

WIDGER'S QUOTATIONS FROM THE MEMOIRS OF JACQUES CASANOVA

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The quotations are in two formats:

1. Small passages from the text.
2. Lists of alphabetized one-liners.

The editor may be contacted at jwidger@cecomet.net for comments, questions or suggested additions to these extracts.

D.W.

FROM THE TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE:

A series of adventures wilder and more fantastic than the wildest of romances, written down with the exactitude of a business diary; a view of men and cities from Naples to Berlin, from Madrid and London to Constantinople and St. Petersburg; the 'vie intime' of the eighteenth century depicted by a man, who to-day sat with cardinals and saluted crowned heads, and to-morrow lurked in dens of profligacy and crime; a book of confessions penned without reticence and without penitence; a record of forty years of "occult" charlatanism; a collection of tales of successful imposture, of 'bonnes fortunes', of marvellous escapes, of transcendent audacity, told with the humour of Smollett and the delicate wit of Voltaire. Who is there interested in men and letters, and in the life of the past, who would not cry, "Where can such a book as this be found?"

WIDGER'S QUOTATIONS

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CHILDHOOD

[JC1][jccld10.xxx]2951

He ordered me never to open my lips except to answer direct questions, and particularly enjoined me never to pass an opinion on any subject, because at my age I could not be allowed to have any opinions.

This worthy lady inspired me with the deepest attachment, and she gave me the wisest advice. Had I followed it, and profited by it, my life would not have been exposed to so many storms; it is true that in that case, my life would not be worth writing.

"The famous precept of the Stoic philosophers," he said to me, "'Sequere Deum', can be perfectly explained by these words: 'Give yourself up to

whatever fate offers to you, provided you do not feel an invincible repugnance to accept it.”

It was ridiculous, of course; but when does man cease to be so?

We get rid of our vices more easily than of our follies.

A CLERIC IN NAPLES

[JC2][jccln10.xxx]2952

Suffering is inherent in human nature; but we never suffer without entertaining the hope of recovery, or, at least, very seldom without such hope, and hope itself is a pleasure. If it happens sometimes that man suffers without any expectation of a cure, he necessarily finds pleasure in the complete certainty of the end of his life; for the worst, in all cases, must be either a sleep arising from extreme dejection, during which we have the consolation of happy dreams or the loss of all sensitiveness. But when we are happy, our happiness is never disturbed by the thought that it will be followed by grief. Therefore pleasure, during its active period, is always complete, without alloy; grief is always soothed by hope.

If this and if that, and every other if was conjured up to torment my restless and wretched brain.

People did not want to know things as they truly were, but only as they wished them to be.

MILITARY CAREER

[JC3][jcmcr10.xxx]2953

It is well known that the first result of anger is to deprive the angry man of the faculty of reason, for anger and reason do not belong to the same family.

Acting on the political axiom that ”neglected right is lost right,”

If you would relish pleasure you must endure pain, and delights are in proportion to the privations we have suffered.

In matters of love, as well as in all others, Time is a great teacher.

Love is a sort of madness, I grant that, but a madness over which philosophy is entirely powerless; it is a disease to which man is exposed at all times, no matter at what age, and which cannot be cured, if he is

attacked by it in his old age.

RETURN TO VENICE

[JC4][jcrvn10.xxx]2954

I saw how easy it must have been for the ancient heathen priests to impose upon ignorant, and therefore credulous mankind. I saw how easy it will always be for impostors to find dupes, and I realized, even better than the Roman orator, why two augurs could never look at each other without laughing; it was because they had both an equal interest in giving importance to the deceit they perpetrated, and from which they derived such immense profits.

I excited her pity. I saw clearly that she no longer loved me; pity is a debasing feeling which cannot find a home in a heart full of love, for that dreary sentiment is too near a relative of contempt.

When we can feel pity, we love no longer, but a feeling of pity succeeding love is the characteristic only of a great and generous mind.

MILAN AND MANTUA

[JC5][jcmmn10.xxx]2955

O you who despise life, tell me whether that contempt of life renders you worthy of it?

I had to acknowledge to myself that I could not speak Latin as well as she spoke French, and this was indeed the case. The last thing which we learn in all languages is wit, and wit never shines so well as in jests. I was thirty years of age before I began to laugh in reading Terence, Plautus and Martial.

Philosophy forbids a man to feel repentance for a good deed, but he must certainly have a right to regret such a deed when it is malevolently misconstrued, and turned against him as a reproach.

PARIS

[JC6][jcpar10.xxx]2956

One of the advantages of a great sorrow is that nothing else seems painful. It is a sort of despair which is not without some sweetness.

He could tell a good story without laughing.

It was impossible for him to have any enemies, for his criticism only grazed the skin and never wounded deeply.

Like all quacks, he possessed an immense quantity of letters and testimonials.

”Every day we reach a moment when we long for sleep, although it be the very likeness of non-existence.

Silliness is the daughter of wit. Therefore it is not a paradox to say that the French would be wiser if they were less witty.

Had the talent of never appearing to be a learned man when he was in the company of amiable persons who had no pretension to learning or the sciences, and he always seemed to endow with intelligence those who conversed with him.

VENICE

[JC7][jcven10.xxx]2957

Misery of knowing that he would not be regretted after his death.

Those words did me good, but a man needs so little to console him or to soothe his grief.

I immediately sat down to write to my dear recluse, intending at first to write only a few lines, as she had requested me; but my time was too short to write so little. My letter was a screed of four pages, and very likely it said less than her note of one short page.

I was in a great measure indebted, two years later, for my imprisonment under The Leads of Venice; not owing to his slanders, for I do not believe he was capable of that, Jesuit though he was—and even amongst such people there is sometimes some honourable feeling—but through the mystical insinuations which he made in the presence of bigoted persons. I must give fair notice to my readers that, if they are fond of such people, they must not read these Memoirs.

Oh! wonderful power of self-delusion!

People want to know everything, and they invent when they cannot guess the truth.

CONVENT AFFAIRS

[JC8][jccon10.xxx]2958

”He has remarked,” she added, ”that perhaps I do not confess anything to him because I did not examine my conscience sufficiently, and I answered him that I had nothing to say, but that if he liked I would commit a few sins for the purpose of having something to tell him in confession.”

I spent those two hours in playing at all the banks, winning, losing, and performing all sorts of antics with complete freedom, being satisfied that no one could recognize me; enjoying the present, bidding defiance to the future, and laughing at all those reasonable beings who exercise their reason to avoid the misfortunes which they fear, destroying at the

same time the pleasure that they might enjoy.

The countess gave me her usual welcome, and, after the thousand nothings which it is the custom to utter in society before anything worth saying is spoken.

She was at all events exempt from that fearful venom called jealousy—an unhappy passion which devours the miserable being who is labouring under it, and destroys the love that gave it birth.

THE FALSE NUN
[JC9][jcfhn10.xxx]2959

I could only solace my grief by writing, and Tonine now and again made bold to observe that I was cherishing my grief, and that it would be the death of me. I knew myself that I was making my anguish more poignant, and that keeping to my bed, continued writing, and no food, would finally drive me mad.

That is a very common error, it comes from the mind, because people imagine that what they feel themselves others must feel likewise.

The fashion of walking in this place shews how the character of a nation changes. The Venetians of old time who made as great a mystery of love as of state affairs, have been replaced by the modern Venetians, whose most prominent characteristic is to make a mystery of nothing.

UNDER THE LEADS
[JC10][jculd10.xxx]2960

Wherever I went I had to tell the story of my escape from The Leads. This became a service almost as tiring as the flight itself had been, as it took me two hours to tell my tale, without the slightest bit of fancy-work; but I had to be polite to the curious enquirers, and to pretend that I believed them moved by the most affectionate interest in my welfare. In general, the best way to please is to take the benevolence of all with whom one has relation for granted.

Philosophic reader, if you will place yourself for a moment in my position, if you will share the sufferings which for fifteen months had been my lot, if you think of my danger on the top of a roof, where the slightest step in a wrong direction would have cost me my life, if you consider the few hours at my disposal to overcome difficulties which might spring up at any moment, the candid confession I am about to make will not lower me in your esteem; at any rate, if you do not forget that a man in an anxious and dangerous position is in reality only half himself.

”I must tell your lordship, then, that, the State Inquisitors shut me up under the Leads; that after fifteen months and five days of imprisonment

I succeeded in piercing the roof; that after many difficulties I reached the chancery by a window, and broke open the door; afterwards I got to St. Mark's Place, whence, taking a gondola which bore me to the mainland, I arrived at Paris, and have had the honour to pay my duty to your lordship."

PARIS AND HOLLAND

[JC11][jcphl10.xxx]2961

Oh, you women! beauty is the only unpardonable offence in your eyes. Mdlle. Casanova was Esther's friend, and yet she could not bear to hear her praised.

Desire is only kept alive by being denied: enjoyment kills it, since one cannot desire what one has got.

If one tells a lie a sufficient number of times, one ends by believing it.

Nevertheless, the idea of the marriage state, for which I felt I had no vocation, made me tremble.

All this was clear enough, but strong passion and prejudice cannot reason.

I had all the necessary qualities to second the efforts of the blind goddess on my behalf save one—perseverance. My immoderate life of pleasure annulled the effect of all my other qualities.

RETURN TO PARIS

[JC12][jcrpr10.xxx]2962

The first motive is always self-interest.

On his death-bed he became a Catholic out of deference to the tears of his wife; but as his children could not inherit his forty thousand pounds invested in England, without conforming to the Church of England, the family returned to London, where the widow complied with all the obligations of the law of England. What will people not do when their interests are at stake! though in a case like this there is no need to blame a person for yielding, to prejudices which had the sanction of the law.

I never could believe in the morality of snatching from poor mortal man the delusions which make them happy.

HOLLAND AND GERMANY

[JC13][jchgr10.xxx]2963

Now, when all these troubles have been long over and I can think over them calmly, reflecting on the annoyances I experienced at Amsterdam, where I might have been so happy, I am forced to admit that we ourselves are the authors of almost all our woes and griefs, of which we so unreasonably complain. If I could live my life over again, should I be wiser? Perhaps; but then I should not be myself.

Lucie was only thirty-three, but she was the wreck of a woman, and women are always as old as they look.

An English lady said, I forget in what connection, that a man of honour should never risk sitting down to dinner at an hotel unless he felt inclined, if necessary, to fight. The remark was very true at that time, when one had to draw the sword for an idle word, and to expose one's self to the consequences of a duel, or else be pointed at, even by the ladies, with the finger of scorn.

SWITZERLAND

[JC14][jcswt10.xxx]2964

He was a man of austere virtue, but he took care to hide the austerity under a veil of a real and universal kindness. Undoubtedly he thought little of the ignorant, who talk about everything right or wrong, instead of remaining silent, and have at bottom only contempt for the learned; but he only shewed his contempt by saying nothing. He knew that a despised ignoramus becomes an enemy.

For in the night, you know, all cats are grey.

M. de Voltaire is a man who ought to be known, although, in spite of the laws of nature, many persons have found him greater at a distance than close at hand.

"How is it," said I, "that he did not attain mature age?"—"Because there is no cure for death."

I concluded that a man who wants to be well informed should read first and then correct his knowledge by travel. To know ill is worse than not to know at all, and Montaigne says that we ought to know things well.

WITH VOLTAIRE

[JC15][jcvlt10.xxx]2965

I should have considered that if it had not been for those quips and cranks which made me hate him on the third day, I should have thought him wholly sublime. This thought alone should have silenced me, but an angry man always thinks himself right.

The essence of freedom consists in thinking you have it.

A nation without superstition would be a nation of philosophers, and philosophers would never obey.

”Reading a history is the easier way.”—”Yes, if history did not lie.”

Love always makes men selfish, since all the sacrifices they make for the beloved object are always ultimately referable to their own desires.

DEPART SWITZERLAND

[JC16][jcdsw10.xxx]2966

Gladness, madam, is the lot of the happy, and sadness the portion of souls condemned to everlasting pains. Be cheerful, then, and you will do something to deserve your beauty.

The best plan in this world is to be astonished at nothing.

”What’s an evasion?”—”A way of escaping from a difficulty without satisfying impertinent curiosity.”

I had rather be your debtor than for you to be mine.

RETURN TO ITALY

[JC17][jcrit10.xxx]2967

For is love anything else than a kind of curiosity? I think not; and what makes me certain is that when the curiosity is satisfied the love disappears.

Love makes no conditions.

I looked at her with the submissive gaze of a captive who glories in his chain.

He had never married, and when asked the reason would reply that he knew too well that women would be either tyrants or slaves, and that he did not want to be a tyrant to any woman, nor to be under any woman’s orders.

I paid a second time, laughing at the clever rascal who had taken me in so thoroughly. Such are the lessons of life; always full of new experiences, and yet one never knows enough.

Return to Naples

[JC18][jcrmp10.xxx]2968

”The time will come,” said I, ”when you will diminish the tale of your years instead of increasing it.”

I then felt prepared for all hazards, and was quite calm, but my unfortunate companion continued to pour forth his groans, and prayers,

and blasphemies, for all that goes together at Naples as at Rome. I could do nothing but compassionate him; but in spite of myself I could not help laughing, which seemed to vex the poor abbe.

After the game we danced in spite of the prohibition of the Pope, whom no Roman can believe to be infallible, for he forbids dancing and permits games of chance. His successor Ganganelli followed the opposite course, and was no better obeyed.

Pride is the daughter of folly, and always keeps its mother's nature.

But I think he's a robber, and a dangerous robber, too. I know it, because he seems so scrupulously careful not to cheat you in small things.

BACK AGAIN TO PARIS
[JC19][jcbpr10.xxx]2969

It is only fools who complain.

...citing the opinion of St. Clement Alexandrinus that the seat of shame is in the shirt.

Blondel regards his wife as his mistress. He says that that keeps the flame of love alight, and that as he never had a mistress worthy of being a wife, he is delighted to have a wife worthy of being a mistress.

MILAN
[JC20][jcmil10.xxx]2970

If you have not experienced the feelings I describe, dear reader, I pity you, and am forced to conclude that you must have been either awkward or miserly, and therefore unworthy of love.

He was an amusing companion for anyone who knew the sublime poet, and could appreciate his numerous and rare beauties. Nevertheless he made me privately give in my assent to the proverb, Beware of the man of one book.

"She makes me happy," he added; "and though she brought me no dower, I seem to be a richer man, for she has taught me to look on everything we don't possess as a superfluity."

Timidity is often another word for stupidity.

Though what she said was perfectly reasonable, it stung me to the quick; when one is in an ill humour, everything is fuel for the fire.

She replied wittily and gracefully to all the questions which were addressed to her. True, what she said was lost on the majority of her

auditors—for wit cannot stand before stupidity.

SOUTH OF FRANCE
[JC21][jcsfr10.xxx]2971

When I had thus successfully accomplished my designs by means of the all-powerful lever, gold, which I knew how to lavish in time of need, I was once more free for my amours.

”We have enjoyed ourselves,” said Marcoline, ”and time that is given to enjoyment is never lost.”

Women often do the most idiotic things out of sheer obstinacy; possibly they deceive even themselves, and act in good faith; but unfortunately, when the veil falls from before their eyes, they see but the profound abyss into which their folly had plunged them.

”I hope you will forgive the ignorance of these poor people, who would like to shape the laws according to their needs.”

TO LONDON
[JC22][jclon10.xxx]2972

Economy in pleasure is not to my taste.

I owe no man an account of my thoughts, deeds, and words, nature had implanted in me a strong dislike to this brother of mine, and his conduct as a man and a priest, and, above all, his connivance with Possano, had made him so hateful to me that I should have watched him being hanged with the utmost indifference, not to say with the greatest pleasure. Let everyone have his own principles and his own passions, and my favourite passion has always been vengeance.

”She knows my horror for the sacrament of matrimony.”—”How is that?”—”I hate it because it is the grave of love.”

Our conversation lasted three-quarters of an hour, and was composed of those frivolous observations and idle questions which are commonly addressed to a traveller.

She had cause for complaint, for marriage without enjoyment is a thorn without roses. She was passionate, but her principles were stronger than her passions, or else she would have sought for what she wanted elsewhere.

I knew how the most trifling services are assessed at the highest rates; and herein lies the great secret of success in the world.

THE ENGLISH
[JC23][jceng10.xxx]2973

That very evening I began my visits, and judged from my welcome that my triumph was nigh at hand. But love fills our minds with idle visions, and draws a veil over the truth. The fortnight went by without my even kissing her hand, and every time I came I brought some expensive gift, which seemed cheap to me when I obtained such smiles of gratitude in exchange.

Proud nation, at once so great and so little.

When I got to this abode of misery and despair, a hell, such as Dante might have conceived, a crowd of wretches, some of whom were to be hanged in the course of the week, greeted me by deriding my elegant attire. I did not answer them, and they began to get angry and to abuse me. The gaoler quieted them by saying that I was a foreigner and did not understand English, and then took me to a cell, informing me how much it would cost me, and of the prison rules, as if he felt certain that I should make a long stay.

LONDON TO BERLIN

[JC24][jclbr10.xxx]2974

If you want to discover the character of a man, view him in health and freedom; a captive and in sickness he is no longer the same man.

She smiled and said that one trunk would be ample for all their possessions, as they had resolved to sell all superfluities. As I had seen some beautiful dresses, fine linen, and exquisite lace, I could not refrain from saying that it would be a great pity to sell cheaply what would have to be replaced dearly.

As old age steals on a man he is never tired of dwelling again and again on the incidents of his past life, in spite of his desire to arrest the sands which run out so quickly.

RUSSIA AND POLAND

[JC25][jcrpl10.xxx]2975

In those days all Russians with any pretensions to literature read nothing but Voltaire, and when they had read all his writings they thought themselves as wise as their master. To me they seemed pigmies mimicking a giant. I told them that they ought to read all the books from which Voltaire had drawn his immense learning, and then, perhaps, they might become as wise as he. I remember the saying of a wise man at Rome: "Beware of the man of one book."

Calumnies are easy to utter but hard to refute.

When the prince saw how happy I was with my Zaira, he could not help thinking how easily happiness may be won; but the fatal desire for

luxury and empty show spoils all, and renders the very sweets of life as bitter as gall.

But my surprise may be imagined when I saw that the father and mother of the child were in an ecstasy of joy; they were certain that the babe had been carried straight to heaven. Happy ignorance!

Ever since I have known this home of frost and the cold north wind, I laugh when I hear travelling Russians talking of the fine climate of their native country. However, it is a pardonable weakness, most of us prefer "mine" to "thine."

SPAIN

[JC26][jcsfn10.xxx]2976

I thought myself skilled in physiognomy, and concluded that she was not only perfectly happy, but also the cause of happiness. But here let me say how vain a thing it is for anyone to pronounce a man or woman to be happy or unhappy from a merely cursory inspection.

"Where ignorance is bliss!"

I delivered all my introductions, beginning with the letter from Princess Lubomirska to the Count of Aranda. The count had covered himself with glory by driving the Jesuits out of Spain. He was more powerful than the king himself, and never went out without a number of the royal guardsmen about him, whom he made to sit down at his table. Of course all the Spaniards hated him, but he did not seem to care much for that. A profound politician, and absolutely resolute and firm, he privately indulged in every luxury that he forbade to others, and did not care whether people talked of it or not.

Fair and beloved France, that went so well in those days, despite 'lettres de cachet', despite 'corvees', despite the people's misery and the king's "good pleasure," dear France, where art thou now? Thy sovereign is the people now, the most brutal and tyrannical sovereign in the world. You have no longer to bear the "good pleasure" of the sovereign, but you have to endure the whims of the mob and the fancies of the Republic—the ruin of all good Government. A republic presupposes self-denial and a virtuous people; it cannot endure long in our selfish and luxurious days.

EXPELLED FROM SPAIN

[JC27][jcexp10.xxx]2977

I was foolish enough to write the truth. Never give way to this temptation, if it assails you.

I was much pleased with the husband's mother, who was advanced in years but extremely intelligent. She had evidently made a point of forgetting

everything unpleasant in the past history of her son's wife.

Nina was wonderfully beautiful; but as it has always been my opinion that mere beauty does not go for much, I could not understand how a viceroy could have fallen in love with her to such an extent.

If these Memoirs, only written to console me in the dreadful weariness which is slowly killing me in Bohemia—and which, perhaps, would kill me anywhere, since, though my body is old, my spirit and my desires are as young as ever—if these Memoirs are ever read, I repeat, they will only be read when I am gone, and all censure will be lost on me.

Is selfishness, then, the universal motor of our actions?
I am afraid it is.

Time that destroys marble and brass destroys also the very memory of what has been.

ROME

[JC28][jccrom10.xxx]2978

Emotion is infectious. Betty wept, Sir B— M— wept, and I wept to keep them company. At last nature called at truce, and by degrees our sobs and tears ceased and we became calmer.

I have travelled all over Europe, but France is the only country in which I saw a decent and respectable clergy.

FLORENCE TO TRIESTE

[JC29][jccft10.xxx]2979

I cannot help laughing when people ask me for advice, as I feel so certain that my advice will not be taken. Man is an animal that has to learn his lesson by hard experience in battling with the storms of life. Thus the world is always in disorder and always ignorant, for those who know are always in an infinitesimal proportion to the whole.

He denied, for instance, that almsgiving could annul the penalty attached to sin, and according to him the only sort of almsgiving which had any merit was that prescribed in the Gospel: "Let not thy right hand know what thy left hand doeth." He even maintained that he who gave alms sinned unless it was done with the greatest secrecy, for alms given in public are sure to be accompanied by vanity.

She asked where he was, and I said at Venice; but of course she did not believe me. There are circumstances when a clever man deceives by telling the truth, and such a lie as this must be approved by the most rigorous moralists.

I also met at Gorice a Count Coronini, who was known in learned circles as the author of some Latin treatises on diplomacy. Nobody read his books, but everybody agreed that he was a very learned man.

Fifty years ago a wise man said to me: "Every family is troubled by some small tragedy, which should be kept private with the greatest care. In fine, people should learn to wash their dirty linen in private."

OLD AGE AND DEATH

[JC30][jcagdxxx.xxx]2980

Age, that cruel and unavoidable disease, compels me to be in good health, in spite of myself.

Now that I am getting into my dotage, I look on the dark side of everything. I am invited to a wedding and see naught but gloom.

When I recall these events, I grow young again and feel once more the delights of youth, despite the long years which separate me from that happy time.

I have loved women even to madness, but I have always loved liberty better; and whenever I have been in danger of losing it, fate has come to my rescue.

The longer I live, the more interest I take in my papers. They are the treasure which attaches me to life and makes death more hateful still.

THE COMPLETE MEMOIRES OF JACQUES CASANOVA

[JC31][csnva10.xxx]2981

"We have enjoyed ourselves," said Marcoline, "and time that is given to enjoyment is never lost."

Is selfishness, then, the universal motor of our actions? I am afraid it is.

Time that destroys marble and brass destroys also the very memory of what has been.

I was foolish enough to write the truth. Never give way to this temptation, if it assails you.

A man never argues well except when his purse is well filled
Accepted the compliment for what it was worth
Accomplice of the slanderer
Advantages of a great sorrow is that nothing else seems painful
Age, that cruel and unavoidable disease
All women, dear Leah are for sale
All-powerful lever, gold

Alms given in public are sure to be accompanied by vanity
Anger and reason do not belong to the same family
Angry man always thinks himself right
At my age I could not be allowed to have any opinions
Augurs could never look at each other without laughing
Awkward or miserly, and therefore unworthy of love
Axiom that "neglected right is lost right"
Beauty is the only unpardonable offence in your eyes
Beauty without wit offers love nothing
Bed is a capital place to get an appetite
Best plan in this world is to be astonished at nothing
Beware of the man of one book
Calumnies are easy to utter but hard to refute
Cherishing my grief
Clever man deceives by telling the truth
Commissaries of Chastity
Confession
Contempt of life
Could tell a good story without laughing
Criticism only grazed the skin and never wounded deeply
Delights are in proportion to the privations we have suffered
Desire is only kept alive by being denied
Desire to make a great fuss like a great man
Despair which is not without some sweetness
Despised ignoramus becomes an enemy
Diminish the tale of your years instead of increasing it
Distance is relative
Divinities—novelty and singularity
Do not mind people believing anything, provided it is not true
Do their duty, and to live in peace and sweet ignorance
Economy in pleasure is not to my taste
Emotion is infectious
Essence of freedom consists in thinking you have it
Everything hung from an if
Exercise their reason to avoid the misfortunes which they fear
Fanaticism, no matter of what nature, is only the plague
Fatal desire for luxury and empty show spoils all
Favourite passion has always been vengeance
First motive is always self-interest
Foolish enough to write the truth
For in the night, you know, all cats are grey
For is love anything else than a kind of curiosity?
Fortune flouts old age
Found him greater at a distance than close at hand
Gave the Cardinal de Rohan the famous necklace
Girl who gave nothing must take nothing
Give yourself up to whatever fate offers to you,
Government ought never to destroy ancient customs abruptly
Groans, and prayers, and blasphemies
Happiness is purely a creature of the imagination

Happiness is not lasting—nor is man
Happy or unhappy from a merely cursory inspection
Happy ignorance!
Happy age when one's inexperience is one's sole misfortune
Hasty verses are apt to sacrifice wit to rhyme
He won't be uneasy—he is a philosopher
Hobbes: of two evils choose the least
Honest old man will not believe in the existence of rascals
Idle questions which are commonly addressed to a traveller
If this and if that, and every other if
If I could live my life over again
If history did not lie
Ignorance is bliss
Ignorant, who talk about everything right or wrong
Imagine that what they feel themselves others must feel
It is only fools who complain
It's too much for honour and too little for love
Jealousy leads to anger, and anger goes a long way
Knowing that he would not be regretted after his death
Last thing which we learn in all languages is wit
Laugh out of season
Let not thy right hand know what thy left hand doeth
Lie a sufficient number of times, one ends by believing it
Light come, light go
Love always makes men selfish
Look on everything we don't possess as a superfluity
Love fills our minds with idle visions
Love makes no conditions
Made a point of forgetting everything unpleasant
Made a parade of his Atheism
Man needs so little to console him or to soothe his grief
Marriage without enjoyment is a thorn without roses
Marriage state, for which I felt I had no vocation
Married a rich wife, he repented of having married at all
Mere beauty does not go for much
Most trifling services are assessed at the highest rates
My spirit and my desires are as young as ever
My time was too short to write so little
Mystical insinuations
Negligent attire
Never to pass an opinion on any subject
Never wearied himself with too much thinking
Nobody read his books, but everybody agreed he was learned
'Non' is equal to giving the lie

Now I am too old to begin curing myself
Obscenity disgusts, and never gives pleasure
Oh! wonderful power of self-delusion
One never knows enough
Owed all its merits to antithesis and paradox

Pardonable weakness, most of us prefer "mine" to "thine"
Passing infidelity, but not inconstancy
Passion and prejudice cannot reason
People did not want to know things as they truly were
People want to know everything, and they invent
Pigmies mimicking a giant
Pity to sell cheaply what would have to be replaced dearly
Pleasures are realities, though all too fleeting
Pope, whom no Roman can believe to be infallible
Post-masters
Prejudices which had the sanction of the law
Pride is the daughter of folly
Privately indulged in every luxury that he forbade to others
Privilege of a nursing mother
Promising everlasting constancy
Proud nation, at once so great and so little
Quacks
Rather be your debtor than for you to be mine
Read when I am gone
Reading innumerable follies one finds written in such places
Repentance for a good deed
Reproached by his wife for the money he had expended
Rid of our vices more easily than of our follies
Rome the holy, which thus strives to make all men pederasts
Rumour is only good to amuse fools
Sad symptom of misery which is called a yawn
Sadness is a disease which gives the death-blow to affection
Scold and then forgive
Scrupulously careful not to cheat you in small things
Seldom praised and never blamed
Selfishness, then, the universal motor of our actions?
Shewed his contempt by saying nothing
Sin concealed is half pardoned
Sleep—the very likeness of non-existence
Snatching from poor mortal man the delusions
Softening the hardships of the slow but certain passage to the grave
Stupid servant is more dangerous than a bad one
'Sublata lucerna nullum discrimen inter feminas'
Submissive gaze of a captive who glories in his chain
Surface is always the first to interest
Talent of never appearing to be a learned man
Taste and feeling
Tell me whether that contempt of life renders you worthy of it
There is no cure for death
There's time enough for that
Time that is given to enjoyment is never lost
Time that destroys marble and brass destroys also the very memory
Time is a great teacher
Timidity is often another word for stupidity
To know ill is worse than not to know at all

Vengeance is a divine pleasure
Verses which, like parasites, steal into a funeral oration
Victims of their good faith
Wash their dirty linen in private
What is love?
When we can feel pity, we love no longer
When one is in an ill humour, everything is fuel for the fire
Whims of the mob and the fancies of the Republic
Wife worthy of being a mistress
Wiser if they were less witty
Wish is father to the thought
Wit cannot stand before stupidity
Woman has in her tears a weapon
Women are always as old as they look
Women would be either tyrants or slaves
Women often do the most idiotic things out of sheer obstinacy
World of memories, without a present and without a future
Would like to shape the laws according to their needs
Wretch treats me so kindly that I love him more and more