of people in worldly reputation: all which manner things (I thank Our Lord) I so little esteem for any affection therein toward myself, that I can well be content to jeopard, lose, and forgo them all and my life therewith, without any further respite than even this same present day, either for the pleasure of God or my prince. But surely, good Master Cromwell (as I by mouth declared unto you some part for all could I neither then say nor now write) it thoroughly pierceth my poor heart, that the king's highness (whose gracious favor toward me far above all the things of this world I have ever more desired, and whereof, both for the conscience of mine own true faithful heart and devotion toward him, and for the manifold benefits of his high goodness continually bestowed upon me, I thought myself always sure) should conceive any such mind or opinion of me as to think that in my communication either with the nun or the friars, or in my letter written unto the nun I had any other manner (of) mind, than might well stand with the duty of a tender loving subject toward his natural prince, or that his grace should reckon in me any manner of obstinate heart against his pleasure in anything that ever I said or did concerning his great matter of his marriage or concerning the primacy of the Pope. Never would I wish other thing in this world more like than that his highness in these things all three as perfectly knew my dealing and as thoroughly saw my mind, as I do myself, or as God doth himself, whose sight passeth deeper into my heart than mine own.

For sir as for the first matter, that is to wit my letter or communication (with the nun), the whole discourse whereof in my former letter I have as plainly declared unto you as I possibly can, so pray I God to withdraw that scruple and doubt of my good mind out of the King's noble breast; and none otherwise but as I not only thought none harm, but also purposed good: and in that thing most in which (as I perceive) his Grace conceiveth most grief and suspicion, that is to wit in my letter that I wrote unto her. And therefore sir since I have by writing declared the truth of my deed and am ready by oath to declare the truth of mine intent, I can desire no further thing by me to be done in the matter but only beseech almighty God to put into the king's gracious mind, that as God knoweth the thing is indeed, so his noble Grace may take it.

Now touching the second point, concerning his grace's great matter of his marriage, to the intent that you may see cause with the better conscience to make suit unto his highness for

me, I shall as plainly declare you my demeanor in that matter, as I have already declared you in the other, for more plainly I cannot.

Sir, upon a time at my coming from beyond the sea, where I had been in the King's business, I repaired (as my duty was) unto the king's grace, being at that time at Hampton Court. At which time, suddenly his highness walking in the gallery, spake with me of his great matter, and showed me that it was perceived that his marriage was not only against the positive laws of the church, and the written law of God, but also in such wise against the law of nature, that it could in no wise by the Church be dispensable.

Now so was it before my going over the sea, I had heard certain things moved against the bull of the dispensation, concerning the words of the law levitical and the law deuteronomical, to prove the prohibition to be *de iure divino*. But yet perceived I not at that time, but that the greater hope of the matter stood in certain faults that were found in the bull, whereby the bull should by the law not be sufficient. And such comfort was there in that point (as far as I perceived) a good season, that the counsel on the other part, were fain to bring forth a brief, by which they pretended those defaults to be supplied: the truth of which brief was by the king's counsel suspected, and much diligence was thereafter done for the trial of that point: wherein what was finally found, either I never knew or else I not remembered. But I rehearse you this to the intent you shall know that the first time that ever I heard that point moved, that it would be in such high degree against the law of nature, was the time in which I began to tell you, the king's grace showed it to me himself and laid the bible open before me, and there read me the words that moved his highness and divers other erudite persons so to think, and asked me further what myself thought thereon. At which time not presuming to look that his highness should anything take that point for the more proved or unproved, for my poor mind in so great a matter, I showed nevertheless (that my duty was at his commandment) what thing I thought upon the words that I there read. Whereupon his highness accepting benignly my sudden unadvised answer, commanded me to commune further with master (Foxe), for now his gracious almoner, and to read with him a book then was in making for that matter. After which book read and my poor opinion eftsoons declared unto his highness thereupon, his highness like a prudent and a virtuous prince assembled at another time at Hampton Court a good number of very well-learned men, at which time as far as ever I heard, there were (as was in so great a matter most likely to be) divers opinions among them. However I never heard, but that they agreed at that time upon a certain form in which the book should be made, which book was afterward at York Palace in my lord Cardinal's chamber, read in the presence of divers bishops and many learned men. And they all thought that there appeared in the book, good and reasonable causes, that might well move the king's highness, being so virtuous a prince, to conceive in his mind a scruple against his marriage: which while he could not otherwise avoid, he did well and virtuously for the a-quieting of his conscience, to sue and procure to have his doubt decided by judgment of the Church. After this, the suit began, and the legates sat upon the matter. During all which time I never meddled there, nor was a man mete to do, for the matter was in hand by an ordinary process of the spiritual law, whereof I could little skill.

And yet while the legates were sitting upon the matter, it pleased the king's highness to send me in the company of my lord of London, now of Durham, in an embassy about the peace, that at our being there was concluded at Cambray,

between his highness and the Emperor and the French king. And after my coming home, his highness of his only goodness (as far unworthy as I was thereto) made me, as you well know, his Chancellor of this realm.

Soon after which time, his grace moved me again, yet eftsoons, to look and consider his great matter, and well and indifferently to ponder such things as I should find therein. And if it so were that thereupon it should hap me to see such things as should persuade me to the part, he would gladly have me among other of his councilors in the matter. And nevertheless he graciously declared unto (me) that he would in no wise that I should no other thing do or say therein, than upon that that I should perceive mine own conscience should serve me, and that I should first look unto God, and after God unto him. Which most gracious words was the first lesson also that he ever of his grace gave me at my first coming into his noble service.

This motion was to me very comfortable and much I longed beside anything that myself either had seen or by further search should hap to find for the one part or the other, yet specially to have some conference in the matter, with some such of his grace's learned council, as most for his part had labored, and most have found in the matter. Whereupon his highness assigned unto me, the now most reverend fathers, archbishops of Canterbury and York, with master doctor, for now his grace's almoner, and master doctor Nicholas (De Burgo), the Italian friar. Whereupon I not only sought and read, and as far forth as my poor wit and learning served me, well weighed and considered every such thing as I could find myself, or read in any other man's labor that I could get, which anything had written therein, but had also diligent conference with his grace's councillors beforesaid: whose honors and worships I nothing mistrust in this point, but that they both have and will report unto his highness, that they never found obstinate manner or fashion in me, but a mind as toward and as conformable as reason could in the matter disputable require. Whereupon the king's highness being farther advertised both by them and by myself, of my poor opinion in the matter (wherein to have been able or mete to do him service, I would as I then shewed his highness, have been more glad than of all such worldly commodities as I either then had, or sure should come to) his highness graciously taking in my good mind in his behalf, used of his blessed disposition in the persecuting of his great matter, only those (of whom his grace had good number) whose conscience his grace perceived well and fully persuaded upon the part. And as well me as any other to whom his highness thought the thing to seem otherwise, he used in his other business: abiding of his abounding goodness nevertheless gracious lord unto every man, nor never was willing to put any man in ruffle or trouble of his conscience.

After this did I never nothing more therein, nor never any word wrote I therein to them paring of his grace's part neither before nor after: but settling my mind in quiet to serve his grace in other things, I would not so much as look nor let lie by me any book of the other part, albeit that I gladly read afterwards divers books that were made on his part. Nor never would I read the book that Master Abel made on the other side, nor other books which were (as I heard say) made in Latin beyond the sea, nor never gave ear to the Pope's proceeding in the matter. Moreover, where I had found in my study, a book that I had before borrowed of my Lord of Bath (Dr. Clark), which book he had made of the matter at such time as the legates sat here thereupon, which book had been by me negligently cast aside, and that I showed him I would send him home his book again, he told me that in good faith he had long time before discharged his mind upon the matter, and having forgotten that

copy to remain in my hands, had burned his own copy that he had thereof at home: and because he no more minded to meddle anything in the matter, he desired me to burn the same book too. And upon my faith so did I. Besides this divers other ways have I so used myself that if I rehearse them all, it should well appear that I never have had against his grace's marriage any manner (of) demeanor whereby his highness might have any manner cause or occasion of displeasure toward me. For likewise as I am not he which either can, or whom it could become to take upon me, the determination or decision of such a weighty matter, whereof diverse points a great way passed my learning, so am I he, that among other (of) his grace's faithful subjects, his highness being in possession of his marriage, will most heartily pray for the prosperous estate of his grace, long to continue to the pleasure of God.

As touching the third point, the primacy of the Pope, I nothing meddle in the matter. Truth it is, that as I told you, when you desired me to shew you what I thought therein, I was myself sometime not of the mind that the primacy of the See should be begun by the institution of God, until I read the matter those things that the king's highness had written in his most famous book against the heresies of Martin Luther. At the first reading whereof, I moved the king's highness either to leave out that point, or else to touch it more slenderly, for doubt of such things as after might hap to fall in question between his highness and some Pope, as between princes and Popes divers times have done. Whereunto his highness answered me, that he would in no wise anything minish of that matter, of which thing his highness shewed me secret cause whereof I never had anything heard before. But surely after that I had read his grace's book therein, and so many other things as I have seen in that point by this continuance of [this seven] years since and more, I have found, in effect the substance of all the holy doctors from Saint Ignatius, disciple to St. John the Evangelist, unto our own days both Latins and Greeks, so consonant and agreeing in that point, and the thing by such general Councils so confirmed also, that in good faith I never neither read nor heard anything of such effect on the other side, that ever could lead me to think that my conscience was well discharged, but rather in right great peril if I should follow the other side, and deny the primacy to be provided by God. Which if we did yet can I nothing (as I showed you) perceive any commodity that ever could come by that denial.

For that the primacy was at the leastwise instituted by the corps of Christendom, and for a great urgent cause in avoiding of schisms, and corroborate by continual succession more than the space of a thousand years at the least (for there are past almost a thousand years since the time of holy St. Gregory). And therefore since all Christendom is one corps, I cannot perceive how any member thereof may without the common assent of the body depart from the common head. And then if we may not lawfully leave it by ourselves, I cannot perceive but if the thing were a-treating in a General Council, what the question could avail, whether the primacy were instituted immediately by God, or ordained by the Church. As for the General Council assembled lawfully, I never could perceive, but that in the declaration of the truth, it is to be believed and to be standen to, the authority whereof ought to be taken for undoubtable, or else were there in nothing no certainty, but through Christendom upon every man's affectionate reason all things might be brought from day to day into continual ruffle and confusion. From which by the General Councils, the spirit of God assisting, every such Council well assembled, keepeth and ever shall keep the corps of his Catholic Church. And verily since the king's highness hath (as by the book of his honorable counsel appeareth) appealed to the General Council from the

Pope, in which Council I beseech Our Lord send his grace comfortable speed, methinketh in my poor mind it could be no furtherance thereunto his grace's cause if his highness should in his own realm before, either by laws making or books putting forth, seem to derogate and deny, not only the primacy of the See Apostolic, but also the authority of the General Councils too, which I verily trust his highness intendeth not.

For in the next General Council it may well happen, that this Pope may be deposed, and another substituted in his room with whom the king's highness may be very well content. For albeit that I have for mine own part such opinion of the Pope's primacy as I have shown you, yet never thought I the Pope above the General Council, nor never have, in any book of mine put forth among the king's subjects in our vulgar tongue, advanced greatly the Pope's authority. For albeit that a man may peradventure find therein, that after the common manner of Christian realms, I speak of him as primate, yet never do I stick thereon when reasoning and proving of that point. And in my book against the Masker I wrote not, I wot well, five [times] and yet of no more but only St. Peter himself, from whose person many take not (away) the primacy, even of those that granted [it to] none of his successors. And yet was the book made, printed, and put forth of very truth, before that any of the books of the Council was either printed or spoken of. But whereas I had written thereof at length in my *Confutation* (1531 – 2) before and for the proof thereof had compiled together all that, I could find therefore, at such time as I little looked that they should fall between the king's highness and the Pope such a breach as is fallen since, when I after that saw the thing likely to draw towards such displeasure between them, I suppressed it utterly, and never put word thereof into my book, but put out the remnant without it.

Which thing well declareth, I never intended anything to meddle in that matter against the king's gracious pleasure whatsoever mine own opinion were therein.

And thus have I good Master Cromwell, long troubled your mastership, with a long process of these matters, with which I neither durst, nor it could become me to encumber the king's noble grace. But I beseech you, for Our Lord's love, that ye be not so weary of my most cumbrous suit but that it may like you at such opportune time or times as your wisdom may find, to help that his highness may, by your goodness, be fully informed of my true faithful mind, that he may the rather by the means of your wisdom and dexterity, consider that in the matter of the nun, there was never on my part any other mind than good; nor yet in any other thing else, never was there nor never shall there be, any further fault found in me, than that I cannot in everything think the same way that some other men of more wisdom and deeper learning do; nor can find in mine heart otherwise to say than as mine own conscience giveth me. Which condition hath never grown in anything that might touch his gracious pleasure of any obstinate mind or misaffectionate appetite, but of a timorous conscience rising haply for lack of better perceiving and yet not without tender respect unto my most bounden duty towards his noble grace. Whose only favor I so much esteem, that I nothing have of mine own in all this world except only my soul, but that I will with better will forgo it, than abide of his highness one heavy displeasant look. And thus I make an end of my long troublous process, beseeching the Blessed Trinity for the great goodness you have shown me, and the great comfort you do me, both bodily and ghostly, to prosper you, and in heaven to reward you.

From *The Last Letters of Blessed Thomas More*, edited by W.E. Campbell (London: The Manresa Press, 1924), pp 23 - 35.

Farrell O’Gorman.

Michel Guillaume Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer.*

Letters from an American Farmer was written by Michel Guillaume Jean de Crèvecœur, who was born to a family of minor nobility in Normandy in 1735 and educated at a Jesuit college there. He migrated to North America in 1755 and wrote *Letters from An American Farmer* in the 1770s. First published in London in 1782, it was among the earliest books to represent the fledgling United States to the larger world. Crèvecœur’s book took the form of a series of letters from a putatively representative American colonist to a correspondent in England. Soon translated into Dutch, German, and French, *Letters* was read and admired by audiences on both sides of the North Atlantic. George Washington himself deemed the book “founded on fact”—if “rather too flattering” to be entirely true. The book was initially published under the name “J. Hector St. John,” and in it Crèvecœur writes in the voice of a persona, a simple Pennsylvania farmer named James. The text defies generic conventions but has been aptly described as “an embryonic epistolary novel.”

Letter I: Having recently been visited by an Englishman identified as “Mr. F.B.,” James is here responding to a request to pen a series of letters concerning life in America. James explains that he is reluctant to do so because of his lack of formal education: “My father left me a few musty books, which his father brought from England with him; but what help can I draw from a library consisting mostly of Scotch Divinity, the Navigation of Sir Francis Drake, the History of Queen Elizabeth, and a few miscellaneous volumes?” He explains here how he has been convinced to write primarily by his minister:

MINISTER: Well then…, neighbour James, as you can talk well, I am sure you must write tolerably well also; imagine, then, that Mr. F. B. is still here, and simply write down what you would say to him…. This is all that he requires from you, and I am sure the task is not difficult. He is your friend: who would be ashamed to write to such a person? Although he is a man of learning and taste, yet I am sure he will read your letters with pleasure: if they be not elegant, they will smell of the woods, and be a little wild; I know your turn, they will contain some matters which he never knew before. Some people are so fond of novelty, that they will overlook many errors of language for the sake of information. We are all apt to love and admire exotics, tho' they may be often inferior to what we possess; and that is the reason I imagine why so many persons are continually going to visit Italy. That country is the daily resort of modern travellers.

James: I should like to know what is there to be seen so goodly and profitable, that so many should wish to visit no other country?

Minister: I do not very well know. I fancy their object is to trace the vestiges of a once flourishing people now extinct. There they amuse themselves in viewing the ruins of temples and other buildings which have very little affinity with those of the present age, and must therefore impart a knowledge which appears useless and trifling. I have often wondered that no skilful botanists or learned men should come over here; methinks there would be much more real satisfaction in

observing among us the humble rudiments and embryos of societies spreading everywhere, the recent foundation of our towns, and the settlements of so many rural districts. I am sure that the rapidity of their growth would be more pleasing to behold, than the ruins of old towers, useless aqueducts, or impending battlements.

James: What you say, minister, seems very true: do go on: I always love to hear you talk.

Minister: Don't you think, neighbour James, that the mind of a good and enlightened Englishman would be more improved in remarking throughout these provinces the causes which render so many people happy? In delineating the unnoticed means by which we daily increase the extent of our settlements? How we convert huge forests into pleasing fields, and exhibit through these thirteen provinces so singular a display of easy subsistence and political felicity.

In Italy all the objects of contemplation, all the reveries of the traveller, must have a reference to ancient generations, and to very distant periods, clouded with the mist of ages.--Here, on the contrary, everything is modern, peaceful, and benign. Here we have had no war to desolate our fields: [Footnote: The troubles that now convulse the American colonies had not broke out when this and some of the following letters were written.] Our religion does not oppress the cultivators: we are strangers to those feudal institutions which have enslaved so many. Here nature opens her broad lap to receive the perpetual accession of new comers, and to supply them with food. I am sure I cannot be called a partial American when I say that the spectacle afforded by these pleasing scenes must be more entertaining and more philosophical than that which arises from beholding the musty ruins of Rome. Here everything would inspire the reflecting traveller with the most philanthropic ideas; his imagination, instead of submitting to the painful and useless retrospect of revolutions, desolations, and plagues, would, on the contrary, wisely spring forward to the anticipated fields of future cultivation and improvement, to the future extent of those generations which are to replenish and embellish this boundless continent. There the half-ruined amphitheatres, and the putrid fevers of the Campania, must fill the mind with the most melancholy reflections, whilst he is seeking for the origin and the intention of those structures with which he is surrounded, and for the cause of so great a decay. Here he might contemplate the very beginnings and outlines of human society, which can be traced nowhere now but in this part of the world. The rest of the earth, I am told, is in some places too full, in others half depopulated. Misguided religion, tyranny, and absurd laws everywhere depress and afflict mankind. Here we have in some measure regained the ancient dignity of our species; our laws are simple and just, we are a race of cultivators, our cultivation is unrestrained, and therefore everything is prosperous and flourishing. For my part I had rather admire the ample barn of one of our opulent farmers, who himself felled the first tree in his plantation, and was the first founder of his settlement, than study the dimensions of the temple of Ceres. I had rather record the progressive steps of

this industrious farmer, throughout all the stages of his labours and other operations, than examine how modern Italian convents can be supported without doing anything but singing and praying….

James: Oh! could I express myself as you do, my friend, I should not balance a single instant, I should rather be anxious to commence a correspondence which would do me credit.

Minister: You can write full as well as you need, and will improve very fast; trust to my prophecy, your letters, at least, will have the merit of coming from the edge of the great wilderness, three hundred miles from the sea, and three thousand miles over that sea: this will be no detriment to them, take my word for it…. What he requires of you is but simple--what we speak out among ourselves we call conversation, and a letter is only conversation put down in black and white…. Nature hath given you a tolerable share of sense, and that is one of her best gifts let me tell you. She has given you besides some perspicuity, which qualifies you to distinguish interesting objects; a warmth of imagination which enables you to think with quickness; you often extract useful reflections from objects which presented none to my mind: you have a tender and a well meaning heart, you love description, and your pencil, assure yourself, is not a bad one for the pencil of a farmer; it seems to be held without any labour; your mind is what we called at Yale college a *tabula rasa*, where spontaneous and strong impressions are delineated with facility.

Letter III: James writes regarding the query, "What Is an American?"

I wish I could be acquainted with the feelings and thoughts which must agitate the heart and present themselves to the mind of an enlightened Englishman, when he first lands on this continent. He must greatly rejoice that he lived at a time to see this fair country discovered and settled; he must necessarily feel a share of national pride, when he views the chain of settlements which embellishes these extended shores. When he says to himself, this is the work of my countrymen, who, when convulsed by factions, afflicted by a variety of miseries and wants, restless and impatient, took refuge here. They brought along with them their national genius, to which they principally owe what liberty they enjoy, and what substance they possess. Here he sees the industry of his native country displayed in a new manner, and traces in their works the embryos of all the arts, sciences, and ingenuity which nourish in Europe. Here he beholds fair cities, substantial villages, extensive fields, an immense country filled with decent houses, good roads, orchards, meadows, and bridges, where an hundred years ago all was wild, woody, and uncultivated! What a train of pleasing ideas this fair spectacle must suggest; it is a prospect which must inspire a good citizen with the most heartfelt pleasure. The difficulty consists in the manner of viewing so extensive a scene. He is arrived on a new continent; a modern society offers itself to his contemplation, different from what he had hitherto seen. It is not composed, as in Europe, of great lords who possess everything, and of a herd of people who have

nothing. Here are no aristocratical families, no courts, no kings, no bishops, no ecclesiastical dominion, no invisible power giving to a few a very visible one; no great manufacturers employing thousands, no great refinements of luxury. The rich and the poor are not so far removed from each other as they are in Europe. Some few towns excepted, we are all tillers of the earth, from Nova Scotia to West Florida. We are a people of cultivators, scattered over an immense territory, communicating with each other by means of good roads and navigable rivers, united by the silken bands of mild government, all respecting the laws, without dreading their power, because they are equitable. We are all animated with the spirit of an industry which is unfettered and unrestrained, because each person works for himself. If he travels through our rural districts he views not the hostile castle, and the haughty mansion, contrasted with the clay- built hut and miserable cabin, where cattle and men help to keep each other warm, and dwell in meanness, smoke, and indigence. A pleasing uniformity of decent competence appears throughout our habitations. The meanest of our log-houses is a dry and comfortable habitation. Lawyer or merchant are the fairest titles our towns afford; that of a farmer is the only appellation of the rural inhabitants of our country. It must take some time ere he can reconcile himself to our dictionary, which is but short in words of dignity, and names of honour. There, on a Sunday, he sees a congregation of respectable farmers and their wives, all clad in neat homespun, well mounted, or riding in their own humble waggons. There is not among them an esquire, saving the unlettered magistrate. There he sees a parson as simple as his flock, a farmer who does not riot on the labour of others. We have no princes, for whom we toil, starve, and bleed: we are the most perfect society now existing in the world. Here man is free as he ought to be; nor is this pleasing equality so transitory as many others are. Many ages will not see the shores of our great lakes replenished with inland nations, nor the unknown bounds of North America entirely peopled. Who can tell how far it extends? Who can tell the millions of men whom it will feed and contain? for no European foot has as yet travelled half the extent of this mighty continent!

The next wish of this traveller will be to know whence came all these people? they are a mixture of English, Scotch, Irish, French, Dutch, Germans, and Swedes. From this promiscuous breed, that race now called Americans have arisen. The eastern provinces must indeed be excepted, as being the unmixed descendants of Englishmen. I have heard many wish that they had been more intermixed also: for my part, I am no wisher, and think it much better as it has happened. They exhibit a most conspicuous figure in this great and variegated picture; they too enter for a great share in the pleasing perspective displayed in these thirteen provinces. I know it is fashionable to reflect on them, but I respect them for what they have done; for the accuracy and wisdom with which they have settled their territory; for the decency of their manners; for their early love of letters; their ancient college, the first in this hemisphere; for their industry; which to me who am but a farmer, is the criterion of everything. There never was a people, situated as

they are, who with so ungrateful a soil have done more in so short a time. Do you think that the monarchical ingredients which are more prevalent in other governments, have purged them from all foul stains? Their histories assert the contrary.

In this great American asylum, the poor of Europe have by some means met together, and in consequence of various causes; to what purpose should they ask one another what countrymen they are? Alas, two thirds of them had no country. Can a wretch who wanders about, who works and starves, whose life is a continual scene of sore affliction or pinching penury; can that man call England or any other kingdom his country? A country that had no bread for him, whose fields procured him no harvest, who met with nothing but the frowns of the rich, the severity of the laws, with jails and punishments; who owned not a single foot of the extensive surface of this planet? No! urged by a variety of motives, here they came. Every thing has tended to regenerate them; new laws, a new mode of living, a new social system; here they are become men: in Europe they were as so many useless plants, wanting vegetative mould, and refreshing showers; they withered, and were mowed down by want, hunger, and war; but now by the power of transplantation, like all other plants they have taken root and flourished! Formerly they were not numbered in any civil lists of their country, except in those of the poor; here they rank as citizens. By what invisible power has this surprising metamorphosis been performed? By that of the laws and that of their industry. The laws, the indulgent laws, protect them as they arrive, stamping on them the symbol of adoption; they receive ample rewards for their labours; these accumulated rewards procure them lands; those lands confer on them the title of freemen, and to that title every benefit is affixed which men can possibly require. This is the great operation daily performed by our laws. From whence proceed these laws? From our government. Whence the government? It is derived from the original genius and strong desire of the people ratified and confirmed by the crown. This is the great chain which links us all, this is the picture which every province exhibits….

What attachment can a poor European emigrant have for a country where he had nothing? The knowledge of the language, the love of a few kindred as poor as himself, were the only cords that tied him: his country is now that which gives him land, bread, protection, and consequence: *Ubi panis ibi patria*, is the motto of all emigrants. What then is the American, this new man? He is either an European, or the descendant of an European, hence that strange mixture of blood, which you will find in no other country. I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons have now four wives of different nations. He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. He becomes an American by being received in the broad lap of our great Alma Mater. Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labours and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world.

Americans are the western pilgrims, who are carrying along with them that great mass of arts, sciences, vigour, and industry which began long since in the east; they will finish the great circle. The Americans were once scattered all over Europe; here they are incorporated into one of the finest systems of population which has ever appeared, and which will hereafter become distinct by the power of the different climates they inhabit. The American ought therefore to love this country much better than that wherein either he or his forefathers were born. Here the rewards of his industry follow with equal steps the progress of his labour; his labour is founded on the basis of nature, SELF-INTEREST: can it want a stronger allurement? Wives and children, who before in vain demanded of him a morsel of bread, now, fat and frolicsome, gladly help their father to clear those fields whence exuberant crops are to arise to feed and to clothe them all; without any part being claimed, either by a despotic prince, a rich abbot, or a mighty lord. Here religion demands but little of him; a small voluntary salary to the minister, and gratitude to God; can he refuse these? The American is a new man, who acts upon new principles; he must therefore entertain new ideas, and form new opinions. From involuntary idleness, servile dependence, penury, and useless labour, he has passed to toils of a very different nature, rewarded by ample subsistence.--This is an American.

British America is divided into many provinces, forming a large association, scattered along a coast 1500 miles extent and about 200 wide. This society I would fain examine, at least such as it appears in the middle provinces; if it does not afford that variety of tinges and gradations which may be observed in Europe, we have colours peculiar to ourselves. For instance, it is natural to conceive that those who live near the sea, must be very different from those who live in the woods; the intermediate space will afford a separate and distinct class.

Men are like plants; the goodness and flavour of the fruit proceeds from the peculiar soil and exposition in which they grow. We are nothing but what we derive from the air we breathe, the climate we inhabit, the government we obey, the system of religion we profess, and the nature of our employment. Here you will find but few crimes; these have acquired as yet no root among us. I wish I was able to trace all my ideas; if my ignorance prevents me from describing them properly, I hope I shall be able to delineate a few of the outlines, which are all I propose.

Those who live near the sea, feed more on fish than on flesh, and often encounter that boisterous element. This renders them more bold and enterprising; this leads them to neglect the confined occupations of the land. They see and converse with a variety of people, their intercourse with mankind becomes extensive. The sea inspires them with a love of traffic, a desire of transporting produce from one place to another; and leads them to a variety of resources which supply the place of labour. Those who inhabit the middle settlements, by far the most numerous, must be very different; the simple cultivation of the earth purifies them, but the indulgences of the government, the soft remonstrances of religion, the rank of independent

freeholders, must necessarily inspire them with sentiments, very little known in Europe among people of the same class. What do I say? Europe has no such class of men; the early knowledge they acquire, the early bargains they make, give them a great degree of sagacity. As freemen they will be litigious; pride and obstinacy are often the cause of law suits; the nature of our laws and governments may be another. As citizens it is easy to imagine, that they will carefully read the newspapers, enter into every political disquisition, freely blame or censure governors and others. As farmers they will be careful and anxious to get as much as they can, because what they get is their own. As northern men they will love the cheerful cup. As Christians, religion curbs them not in their opinions; the general indulgence leaves every one to think for themselves in spiritual matters; the laws inspect our actions, our thoughts are left to God. Industry, good living, selfishness, litigiousness, country politics, the pride of freemen, religious indifference, are their characteristics. If you recede still farther from the sea, you will come into more modern settlements; they exhibit the same strong lineaments, in a ruder appearance. Religion seems to have still less influence, and their manners are less improved.

Now we arrive near the great woods, near the last inhabited districts; there men seem to be placed still farther beyond the reach of government, which in some measure leaves them to themselves. How can it pervade every corner; as they were driven there by misfortunes, necessity of beginnings, desire of acquiring large tracts of land, idleness, frequent want of economy, ancient debts; the re-union of such people does not afford a very pleasing spectacle. When discord, want of unity and friendship; when either drunkenness or idleness prevail in such remote districts; contention, inactivity, and wretchedness must ensue. There are not the same remedies to these evils as in a long established community. The few magistrates they have, are in general little better than the rest; they are often in a perfect state of war; that of man against man, sometimes decided by blows, sometimes by means of the law; that of man against every wild inhabitant of these venerable woods, of which they are come to dispossess them. There men appear to be no better than carnivorous animals of a superior rank, living on the flesh of wild animals when they can catch them, and when they are not able, they subsist on grain. He who would wish to see America in its proper light, and have a true idea of its feeble beginnings and barbarous rudiments, must visit our extended line of frontiers where the last settlers dwell, and where he may see the first labours of settlement, the mode of clearing the earth, in all their different appearances; where men are wholly left dependent on their native tempers, and on the spur of uncertain industry, which often fails when not sanctified by the efficacy of a few moral rules. There, remote from the power of example and check of shame, many families exhibit the most hideous parts of our society. They are a kind of forlorn hope, preceding by ten or twelve years the most respectable army of veterans which come after them. In that space, prosperity will polish some, vice and the law will drive off the rest, who uniting again with others like themselves will recede still farther; making room for more industrious people, who will finish their improvements, convert the loghouse into a convenient habitation, and rejoicing that the first heavy labours are finished, will change in a few years that hitherto barbarous country into a fine fertile, well regulated district. Such is our progress, such is the march of the Europeans toward the

interior parts of this continent. In all societies there are off-casts; this impure part serves as our precursors or pioneers; my father himself was one of that class, but he came upon honest principles, and was therefore one of the few who held fast; by good conduct and temperance, he transmitted to me his fair inheritance, when not above one in fourteen of his contemporaries had the same good fortune.

Forty years ago this smiling country was thus inhabited; it is now purged, a general decency of manners prevails throughout, and such has been the fate of our best countries.

Exclusive of those general characteristics, each province has its own, founded on the government, climate, mode of husbandry, customs, and peculiarity of circumstances. Europeans submit insensibly to these great powers, and become, in the course of a few generations, not only Americans in general, but either Pennsylvanians, Virginians, or provincials under some other name. Whoever traverses the continent must easily observe those strong differences, which will grow more evident in time. The inhabitants of Canada, Massachusetts, the middle provinces, the southern ones will be as different as their climates; their only points of unity will be those of religion and language.

As I have endeavoured to show you how Europeans become Americans; it may not be disagreeable to show you likewise how the various Christian sects introduced, wear out, and how religious indifference becomes prevalent. When any considerable number of a particular sect happen to dwell contiguous to each other, they immediately erect a temple, and there worship the Divinity agreeably to their own peculiar ideas. Nobody disturbs them. If any new sect springs up in Europe it may happen that many of its professors will come and settle in American. As they bring their zeal with them, they are at liberty to make proselytes if they can, and to build a meeting and to follow the dictates of their consciences; for neither the government nor any other power interferes. If they are peaceable subjects, and are industrious, what is it to their neighbours how and in what manner they think fit to address their prayers to the Supreme Being? But if the sectaries are not settled close together, if they are mixed with other denominations, their zeal will cool for want of fuel, and will be extinguished in a little time. Then the Americans become as to religion, what they are as to country, allied to all. In them the name of Englishman, Frenchman, and European is lost, and in like manner, the strict modes of Christianity as practised in Europe are lost also. This effect will extend itself still farther hereafter, and though this may appear to you as a strange idea, yet it is a very true one. I shall be able perhaps hereafter to explain myself better; in the meanwhile, let the following example serve as my first justification.

Let us suppose you and I to be travelling; we observe that in this house, to the right, lives a Catholic, who prays to God as he has been taught, and believes in transubstantiation; he works and raises wheat, he has a large family of children, all hale and robust; his belief, his prayers offend nobody. About one mile farther on the same road, his next neighbour may be a good

honest plodding German Lutheran, who addresses himself to the same God, the God of all, agreeably to the modes he has been educated in, and believes in consubstantiation; by so doing he scandalises nobody; he also works in his fields, embellishes the earth, clears swamps, etc. What has the world to do with his Lutheran principles? He persecutes nobody, and nobody persecutes him, he visits his neighbours, and his neighbours visit him. Next to him lives a seceder, the most enthusiastic of all sectaries; his zeal is hot and fiery, but separated as he is from others of the same complexion, he has no congregation of his own to resort to, where he might cabal and mingle religious pride with worldly obstinacy. He likewise raises good crops, his house is handsomely painted, his orchard is one of the fairest in the neighbourhood. How does it concern the welfare of the country, or of the province at large, what this man's religious sentiments are, or really whether he has any at all? He is a good farmer, he is a sober, peaceable, good citizen: William Penn himself would not wish for more. This is the visible character, the invisible one is only guessed at, and is nobody's business. Next again lives a Low Dutchman, who implicitly believes the rules laid down by the synod of Dort. He conceives no other idea of a clergyman than that of an hired man; if he does his work well he will pay him the stipulated sum; if not he will dismiss him, and do without his sermons, and let his church be shut up for years. But notwithstanding this coarse idea, you will find his house and farm to be the neatest in all the country; and you will judge by his waggon and fat horses, that he thinks more of the affairs of this world than of those of the next. He is sober and laborious, therefore he is all he ought to be as to the affairs of this life; as for those of the next, he must trust to the great Creator. Each of these people instruct their children as well as they can, but these instructions are feeble compared to those which are given to the youth of the poorest class in Europe. Their children will therefore grow up less zealous and more indifferent in matters of religion than their parents. The foolish vanity, or rather the fury of making Proselytes, is unknown here; they have no time, the seasons call for all their attention, and thus in a few years, this mixed neighbourhood will exhibit a strange religious medley, that will be neither pure Catholicism nor pure Calvinism. A very perceptible indifference even in the first generation, will become apparent; and it may happen that the daughter of the Catholic will marry the son of the seceder, and settle by themselves at a distance from their parents. What religious education will they give their children? A very imperfect one. If there happens to be in the neighbourhood any place of worship, we will suppose a Quaker's meeting; rather than not show their fine clothes, they will go to it, and some of them may perhaps attach themselves to that society. Others will remain in a perfect state of indifference; the children of these zealous parents will not be able to tell what their religious principles are, and their grandchildren still less. The neighbourhood of a place of worship generally leads them to it, and the action of going thither, is the strongest evidence they can give of their attachment to any sect. The Quakers are the only people who retain a fondness for their own mode of worship; for be they ever so far separated from each other, they hold a sort of communion with the society, and seldom depart

from its rules, at least in this country. Thus all sects are mixed as well as all nations; thus religious indifference is imperceptibly disseminated from one end of the continent to the other; which is at present one of the strongest characteristics of the Americans. Where this will reach no one can tell, perhaps it may leave a vacuum fit to receive other systems. Persecution, religious pride, the love of contradiction, are the food of what the world commonly calls religion. These motives have ceased here; zeal in Europe is confined; here it evaporates in the great distance it has to travel; there it is a grain of powder inclosed, here it burns away in the open air, and consumes without effect.

But to return to our back settlers. I must tell you, that there is something in the proximity of the woods, which is very singular. It is with men as it is with the plants and animals that grow and live in the forests; they are entirely different from those that live in the plains. I will candidly tell you all my thoughts but you are not to expect that I shall advance any reasons. By living in or near the woods, their actions are regulated by the wildness of the neighbourhood. The deer often come to eat their grain, the wolves to destroy their sheep, the bears to kill their hogs, the foxes to catch their poultry. This surrounding hostility immediately puts the gun into their hands; they watch these animals, they kill some; and thus by defending their property, they soon become professed hunters; this is the progress; once hunters, farewell to the plough. The chase renders them ferocious, gloomy, and unsociable; a hunter wants no neighbour, he rather hates them, because he dreads the competition. In a little time their success in the woods makes them neglect their tillage. They trust to the natural fecundity of the earth, and therefore do little; carelessness in fencing often exposes what little they sow to destruction; they are not at home to watch; in order therefore to make up the deficiency, they go oftener to the woods. That new mode of life brings along with it a new set of manners, which I cannot easily describe. These new manners being grafted on the old stock, produce a strange sort of lawless profligacy, the impressions of which are indelible. The manners of the Indian natives are respectable, compared with this European medley. Their wives and children live in sloth and inactivity; and having no proper pursuits, you may judge what education the latter receive. Their tender minds have nothing else to contemplate but the example of their parents; like them they grow up a mongrel breed, half civilised, half savage, except nature stamps on them some constitutional propensities. That rich, that voluptuous sentiment is gone that struck them so forcibly; the possession of their freeholds no longer conveys to their minds the same pleasure and pride. To all these reasons you must add, their lonely situation, and you cannot imagine what an effect on manners the great distances they live from each other has! Consider one of the last settlements in its first view: of what is it composed? Europeans who have not that sufficient share of knowledge they ought to have, in order to prosper; people who have suddenly passed from oppression, dread of government, and fear of laws, into the unlimited freedom of the woods. This sudden change must have a very great effect on most men, and on that class particularly. Eating

of wild meat, whatever you may think, tends to alter their temper: though all the proof I can adduce, is, that I have seen it: and having no place of worship to resort to, what little society this might afford is denied them. The Sunday meetings, exclusive of religious benefits, were the only social bonds that might have inspired them with some degree of emulation in neatness. Is it then surprising to see men thus situated, immersed in great and heavy labours, degenerate a little? It is rather a wonder the effect is not more diffusive. The Moravians and the Quakers are the only instances in exception to what I have advanced. The first never settle singly, it is a colony of the society which emigrates; they carry with them their forms, worship, rules, and decency: the others never begin so hard, they are always able to buy improvements, in which there is a great advantage, for by that time the country is recovered from its first barbarity. Thus our bad people are those who are half cultivators and half hunters; and the worst of them are those who have degenerated altogether into the hunting state. As old ploughmen and new men of the woods, as Europeans and new made Indians, they contract the vices of both; they adopt the moroseness and ferocity of a native, without his mildness, or even his industry at home. If manners are not refined, at least they are rendered simple and inoffensive by tilling the earth; all our wants are supplied by it, our time is divided between labour and rest, and leaves none for the commission of great misdeeds. As hunters it is divided between the toil of the chase, the idleness of repose, or the indulgence of inebriation. Hunting is but a licentious idle life, and if it does not always pervert good dispositions; yet, when it is united with bad luck, it leads to want: want stimulates that propensity to rapacity and injustice, too natural to needy men, which is the fatal gradation. After this explanation of the effects which follow by living in the woods, shall we yet vainly flatter ourselves with the hope of converting the Indians? We should rather begin with converting our back- settlers; and now if I dare mention the name of religion, its sweet accents would be lost in the immensity of these woods. Men thus placed are not fit either to receive or remember its mild instructions; they want temples and ministers, but as soon as men cease to remain at home, and begin to lead an erratic life, let them be either tawny or white, they cease to be its disciples.

Thus have I faintly and imperfectly endeavoured to trace our society from the sea to our woods! yet you must not imagine that every person who moves back, acts upon the same principles, or falls into the same degeneracy. Many families carry with them all their decency of conduct, purity of morals, and respect of religion; but these are scarce, the power of example is sometimes irresistible. Even among these back-settlers, their depravity is greater or less, according to what nation or province they belong. Were I to adduce proofs of this, I might be accused of partiality. If there happens to be some rich intervals, some fertile bottoms, in those remote districts, the people will there prefer tilling the land to hunting, and will attach themselves to it; but even on these fertile spots you may plainly perceive the inhabitants to acquire a great degree of rusticity and selfishness.

It is in consequence of this straggling situation, and the astonishing power it has on manners, that the back-settlers of both the Carolinas, Virginia, and many other parts, have been long a set of lawless people; it has been even dangerous to travel among them….

[NOTE: The primary text here is copied from http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/letters.asp]

Ivone Moreira.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*.

CHAPTER V: that we must always go back to a first convention

EVEN if I granted all that I have been refuting, the friends of despotism would be no better off. There will always be a great difference between subduing a multitude and ruling a society. Even if scattered individuals were successively enslaved by one man, however numerous they might be, I still see no more than a master and his slaves, and certainly not a people and its ruler; I see what may be termed an aggregation, but not an association; there is as yet neither public good nor body politic. The man in question, even if he has enslaved half the world, is still only an individual; his interest, apart from that of others, is still a purely private interest. If this same man comes to die, his empire, after him, remains scattered and without unity, as an oak falls and dissolves into a heap of ashes when the fire has consumed it.

A people, says Grotius, can give itself to a king. Then, according to Grotius, a people is a people before it gives itself. The gift is itself a civil act, and implies public deliberation. It would be better, before examining the act by which a people gives itself to a king, to examine that by which it has become a people; for this act, being necessarily prior to the other, is the true foundation of society.

Indeed, if there were no prior convention, where, unless the election were unanimous, would be the obligation on [14] the minority to submit to the choice of the majority? How have a hundred men who wish for a master the right to vote on behalf of ten who do not? The law of majority voting is itself something established by convention, and presupposes unanimity, on one occasion at least.

CHAPTER VI: the social compact

I SUPPOSE men to have reached the point at which the obstacles in the way of their preservation in the state of nature show their power of resistance to be greater than the resources at the disposal of each individual for his maintenance in that state. That primitive condition can then subsist no longer; and the human race would perish unless it changed its manner of existence.

But, as men cannot engender new forces, but only unite and direct existing ones, they have no other means of preserving themselves than the formation, by aggregation, of a sum of forces great enough to overcome the resistance. These they have to bring into play by means of a single motive power, and cause to act in concert.

This sum of forces can arise only where several persons come together: but, as the force and liberty of each man are the chief instruments of his self-preservation, how can he pledge them without harming his own interests, and neglecting the care he owes to himself? This difficulty, in its bearing on my present subject, may be stated in the following terms—

"The problem is to find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before." This is the fundamental problem of which the *Social Contract* provides the solution.

The clauses of this contract are so determined by the nature of the act that the slightest modification would make them vain and ineffective; so that, although they have perhaps never been formally set forth, they are everywhere the same and everywhere tacitly admitted and [15] recognised, until, on the violation of the social compact, each regains his original rights and resumes his natural liberty, while losing the conventional liberty in favour of which he renounced it.

These clauses, properly understood, may be reduced to one—the total alienation of each associate, together with all his rights, to the whole community; for, in the first place, as each gives himself absolutely, the conditions are the same for all; and, this being so, no one has any interest in making them burdensome to others.

Moreover, the alienation being without reserve, the union is as perfect as it can be, and no associate has anything more to demand: for, if the individuals retained certain rights, as there would be no common superior to decide between them and the public, each, being on one point his own judge, would ask to be so on all; the state of nature would thus continue, and the association would necessarily become inoperative or tyrannical.

Finally, each man, in giving himself to all, gives himself to nobody; and as there is no associate over whom he does not acquire the same right as he yields others over himself, he gains an equivalent for everything he loses, and an increase of force for the preservation of what he has.

If then we discard from the social compact what is not of its essence, we shall find that it reduces itself to the following terms—

"Each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and, in our corporate capacity, we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole."

At once, in place of the individual personality of each contracting party, this act of association creates a moral and collective body, composed of as many members as the assembly contains votes, and receiving from this act its unity, its common identity, its life and its will. This public person, so formed by the union of all other persons, formerly took the name of *city,*[1] and now takes that of [16] *Republic* or *body politic;* it is called by its members *State* when passive, *Sovereign* when active, and *Power* when compared with others like itself. Those who are associated in it take collectively the name of *people,* and severally are called *citizens,* as sharing in the sovereign power, and *subjects,* as being under the laws of the State. But these

terms are often confused and taken one for another: it is enough to know how to distinguish them when they are being used with precision.

CHAPTER VII: the sovereign

THIS formula shows us that the act of association comprises a mutual undertaking between the public and the individuals, and that each individual, in making a contract, as we may say, with himself, is bound in a double capacity; as a member of the Sovereign he is bound to the individuals, and as a member of the State to the Sovereign. But the maxim of civil right, that no one is bound by undertakings made to himself, does not apply in this case; for there is a great difference between incurring an obligation to yourself and incurring one to a whole of which you form a part.

Attention must further be called to the fact that public deliberation, while competent to bind all the subjects to the Sovereign, because of the two different capacities in which each of them may be regarded, cannot, for the opposite reason, bind the Sovereign to itself; and [17] that it is consequently against the nature of the body politic for the Sovereign to impose on itself a law which it cannot infringe. Being able to regard itself in only one capacity, it is in the position of an individual who makes a contract with himself; and this makes it clear that there neither is nor can be any kind of fundamental law binding on the body of the people—not even the social contract itself. This does not mean that the body politic cannot enter into undertakings with others, provided the contract is not infringed by them; for in relation to what is external to it, it becomes a simple being, an individual.

But the body politic or the Sovereign, drawing its being wholly from the sanctity of the contract, can never bind itself, even to an outsider, to do anything derogatory to the original act, for instance, to alienate any part of itself, or to submit to another Sovereign. Violation of the act by which it exists would be self-annihilation; and that which is itself nothing can create nothing.

As soon as this multitude is so united in one body, it is impossible to offend against one of the members without attacking the body, and still more to offend against the body without the members resenting it. Duty and interest therefore equally oblige the two contracting parties to give each other help; and the same men should seek to combine, in their double capacity, all the advantages dependent upon that capacity.

Again, the Sovereign, being formed wholly of the individuals who compose it, neither has nor can have any interest contrary to theirs; and consequently the sovereign power need give no guarantee to its subjects, because it is impossible for the body to wish to hurt all its members. We shall also see later on that it cannot hurt any in particular. The Sovereign, merely by virtue of what it is, is always what it should be.

This, however, is not the case with the relation of the subjects to the Sovereign, which, despite the common interest, would have no security that they would fulfil their undertakings, unless it found means to assure itself of their fidelity.

In fact, each individual, as a man, may have a particular will contrary or dissimilar to the general will which [18] he has as a citizen. His particular interest may speak to him quite differently from the common interest: his absolute and

naturally independent existence may make him look upon what he owes to the common cause as a gratuitous contribution, the loss of which will do less harm to others than the payment of it is burdensome to himself; and, regarding the moral person which constitutes the State as a *persona ficta,* because not a man, he may wish to enjoy the rights of citizenship without being ready to fulfil the duties of a subject. The continuance of such an injustice could not but prove the undoing of the body politic.

In order then that the social compact may not be an empty formula, it tacitly includes the undertaking, which alone can give force to the rest, that whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be compelled to do so by the whole body. This means nothing less than that he will be forced to be free; for this is the condition which, by giving each citizen to his country, secures him against all personal dependence. In this lies the key to the working of the political machine; this alone legitimises civil undertakings, which, without it, would be absurd, tyrannical, and liable to the most frightful abuses.

CHAPTER VIII: the civil state

THE passage from the state of nature to the civil state produces a very remarkable change in man, by substituting justice for instinct in his conduct, and giving his actions the morality they had formerly lacked. Then only, when the voice of duty takes the place of physical impulses and right of appetite, does man, who so far had considered only himself, find that he is forced to act on different principles, and to consult his reason before listening to his inclinations. Although, in this state, he deprives himself of some advantages which he got from nature, he gains in return others so great, his faculties are so stimulated and developed, his ideas so extended, his feelings so ennobled, and his whole soul so uplifted, that, did not [19] the abuses of this new condition often degrade him below that which he left, he would be bound to bless continually the happy moment which took him from it for ever, and, instead of a stupid and unimaginative animal, made him an intelligent being and a man.

Let us draw up the whole account in terms easily commensurable. What man loses by the social contract is his natural liberty and an unlimited right to everything he tries to get and succeeds in getting; what he gains is civil liberty and the proprietorship of all he possesses. If we are to avoid mistake in weighing one against the other, we must clearly distinguish natural liberty, which is bounded only by the strength of the individual, from civil liberty, which is limited by the general will; and possession, which is merely the effect of force or the right of the first occupier, from property, which can be founded only on a positive title.

We might, over and above all this, add, to what man acquires in the civil state, moral liberty, which alone makes him truly master of himself; for the mere impulse of appetite is slavery, while obedience to a law which we prescribe to ourselves is liberty. But I have already said too much on this head, and the philosophical meaning of the word liberty does not now concern us.

CHAPTER IX: real property

EACH member of the community gives himself to it, at the moment of its foundation, just as he is, with all the resources at his command, including the goods he possesses. This act does

not make possession, in changing hands, change its nature, and become property in the hands of the Sovereign; but, as the forces of the city are incomparably greater than those of an individual, public possession is also, in fact, stronger and more irrevocable, without being any more legitimate, at any rate from the point of view of foreigners. For the State, in relation to its members, is master of all their goods by the social contract, which, within the State, is the basis of all rights; [20] but, in relation to other powers, it is so only by the right of the first occupier, which it holds from its members.

The right of the first occupier, though more real than the right of the strongest, becomes a real right only when the right of property has already been established. Every man has naturally a right to everything he needs; but the positive act which makes him proprietor of one thing excludes him from everything else. Having his share, he ought to keep to it, and can have no further right against the community. This is why the right of the first occupier, which in the state of nature is so weak, claims the respect of every man in civil society. In this right we are respecting not so much what belongs to another as what does not belong to ourselves.

In general, to establish the right of the first occupier over a plot of ground, the following conditions are necessary: first, the land must not yet be inhabited; secondly, a man must occupy only the amount he needs for his subsistence; and, in the third place, possession must be taken, not by an empty ceremony, but by labour and cultivation, the only sign of proprietorship that should be respected by others, in default of a legal title.

In granting the right of first occupancy to necessity and labour, are we not really stretching it as far as it can go? Is it possible to leave such a right unlimited? Is it to be enough to set foot on a plot of common ground, in order to be able to call yourself at once the master of it? Is it to be enough that a man has the strength to expel others for a moment, in order to establish his right to prevent them from ever returning? How can a man or a people seize an immense territory and keep it from the rest of the world except by a punishable usurpation, since all others are being robbed, by such an act, of the place of habitation and the means of subsistence which nature gave them in common? When Nuñez Balbao, standing on the sea-shore, took possession of the South Seas and the whole of South America in the name of the crown of Castille, was that enough to dispossess all their actual inhabitants, and to shut out from them all the princes of the world? On such a showing, these ceremonies are idly multiplied, and the Catholic King need only take possession all at once, from his apartment, of the whole [21] universe, merely making a subsequent reservation about what was already in the possession of other princes.

We can imagine how the lands of individuals, where they were contiguous and came to be united, became the public territory, and how the right of Sovereignty, extending from the subjects over the lands they held, became at once real and personal. The possessors were thus made more dependent, and the forces at their command used to guarantee their fidelity. The advantage of this does not seem to have been felt by ancient monarchs, who called themselves King of the Persians, Scythians, or Macedonians, and seemed to regard themselves more as rulers of men than as masters of a country. Those of the present day more cleverly call themselves Kings of France, Spain, England, etc.: thus holding the land, they are quite confident of holding the inhabitants.

The peculiar fact about this alienation is that, in taking over the goods of individuals, the community, so far from despoiling them, only assures them legitimate possession, and changes usurpation into a true right and enjoyment into proprietorship. Thus the possessors, being regarded as depositaries of the public good, and having their rights respected by all the members of the State and maintained against foreign aggression by all its forces, have, by a cession which benefits both the public and still more themselves, acquired, so to speak, all that they gave up. This paradox may easily be explained by the distinction between the rights which the Sovereign and the proprietor have over the same estate, as we shall see later on.

It may also happen that men begin to unite one with another before they possess anything, and that, subsequently occupying a tract of country which is enough for all, they enjoy it in common, or share it out among themselves, either equally or according to a scale fixed by the Sovereign. However the acquisition be made, the right which each individual has to his own estate is always subordinate to the right which the community has over all: without this, there would be neither stability in the social tie, nor real force in the exercise of Sovereignty.

I shall end this chapter and this book by remarking on a fact on which the whole social system should rest: *i. e.* that, instead of destroying natural inequality, the fundamental [22] compact substitutes, for such physical inequality as nature may have set up between men, an equality that is moral and legitimate, and that men, who may be unequal in strength or intelligence, become every one equal by convention and legal right.[1]

BOOK II

CHAPTER I: that sovereignty is inalienable

THE first and most important deduction from the principles we have so far laid down is that the general will alone can direct the State according to the object for which it was instituted, *i. e.* the common good: for if the clashing of particular interests made the establishment of societies necessary, the agreement of these very interests made it possible. The common element in these different interests is what forms the social tie; and, were there no point of agreement between them all, no society could exist. It is solely on the basis of this common interest that every society should be governed.

I hold then that Sovereignty, being nothing less than the exercise of the general will, can never be alienated, and that the Sovereign, who is no less than a collective being, cannot be represented except by himself: the power indeed may be transmitted, but not the will.

In reality, if it is not impossible for a particular will to agree on some point with the general will, it is at least impossible for the agreement to be lasting and constant; [23] for the particular will tends, by its very nature, to partiality, while the general will tends to equality. It is even more impossible to have any guarantee of this agreement; for even if it should always exist, it would be the effect not of art, but of chance. The Sovereign may indeed say: “I now will actually what this man wills, or at least what he says he wills”; but it cannot say: “What he wills tomorrow, I too shall will” because it is absurd for the will to bind itself for the future, nor is it incumbent on any will to consent to anything that is not for the good of the being who

wills. If then the people promises simply to obey, by that very act it dissolves itself and loses what makes it a people; the moment a master exists, there is no longer a Sovereign, and from that moment the body politic has ceased to exist.

This does not mean that the commands of the rulers cannot pass for general wills, so long as the Sovereign, being free to oppose them, offers no opposition. In such a case, universal silence is taken to imply the consent of the people. This will be explained later on.

CHAPTER II: that sovereignty is indivisible

SOVEREIGNTY, for the same reason as makes it inalienable, is indivisible; for will either is, or is not, general;[1] it is the will either of the body of the people, or only of a part of it. In the first case, the will, when declared, is an act of Sovereignty and constitutes law: in the second, it is merely a particular will, or act of magistracy—at the most a decree.

But our political theorists, unable to divide Sovereignty in principle, divide it according to its object: into force and will; into legislative power and executive power; into rights of taxation, justice and war; into internal administration and power of foreign treaty. Sometimes they confuse all these sections, and sometimes they distinguish [24] them; they turn the Sovereign into a fantastic being composed of several connected pieces: it is as if they were making man of several bodies, one with eyes, one with arms, another with feet, and each with nothing besides. We are told that the jugglers of Japan dismember a child before the eyes of the spectators; then they throw all the members into the air one after another, and the child falls down alive and whole. The conjuring tricks of our political theorists are very like that; they first dismember the body politic by an illusion worthy of a fair, and then join it together again we know not how.

This error is due to a lack of exact notions concerning the Sovereign authority, and to taking for parts of it what are only emanations from it. Thus, for example, the acts of declaring war and making peace have been regarded as acts of Sovereignty; but this is not the case, as these acts do not constitute law, but merely the application of a law, a particular act which decides how the law applies, as we shall see clearly when the idea attached to the word *law* has been defined.

If we examined the other divisions in the same manner, we should find that, whenever Sovereignty seems to be divided, there is an illusion: the rights which are taken as being part of Sovereignty are really all subordinate, and always imply supreme wills of which they only sanction the execution.

It would be impossible to estimate the obscurity this lack of exactness has thrown over the decisions of writers who have dealt with political right, when they have used the principles laid down by them to pass judgment on the respective rights of kings and peoples. Every one can see, in Chapters III and IV of the First Book of Grotius, how the learned man and his translator, Barbeyrac, entangle and tie themselves up in their own sophistries, for fear of saying too little or too much of what they think, and so offending the interests they have to conciliate. Grotius, a refugee in France, ill-content with his own country, and desirous of paying his court to Louis XIII, to whom his book is dedicated, spares no pains to rob the peoples of all their rights and invest kings with them by every conceivable artifice. This would also have been much to the

taste of Barbeyrac, who [25] dedicated his translation to George I of England. But unfortunately the expulsion of James II, which he called his "abdication," compelled him to use all reserve, to shuffle and to tergiversate, in order to avoid making William out a usurper. If these two writers had adopted the true principles, all difficulties would have been removed, and they would have been always consistent; but it would have been a sad truth for them to tell, and would have paid court for them to no-one save the people. Moreover, truth is no road to fortune, and the people dispenses neither ambassadorships, nor professorships, nor pensions.

CHAPTER III: whether the general will is fallible

It follows from what has gone before that the general will is always right and tends to the public advantage; but it does not follow that the deliberations of the people are always equally correct. Our will is always for our own good, but we do not always see what that is; the people is never corrupted, but it is often deceived, and on such occasions only does it seem to will what is bad.

There is often a great deal of difference between the will of all and the general will; the latter considers only the common interest, while the former takes private interest into account, and is no more than a sum of particular wills: but take away from these same wills the pluses and minuses that cancel one another,1 and the general will remains as the sum of the differences.

If, when the people, being furnished with adequate information, held its deliberations, the citizens had no communication one with another, the grand total of the small differences would always give the general will, and [26] the decision would always be good. But when factions arise, and partial associations are formed at the expense of the great association, the will of each of these associations becomes general in relation to its members, while it remains particular in relation to the State: it may then be said that there are no longer as many votes as there are men, but only as many as there are associations. The differences become less numerous and give a less general result. Lastly, when one of these associations is so great as to prevail over all the rest, the result is no longer a sum of small differences, but a single difference; in this case there is no longer a general will, and the opinion which prevails is purely particular.

It is therefore essential, if the general will is to be able to express itself, that there should be no partial society within the State, and that each citizen should think only his own thoughts:1 which was indeed the sublime and unique system established by the great Lycurgus. But if there are partial societies, it is best to have as many as possible and to prevent them from being unequal, as was done by Solon, Numa and Servius. These precautions are the only ones that can guarantee that the general will shall be always enlightened, and that the people shall in no way deceive itself.

CHAPTER IV: the limits of the sovereign power

If the State is a moral person whose life is in the union of its members, and if the most important of its cares is the care for its own preservation, it must have a universal and compelling force, in order to move and dispose each part as may be most advantageous to the whole. As nature gives each man absolute power over all his [27] members, the social compact gives the

body politic absolute power over all its members also; and it is this power which, under the direction of the general will, bears, as I have said, the name of Sovereignty.

But, besides the public person, we have to consider the private persons composing it, whose life and liberty are naturally independent of it. We are bound then to distinguish clearly between the respective rights of the citizens and the Sovereign,[1] and between the duties the former have to fulfil as subjects, and the natural rights they should enjoy as men.

Each man alienates, I admit, by the social compact, only such part of his powers, goods and liberty as it is important for the community to control; but it must also be granted that the Sovereign is sole judge of what is important.

Every service a citizen can render the State he ought to render as soon as the Sovereign demands it; but the Sovereign, for its part, cannot impose upon its subjects any fetters that are useless to the community, nor can it even wish to do so; for no more by the law of reason than by the law of nature can anything occur without a cause.

The undertakings which bind us to the social body are obligatory only because they are mutual; and their nature is such that in fulfilling them we cannot work for others without working for ourselves. Why is it that the general will is always in the right, and that all continually will the happiness of each one, unless it is because there is not a man who does not think of "each" as meaning him, and consider himself in voting for all? This proves that equality of rights and the idea of justice which such equality creates originate in the preference each man gives to himself, and accordingly in the very nature of man. It proves that the general will, to be really such, must be general in its object as well as its essence; that it must both come from all and apply to all; and that it loses its natural rectitude when it is directed to some particular and determinate object, because in such a case we are judging of something [28]foreign to us, and have no true principle of equity to guide us.

Indeed, as soon as a question of particular fact or right arises on a point not previously regulated by a general convention, the matter becomes contentious. It is a case in which the individuals concerned are one party, and the public the other, but in which I can see neither the law that ought to be followed nor the judge who ought to give the decision. In such a case, it would be absurd to propose to refer the question to an express decision of the general will, which can be only the conclusion reached by one of the parties and in consequence will be, for the other party, merely an external and particular will, inclined on this occasion to injustice and subject to error. Thus, just as a particular will cannot stand for the general will, the general will, in turn, changes its nature, when its object is particular, and, as general, cannot pronounce on a man or a fact. When, for instance, the people of Athens nominated or displaced its rulers, decreed honours to one, and imposed penalties on another, and, by a multitude of particular decrees, exercised all the functions of government indiscriminately, it had in such cases no longer a general will in the strict sense; it was acting no longer as Sovereign, but as magistrate. This will seem contrary to current views; but I must be given time to expound my own.

It should be seen from the foregoing that what makes the will general is less the number of voters than the common interest

uniting them; for, under this system, each necessarily submits to the conditions he imposes on others: and this admirable agreement between interest and justice gives to the common deliberations an equitable character which at once vanishes when any particular question is discussed, in the absence of a common interest to unite and identify the ruling of the judge with that of the party.

From whatever side we approach our principle, we reach the same conclusion, that the social compact sets up among the citizens an equality of such a kind, that they all bind themselves to observe the same conditions and should therefore all enjoy the same rights. Thus, from the very nature of the compact, every act of Sovereignty, [29] *i. e.* every authentic act of the general will, binds or favours all the citizens equally; so that the Sovereign recognises only the body of the nation, and draws no distinctions between those of whom it is made up. What, then, strictly speaking, is an act of Sovereignty? It is not a convention between a superior and an inferior, but a convention between the body and each of its members. It is legitimate, because based on the social contract, and equitable, because common to all; useful, because it can have no other object than the general good, and stable, because guaranteed by the public force and the supreme power. So long as the subjects have to submit only to conventions of this sort, they obey no-one but their own will; and to ask how far the respective rights of the Sovereign and the citizens extend, is to ask up to what point the latter can enter into undertakings with themselves, each with all, and all with each.

We can see from this that the sovereign power, absolute, sacred and inviolable as it is, does not and cannot exceed the limits of general conventions, and that every man may dispose at will of such goods and liberty as these conventions leave him; so that the Sovereign never has a right to lay more charges on one subject than on another, because, in that case, the question becomes particular, and ceases to be within its competency.

When these distinctions have once been admitted, it is seen to be so untrue that there is, in the social contract, any real renunciation on the part of the individuals, that the position in which they find themselves as a result of the contract is really preferable to that in which they were before. Instead of a renunciation, they have made an advantageous exchange: instead of an uncertain and precarious way of living they have got one that is better and more secure; instead of natural independence they have got liberty, instead of the power to harm others security for themselves, and instead of their strength, which others might overcome, a right which social union makes invincible. Their very life, which they have devoted to the State, is by it constantly protected; and when they risk it in the State's defence, what more are they doing than giving back what they have received from it? What are they doing that they would not do more often and with [30] greater danger in the state of nature, in which they would inevitably have to fight battles at the peril of their lives in defence of that which is the means of their preservation? All have indeed to fight when their country needs them; but then no one has ever to fight for himself. Do we not gain something by running, on behalf of what gives us our security, only some of the risks we should have to run for ourselves, as soon as we lost it?

From http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/rousseau-the-social-contract-and-discourses

Troy Feay.

Blessed Frédéric Ozanam.

Antoine-Frédéric Ozanam (1813-1853) was a literature professor at the Sorbonne, the founder of the Society of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul, a historian and a French Catholic essayist. He was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1997.

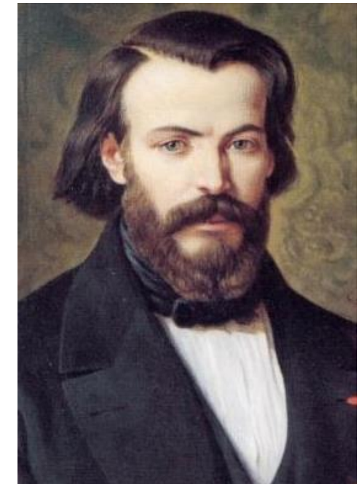
To M. l'abbé Ozanam
Paris, March 15, 1848

My dear brother,

I am pleased to suppose that you are well settled … and hope that when your strength returns you will be able to resume some of your pious occupations in evangelizing the working class for which you have constantly had such a predilection. I have always approved of, and now I am happy to share, your penchant for those hardworking, poor men, strangers to the delicacies and politeness of so-called well-bred people. If a greater number of Christians, and above all ecclesiastics, had looked after working men over the last ten years, we would be surer of the future. All our hopes rest on the little that has been done so far…. I am going to write a little paper myself on this question, which I will distribute and post, and perhaps it will be a way to get the workers to petition on this point.

At the same time, I am going to have a meeting at the house in a few days where we will set up public courses and a kind of evening school for these good people. The ecclesiastics of the Carmelites will lend us their assistance, and the Lord has given us room….

The first duty of Christians is not to be afraid, and the second is not to frighten others, to reassure troubled minds, to make them consider the crisis as a storm that cannot last. Providence is here, and we see that it has never allowed the financial upheavals that shake the material order of societies to continue for more than a few months. Do not torment us too much by asking us, "What will we eat and how will we dress?" Let us have courage, seek the justice of God and the good of the land, and the rest will be given to us in addition. But this is a long sermon to a sermonist; a thousand tendernesses on the part of all those who love you here.



To M. Foisset
Paris, March 22, 1848
[Foisset was a wealthy landowner who started a conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society in his hometown of Beaune.]

Dear friend,

This is a late reply to your two letters. But they arrived at a difficult moment, in which I shared in the general anxiety and

was unable to collect myself in order to converse with you gently and freely, as you like, and as is appropriate to Christian friendship. Today I am calmer, but with very little leisure, and yet I cannot resist the need to express to you how much you have touched me. As far as I am concerned, you are very wrong, sir and dear friend, to believe me to be one of the men of the moment. I have never felt my weakness and my incompetence more keenly. I am less prepared than anyone else for the questions that occupy all our minds. I mean those questions of work, of wages, of industry, of economy, which are far more important than all the political controversies. The very history of modern revolutions is almost foreign to me. I had shut myself up with a sort of predilection for the Middle Ages, which I studied passionately; and it is there that I think I have found the little light that remains in the darkness of the present circumstances. I am not a man of action, I was born neither for the tribune nor for the public square. If I can do anything—and it's very little—it's in my pulpit; it is perhaps through recollections in a library, drawing on Christian philosophy, from the history of Christian times, that I can propose a series of ideas to young people, to spirits troubled and uncertain, to reassure them, to revive them, to rally them in the midst of the confusion of the present and the formidable uncertainties of the future.

I do not know if I am mistaken, but it seems to me that the plan of God, whose first traces we see, is proceeding more rapidly than we could have believed, that the events of Vienna finish explaining those of Paris and Rome, and we already hear the voice that says *Ecce facio caelos novos ad terram novam*! ["Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth"—a reference to Isaiah 65:17.] Since the fall of the Roman Empire, the world has not seen a revolution like this. I still believe in the invasion of the Barbarians, but so far I have seen more Franks and Goths than Huns and Vandals. I believe in the emancipation of oppressed nationalities, and more than ever I admire the mission of Pius IX. In a word, I conceal from myself neither the perils of the time nor the harshness of hearts; I expect to see a lot of misery, disorder, and perhaps looting, a long eclipse for the arts and letters to which I have devoted my life. I believe we may be crushed—but it will be under the chariot of triumphant Christianity.

Let us rest on this hope, and now, sir and dear friend, let me once again express my gratitude for the affectionate abandonment with which you allow me to penetrate your heart. I find nothing there that does not move me, and all that draws me and edifies me. Keep me so dear. Believe that also of my wife. Thank God she has courage. Pray for us.

Excerpt from *L'Ère nouvelle* [*The New Era*], September 1848
(*The New Era* was a short lived—April 1848 to January 1849—Catholic newspaper created to defend democratic ideals for which Ozanam wrote 65 articles)

To All Good and Well-Intentioned People:

The day after the June Days, [a working-class uprising, from the 23rd to the 26th of June 1848, in response to the closing of the National Workshops—a source of income for the unemployed. The National Guard was called in to end the protests, which it did at the cost of 10,000 people killed or injured.] when the ruins of the Saint-Lazare neighborhood and the Bastille still smoked, *The New Era*, whose unexpected popularity has spread to the Paris suburbs, took advantage of the moment to address the unarmed insurgents, to speak to them in a language which did not spare them, but which did not irritate them, and to teach them to

better know the great culprits who had deceived them. Good men praised the firmness of our words and did us the honor of finding there some warmth of heart and a sincere passion for the interests of the people. Today we ask them the same indulgence, because we will now deal with them. Now that the military apparatus no longer darkens our boulevards, now that the parliamentary storm of investigations has been unburdened of all its thunderbolts, we are allowed to speak truths that have ceased to be dangerous, and to address good citizens without fear that the bad ones will seize upon our words and use them to stuff the guns of the barricades.

Certain people have been told that they have saved France, and we do not find this mere flattery, because those good people constitute, in our opinion, France itself—minus the selfish and the factious ones. They are the vast majority of the eight million voters who gave the country its assembly; they are the majority of the eight hundred thousand National Guardsmen who rose in June to defend the country. But it is not enough to have saved France one time; a large country needs to be saved every day. Providence, which has resolved to keep us in suspense, allows danger to succeed peril. You come and go quietly from one end of the peaceful city to the other. But the danger, which you congratulate yourselves for no longer seeing in the streets, is hidden in the attics of the houses which border them. You have crushed the revolt; but you have an enemy whom you do not know well enough, whom you do not like talking about, and whom we have resolved to speak to you about today: Misery.

You wanted the dissolution of the national workshops, and you are right. You rejoice not to see the public gardens cluttered with workers doing little and receiving some small pay for their idleness, the square crisscrossed by gangs of workers gathered under a flag inscribed with the work organization, bearing ruins in its folds. But just because the gardens and squares are empty, do you think the private workshops are full, and that it was enough, as the smooth talkers assured us, to dismiss the national workshops to bring on construction, increase the trade of the weavers, and cause the chimneys of all the factories to smoke? It has been two months now that industry has enjoyed the peace that was to restore its life, and in Paris the number of unemployed individuals who must be saved from hunger is still two hundred and sixty-seven thousand.

We are witnesses to them. Perhaps the memory of the five million others who also voted for this, who are equal supporters of your cause, calms your conscience and satisfies your humanity. But those who have the honor of being public relief distributors are less reassured. They enter, for example, district twelve, one of the principal sites of the insurrection, with about ninety thousand inhabitants, and they find eight thousand households registered at the charity office, in all about seventy thousand people, extraordinarily “rescued,” yet living on the precarious bread of alms.

Half of these neighborhoods—all of Montagne-Sainte-Geneviève, and all the neighborhood of the Gobelins—are composed of narrow, winding streets, where the sun never penetrates, where a carriage would not stop without danger, where a well-dressed man does not go unnoticed, attracting groups of naked children and women in rags to their doors. On both sides of an infected brook rise five-story houses, several of which house up to fifty families. Low, damp, nauseous rooms are rented at the rate of one franc fifty centimes a week when they have a chimney, and one franc twenty-five centimes when they are lacking. No wallpaper, often not a single piece of furniture, hides the nakedness of their sad walls. In a house

in the Rue des Lyonnais, which is known to us, ten households have not even a single wooden bed. In the depths of a cellar lives a family with no other couch than a little straw on the broken floor, with no other furniture than a rope hanging from the ceiling: these poor people were hanging their bread in a piece of cloth to protect it from rats. In the next room, a woman had lost three children, who had died of tuberculosis [the disease that will also kill Ozanam at forty], and showed us, in despair, three other children destined for the same end. The upper floors did not offer a more comforting aspect. Under the eaves, an attic without windows, pierced only by two openings each closed by a tile, housed a poor tailor, his wife and eight children - every evening, they crawled into the end of the room, under the slope of the roof, into the straw that served as their only warmth.

Let us not speak of the beds shared—those who had two beds for six, where huddled together healthy and sick, and boys of eighteen with girls of sixteen. Let's not talk about the worn out clothes, which is so serious that, in the same house, twenty children cannot attend school for a lack of clothes. It is, at the very least, necessary that these unfortunates find food somewhere, and that, if they perish of consumption, it is not said that they literally die of hunger in the most civilized city on earth. Several live off the remains that are distributed to them by the cooks for the troops housed in the castle of Luxembourg. An old woman fed herself for eight days on pieces of sodden bread that she picked up in the filthy cold water outside the castle. It is true that the benevolence of the nation came to the aid of such cruel distress: the welfare distributors who knock every ten days on the door of the unemployed workers leave a good single kilogram of meat and three kilograms of bread.

Certainly, the Saint-Jacques district and that of the Jardin-des-Plantes do not always give the spectacle of the same desolation. We know there of the market streets, the poor but habitable houses, the narrow but well-kept rooms, preserving the remains of an old ease, with polished furniture, white linen, and that cleanliness which is the luxury of the poor. But the comparison is all the more painful between the memory of this well-being, the fruit of long effort in a severe economy, and the deprivation of these hardworking laborers, of these active housewives, who are indignant at their idleness, and who, after long days spent at the gates of the factories and the stores where they are not hired, complain of perishing despite such heroic efforts. At least there is no more room for the familiar excuse, given by those with hard hearts, that the poor are poor because of their own fault, as if the defect was one of light and morality.

There, as the visitor penetrates the intimacy of the families, he finds there less sympathy for the insurrection than blame for it, less regret for the club than for the workshop. The small number of those whose sick minds still feed on incendiary dreams often end up having a friendly and sensible conversation, and believe in the virtues they had been made to hate: charity, resignation, and patience. Among these people, from the suburbs, who are customarily represented as a people without faith, there are very few who do not have, above their bedside, a cross, a picture, a blessed branch, very few who died in the hospital, very few who received June's wounds without opening their arms to the priest and their hearts to forgiveness. Along with laziness and debauchery, we have seen the most amiable domestic virtues, with the delicacy and the intelligence that we do not always meet under gilded paneling; a poor cooper, seventy years old, tiring his old arms to feed the child

whom a dead son in the prime of life had left him; a young deaf-and-mute man of twelve, whose education has been pushed to the point that he begins to read, that he prays, that he knows God. We will never forget a humble room where a good woman of Auvergne, in the costume of her country, worked with her four clean, modest girls, not raising their eyes from their work to answer politely questions from a stranger. The father was only a laborer and served the masons but the faith that these brave people had kept from their mountains illuminated their lives, like the ray of sunlight that slid through their windows and illuminated the holy images stuck on the walls.

The multitude of children who grow up in disorder and crime, with no other education than the examples of the cabaret and the temptations of the public square, are frightened with reason. It is clear enough that, in the twelfth arrondissement, four thousand boys and girls do not go to school because of lack of space. It is known that the Saint-Marceau neighborhood has only one youth shelter whose door remains closed to fifteen hundred children from two to seven years. In the presence of these sad numbers, we are shocked to learn that the Asylum Committee and the Municipal Council refuse to allow private charity to collect and instruct children, and that they cannot find the thirty thousand francs necessary to found ten more schools, yet the Saint-Marcel theater is allowed to resume the course of its performances, and a new auditorium is opening in the miserable Rue du Grand Banquier. These are the evils, not of a single district, but of several arrondissements of Paris; not only from Paris, but from Lyons, Rouen, and all the manufacturing cities of the North. These are the perils of the present, but think of those of the future when the rigor of the winter season will suspend the little remaining work of building construction, and throw 40,000 more idle workers onto the pavement of the capital! We are certainly not accustomed to echoing public alarms; but we cannot forget the words of a sister of Charity: “I am afraid of death,” she said, “but I fear even more the next winter.” And we, too, fear it. Down these dilapidated stairs, on each floor of which we have seen so much present suffering, so many dangers for the future, we could not contain our grief. We promised ourselves that we would warn our fellow citizens, addressing all those with an openness of heart.

To All the Priests of France:

Do not denigrate the freedom of a secular word that appeals to your zealous citizens. The death of the Archbishop of Paris covers you with honor, but it leaves you a great example. Those who saw you during the cholera outbreak of 1832 and working the ambulances in June do not doubt your courage, and when priests and monks took the initiative on penitentiary reforms, professional education, and agricultural communes, one can no longer dispute your competence. For the past fifteen years, many of you have dedicated themselves to the apostolate of the workers, and at the foot of the blessed freedom trees recognized that they were not dealing with an ungrateful people. Beware of those who slander them, and of those who talk to you of their regrets, of their hopes, of their prophecies—of all that consumes, in useless thoughts, the hours you owe to working on our dangers and our needs. Challenge yourself above all to continue the habits of a more peaceful time, and do not doubt the power of your ministry and its popularity.

We owe you this justice, that you do love the poor of your parishes, whom you charitably receive whenever a needy one knocks at your door, and whom you do not make wait if he calls you to his bedside. But the time has come to occupy yourself more with those other poor ones who do not beg, who ordinarily live by their labor, and who will never be assured of the right to work or the right to assistance, yet still need help, advice and comfort. The time has come to look for those who do not call upon you, who, relegated to poor neighborhoods, may never have known the Church, the priest, or the sweet name of Christ. Do not ask how they will receive you, or rather ask those who have visited them, who have ventured to speak to them about God, and who did not find them any more insensitive than other men to a good word and good deeds. If you are afraid of your shyness, your inexperience and the inadequacy of your resources, use the benefits of the new laws and form charitable societies of priests. Exhaust the credit you have left with so many Christian families, press them in time, out of season, and believe that by forcing them to shed themselves of their excesses now, you spare them the displeasure of being robbed by ruder hands. Do not be frightened when the wicked or the rude call you communists. St. Bernard himself was treated as fanatical and foolish. Remember that your fathers, the French priests of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, saved Europe by the crusades: save it once more by the crusade of charity. Without shedding blood you can be the first soldiers.

To the Rich:

If you fear that your numbers are already diminishing, we can only warn you of entire provinces in which public distress has only scratched the surface, and that fortunes pass like the clouds, as we have seen during the first months of this revolution. You are excused for worrying about the future, thinking of your children, and of the necessity of collecting savings against the possibility of spoliation and exile. But foresight has its limits, and He who has taught us to ask for the bread of every day has never advised us to secure ten years of luxury. We live in unprecedented days where it may be wise to sacrifice the future to the present, and economy to necessity. Reopen the sources of credit which you are depleting. Spend on legitimate pleasures in this moment when they can become meritorious for all. Give alms and assistance. Do not be afraid to interfere with the petty trades by dressing with your money these thousands of poor, who certainly will not buy clothes or shoes for six months. Give to the asylums and the schools, and do not forget the houses of refuge, obliged to reduce to a quarter, to a tenth, the number of their penitents. Do not close your doors to repentance when God has opened the doors of heaven to you.

To the Representatives of the People:

We respect the size and difficulty of your task. We are not among those who, by the temerity of their accusations, attempt to weaken the last power capable of saving society. You are pursuing your work with a just slowness, even as you attempt to accomplish in months the work of centuries. But you will not have worked for a day, if you neglect this formidable question of misery, which cannot suffer a delay. Do not think you have done enough, having voted in subsidies that are already running out, having regulated the hours of work, when

work is still a dream, and having refused the Sunday of rest to workers who reproach you for the idleness of their weekdays.

Do not say that inspiration is missing. We know that in your ranks there are excellent minds who are making fruitful proposals. The families of the deportees, [insurgents deported to the French colonies, especially Algeria] that is to say nearly four thousand persons, urge you to allow them to join their fathers, sons, and brothers, to allow them to leave the suburbs where they give only the dangerous spectacle of their distress and their resentment. A petition signed by twenty thousand men begs you to train them for agricultural colonies in Algeria. The moors of Brittany and the uncultivated lands of the south of France require a hundred thousand arms which, withdrawn from industry, would offer less competition to the congested workshops. We are not unaware of the obstacles, the rivalries, or the imperfections that stop each project and that eternalize the debates. But we have never seen that great power was required for easy circumstances; we believe that your rivalries of self-esteem must disappear in the face of public need, and that it is better to do something imperfectly than to do nothing at all.

Do not say that you lack time. Under the fusillades of the insurrection, the National Assembly asked the night for the hours that the day refused him. You were seen at all the barricades, haranguing the factious, encouraging the defenders of order, and history will forget neither those of you who lost their lives, nor those who saved the lives of their fellow citizens. Why do not you see where is the danger of the present moment? You should give up your mornings with disputatious solicitors to visit those in the deprived districts, to climb the dark stairs, to penetrate those bare rooms, to see with your own eyes what your brothers suffer, to assure you of their needs, to leave these poor people with the memory of a visit which already honors and comforts their misfortune, and, finally, to be penetrated with an emotion that will no longer bear any delay, that will set fire to your lips in the Assembly, forcing it, if necessary, to declare itself in permanent session, never to disband until it has conquered misery, as on the memorable night of the 24th of June, it conquered revolt.

Finally, do not say that you lack money. When you have to look elsewhere than the usual resources, when you have nothing to expect from the economy and taxes and credit, wait still more for the generosity of France. Loudly announce the measures that would save France, and the deficit that delays its salvation. Open a national subscription for unemployed workers, not only in Paris, but all the provinces. Put it under the patronage and control of enlightened and respectable citizens. Your nine hundred names could have the honor of appearing first. The bishops sitting in the Assembly could invite their colleagues and the thirty thousand priests of France to publish the subscription across the country. The minister of the interior could order the forty thousand mayors to post it, to publicize it in all the communes. All in kind donations as well as money. The accounts must be public and frequently rendered; make it a matter of security for the timid, of patriotism, of charity for all, and I would be astonished if there remained a financier who refuses you a bank note, or a peasant who refuses you a handful of wheat.

Citizens of all Conditions,

You, from whom the rigors of time have removed everything superfluous, you who lack even life’s necessities, can do more than others against the evils you know best. All those who have

received public beneficence know that the poor are never better helped than by the poor themselves. You owe to one another the mutual assistance of good offices and good examples. When others bring gold to the public treasury, you will serve the country better by giving it the spectacle of devotion, resignation and hope. Christianity has made hope a virtue, make it the guardian of this threatened society. Keep yourselves free from despairing for your century, for it is the peril of honest souls and high-minded hearts. Tear yourself away from the decadence of revolution, which, by dint of announcing the imminent ruin of a country, ends by precipitating it.

Notes: