

in the sight of God; notwithstanding the inequality of conditions; you will set them none but good examples; watch over their manners, without either being a tyrant or a spy, and attach them to you by your gentleness and your beneficence. Nothing can be so flattering as to render those happy who live with us. You must think of taking some charge upon you which will give you employment; we always do amiss when we do nothing. Examine your understanding, consult your taste, ask your heart, but above all address yourself to God, that you may know what is fit for you whether civil or military; the life of an Ecclesiastic is by no means proper for you. We ought not to carry into the sanctuary the remains of a heart stained by a commerce with the world, unless the will of God is manifested in an extraordinary manner, which is very rare; and the example is much more to be admired than imitated.

Your friends will not think of marrying you, and it is my advice not to defer it too long.

Marriage when made with purity of heart preserves young people from a multitude of dangers; but do not reckon upon my choosing a wife for you. From the moment I embraced my profession I promised to God that I would never meddle in marriages or testaments.

A monk is a man buried, who ought not to show any signs of life, but for things purely spiritual, because the soul never dies.

Religion and reason ought to be consulted more than inclinations in an establishment that is to last for life. We rarely see marriages happy which have no other motives than love, that passion does wonders in poetry and romance, but in real life produces no good effect.

I cannot speak of your expenses nor of your table. With such principles as I lay down they should be moderate. Frequently invite some virtuous friends to dinner. I do not like to see you alone, and I recom-

mend to you to be so as little as possible, except when you are at your prayers or reading.

It is not good for man to be alone saith the Scriptures. Visit your estate only now and then.

If you take up your residence in the country, it at this time will bury your good resolutions as well as your admiration. Rural societies lead only to dissipation; and however little they are frequented, the effect is that you forget what you know and become rustic, illiterate and clownish.

Hunting, love and wine often become the portions of men who live constantly in the country. Towns polish the manners, adorn the mind, and prevent the soul from gathering rust. Do not be scrupulously exact about the hour of rising or going to bed. Order is necessary to all ranks, but constraint and formality too often produce narrow mindedness. If you look upon religion in the light, as it ought to be viewed, you will not find in it the trifling of puerile devotion. Never open those mystical or apocryphal books, which under pretense of nourishing piety, amuse the soul with insignificant ceremonies, leaving the mind without light and the heart without compunction.

"The devotion" written by the celebrated Muratori will preserve you from all dangers of a mistaken credulity. I advise you to read that work again and again, and you will profit by it. Do not receive indiscriminate counsels; for in the disease of the soul as in those of the body, every one offers his advice. Avoid the hypocrite as well as the dissipated; both the one and the other will hinder you from aiming at the point we propose. I do not look upon you as a convert till you have been a long time proved.

It is not easy to put down evil to the practice of virtue. Above all things let there be no excess in your piety, take no violent courses; they will be the means of your relapsing.

Behold, my dear son, my dear