

# I

Why this book? —It is a duty to let others profit from one's own experience. —*Lettres d'un voyageur*. —*Les Confessions* of J.-J. Rousseau. —My name and my era. —Reproaches to my biographers. —Antoine Delaborde, master of tennis courts and master bird handler. —Mysterious affinities. —In praise of birds. —The story of Agathe and Jonquille. —The bird handler of Venice.

I do not think there need be vanity or impertinence in writing the story of one's own life, still less in choosing from among the memories that life has left us those which seem worth saving.<sup>(1)</sup> From my point of view, I feel as though I am fulfilling a duty, painful at that, for I know of nothing more difficult than to define and sum oneself up as a person.

The study of the human heart is such that the more one is absorbed by it, the less clearly one sees it, and for certain active minds, to know oneself is a fastidious, never-ending study. However, I intend to discharge this duty; I have always had it in view; I have always promised myself not to die without having done what I have always advised others to do for themselves: a sincere study of my own nature and a careful examination of my own existence.

An insurmountable laziness (malady of preoccupied minds, hence that of youth) has made me defer this task until today, and perhaps to my own detriment, I have allowed a fair number of biographies to be published about me, which erred in both directions—praise and blame. In certain of these biographies, first published in foreign countries and then reproduced in France with further fanciful modifications, my name is about the only thing left that is not fiction. Questioned by the authors of such works, called on to furnish information at my own discretion, I have pushed apathy to the point of refusing the slightest guidance to those well-meaning people. I confess I felt it distasteful to bother the public with my personality, which has no striking features, while my head and heart abound with personalities that are stronger, more logical, more ideal—types superior to myself; that is to say, with characters for novels. I feel one must speak about oneself to the public only once in a lifetime, very seriously, and not return to it again.

The habit of speaking about ourselves seems easily to lead to self-praise, and that, doubtless quite involuntarily, by a law instinctive to the human mind, which cannot keep from embellishing the object of its contemplation. There is even a naïve kind of vaunting that need not be considered a pitfall when it is cloaked in lyricism like that of the poets, who have a special privilege in this

area. But the self-enthusiasm which inspires such audacious surges toward heaven is not the milieu in which the soul can settle in order to speak of itself to humankind. In that mood, it loses the sense of its own weaknesses. It identifies with the godhead, with the ideal that it embraces; if it finds itself inclined toward regret and repentance, it exaggerates them to the point of poetic despair and remorse; it becomes Werther, or Manfred, or Faust, or Hamlet—sublime types from art's point of view, but types which, without the aid of philosophical detachment, have sometimes become morbid examples or ideals beyond our reach.

May these great portraits of the most powerful emotions of the poetic soul nevertheless remain forever blessed! And let us very quickly agree to forgive great artists for having draped themselves in thunderclouds or rays of glory. It is their right, and in giving us such renderings, they have accomplished their mission. But let us also agree that, in more humble circumstances and under more vulgar wraps, we may fulfill a serious duty more immediately useful to our fellow-creatures by communicating ourselves to them without symbol, halo, or pedestal.

It is surely impossible to believe that the penchant of poets for idealizing their own existences and making of them something abstract and impalpable is a lesson complete in itself. Useful and vivifying it is without doubt, for everyone's spirit is uplifted with those of the inspired dreamers; everyone's sentiments are purified by following them across those rapturous regions, but what is missing in this subtle balm spread by them over our failings is very important—reality.

Naturally, it takes something for an artist to mirror reality; those who get their pleasure this way are really very generous! As for me, I cannot carry the love of duty that far, and it is not without great effort that I am going to descend into the prose of my subject.

I have always found it in bad taste not only to speak a great deal about oneself, and worse, to do so with only oneself for any length of time. There are few days, few moments in the lives of ordinary beings which are interesting or useful to contemplate. But I have sometimes felt at such times like anyone else, and then I have taken up my pen to vent some vivid suffering I could not contain, or some violent anxiety that was working in me. The majority of these fragments have never been published and will serve me as markers for the examination of my life that I am undertaking. Only a few of these have assumed semi-confidential or semi-literary form in letters published from time to time and postmarked from diverse places. They have been collected under the title, *Lettres d'un voyageur* [1836]. At the time I wrote those letters, I did not feel too alarmed at speaking about myself, because it was neither overtly nor literally of myself that I spoke. That "traveller" was a sort of fiction, a convenient character, masculine as is my pseudonym, old though I was still young, but into the mouth of that sad pilgrim, that semi-fictional hero, I put impressions and reflections more personal than those I would have risked in a novel, where the conditions of the art are more stringent.

I needed then to rid myself of certain anxieties, not to attract my readers'

attention to myself. Today I have that need still less than before—a need which in ordinary people is merely childish, but in artists is a risk, to say the least. I shall explain why I do not have it and also why I am, nevertheless, going to write about my life as if I did have it, as we eat because we know we should, without feeling any appetite.

I do not need to attract attention, because I have arrived at an age of tranquility, where my personality has nothing to gain by exhibiting itself and where I would aspire only to have it forgotten, indeed to forget it myself, if I were only following my instincts and good taste. I no longer try to solve the enigmas which tormented my youth; I have resolved many of the problems which used to keep me awake. I had help, for left on my own I would very likely have clarified nothing.

My century has set off sparks of truth and is keeping them alive; I have seen them, and I know from whence their main fires emanate. That is sufficient. In days gone by I looked to the facts of psychology for enlightenment. That was pointless. When I understood that such enlightenment lay in moral principles and that those principles were in me though not necessarily having originated from me, I was able to enter a peaceful state of mind without too much effort. Peacefulness of the heart has by no means been achieved and never will be. For those who were born compassionate there will always be something to love on this earth, consequently to lament, to serve, to suffer for. So, we need not seek the absence of pain, fatigue, or fear, no matter how old we are, for that would mean insensitivity, impotence, premature death. We can better cope with an incurable disease once we have accepted it.

My mind being at peace and my feelings resigned, I should not resent the human race for deluding itself, nor be enamored of myself who was for so long deluded. So, neither the attraction of a struggle nor the need for self-aggrandisement brings me to speak of my present and my past.

As I have said, I rather regard it as a duty, and here is why: many human beings live without taking serious account of their existences, without understanding, and almost without seeking God's design with respect to them as individuals as well as to the society of which they are part. They pass among us unrevealed, because they vegetate in unawareness, and although their destiny, undeveloped as it is, always has its usefulness in the eyes of Providence, it is as sure as fate that any disclosure of their lives remains morally barren for the rest of us.

The source of progress for the human mind which is most alive and serious is, in the language of today, the idea of "solidarity."<sup>(2)</sup> People of all eras have felt it vaguely or distinctly, and every time an individual found himself invested with a somewhat developed gift for disclosing his own life, he was led into doing it by the wishes of those close to him, or by an interior voice no less persuasive. Then it seemed to him to be the fulfillment of an obligation, as indeed it was, whether he had to relate historic events to which he had been witness, or whether he had frequented important individuals, or finally, whether he had travelled and appreciated people and things beyond the ordinary.

Another kind of personal writing exists which has been more rarely

accomplished and which, in my opinion, has as great a usefulness: relating the interior life, the life of the soul—that is to say, the story of one's mind and heart—with a view toward teaching one's peers. Such personal impressions or attempts to voyage into the abstract world of intelligence and feeling, told by a serious soul, might be a prod, an encouragement, even a counsel or guide for other souls in the labyrinth of life. It is like an exchange of trust and sympathy which elevates the thought of the one who talks as well as the one who listens. In our private lives we are naturally moved toward this kind of exposition at once humble and proud. When a friend, a brother, approaches us to confess the trials and perplexities of his situation, we have no better arguments with which to strengthen him than those taken from our own experience, so sure are we then that the life of a friend resembles our own, just as the lives of each resemble those of all. "I have suffered the same ills, I have crossed the same reefs, and I have survived; so you, too, can be healed and conquer." That is what one friend says to another, what human beings teach each other. And which of us in those moments of despair, when the affection and help of another are indispensable, has not received strength from the outpourings of that soul to whom we went to pour out our own?

Certainly then, it is the most tried spirit that has the greatest influence over another. Under stress we rarely look to the support of a mocking skeptic. It is toward an unlucky one of our species, even unluckier than we, that we look and reach out. If we catch him in a moment of pain, he will be versed in pity and will weep with us. If we call to him during the fullness of his strength and sanity, he will advise us and perhaps save us; but surely he will influence us most by his understanding, and in order to be understanding, he will be compelled to confide in us in turn.

The recital of struggles in the life of each is, therefore, a lesson for all; it would mean health for all if each of us could analyse the cause of our suffering and realize what has saved us. It is with this sublime intention and under the influence of a passionate faith that Saint Augustine wrote his *Confessions*, which were the ones for his century and effectively rescued several generations of Christians to come.

There is a gulf between *Les Confessions* of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and those of the Church father. The purpose of the eighteenth-century philosopher seems more personal, hence less serious or useful. He accuses himself in order to clear himself, he reveals his private crimes for the right to reject public slander. Furthermore, his is a monumental confusion of pride and humility, which sometimes repels us by its affectation and sometimes touches us by its sincerity. As pervasively flawed and occasionally blameworthy as this famous work may be, it carries with it serious lessons, and the more the martyr abases himself and wanders from the pursuit of his ideal, the more the same ideal beckons to us.

But *Les Confessions* has been judged for too long as a purely individual apology. Jean-Jacques is partly responsible for provoking this negative response by injecting in his work personal preoccupations. Now that his friends and enemies no longer exist, we judge the work to be of greater value. We are no longer so concerned to know to what extent the author was unfair or deluded, to what

extent his detractors were lying or cruel. What does interest us, what enlightens and influences us is the spectacle of an inspired human being at grips with the errors of his time and the obstacles in his philosophical destiny; his is a genius imbued with austerity, independence, and dignity in a struggle with the frivolous, disbelieving, corrupt environment through which he passed and which, reacting on him constantly either by seduction or tyranny, either dragged him into the pit of despair or propelled him toward sublime protestations.

If the intention behind *Les Confessions* was a good one; if it was Rousseau's mission to seek out childish mistakes and relate failures, I am not among those who shrink from such public penance. I think my readers know me well enough, at least as a writer, not to accuse me of cowardice. But in my opinion, that manner of self-accusation is not humble, and public sentiment is not taken in by it. It is not useful, it is not edifying to know, for example, that Jean-Jacques stole three livres, ten sous from my grandfather, still more so because it may not even be true.<sup>(3)</sup> As for me, I recall as a child having taken ten sous from my grandmother's purse in order to give it to a beggar, and even to have done it secretly and with pleasure. I do not find that at all a subject worth praising or blaming myself for. It was simply a misjudgment, because I could have had the money by asking.

Well, the majority of our faults, at least for us decent folk, are nothing more than misjudgments, and we would do well to accuse ourselves of them in front of the dishonest folk who commit evil artfully and with premeditation. The public is composed of both. We would be paying the public a little too much homage to reveal ourselves worse than we are in order to placate or please it.

I suffer mortally when I see the great Rousseau humiliate himself this way and imagine that by exaggerating or even inventing such sins he clears himself of the vices of the heart which his enemies ascribe to him. He certainly did not disarm them with his *Confessions*; and isn't it enough, in order to believe him good, to read the parts of his life where he forgets to accuse himself? It is only there that he is unselfconscious, and one is well aware of it.

Whether we are good or evil, young or old, it is always vanity, childish and miserable vanity, to undertake our own justification. I have never understood how an accused person could take the stand in his own defense. If guilty, he becomes more so by lying, and his lie, exposed, adds humiliation and shame to the rigor of his punishment. If innocent, how can he lower himself to wish to prove it?

And furthermore, it all has to do with honor. In the ordinary course of existence, it is necessary either to love oneself dearly or have a serious commitment to repulse the calumny which reaches even the best of us and to wish absolutely to prove one's worth. This is sometimes a requirement of public life, but in private life you do not prove your loyalty with speeches, and since no one is able to prove that he has reached perfection, we must leave to those who know us the care of absolving us from our failings and appreciating our virtues.

In the long run, since we are all responsible for one another, there is no such thing as an isolated fault. There is no error to which someone is not the cause or accomplice, and it is impossible to accuse ourselves without accusing



the next one, not only the enemy who denounces us, but even sometimes the friend who defends us. That is what happened to Rousseau, and that is unfortunate. Who can excuse him for having implicated Mme. de Warens in his own confession?

Forgive me, Jean-Jacques, for blaming you when I finished your admirable *Confessions*! In blaming you, I pay you greater tribute, because this blame does not obviate my respect and enthusiasm for the whole of your oeuvre.

I am not making a work of art here, I even forbid myself to do so, because such subjects as these have value only through spontaneity and abandon, and I would not want to tell my life like a novel. The content would be overwhelmed by the form.

I shall, therefore, be able to speak without order or sequence, and even fall into many contradictions. Human nature is but a tissue of inconsequences, and I do not for a moment believe those who pretend to find themselves always in accord with their selves of yesterday.

Thus, the form of my work will feel the effects of this relaxation of my mind, and to begin, I shall not belabor the usefulness of these memoirs but simply show it by the account itself that I embark on, as it unfolds.

Let none of those who have done me harm take fright, I do not remember them; let no scandal mongers rejoice, I do not write for them.

I was born the year Napoléon was crowned, Year Twelve<sup>1</sup> of the French Republic (1804). My name is not Marie-Aurore de Saxe, Marquise de Dudevant, as several of my biographers have "discovered," but Amantine-Lucile-Aurore Dupin, and my husband, M. François Dudevant, claims no title. He has never been more than a second lieutenant in the infantry, and he was twenty-seven when I married him. In making him out as an old colonel of the Empire, they have confused him with M. Delmare, a character in one of my novels.<sup>2</sup> It is really too simple to write the biography of a novelist by transporting the fiction of her stories into the reality of her existence. Such expenses of the imagination are small.

They have perhaps also confused us with our forebears. Marie-Aurore de Saxe was my grandmother; my husband's father was a colonel in the cavalry during the Empire. But he was neither boorish nor peevish, as they claimed; he was the best and gentlest of men.

In this connection, and I beg the pardon of my biographers, but at the risk of quarreling with them and repaying their good will with ingratitude, I find it neither tactful nor honest that, in order to excuse me for having given up living under the conjugal roof and having obtained a legal separation, they accuse my husband of wrongs which I have absolutely stopped complaining about since I regained my independence. It cannot be helped if the public, in its spare time, discusses its souvenirs of a trial of this kind and if it has kept an impression more or less favorable to one or the other of us; there should be no cause for concern on either side if we have had to confront and suffer such publicity. But writers who devote themselves to relating the life of another writer, especially those who are prejudiced in her favor and who wish to inflate or rehabilitate her in public opinion, ought not to act contrary to her feelings and thoughts by

parrying and thrusting around her. A writer's task in such a case is the same as a friend's, and friends should not lack respect, after all, for what concerns public morality. My husband is still alive and reads neither my writings nor those that are done on my account, which is another reason for me to disavow the attacks of which he is the object apropos of me. I was not able to live with him, our characters and our ideas being essentially different. He had motives for not consenting to a legal separation, of which he nevertheless felt the need, since we were already separated. Imprudent counsels committed him to public debates which forced us to accuse each other—unhappy result of an imperfect legal system that the future will amend. Since the separation was decreed and upheld, I hastened to forget my grievances, to the extent that all public recrimination against him seems to me in bad taste and could lead to the belief that resentments persist, which is not so in my case.

This said, it should be apparent that I am not going to transcribe the documents of my trial into my memoirs. It would make my task too painful to give space to childish grudges and bitter memories. I have suffered greatly from all that, but I am not writing to complain and give myself consolation. The sufferings I would have to relate in connection with purely personal action would not be generally useful. I shall relate only that suffering with which you all can identify. Once again, therefore, scandal lovers, close my book. It is not made for you.

The above is probably all I shall have to declare about my marriage, and I have said it quickly to obey a decree of my conscience. It is not prudent, I know, to disavow biographers who are well disposed in your favor, and who can threaten you with a revised and corrected edition, but I have never been prudent no matter what was at stake, nor have I observed that those who bother to be spared more than I. When the chips are down, one must follow the impulse of one's true character.

There I leave the fact of my marriage, for the time being, and return to that of my birth.

This birth, for which I have been reproached so often and so singularly by both sides of my family, is a fact curious enough in actuality, and has every now and then given me pause to reflect on my ancestry.

I especially suspect my foreign biographers of an aristocratic bias, for they have all bestowed on me (those who ought to have been better informed) an illustrious origin while ignoring a very visible stain on my blazon.

One is not only the offspring of one's father, one is also a little, I believe, that of one's mother. It seems to me that the latter is even more the case, and that we are attached to the entrails of the one who gave birth to us in the most immediate, powerful, and sacred way. Hence, if my father was the great-grandson of Augustus II, King of Poland, and if on that side I find myself the illegitimate, but nevertheless very real, next of kin to Charles X and Louis XVIII,<sup>3</sup> it is no less true that my bloodlines are tied to the people in a way as intimate and direct; and what's more, there is no bastardy on this side.

My mother was a poor child of the old streets of Paris; her father, Antoine Delaborde, was a "master of tennis courts," and a "master bird handler," that is

to say, he sold canaries and finches on Quai aux Oiseaux, after having run a small tavern with billiards in some corner or other of Paris, where as a matter of fact he did not do much business. My mother's godfather did indeed have an illustrious name among members of the bird trade—Barra—and this name is still legible at Boulevard du Temple, above an edifice of cages of all sizes, where flocks of winged creatures which I look on as so many godfathers and godmothers—mysterious patrons with whom I have always had a peculiar affinity—always sing joyously.

Let whoever wishes explain these attractions between humans and lesser beings in creation. They are quite as real as the overwhelming antipathy and terror that certain inoffensive animals inspire in us. As for me, the sympathy for birds is so deeply ingrained that my friends have often reacted to it as though it were some prodigious feat. I have, in this regard, done some miraculous training, but birds are the sole beings in creation on which I have ever exerted a power, and if there is conceit in bragging about it, I owe them my apology.

I come by this gift through my mother, even more gifted than I, who always walked in our garden accompanied by cheeky sparrows, nimble warblers, chattering finches, which lived in the trees in total freedom but would come to peck with confidence at the hands that always fed them. I would safely wager that she came by that talent through her father, and that he did not become a bird seller simply by accident but through a natural attraction to those creatures with which instinct had put him in touch. No one has denied Martin, Carter, and Van Amberg a particular power over the instincts of wild animals. I hope no one will contest too much my *savoir faire* and *savoir vivre* with these feathered bipeds, which perhaps played a role in my former lives.

Joking aside, it is certain that each of us has a marked, even violent, predilection for or against certain animals. Dogs play an exorbitant role in people's lives, and there is indeed some mystery there that we have not entirely fathomed. I once had a servant who had a passion for pigs and who swooned from despair when she saw them pass into the hands of the butcher; whereas I, raised in the country—even, one might say, as a rustic—and destined to see numerous of these animals fed at our house, always had an infantile terror of them, insuperable, to the point of losing my head if I envisioned myself surrounded by that unclean species; I prefer a hundred times over to be in the midst of lions and tigers.

Perhaps for each human type, corresponding traits may be found among the animal families. The physiognomists have established physical resemblances; who can deny the psychological ones? Aren't there among us foxes, wolves, lions, eagles, beetles, flies? Human coarseness is often as vile and ferocious as the appetite of a pig and is precisely what causes me the greatest terror and disgust among my fellows. I like dogs, but not all dogs. I even have marked aversions to certain traits of particular members of that species. I prefer them a little rebellious, plucky, scolding, and independent. Their invariable greed distresses me. They are excellent creatures, wonderfully gifted, but incorrigible along certain lines where animal grossness reasserts its rights excessively. The dog-man is not a likable type.



But the bird, I insist, is the superior being in all creation. The way it is made is admirable. Its flying ability places it substantially above man and has endowed it with a power that our genius has not yet been able to acquire for us. Its beak and claws possess unparalleled dexterity. It has instincts for conjugal love, for domestic foresight and industry; its nest is a masterpiece of skill and scrupulous comfort. It is the principal species where the male helps the female with family chores and where the father is occupied, as with man, with building a home and protecting and nourishing the offspring. The bird is a singer, it is beautiful, it has grace, vivacity, affection, spirituality. That it is often made to typify inconstancy is certainly unjust. To the extent that an instinct for fidelity is given to animals, it is the most faithful. In the highly-touted canine family, the female alone loves her progeny, which renders her superior to the male; in birds, both sexes, endowed with equal virtue in this respect, offer us examples of ideal marriage. Hence, let no one speak lightly of birds. They would have to be less endowed for them to deserve us, and like musicians and poets, they are better endowed by nature than we. The bird-man is the artist.

As I am on the subject of birds (and why not exhaust it, since I am once and for all allowing myself unlimited digressions?), I shall mention a trait I have witnessed and which I would have wanted to relate to Buffon,<sup>5</sup> that discreet poet of nature. I raised two warblers from different nests and of different varieties—one yellow-breasted, one gray. The yellow chest, which was called Jonquille, was a fortnight older than the gray, which was called Agathe. Fifteen days for a warbler (the most intelligent and precocious of our small birds) is equivalent to ten years for a person. Jonquille was therefore a very nice little girl, still thin and poorly feathered, knowing how to fly only from one branch to another, but not yet feeding herself; for birds that are raised in captivity develop much more slowly than those which grow up in the wild. Mother sparrows are much stricter than we, and Jonquille would have fed herself fifteen days sooner if I had had the wisdom to force her by leaving her on her own and not giving in to her pleas.

Agathe was an unbearable little baby. All she could do was fidget, squeak, shake her nascent feathers, and torment Jonquille, who was beginning to use her brain and pose problems for herself, one foot drawn under the down of her dress, her head buried in her shoulders, her eyes half-shut.

However, she was still a very little girl, very greedy, and striving to fly to as far as where I was, in order to eat her fill, as soon as I was imprudent enough to glance at her.

One day I was writing some novel or other which intrigued me a little; I had placed at some distance the green branch on which my two pupils perched and existed on good terms. It was a bit chilly. Agathe, still half-nude, was snuggled up and nestled into Jonquille's belly, who lent herself to the mother role with generous compliance. They remained quiet for a half hour, from which I profited to write, for it was rare that they gave me that much leisure during the day.

But, finally, appetite won out, and Jonquille, landing on a chair, then on my table, came to obliterate the last word at the end of my pen, while Agathe,

not daring to leave the branch, beat her wings at my side and stretched her wide-open beak with desperate cries.

I was in the middle of the *dénouement* and for the first time got cranky with Jonquille. I pointed out to her that she was old enough to feed herself, that she had under her nose an excellent mash in a pretty saucer, and that I was resolved no longer to close my eyes to her laziness. A little piqued and stubborn, Jonquille made up her mind to sulk and returned to her branch. But Agathe, not so resigned, turned toward her and demanded to be fed with unbelievable insistence. Undoubtedly, she addressed her with great eloquence, or if she did not yet know how to express herself well, she had in her voice accents to break a sensitive heart. Barbarous me, I looked and listened without budging, studying the visible emotion of Jonquille, who seemed to hesitate and undergo a most extraordinary internal conflict.

At last she arms herself with resolution, flies in a single swoop as far as the saucer, lets out a single cry, hoping the food will come by itself to her beak; then she makes up her mind and bites into the mash. But, miracle of sensitivity! she does not dream of appeasing her own hunger, she fills her beak, returns to the branch, and gives the food to Agathe, with as much skill and tidiness as if she were already a mother.

From that moment, Agathe and Jonquille no longer bothered me, and the little one was fed by the older, who did the job better than I, for she rendered her clean, shining, plump, and able to help herself much more quickly than I ever could have. Thus, the poor little thing had made of her companion an adoptive daughter while she herself was still only a child, and she had learned to feed herself only when pushed and overcome by a feeling of maternal charity towards her companion.<sup>(4)</sup>

A month later, Jonquille and Agathe, always inseparable although of the same sex and different breeds, were living freely among the tall trees of my garden. They did not fly far from the house, and their chosen domicile was atop a giant pine. They were quite long, lithe, and glistening. Each day, as it was summer and we ate outdoors, they winged swiftly down to our table and hovered around us like amiable guests, sometimes on a nearby branch, sometimes on our shoulders, sometimes flying in front of the servant who carried the fruit, in order to taste them on the platter before we did.

Despite their trust in all of us, they did not allow themselves to be caught and held except by me, and no matter what the time of day, they came down from the height of their tree at my call, which they knew very well and never confused with that of other people. It was a great surprise to one of my friends who arrived from Paris to hear me call to birds seemingly lost in the high branches and see them fly down immediately. I had just told him that I could make them obey, and as he had not been present during their training, for a moment he believed some witchcraft was at work.

I also had a red-throat which was a miracle of memory and intelligence, a royal kite, ferocious to everyone, which lived with me in such an intimate rapport that he perched on the edge of my son's cradle and, with his large beak, sharp as a razor, delicately lifted with a smart, little, tender cry the flies which

alighted on the baby's face. The bird did this with such skill and caution that it never woke him. However, this fellow had so much strength and will that he flew away the day after he had rolled under him and broken out of an enormous cage in which he had been put because he was becoming dangerous to people whom he did not like. There was no chain whose links he could not break quite easily, and the largest dogs had an insurmountable fear of him.

There would be no end to the story of birds I have had as friends and companions. In Venice, I lived tête-à-tête with a charming starling which, to my great despair, drowned in the canal; then with a thrush that I had to leave there and parted from with pain. Venetians have a talent for raising birds, and there was on a street corner a young chap who did marvels in this line. One day he bought a lottery ticket and won more sequins than he could count. He squandered them on a great feast for his beggar friends. The next day he sat down again at his corner, on the steps of a landing, with his cages full of completely tame magpies and starlings that he sold to passers-by and with whom he discoursed lovingly from morning till night. He had not a worry, not a single regret for having wasted his money on his friends. He had lived too long among birds not to have become an artist. That was the day he sold me my lovely thrush for five sous. To have a beautiful, good, cheerful, trained companion, who asks only to live with you for a day to love you all its life, for five sous! It is really too cheap! Ah, birds! how poorly we value them!

I have lived through the writing of a novel where birds play an important role and where I tried to say something about occult propensities and influences. I send my reader to *Teverino* [1845], which is what I shall often do when I do not wish to repeat what I have developed better elsewhere. I am quite aware that I do not write for all mankind. The human race has a few other things on its mind than to keep abreast of a collection of novels or read the story of an individual out of step with the official world. People in my profession always write only for a limited number of persons, who happen to be in situations or lost in dreams analagous to those which preoccupy the writers. I, therefore, shall not worry about being presumptuous if I ask those who have nothing better to do to reread certain of my pages in order to augment those they have before them.

Thus, in *Teverino*, I depicted a girl who, like Eve, had power over all the birds in creation; let me say here that that was not pure fantasy, no more than the same kind of marvels they relate about the poetic and wonderful "imposter" Apollonius de Tyane are fables contrary in spirit to Christianity. We are living at a time when we cannot quite explain the natural causes of what have heretofore passed for miracles, but when we can already assert that nothing on earth is a miracle and that the laws of the universe are no less conforming to an eternal order for having as yet been undiscovered and undefined.

But it is time to close this treatise on birds and return to the one on my birth.

T.J.

## II

On birth and free will. —Frederick Augustus. —Aurora von Königsmarck. —Maurice de Saxe. —Aurore de Saxe. —Comte de Horn. —Mesdemoiselles Verrières and the eighteenth-century wits. —M. Dupin de Francueil. —Mme. Dupin de Chenonceaux. —Abbé de Saint-Pierre.

So, the blood of kings was mixed in my veins with that of the poor and lowly. And just as what is said to be fate is really an individual's character; just as one's character amounts to one's constitution; just as what constitutes each one of us is the result of a mixture, or a parity, of bloodlines, and the continuation, ever modified, of a succession of types that are linked to one another; so I have always concluded that the principle of natural heredity, which pertains to body *and* soul, was grounds for a sufficiently important bond between each one of us and each of our ancestors.

For we all have ancestors, high and low, plebian and patrician; ancestors signifies *patres*, that is to say, a succession of fathers, for the word is not used in the singular. It is amusing that the nobility has appropriated this word to its own advantage, as though the artisan and peasant are presumed not to have any lineage, as though one could not bear the sacred title of father without having a coat of arms, as if legitimate forefathers would indeed be found more commonly in one class than another.

What I think of racial superiority was stated in *Le Piccinino* [1847], and I probably wrote that novel only in order to present the three chapters where I expressed my feelings on nobility. The way people have understood it until now is tantamount to a monstrous prejudice wherein it hoards for the benefit of a class of rich and powerful people the sacredness of family, a principle which must be dear to all mankind. This principle is inalienable in and of itself, and I find lacking the following Spanish maxim: *Cado uno es hijo de sus obras* [Each of us is the son of his works]. The idea of being the son of one's works and as worthy in terms of one's virtues as the patrician is by his titles is a grand and generous one. That was the idea which engendered our great revolution, but it was inspired by reaction, and reactions only take into account one side, the one that people had grossly misunderstood and sacrificed. Thus, it is very true that each is the son of his works, but it is equally true that each is the son of his fathers, of his ancestors, *patres et matres*. We carry within us from birth instincts which are only the result of the blood that has been transmitted to us and which would govern us as a terrible fate were it not for the fact that we

possess a certain measure of will-power, that individual gift granted to each one of us through divine justice.

In this respect (and this will be yet another digression), I say that, in my opinion, we are not absolutely free, and those who have conceded the dreadful dogma of predestination should, in order to be logical and not insult the kindness of God, be obliged to suppress the atrocious fiction of hell, as I myself suppress it in my soul and conscience. But neither are we absolutely enslaved by our instincts. God has given us all a certain rather powerful one to combat the others by giving us the power to reason, to compare, to profit from experience, to be "saved" ultimately, whether through a well-intentioned love of oneself or through the love of absolute truth.

To raise as objections idiots, madmen, and homicides would be in vain, for these examples, being under the influence of an uncontrollable monomania, consequently revert to the category of madmen and idiots. Every rule has its exception by which it is confirmed; every combination, no matter how perfect, has its accidents. I am convinced that, with the progress of societies and better education of humankind, these disastrous accidents will disappear; and likewise the measure of possibilities that we bring with us at birth, resulting from a better combination of transmitted instincts, will become our strength and the natural support of our acquired logic instead of creating interminable struggles between our inclinations and our principles.

It is perhaps a bit rash to try to resolve questions that have throughout the centuries been the concern of philosophy and theology when one admits to, as I dare to do, both a degree of bondage and a degree of liberty. Religions have believed that they could not be established without admitting or rejecting free will in an absolute manner. The church of the future will understand, I believe, that it has to take into account an element of fate—in other words, some drive of instinct, some pull of passion. The church of the past had already divined it, inasmuch as it had provided for a purgatory, a middle term between eternal damnation and eternal beatitude. The perfected theology of humankind will concede the two principles, fate and freedom. But as I trust we are done with Manichaeism, it will admit a third principle, grace, which will be the solution to the antithesis.

Nor will it invent this principle, it will only preserve it; for in its ancient heritage, that is what will be the best and most beautiful to exhume. Grace is divine action, always fecund and always ready to come to the aid of the one who pleads for it. That is what I believe, and I would not know how to believe in God without it.

The old theology had outlined this dogma for the use of people more naïve and ignorant than we, and also as a consequence of the limited enlightenment of the times. To conquer Satan it had preached, "temptations of Satan," "free will," and "succor of grace." Thus, we have three terms which are not in balance, two against one: absolute freedom of choice and succor from the Almighty pitted against fate, the devil's temptations, which must yield and be easily brought down. If that had been true, how therefore explain the imbecility of human beings who continued to satisfy their passions and give in to the



devil, in spite of the certainty of eternal hellfire, when all the while it was so easy for them, with all their free will and support from God, to take the road to eternal happiness?

Apparently this dogma of eternal damnation never thoroughly convinced them; this dogma that stemmed from austere, exalted, courageous sentiment; this dogma that was rash to the point of arrogance and marked by the passion for progress, but that did not take into account the very essence of man; this dogma so grim in its effect and tyrannical in its decrees, since it logically condemns to the eternal wrath of God the mindless one who has freely chosen the cult of evil; this dogma has never saved anyone; saints never gained access to heaven except by love. Fear has not prevented the weak from tumbling into the Catholic hell.

In separating absolutely the soul from the body, and mind from matter, the Catholic Church was obliged to misunderstand the power of temptation and to decree that it had its seat in hell. But if temptation is within ourselves, if God has permitted it to be there in setting forth the law that joins son to mother, or daughter to father, all children to one or the other, at times as much to one as the other—at times also to a grandfather, or an uncle, or a great-grandfather (for all these phenomena of resemblance, whether physical or moral, or whether physical and moral at the same time, can be observed daily in families)—it is certain that temptation is not determined a wicked element in advance and that it is not the influence of an abstract principle placed outside ourselves in order to test us and torment us.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau believed we were all born good, capable of self-improvement; thus, he eliminated the factor of fate; but then how was he to explain the general perversity that took possession of every man from the cradle, effectively corrupting and injecting him with a love of evil? Nevertheless, he too believed in free will! It seems to me that when we concede this absolute liberty of man and when we see the bad use he makes of it, we must come to doubt God absolutely—or else proclaim His inaction, His indifference—and re-immense ourselves, out of a final consequence of desperation, into the dogma of predestination; this is somewhat the history of theology during the last few centuries.

If one concedes that the educability or the barbarousness of our instincts is, as I have claimed, a heritage that is not ours to reject and quite useless to deny, then eternal evil, as a principle, is destroyed; for progress is not bound up in the type of fate I take into consideration. It is a fate always modifiable, always being modified, sometimes excellent and sublime because one's heritage is at times a magnificent gift to which the goodness of God is never opposed. The human race is no longer a multitude of isolated beings going at random, but a coming together of lines which are connected to one another and which are never absolutely broken even when the names happen to perish (this latter being an accident of little importance and of embarrassment only to the nobility); the intellectual conquests of the time always exert an influence on the free part of the soul, and as for divine action, which is the very soul of this progress, it always aims toward revitalizing the mind, which thus frees itself

little by little from the bonds of the past and from the original sin of one's ancestry.

In this way, the physical evil little by little leaves our blood, as the spirit of evil abandons our soul. As long as our imperfect generations continue to struggle against themselves, philosophy can be indulgent and religion compassionate. Neither has the right to destroy man for an act of madness, nor condemn him for a false point of view. When the time comes for philosophy and religion to outline a new dogma for stronger and purer beings, Satan the stoker—inquisitor of the darkness, eternity's executioner—will have only a minor part. Fear will no longer have any effect on men (indeed, it already has none). Grace will suffice; for what people have called grace is the action of God as manifested, through faith, in men.

Faced with this dreadful dogma of hell, which the human spirit rejects, faced with the tyranny of a belief which would sanction neither pardon nor hope beyond this life, the human conscience has rebelled. It has broken its shackles. It has severed society from the church, the tomb of its forebears from the altars of the past. It has taken flight, it has gone astray momentarily, but it will get back on its course, never fear.

Here I am once again quite some distance from my subject, and my story runs the risk of resembling that of the King of Bohemia and his seven castles. Ah, well! what is the difference, my good readers? My story in itself is of rather slight interest. The facts play the minor role in it, the reflections round it out. No one has dreamed more and acted less than I in her life; would you expect otherwise from a novelist?

Listen! My life is yours, for you who read me are not immersed in the fracas of interests of today's world, otherwise you would push me aside out of boredom. You are dreamers like me. From the outset, everything that has stopped me on my way has stopped you too. You have sought, as I have, to give meaning to your existence, and you have come to some conclusions. Compare yours with mine. Weigh them and pronounce judgment, for the truth is only revealed by examination.

We shall, therefore, stop at each step, and we shall examine each point of view. Just now a truth has come to me, which is that the idolatrous cult of family is false and dangerous, but that respect and solidarity in the family are necessary. In antiquity the family played a big role. Then the role took on an exaggerated importance, with entitlement to noble rank being transmitted as a privilege. In the Middle Ages the barons acquired such a high opinion of their family origins that they might have held the august patriarchal families in scorn had not religion consecrated and sanctified their memory. The philosophers of the eighteenth century upset the cult of nobility, the Revolution overthrew it; but the religious ideal of the family disappeared in this destruction, and the people who had suffered from hereditary oppression, the people who laughed at blazons, got used to regarding themselves solely as the sons of their works. In this the people were mistaken, for they have their ancestors just as kings do. Each family has its nobility, its glory, its titles—work, courage, virtue, or intelligence. Every man who is endowed with some natural distinc-

tion owes it to some man who preceded him, or to some woman who gave birth to him. Every descendant of any lineage whatsoever would therefore have some examples to follow, if he could look back over his family's history. He would even find some examples to avoid. Families of illustrious lineage are filled with them; and it would not be a bad idea for children to learn from the lips of their wet-nurses the old family traditions that used to make up the education of a young noble ensconced in his castle.

Thus, you artisans who are beginning to understand all things, you peasants who are learning to write, don't forget your departed ones any longer. Hand down the life of your forefathers to your sons, make up the titles and coats of arms if you wish, but do it for all! The trowel, the pickaxe, or the pruning hook are just as beautiful symbols as the horn, the tower, or the bell. You can treat yourselves to this entertainment if you are so inclined. Financiers and men of industry take to it very well!

But you are more serious than those folks. Well then, may each one of you seek to retrieve and rescue from oblivion the fine deeds and useful works of your ancestors, and may you each behave in such a way that your descendants give you the same honor. Oblivion is a stupid monster which has devoured too many generations. How many heroes forever unknown because they have not left the wherewithal to erect a tomb! How many luminaries extinct in the past because the nobility insisted on being the sole guide and history of by-gone centuries! Escape from oblivion, all of you who have something more in your mind than the limited notion of the isolated present. Write your stories, all of you who have understood your lives and probed your hearts. For no other reason do I write mine and am I about to tell you the story of my forebears.

Frederick Augustus, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, was the most astonishing debauchee of his time. It is no extraordinary honor to have a bit of his blood in one's veins, for he had, they say, several hundred bastard offspring. He had, by the beautiful Aurora von Königsmarck, that great and clever coquette before whom Charles XI withdrew leaving her to regard herself as more formidable than an army,<sup>(5)</sup> a son who surpassed him greatly in nobility although he was never more than a field marshal of France. This son was Maurice de Saxe, victor of Fontenoy, clever and brave like his father, but no less debauched, more knowledgeable in the art of war, also more fortunate and better supported.

Aurora von Königsmarck was granted, in her old age, a position in the Protestant Abbey of Quedlinburg, the same one in which Princess Amelia of Prussia (sister of Frederick the Great and mistress of the celebrated, unfortunate Baron von Trenk) was also to become the abbess. La Königsmarck died at the abbey and was buried there. A few years ago, the German newspapers published a report on excavations in the vaults of Quedlinburg Abbey, where the remains of Abbess Aurora were found perfectly embalmed and intact. She was attired in a sable-lined, velvet cloak over a dress of brocade embroidered with precious stones. As a matter of fact, I have hanging in my room in the country a portrait, strikingly beautiful in color, of this lady when she was still young.

One can readily see that she was made up to pose for the painter. Her complexion is quite swarthy, which does not at all fit our conception of a beauty from the north. Her jet-black hair is lifted behind by ruby clasps, and her smooth, exposed forehead has no trace of modesty; her thick, loose tresses fall over her bosom; she is wearing the gown of gem-covered, gold brocade and the red velour mantle with sable lining she had on when found in her coffin. I confess that this bold and smiling beauty does not appeal to me, and since learning the story of the exhumation, the portrait makes me even a bit fearful on evenings when it looks at me with its glittering eyes. It seems, then, as though she is saying to me, "With what nonsense do you confound your poor brain, degenerate offspring of my proud stock? With what chimera of equality do you fill your dreams? Love is not what you believe it to be; men will never be what you hope for. They are only created to be deceived by kings, by women, and by themselves."

Next to her is a handsome pastel of her son, Maurice de Saxe, done by Latour. He has a dazzling breast-plate and powdered hair, a handsome and good face which seems ever to be saying, "Onward to the beating drum, the cannon fuse is lit!" and shows little concern about learning French to justify his admission to the Academy. He resembles his mother, but he is blond, with a rather delicate skin tone; his blue eyes are softer and there is more frankness in his smile.

However, what was written under the heading of his passions often detracted from his glory, as in the affair he had, among others, with Mme. Favart, which Favart's correspondence reports with such dignity and sensitivity. One of his last loves was Mlle. Verrières,<sup>(6)</sup> a *dame de l'opéra* [courtesan], who lived with her sister in a "little country hideaway" still extant today and located in the new center of Paris, in the middle of Chaussée d'Antin. Mlle. Verrières had a daughter, who was not recognized as that of Maréchal de Saxe until fifteen years later and who was then authorized to bear his name by official decree. As a picture of the customs of the period, this story is a rather curious one. Here is what I found on the subject in an old work of jurisprudence:

"The demoiselle Marie-Aurore, illegitimate daughter of Maurice, Comte de Saxe, field marshal general of the French armies, had been baptized under the title of 'daughter of Jean-Baptiste de La Rivière, Paris citizen, and Marie Rinteau, his wife.' Since Mlle. Aurore was about to be married, M. Montglas had been named as her guardian by judgment of the Châtelet court, on May 3, 1766. There was difficulty with the publication of the bans inasmuch as Mlle. Aurore was unwilling to agree to being identified as the daughter of M. de la Rivière and still less as the daughter of 'father and mother unknown.' Aurore submitted a petition to the court tribunal appealing the Châtelet judgment. Before the court, Attorney Thétion, in behalf of Mlle. Aurore, furnished the complete proof through the deposition of M. Gervais, who delivered her, as well as through evidence of individuals who had held Aurore at the baptismal font, etc., that she was the illegitimate daughter of Comte de Saxe, and that he had always acknowledged her as his daughter; M. Massonet, in behalf of the first guardian, who left the matter to legal determination, and in accordance

with the consistent conclusions of M. Joly de Fleury, advocate general, rendered June 4, 1766, a decree which invalidated the judgment of the preceding third of May. As amended, it named Attorney Giraud, agent of the court, as Mlle. Aurore's guardian, and declared her 'as having the status of illegitimate daughter of Maurice, Comte de Saxe,' and maintained and kept her in said status and as a ward of the aforementioned court. This being the case, it ordered that the notice of baptism inscribed in the registry of the parish of Saint-Gervais and Saint-Protais in Paris, dated 19 October 1748, containing the said extract: 'Marie-Aurore, daughter, presented on said day for baptism by Antoine-Alexandre Colbert, Marquis de Sourdis and by Geneviève Rinteau, godfather and godmother, respectively,' will be amended, and that instead of the names Jean-Baptiste de la Rivière, Paris citizen, and of Marie Rinteau, his wife, there will be added after the name of Marie-Aurore, daughter, these words: '*Illegitimate daughter of Maurice, Comte de Saxe, field marshal general of the armies of France, and of Marie Rinteau*'; this to be carried out by the bailiff of our said court, bearer of the present decree, etc.'<sup>(7)</sup>

Another irrefutable proof that my grandmother might have been able to put before the public was the fact of the obvious resemblance she bore to Maréchal de Saxe and the manner in which she was virtually adopted by the Dauphine, who was the daughter of King Augustus, niece of the field marshal, mother of Charles X and of Louis XVIII. This princess enrolled her in Saint-Cyr, assuming responsibility first for her education and then for her marriage, and advising her not to see or associate with her mother.

At fifteen, Aurore de Saxe left Saint-Cyr to be married to Comte de Horn,<sup>(8)</sup> illegitimate son of Louis XV, and king's lieutenant at Schelestadt. She saw him for the first time on the eve of their wedding and became very frightened, as she believed she saw in him a likeness to the late king, whom he resembled to an alarming degree. He was taller, more handsome, yet he had the same severe and insolent air. On the evening of their wedding day, which my great-uncle, Abbé de Beaumont, attended (he was the son of Duc de Bouillon and Mlle. Verrières), a devoted valet came to ask the young abbé, who was then still quite young, to prevent the young Comtesse de Horn by all means possible from spending the night with her husband. The doctor of Comte de Horn was consulted, and the count himself listened to reason.

The result was that Aurore de Saxe was the wife of her first husband in name only, for they saw each other only at the princely festivities given in their honor at Schelestadt in Alsace—presentations of arms, cannon salutes, keys to the city presented on a gold plate, speeches by magistrates, illuminations, grand balls at the town hall, and whatever else made up the vain, noisy display with which people seemed to want to console this poor little girl for belonging to a man she did not love, whom she did not know, and whom she had to avoid like the plague.

My grandmother often told me how impressed she was with the pomp of the reception she received on leaving the convent school. She was taken in a big golden carriage drawn by four white horses, while her husband, attired in magnificent full regalia, rode on horseback. The noise of the cannon frightened



Aurore as much as her husband's voice. Only one thing delighted her: their bringing for her signature royal papers authorizing pardon of some prisoners. And thereupon about twenty prisoners left the prisons of the state and came to thank her for it. Then she began to cry, and perhaps the naïve joy she experienced was taken into account by Providence when she herself left prison after 9 Thermidor.<sup>7</sup>

But a few weeks after her arrival in Alsace, in the very middle of a grand ball—the governor having departed, while his wife continued to dance until three in the morning—Aurore was told in a whisper that her husband would be grateful if she came to see him for a moment. She went at once, but at the entrance to the count's chamber she stopped suddenly, recalling how her young brother, the abbé, had advised her never to enter his room alone. She took courage as soon as the door was opened and she could see people there in the lighted chamber; the same valet who had spoken to the abbé on her wedding day was holding Comte de Horn in his arms. They had laid him out on a bed, and a doctor was in attendance. "Monsieur le Comte has no more to say to Madame la Comtesse," exclaimed the valet on seeing my grandmother appear. "Do take Madame away!" She saw only the count's large, white hand that hung down over the edge of the bed and that they quickly lifted to give the body a more seemly appearance. Comte de Horn had just died from a severe blow sustained in a duel with swords.

My grandmother never knew any more about it. There was little she could do to fulfill her duty to her husband other than wear mourning; living or dead, he had always inspired her with fear.

I believe, if I am not mistaken, that the Dauphine was still living at this time and that she had Marie-Aurore placed in a convent. Whether this was done right away or shortly afterward, it is certain that the young widow quickly gained the liberty of seeing her mother, whom she had always loved, and that she was keen to benefit from this experience.<sup>(9)</sup>

The Milles. Verrières continued to live together comfortably and even led a rather luxurious life, for they were still attractive and yet sufficiently mature to be favored with disinterested homage. The one who was my great-grandmother was the more intelligent and likeable. The other was haughtily proud; I no longer know who provided her support. I heard it said that they used to be called the Beauty and the Beast.

They lived pleasantly, with a degree of insouciance in keeping with the period's easy manners, "cultivating the muses," as they were wont to say in those days. Plays were put on at their house, M. de La Harpe<sup>8</sup> coming there himself to act in his as yet unpublished plays. Aurore played the title role in *Mélanie*, with well-deserved success. They busied themselves exclusively with literature and music. Aurore possessed angelic beauty and showed superior intelligence and training equal to that of the most enlightened minds of her time; her intelligence was further cultivated and developed through her association with members of her mother's circle. She had, in addition, a magnificent voice, and I have never known a better female musician. They would also put on comic operas at her mother's place. She played Colette in *Le Devin du vil-*

lage, Azémia in *Les Sauvages*, as well as all the principal roles in the operas of Grétry and the plays of Sedaine.<sup>9</sup> I have heard her a hundred times in her old age sing the airs of the old Italian masters, from whom she had subsequently gained greater sustenance: Leo, Porpora, Hasse, Pergolese, etc. Her hands were paralyzed, and she would accompany herself with only two or three fingers on an old discordant harpsichord. Though her voice was tremulous, it was always on pitch and reached to its full range; she never lost her technique or her tone. She would sightread all the scores with ease, and never since have I heard better singing or better accompaniment. She had that large manner, that unadorned simplicity, that purity of taste and distinguished pronunciation that no one has any more, that no longer exist today. In my childhood she would have me say with her a little Italian duet by some master whose name escapes me:

Non mi dir, bel idol mio [Don't tell me my beautiful idol],  
 Non mi dir ch'io son ingrato [Don't tell me you find me ungrateful].<sup>10</sup>

She would take the tenor part, and on a number of occasions, although she was then about sixty-five years old, her voice rose to such a power of expression and charm that once I stopped short and burst into tears while listening to her. But I shall have to come back later to these first musical impressions, which were the dearest of my life. Now I am going to retrace my steps and take up the story of my "grandmama" in her youth.

Among the famous men who used to frequent her mother's house, she knew Buffon especially well and found in his conversation a charm that remained forever fresh in her memory. Her life at this period was happy and sweet as well as brilliant. She inspired love or friendship in everyone. I have a number of love epistles, in rather bland verse, addressed to her by the wits of the day, one of which by La Harpe was expressed in these words:

All the respect of the Caesars I place at your feet.<sup>(10)</sup>  
 Accept then this gift that Friendship does treat,  
 But do not tell Love what you have just heard . . .  
 For I fear he'll deny every word!

This is a sample of the gallantry of the time. But Aurore was able to cope with the temptations of this society and its host of compliments without swerving from her goal of cultivating the arts and developing her mind. She never had a passion other than that of maternal love, nor did she have any idea of what a love affair was. She was, however, possessed of a tender, generous nature and had an exquisite sensibility. Piety was not what restrained her. She had no religion other than the one of the eighteenth century, the deism of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Voltaire. But hers was a firm, perceptive soul and particularly attracted to a certain ideal of pride and self-respect. She was ignorant of coquetry, for she was too gifted to have need for it, and that method of provocation offended her idea of dignified behavior. She survived a very liberal epoch in a very corrupt world without suffering the slightest blemish to her