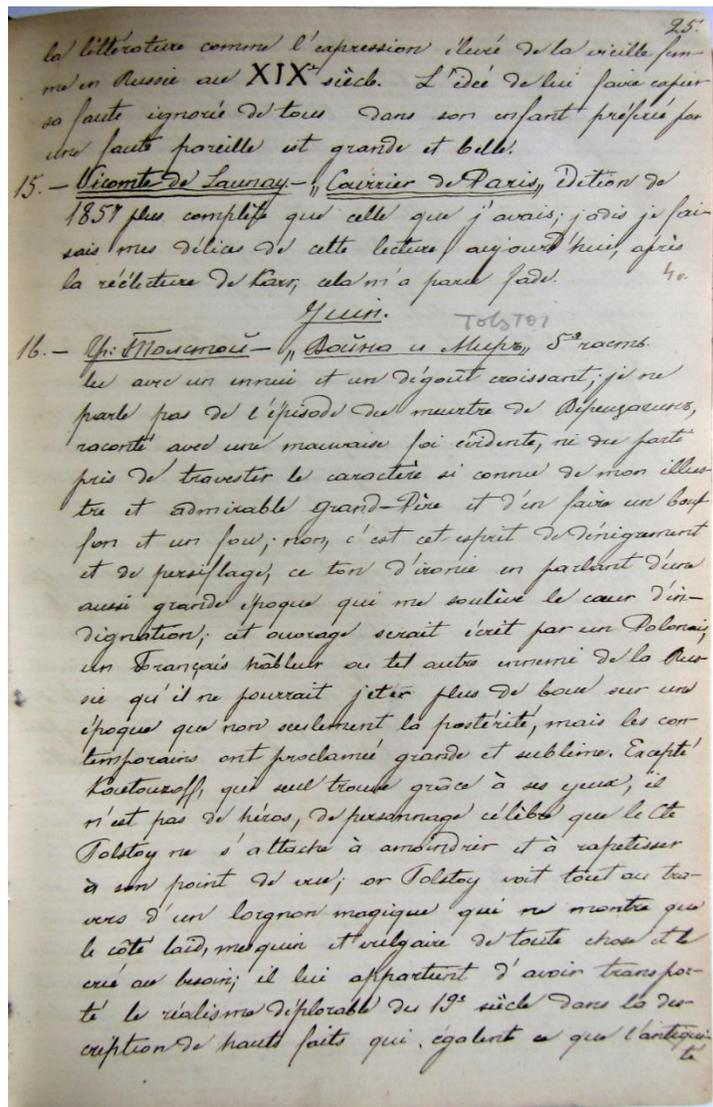


Il me semblait que je me feuilletais moi-même: the reading journal of Lydie Rostopchine

ROSTOPCHINA, Lidiia Andreevna, Countess (1838-1915). *Livres lus par la Comtesse Lydie Rostopchine. Catalogue commencé en 1867. 1868. 1869. 1870. 1871. 1872. Livre N° 1.* [Russia, France, Italy, Switzerland and Germany, various places], 1867-1873.



Manuscript, octavo (202 x 133 mm.), 69 leaves, paginated as follows: [1 leaf, title on recto, table on verso], 1-117 [118-119] 120-132 [133-135, 1 blank] pp. (pages 20-21 are also blank). Written in a fluent, legible cursive, in brown, black and purple ink, 32/33 lines per page, mostly one column, a few pages in multiple columns, mainly in French, many titles and some passages in Russian, and a few quotes in English. The handwriting becomes smaller and more upright in the second half, apparently in a deliberate attempt to save space. Occasional later insertions and additions. A few short marginal chips or tears, 2 or 3 corners creased. The journal fills a notebook of contemporary black chagrin-covered boards, backed in modern leather (slight wear to corners).

An extraordinary manuscript journal containing meticulous reading notes made over six years, many of which contain extended literary reviews or autobiographical essays, by the Countess Lydia Andreyevna

Rostopchina, whose grandfather was the famous Count Rostopchin said to have ordered the burning of Moscow, whose aunt was the writer of children's books the Comtesse de Ségur, and whose mother Evdokia Rostopchina was a poet and writer in her own right.

This UNPUBLISHED RECORD OF THE ASSIDUOUS AND WIDE READING OF A HIGHLY LITERATE FEMALE ARISTOCRAT provides a remarkable window into the cosmopolitan culture of a member of the nineteenth-century Russian intelligentsia. Endowed with curiosity, an independent mind, and

acute literary sensitivity, Rostopchine (who used the French spelling of her name) records her reactions to such new publications as *War and Peace*, *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot*, works by Turgenev and Goncharov, George Sand, Flaubert, and Charlotte Brontë. She provides lengthy and personal commentaries on Dickens, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Pascal, Molière, Alfred de Musset and Saint Augustine, to name just a few of the hundreds of authors whose works she analyses in this journal. Adding a further dimension to the journal are her essay-like reflections on recent history and revelations about the lives of family members and their extended social circle, prompted by her readings of dozens of memoirs by figures ranging from statesmen to courtesans. \$25,000

Background:

Countess Lydie Rostopchine was born into the highest spheres of the Russian aristocracy. Her paternal grandfather Count Fyodor Vasilyevich Rostopchin (1763-1826), appointed military governor of Moscow in May 1812, is believed to have given the order for the (emptied) city to be burned to the ground in September 1812 to prevent Napoleon's troops from taking it. He subsequently set fire to his own magnificent chateau of Voronovo, for the same reason. Although the destruction of the city was recognized by later generations as a courageous last-ditch act which contributed to Napoleon's defeat, his contemporaries turned against him, and, wounded by their ostracism, Rostopchin (who appears in *War and Peace*, depicted most unfavorably) emigrated to France with his large family in 1817, remaining there until 1823.

Assessments of Fyodor Rostopchin's motivations, if he was indeed behind the arsonists who destroyed Moscow, are mixed; but whatever the true story, he never recovered from the bitterness of his country's "ingratitude," according to his granddaughter and other biographical sources. Rostopchin's wife, Lydie's grandmother Ekaterina née Protassova (1776-1859), who had been a protégée of Catherine the Great, had converted to Catholicism and attempted to raise her five children in the most strict and anti-Orthodox observance of that faith. (In a long autobiographical passage ([see below], Lydie portrays her as an inhumane bigot, unspeakably cruel to her serfs, and claims that their luxurious domain of Voronovo provided more exiles to Siberia than any other princely estate.) Lydie's father, Andrey, the youngest son, dissipated the family fortune. Her aunt, Sophia Rostopchina, the Comtesse de Ségur, adopted her mother's Catholicism. Lydie, who passed her time between France and Russia, remained staunchly Orthodox, and did not hesitate to criticize both her grandmother and her aunt for her ignorance of her native country, "unjust prejudices" against it, and for their "apostasy" (pp. 16-17).

Like both Lydie's paternal grandparents, her famous aunt, and several other family members, her mother was a published writer. Evdokia Petrovna Rostopchina, née Sushkova (1812-1858) was a respected poet and prose writer, and a huge reader in five languages. At the age of 22 she married the then extremely wealthy Count Andrei Rostopchin. The two had three children, Olga, Lydie and Victor. Evdokia's soirées in St. Petersburg were frequented by writers like Pushkin, Gogol, Zhukovsky, Odoyevsky, Alexandre Dumas, and other prominent *literati*; Franz Liszt performed there; she was a friend of Lermontov's. According to some accounts, in 1845 she wrote a poem critical of Russia's forced annexation of Poland, and fell out of favor, having provoked the ire of Tsar Nicholas I, who made it clear that she was no longer welcome in St. Petersburg. Whether this story is true or not, in 1845 Evdokia and her family left St. Petersburg and spent two years traveling, through Poland, Germany, Italy, France and Switzerland (a path nearly echoed two and half decades later by her daughter while writing this journal). She spent the last two years in her native Moscow, ill with cancer, and died at the age of 46.

One of the first published women prose writers in Russia, Evdokia Rostopchina “composed her own *art poétique*, a guide on how women should write poetry, advocating restraint, understatement, and subdued passion” (Sobel, p. 699). Her literary work has been neglected by the misogynistic literary mainstream, according to Diane Green.

Lydie’s father Andrei Fyodorovich Rostopchin (1813-1892), the Comtesse de Ségur’s younger brother and the cadet of his family, was an art collector and bibliophile “who managed to squander his enormous inheritance in 30 years” (Sobel, p. 698). Before that he published a catalogue of his library, in Brussels in 1862, in a print-run of 50 copies. The manuscript of the catalogue (written in French), held by the Russian State Library, differs from the printed version, and contains many unpublished notes, which have been published on the University of Bristol website (see Bibliography at end). Andrei Rostopchin also wrote a “dictionary” on Russia, *Russie anecdotique, bibliographique, biographique, géographique, historique, littéraire, statistique...* (Brussels, 1874), and a history of the Battle of Actium, *Histoire universelle (jusqu’à la bataille d’Actium)*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1843-44), privately printed for the use of his children. Clearly literature and writing was part of the air the Rostopchins breathed.

Of all her family, Lydie, who used the French form of her name, appears to have remained in closest contact with her aunt, the Comtesse de Ségur (Saudray, p. 39). Born Sophia Rostopchina, the latter had left Russia with her family at the age of 17, and she remained in France for the rest of her life, while her parents and siblings returned to Russia in 1823 (to the children’s chagrin). The Comtesse de Ségur’s popular novels and tales for children conveyed a rigid Catholic morality, filled with punishments and contrition (one commentator described Ségur’s protagonists as possessing the “rigidity, asceticism, and sadomasochistic penchants of her mother, Countess Rostopchine” (B. L. Knapp, *French Fairy Tales: A Jungian Approach* [2003], p. 230).

Lydie herself would later write and publish her own works, in both Russian and French. First to appear was a short novel with the title *Paduchaya zvezda* [A shooting star], which appeared in 1886 in the important Russian literary journal *Russkiy vestnik* (*Russian Messenger*, on which more below). In 1897 she published a semi-satirical novel in French, entitled *Rastaquouéropolis*; a very rare book now, it contains *entre autres* a melodramatic tale of feminist revenge. A third novel or novella, *Les Rastas de Monte-Carlo* appeared a few years later (Paris: Vaton, [ca. 1905], translated into English as *The Real Monte Carlo* in 1931). Lydie was also actively involved in editing and publishing the poetry and letters of her mother, which were finally published in 1890, in St. Petersburg. Finally, she edited a selection of her grandfather’s writing (*Oeuvres inédites du Comte Rostopchine*, [1894]), and wrote her own family chronicle, *Les Rostopchine* (Paris: Félix Juven, 1910). A few other short works and translations from Russian to French complete her *oeuvre*.

She remained single. In a review of her novel (*Les Annales politiques et littéraires*, no. 889, 8 July 1900, p. 172), she is referred to as Mlle. Rostopchine, and she is said to have “commended the life of an old maid as the happiest of all”¹ On p. 85 of the present journal Lydie says of Rousseau’s *Confessions*, “my daughter will never read it”: presumably this daughter was imagined for the future (Lydie was in her early thirties at the time). Several journal entries signal books that are suitable for young girls (e.g., “*bon pour jeunes filles*”); some of these notes were apparently added later, sometimes in purple ink, and

¹ *Street’s Pandex of the News*, 1909, p. 266, announcing Lydie Rostopchine’s arrival in the US on a lecture tour (perhaps not the most reliable source, as she is here conflated with her grandfather!).

marked with a large X in the margin. Whether Lydie tutored her young nieces or even the daughters of acquaintances, or intended the journal as a guide for reading for younger family members, is not stated.

The Russian Wikipedia entry on her mother states that Lydie was “a writer who lived on a modest pension received from the Tsar.” She clearly had the means to travel widely, spending several months of each year visiting fellow aristocrats in Russia, France, and elsewhere, a way of life that she shared with her peripatetic family (cf. Hédouville, pp. 65-70). In this month-to-month journal, she often records her present location. From the spa of Bad Kreuznach in June 1867, she moves to Bern in October, and thence to St. Petersburg, her primary home, in December. In July 1869 and again in May 1870 she is in Volosovo-Kourakino (also described as Nadezdino [Nadejdino]), the luxurious Palladian estate of Prince Alexis Kourakin, near Tver; she returns a year later. After a brief visit to St. Petersburg, she winters in Rome, and the summer of 1872 finds her in France, at the Chateau de Livet, in the Orne, the home of her cousin Olga de Pitray, daughter of the Comtesse de Ségur, where she remains for nearly a year. In 1873 (included in the volume though not mentioned on the title) she visits Tsarskoe-Selo, the imperial palace, and when the journal ends she is back at Nadejdino. She seems to have spent the last years of her long life in Paris.

The journal, summary:

Lydie Rostopchine was evidently proud of her prodigious *lectures*. Reading, and discussing her reading, was a habit that had been inculcated in the Rostopchin children from an early age: “Like most grand Russian families, the Rostopchins were cultivated, spoke several languages, read enormously, judged foreign writers critically, and advised each other on what to read” (Hédouville, p. 75, trans.)

Lydie was 29 when she commenced the journal, which must have had a suite, “*Livre no. 1*” being scrawled beneath the title in an apparently later hand. Her record-keeping is methodical: within each year the titles are numbered, with a tally of the total number of works and volumes (always noted) at the end of each annual entry. From 1870 on she supplies tables of her reading arranged by category – e.g., *Romans, Théâtre, Poésie, Histoire, Mémoires, Philosophie, Livres de Piété* or *Religion, Journaux*, and *Divers* – and for the last two years, 1872 and 1873, a total page count. The yearly results are tabulated on the verso of the title: the totals range from a low of 48 books in 82 volumes in 1869 to the highs of 89 books in 98 volumes in 1872, and 67 titles in 148 volumes in 1873 (the latter amounting to 49,481 pages!). As the journal continues she develops certain personal conventions, e.g., multiple underlines for the books most worthy of note, or the use of purple ink for cited passages.

Lydie’s reading encompassed novels, history, memoirs, philosophy, works on religion, and theater, and she read journals and newspapers, in French, Russian, and English (both in French translations and in the original), with German and Italian works in translation. (While in France or elsewhere outside of Russia, she reads scarcely any Russian books, naturally, since they would have been difficult to obtain.) Periods range from Antiquity to the Enlightenment to new publications. Authors – whom she loves or hates, often both at once when a beautiful style is paired with ethical failings – include Pascal, Dante, Saint Augustine, Homer, Virgil, Milton, Saint Teresa, La Rochefoucauld, Rousseau, Voltaire, Vauvenargues, Molière, Bossuet, Victor Hugo, Balzac, Dickens, Goethe, Heine, Balzac, Byron, Wordsworth, Richardson, Hawthorne, Laurence Sterne, Wilkie Collins, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Turgenev, Pushkin, Goncharov, Alexander Herzen, George Sand, Alfred de Musset, Trollope, Flaubert, Mme de Stael, Bossuet, Lamartine, Jules Verne, Stendhal, Richardson, Zola, Théophile Gautier, Manzoni, Sainte-Beuve... as well as writers the light of whose fame has dimmed today – Alphonse Karr, Octave Feuillet, Ernest Daudet, Jules Janin, Louis Ulbach, Zhukovsky, Baratynsky, Zimmerman, Tyutchev, Edmond About, and a number of now obscure women writers (see below). She reads histories and memoirs of

Napoleon including Las Cases, *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, and Pierre Lanfrey's more objective history, as well as letters between Empress Josephine and Napoleon, prison memoirs of Mme. Lafarge, the supposed memoirs of the Comtesse du Caylus [Zoë Talon], mistress of Louis XVIII, the autobiography of the painter Mme. Vigée-Lebrun, memoirs of Saint-Simon and Sainte-Beuve (*Port-Royal*), and several memoirs and biographical accounts of members of her large and literate family (most of which infuriate her).

In her journal Lydie provides ample testimony of reading practice. She rereads (often); she is read to, or recalls being read to; and she underlines passages in books, or copies passages into a commonplace book. She often reads aloud, noting the occasions, which include such lengthy works as Rousseau's *Confessions* and George Sand's ten-volume *Histoire de Ma Vie*; and reading aloud is often done with others, sometimes with one other person, at other times *en famille*. Throughout the journal she notes how many times she has read a book, returning to many after several years' interval, noting her differing reactions as time passes. She notes also the adaptability of certain works to reading aloud: Montalembert's *Life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary*, for example, "tiring to read aloud because of his rough (*raboteux*) style and his comparisons always grouped in threes" (p. 122).

| 92. | | 1871. | |
|--|---------|---|------------|
| <u>Romans.</u> | | <u>Histoire</u> | |
| By the author of „Cometh up as a flower, Red as a Rose is she, &c. | 2. | Sainte-Beuve - <u>Port-Royal</u> | 1 |
| Balzac: „Une ténébreuse Affaire, | 2 | Henry IV - <u>Lettres inédites</u> | 1. |
| Thi. Gautier: <u>Avator.</u> | 1. | Las-Cases - <u>Mémorial</u> | 8. |
| _____ <u>Jettativa.</u> | 1. | Marie-Antoinette - <u>Correspondance inédite</u> | |
| Pugine Sue: <u>Miss Mary ou la</u> | | (édité par le Cte de Humolstein.) | 1. |
| _____ <u>gouvernante.</u> | 1. | <u>Philosophie.</u> | 11. |
| Dickens: <u>Hard Times.</u> | 2. | <u>Vauvenargues</u> | 1. |
| _____ <u>bottle of Life - Haunted Man.</u> | 1. | <u>Pascal</u> | 1. |
| By the author of „John Halifax, | | La-Rochefoucauld | 1. |
| _____ <u>the Woman's Kingdom.</u> | 2. | <u>Pascal. - Lettres Provinciales</u> | 1. |
| Miss Kavanagh: <u>Dora.</u> | 2. | Henry Bylle - <u>de l'Amour,</u> | 1. |
| <u>Pas bon pour jeunes Filles:</u> | | <u>Poésie.</u> | 5. |
| Gautier: „ <u>George III et Caroline</u> | | <u>Proemibi.</u> | 1. |
| _____ <u>de Brunswick.</u> ” | 2. | Homère - <u>l'Illyade, tr: Dacier.</u> | 4. |
| Balzac: „ <u>Petites Mœurs de la</u> | | Virgile - <u>Divulgues et Georgiques.</u> | 1. |
| _____ <u>vie conjugale.</u> ” | 2. | <u>Lamartine - Première Méditation.</u> | 1. |
| Ch. de Bernard: „ <u>Un beau-père,</u> | 3. | Dante. | |
| Richardson: „ <u>Clariſſa Harlowe</u> | | Pétrarque. | |
| (Traduction de Jules Janin) | 2. | Michel-ange. | |
| Jules Janin: „ <u>Religieuses de Sou-</u> | | Jasso. | |
| _____ <u>lois.</u> ” | 2. | | 8 volumes. |
| Rousseau: „ <u>Nouvelle Héloïse,</u> ” | 2. | <u>Hémoires.</u> | |
| Hunger: „ <u>Adelin Protat,</u> ” | 1. | „Память о князе Владимирѣ Владиміровичѣ | |
| George Sand: „ <u>Cesarine,</u> ” | 1. | _____ <u>родинѣ Одовскоиъ, учрежденіе Об-</u> | |
| Miss Braddon: „ <u>Doctor's wife.</u> ” | 1. | _____ <u>щества Любимой Свободности, Москва,</u> | |
| | | _____ <u>13 Января 1869. - (Рус: Дон-Фиг-</u> | |
| | | _____ <u>манно, Подручнъ, Сочиненіи, & Мемуары)</u> | |
| | 30 vol. | Duchesse d'Abrantès - <u>Hémoires</u> | 8. |
| | | Madame (la Princesse-Palatine) - <u>Hémoires</u> | 8. |
| | | Soulavie - <u>Hémoires sur la Marquise</u> | |

Contents, general:

In the following, a few shorter quotations are left in the original French, while longer citations from French and passages in Russian are translated. In her notes to the entries on Russian works Lydie writes mainly in French but occasionally in Russian, and once or twice she segues from one language to the other in mid-sentence.

The earliest entries, for the summer of 1867, contain mainly cursory notes. Two of her favorite writers, often returned to, appear in this *Livre No. 1*: one is Dickens, read in either French or English: *Pickwick Club* for example, and *Dombey et fils* are “chefs d’oeuvre,” and *Nicholas Nickleby* is “magnifique.” *David Copperfield* she has read 10 times, “always with the same pleasure and admiration,” but she finds *Oliver Twist* disappointing – “much less interesting than his other works.”

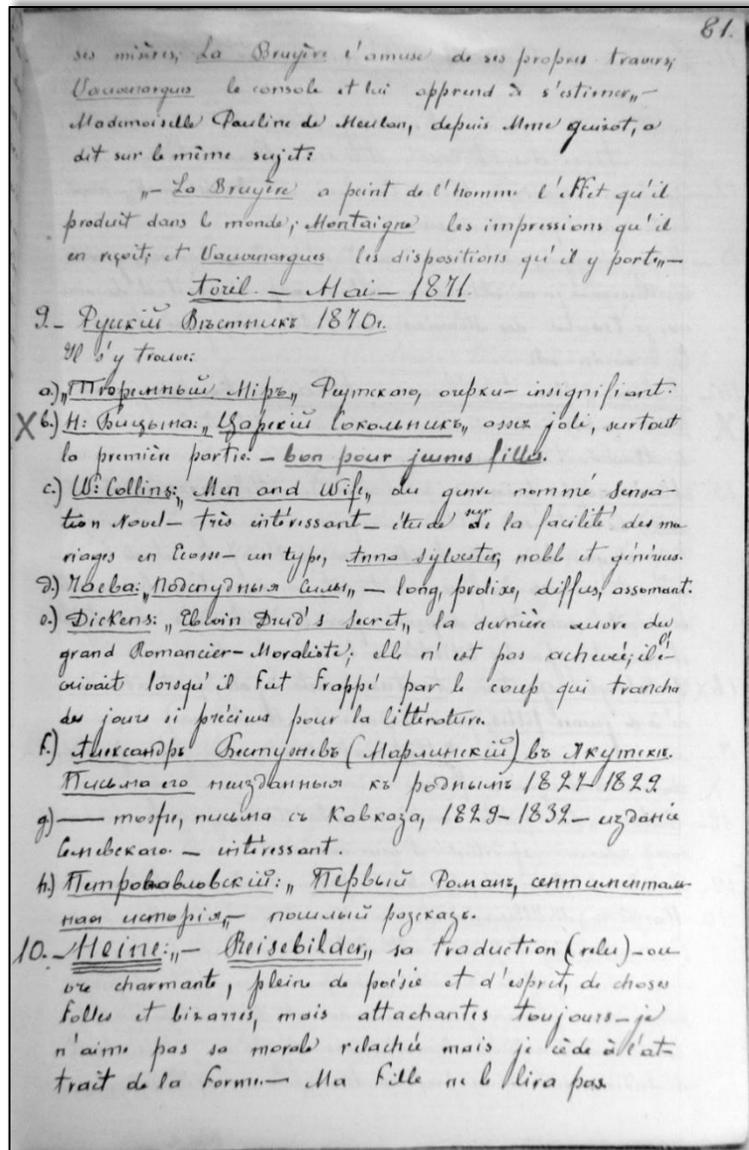
The other is George Sand, with whom she has a more complex relationship: Sand’s *Théâtre de Nohant* is “stupide,” the same writer’s *La Marquise* is “révoltant,” but Sand (the pen name of Aurore Dupin, baronne Dudevant) provokes a love-hate reaction and many outbursts: *charmant*, *épouvantable*, *ignoble* are among the epithets reserved for her works. Lydie read virtually everything of Sand’s impressive output, having assigned herself the task of reading “all the works of this unhealthy genius, the brilliance of whose talent attracts me and whose morals and principles repulse me” (pp. 34-35). For Sand’s scandalous and melodramatic *Lélia*, Lydie exclaims in dismayed fascination, “... cet abominable ouvrage, c’est infâme, c’est infâme! ... mais ô malheur! Que ce poison a de charmes!” Elsewhere she says of Sand that “it is not the human heart that George Sand paints, it is from filth and mud that she takes her subjects and decorates them with an, alas, magnificent style” (pp. 6-7). Lydie’s fixation on this “apostle of a...” [sic, adultery] is almost comical to the modern reader. She transcribes some of Sand’s more shocking passages, and then calls on Dante, asking rhetorically, “implacable but just Dante, in which corner of your Inferno would you have placed this immoral and shameless woman, this dangerous author, this fearful sophist, this immense and terrible talent?” (p. 34). A year later, she reads all ten volumes of Sand’s extraordinary autobiography *Histoire de Ma Vie*, aloud! (pp. 66-68). This was her third reading of it – throughout the journal she notes how many times she has read a book, returning to many after several years’ interval, noting her differing reactions as time passes. She returns to Sand regularly, her works appearing throughout the journal.

Lydie’s brief assessments are eloquent: Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* (in a French translation) is “bien joli” while Arsène Houssaye’s *La Comédienne d’autrefois* is “sot et nul.” Gérard de Nerval wins her approval with the *Voyage en Orient*: “intéressant, immoral, fou.” Starting here and throughout the journal, she notes the books that she has reread, including Currer Bell (Charlotte Brontë), *The Professor* (in French) (“charmant”). Jules Verne, *Voyage au centre de la terre* is *fantastique, hérissé de termes savants* (p. 112).

As the journal progresses, the notes become longer. Lydie finds Stendhal’s marvelous psychological study of love, *De l’Amour*, boring and formulaic (p. 83). On Homer, after reading the *Iliad*, in the translation of Mme. Dacier, she remarks on the “abuse of comparisons” and above all of battles, some of which she skips, and admits that she prefers Dante: “I persist in my corrupted taste and conserve my preference for the Divine Comedy, full of profound thoughts, sublime images, and interesting personages” (p. 83). Elsewhere she regrets not having a better knowledge of Italian, for even in translation the language sings. In contrast, from Virgil’s *Bucolics* and *Georgics*, also read in translation, the only pleasure she derives is “to have finished it, never to start again.”

In January 1871, Lydie launches into the French moralists, with Vauvenargues, and berates herself for avoiding them for so many years under the assumption that they would be boring. She copies the

thoughts and passages that strike her most into “a book intended for that purpose” (p. 74). Reading Pascal, another author whom she had “avoided for so long, believing him above my grasp,” leaves her with her “soul sanctified, her spirit enlarged, and her intelligence more developed” (p. 75). La Rochefoucauld’s cynicism and misogyny horrify her, and she devotes four pages to transcriptions of his most brutal maxims and of selections from various essays on him and on the other French moralists, including Pascal, Vauvenargues, La Bruyère, and Montaigne (pp. 77-81).



Of theater she reads Beaumarchais, Racine, Corneille, whose “male genius” she prefers to Racine (except of course for *Phèdre*, p. 120), Sardou, Dumas, Voltaire, Manzoni, Emile de Girardin, Ostrovsky... She rereads Molière “with as much delight as ever”; some of the plays I had never read, others had been read aloud to us, suppressing certain passages” (p. 64).

To Octave Feuillet’s novel *Monsieur de Camors* she devotes a long paragraph, praising him for his ability to portray women accurately (pp. 2-3). Of the same author’s light-hearted early novel *Onesta, conte vénitien* (1847), “a mix-up [chassé-croisé] of vice and virtue in which a Don-Juan swordsman is converted by love and an aspiring monk is depraved by love,” she writes that were the author’s name

not stated one would find the book worthy of attribution to the “grrrand [sic] Dumas” (p. 29). She adds that she read this work “with Zizi,” her cousin Anatole Naryshkin’s wife (cf. Hédouville, p. 198).

Her dry humor surfaces frequently. She writes (in Russian) of Vasily Kelsiyev’s *Experiences and Thoughts* [*Perezhitoye i peredumannoye*], “Kelsiyev has the disease of analysis, he wants to research, study everything, reach conclusions, which makes him unbearably boring and heavy; one can see his great self-esteem and that that self-esteem turned him into an exile and forced him to return, so that he could become the talk of the town. The goal has been achieved; we’ve talked and forgotten about him” (p. 13).

She reads many works of history, memoirs of statesmen and heads of state, and political treatises. In the autumn of 1870, in the immediate aftermath of the defeat of France, led by the “execrated” Napoléon

III, *l'homme de Sedan*," she reads the first four volumes of Pierre Lanfrey's *Histoire de Napoléon I^{er}* (1867-1875). Relaying with colorful epithets the exaggerated praise and blame of Napoleon's supporters and detractors respectively, she approves of Lanfrey's methodical presentation of documentation to back up his assessment of Napoléon I in all his "greatness and smallness." Notwithstanding his "repulsive egotism, lack of faith and honesty, envious hatred of every rival fame, incredible indifference to humanity which depopulated all of Europe and shook all thrones," Napoleon's undeniable military glory, "and the halo of his expiation on St. Helena," contrast him favorably with his nephew Napoleon III, still imprisoned in Westphalia at this time, beneath whose veneer of cleverness and wit lay only "corruption, corruption, corruption" (pp. 68-70).

Queen Victoria's *Journal*, which she reads in French (probably the 1869 edition, a translation of *Leaves from the journal of our life in the Highlands, from 1848 to 1861* [London 1868]) provokes her astonishment that a woman of 20 with much experience of travel should not perceive more and express herself better: "one might forgive a 10-year old girl for writing this way," but although "much applauded in England," the work is not only of "too local an interest for the rest of Europe," it is "appallingly mediocre" (p. 128).

Starting in 1870, Lydie includes journals and newspapers in the recapitulative table of her year's reading, and she refers to them more often. Reviewing, for example, a book by the journalist Eugène Pelletan, *La Nouvelle Babylone, Lettres d'un provincial en tournée à Paris* (1863), which describes a Paris «corrupted by Bonapartism,» she asks rhetorically, "Will Paris, rid of its dethroned Ceasar, have the strength to regenerate itself? – I doubt it, and the news in the papers confirms my fears" [p. 76]). Describing a work of the Count Agénor de Gasparin, she refers to socialism and communism as "these two plagues of the 19th century."

Like all of her family, Lydie was a believer, and every year includes some reading of religious treatises and devotional works. In the last two years covered by the journal she even reads some prophecies and mystical works, including the abbé Jean-Marie Curicque's *Voix prophétiques; ou, Signes, apparitions et prédictions modernes touchant les grands événements de la Chrétienté au XIX^e siècle et vers l'approche de la fin des temps*, which she takes up as a skeptic and puts down as a believer, having transcribed passages from it at great length (pp. 108-111).

Lydie was hardly exempt from prejudice. In 1870, she reads Berthold Auerbach's *Das Landhaus am Rhein* in the Russian translation [by Turgenev], of which the first part had just appeared in 1869; she finds all the characters false, and objects to what she describes as Auerbach's goal, to make religion cede to science. She concludes with a jarringly anti-Semitic dig, "*le juif perce sous l'enveloppe d'Erich* [the scientist-hero]."

No matter what the subject of the book, Lydie's digressions, in which she gives free rein to her thoughts, beliefs, and memories, contain some of the most original and unusual passages of the journal. An indignant entry on "Mme. d'Epinay, the 2nd volume" (presumably Epinay's 3-volume *Mémoires et Correspondance*, 1818), devolves into a rant first against Rousseau, and by extension against the hypocrisy of all the "grands hommes" of the Enlightenment whose personal lives fell so far short of their loudly proclaimed ideals. Of Epinay's work she finds "no other merit than to be a counterweight to the *Confessions* of Jean-Jacques ... an impossible, acrimonious, irascible, hateful, envious, and consequently unhappy being... Having read his *Nouvelle Héloïse*, his *Emile* and the *Confessions* as well as an immense quantity of memoirs, letters and other writings of the 18th century, I take away from it all only disgust and pity for all this clique of philosophers and celebrated writers; I admire uniquely in Rousseau the writer, the chiseler, the Benvenuto Cellini of words, but the man revolts me and I say to myself with

profound stupefaction, `what?! Is this the friend of humanity, the great benefactor and illuminator [éclairneur] of the 18th century? What, this man who was unable to be a friend, a spouse, or a father, who put his five children in an orphanage and then wrote *Emile*, this grateful friend always ready to bite the hand that extends him generous benefits, this great citizen who renounced his country and his religion, it is to him that we raise statues and before him that all of thinking and writing humanity kneels!!! As far as I am concerned, miserable great man, I pity you and despise you, and I execrate the memory of all these Diderots, Grimms, d’Alemberts and d’Epinays etc. etc” (pp. 8-9). Four years later, in 1871, she rereads the *Confessions* (out loud) with the same reactions but somewhat more explicit praise for Rousseau’s style; followed soon after by *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, which she had to stop reading aloud, as it “put me to sleep invincibly, even during the day” (p. 87).

The Russians:

Lydie reads the Russian writers no less critically. She dislikes Turgenev’s *Home of the Gentry* (p. 11), and of his *Smoke* (1867) she writes, in May 1868, “What? Is that all? And this after *Fathers and Sons...*” (p. 10). Revisiting the latter in May 1869 (p. 63), she finds the characters universally unsympathetic. Of Goncharov’s *The Precipice*, his third novel (and the one he preferred), she praises the female character as “the elevated expression of the old woman in 19th-century Russia” (p 25). His first novel, *A Common Story*, she read *en famille* – “in the evening, around the fire, it’s a particularly agreeable way to enjoy a book together...” (pp. 63-64).

The long-running monthly journal *Russkiy Vestnik* (*Russian Messenger*), published during this period in Moscow, had become by mid-century one of the most influential literary magazines in Russia, and the principal novels of Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Turgenev, published serially, first appeared in its pages. Lydie read the journal religiously, often referring to works that appeared in it without naming the journal itself. One of these was *War and Peace*, of which parts of the first four volumes first appeared serially in *Russkiy Vestnik* in 1865 and 1866, under the title *Year 1805*. In 1867 Tolstoy abandoned the idea of publishing the novel in parts, significantly edited the text and published the first three volumes of the novel under the title *War and Peace*. In 1868 the fourth volume appeared, and in 1869 the fifth and sixth volumes. Further modifications to the first four volumes appeared in a second edition, while volumes five and six remained unchanged. It was only in 1873 that Tolstoy reduced the six parts to four, for the edition of 1873 which appeared in the *Works of Count L. N. Tolstoy in eight parts*.

Lydie read either the first or second edition, in six parts (being a faithful reader of *Russkiy Vestnik*, she probably had also read some of the early parts of 1805, when they first appeared in that journal). In 1868 she reads part 3: “the interest created by part 1, published last year, and further excited by the second part, languishes in this 3rd volume, which is quite weak in my opinion. I await the following volumes to judge it definitively, but I declare as of now that Natasha is repulsive” (p. 8). Having read through Part 5 by June 1869, she pens a disparaging three-page review (pp. 25-27): “read with increasing boredom and disgust: not because of the prejudiced travesty of the character of my illustrious and admirable grandfather, portrayed as a crazy buffoon, no, it is his spirit of belittling and mockery, this ironic tone when speaking of a great epoch that makes my stomach turn with indignation... Tolstoy sees everything through a magic monocle that shows only the ugly, mean and vulgar sides of everything...” Lydie scorned Tolstoy’s realism, she preferred to view this grandiose period of history through an epic lens, she doubted that he was Christian, and she found him arrogant and conceited. The work, “which is neither a novel, nor history, nor a work of philosophy” was for her far too long. A year later, in 1870 she reads the 6th and final part. Conceding that she is “reconciled somewhat to Natasha, who has become a good wife and mother,” she complains of “understanding nothing of the gobbledygook (*galimatias*) of the end, the philosophy of history à la Tolstoy, even though I read it attentively twice. To

sum up, the general impression is not favorable of this novel which when it was first published made a great impact and stirred up so much controversy, but which ultimately ended up boring anyone who was not revolted by it" (p. 56).

Illustrating again the differing perspective of contemporaries and later generations, she derived more enjoyment from Count Aleksey K. Tolstoy, the "excellent author of *Boris Godunov*," than from his second cousin Leo. Reading Aleksey's complete works the following year, she praises his "popular" poetry, written in the Russian of the old chronicles, and is softened by his "guilty but touchingly constant" love for Sophia Andrea Mille (née BachmétiEFF), whom she formerly despised and whom he later married. As often, Lydie's harsh judgment of women in nonconformist situations, is attenuated as she learns more of their circumstances. In this case she decides that "a woman who elicits such thoughts and speech could not possibly be vulgar" (pp. 70-71).

In principle, she admires Dostoevsky: she had read *Crime and Punishment* "with lively interest" when it came out in 1866; in 1870 she reads the book again, "with pleasure, and I admired anew this profound analysis of all of the sentiments of the human heart, which perhaps renders the reading a bit fatiguing; one's heart bleeds painfully at the recitation of all of these poignant and real miseries ... my impression [of this book] is positive enough to allow me to overlook the discomfort caused by the depiction of too realistic but hideous scenes" (p. 64). But *The Idiot*, which she read in 1868-69 as it appeared, in parts, in *Russkiy Vestnik*, leaves her bewildered: "this immense novel, which is far from completion in the December [1868] issue, is so mixed-up, diffuse, and bizarre, that it is impossible to form any kind of opinion of the action; apparently the author has not even halfway finished his work, and already I lack the courage to read it; it is sad to find such a name on such a strange and shapeless work" (pp. 37-38). In 1873 she commences *The Demons*, also published in *Russkiy Vestnik*.

Among other Russian authors read by Lydie was "that great poet and citizen" (p. 11) Vasily A. Zhukovsky, whose translations (or rather adaptations) of Homer, Goethe, Schiller, etc., became influential Russian classics on their own, and whose name "has become emblematic of Russian romanticism" (Cornwell, p. 918). She rereads her favorites from his Works, including "charming *Undina*" (his adaptation, into Russian hexameters, of De La Motte Fouqué's prose novella, used by Tchaikovsky for his first opera; p. 13). Of the realist novelist Aleksey Pisemsky, at the time considered an equal of Turgenev and Dostoevsky, she reads *Troubled Seas*, published in *Russkiy Vestnik* in 1864, judging it "gigantic, amoral, muddled and badly written," while his autobiographical *People of the Forties* is "very boring" (p. 54). Other portraits, both documentary and novelistic, of the state of Russia affect her deeply: the Russian Slavophile and statesman Yuri Samarin brings her to tears with his description of the sufferings of the peasants (p. 18); Vsevolod Krestovsky's novel *The Slums of St. Petersburg* (1864) arouses her ire, pity, and frustration at being "not rich" and thus unable to help (p. 51). "With heartwarming tenderness" she reads Count Mikhail Speransky's letters to his daughter from Siberia, where he was governor-general from 1819 (p. 22). She wonders how Alexander Herzen's "mediocre" novel *Who is to Blame?* could have been produced by his pen (p. 15). And the works of the now-forgotten Yevgeny Baratynsky, whom Pushkin had praised as Russia's finest Russian elegiac poet, she reads "with no pleasure, and with astonishment that such a mediocre author should have obtained such a reputation. I prefer his letters to his poems, as they provide a fine idea of the wit and morality of the man, who was worth more than the poet" (pp. 55-56).

Realism vs. Romanticism:

Not surprisingly, given her distaste for "realism," Lydie disliked *Madame Bovary*, which, in one of her rare slips, she attributes to Flaubert's contemporary Ernest Feydeau (pp. 30-31). In her defense, she must

have read the expurgated version, published in 1857, after Flaubert's trial, which made the work a best-seller, and which had "piqued her curiosity," but she finds the novel "flat, trivial, badly written, of a realism that makes one's stomach turn..." Nonetheless, she reads many realistic novels, in French and Russian, including, in 1873, Zola, still at the beginning of his career, with *La Curée*, volume 2 of what would be the 20-volume series *Les Rougon-Macquart* (cited without comment, p. [134]).

As one reads through the journal, Lydie's character and taste emerge: she demands of literature inspiration and elevation, and in writers and their fictional characters she values humility. The *Confessions* of Saint Augustine, for example, leave her cold, for he lacks that quality that she most prizes; she compares him unfavorably to Francis of Sales (her favorite saint), and is shocked by his "familiar manner of conversing with God." "I retained nothing beneficial to my soul from this reading; my mind undoubtedly profited, but that was not the result that I was seeking" (p. 66).

Romanticism, on the other hand, strikes an immediate chord. Of Johann Georg Zimmermann's *Solitude* (*Über die Einsamkeit*, in the French translation by X. Marmier), a Romantic work far more popular in France and England than in its original German, she writes that "it seemed to me that I was leafing through my own self" (*il me semblait que je me feuilletais moi-même*) ... I wanted to underline all the passages that pleased me the most and I underlined almost the whole book" (p. 47). Lamartine sends her into ecstasies (p. 115). Lydie also loved Alfred de Musset, and rereads his *Oeuvres complètes* in 1870 (pp. 61-63), which provokes another outburst against George Sand, whom she blames for de Musset's unhappiness and alcoholism. Her raptures reading the *Confessions d'un Enfant de Siècle*, on a day when she was sick in bed with a fever, and all of her sensations were "tripled", and the experience of losing herself in the book ("for a few enchanted hours I forgot my personality"), were an experience that "will be one of my life's memories."

Family and autobiography:

As for all dedicated readers, Lydie's reading was an integral part of her life, and the dynamism of the reciprocal influence between her reading and "real life" are constantly on display. Many entries evolve into autobiographical essays. Some works bring back her childhood – "Swift, Gulliver, the friend of my adolescence, along with the Swiss Family Robinson (*Robinson Suisse*) and Don Quixote of childhood – [I] reread this grand edition, with delight."² Others elicit more negative reactions. Her reading, in October 1868, of the life of the Russian mystic Anne Sophie de Swetchine (le Comte de Falloux, *La Vie et les Oeuvres de Madame Swetchine*, 1860), who converted to Catholicism, leads her to critical reflections on the conversions of her own family members, notably her grandmother Catherine "of inflexible memory," and her aunt the Comtesse de Ségur. Her grandmother, she notes, had been raised at the court of Catherine the Great, where only French was spoken, and she had never learned Russian (!) The same could not be said for Mme de Swetchine, whose conversion was more considered, and less reactionary, and in spite of her aversion for "apostasy" Lydie forgives her, especially in light of some of her more beautiful pieces, notably "Resignation" – "in which I found many things whose exactitude I was able to verify, having experienced them myself" (pp. 16-17).

An historical assessment of the actions of her "illustrious grandfather" Count Rostopchin, by Jean-Henri Schnitzler, *La Russie en 1812. Rostopchine et Koutousof, tableau de moeurs et essai de critique historique* (1863),

² A manuscript list of 42 books owned by Lydie and her two siblings, and written by them: "*Catalogue des livres appartenant à Olga, Lydie et Victor Rostopchine*," is transcribed in Hédouville, *Les Rostopchine*, p. 54. No. 21 is "Le Robinson Suisse, par Weyss, 1 vol." (Hédouville, pp. 53-54).

meets with her approval (pp. 57-59). Lydie's grandfather had died 12 years before she was born, but Schnitzler's portrait of him accords with the stories she had heard from her redoubtable grandmother (who "died in 1859 aged over 80, having kept until the age of 76 all her faculties of wit and remarkable intelligence"). The tragedy of Count Rostopchin's life was his fatherland's disavowal of his supposed decision to burn Moscow; although (she writes) it was recognized first by other European countries and then by Russia itself as the act that saved Russia and all of Europe from a victory by Napoleon, the bitterness of his humiliating disgrace by the Tsar haunted the Count. Lydie deplores his subsequent denial of his role in the fire, in a pamphlet published in Paris in 1823 (*La vérité sur l'incendie de Moscou*), but finds Schnitzler's too severe in condemning this act of weakness (the Count later admitted the truth); she attributes it to a "moment of anger for the ingratitude of his sovereign and his country."³

Most remarkable of all the autobiographical digressions in the journal is an 1870 entry on a biography by her cousin Anatole de Ségur (the Comtesse de Ségur's son) of their grandfather (*Vie du comte Rostopchine, gouverneur de Moscou en 1812*, Paris 1871), of which he had sent her the manuscript. This 8-page entry (pp. 98-105) amounts to a memoir of Lydie's family, and particularly of her grandmother, the Countess Ekaterina Petrovna Rostopchina, née Protassova. It contains first-hand accounts of shocking and extremely personal family incidents, and is charged with a rare outpouring of anguish and bitterness, in which Lydie blames all her family's problems and dissensions on her grandmother. She begins by praising her (Catholic) cousin's account of her grandfather, but politely differs on an historic point, concerning the death of their grandparents' youngest daughter Lise, who died in March 1824, age 18, from an "*étysie galopante*" (p. 58), probably pneumonia. According to Lydie, Ekaterina converted her daughter to Catholicism by force on her deathbed, having hidden from her husband the fact that their child was dying. (In his account Anatole stated that Fyodor had acquiesced in the conversion: his source was his mother, "who was already living in France at the time," Lydie sniffs.) Lydie describes a ghastly scene the next morning, of two priests, one Orthodox, one Catholic, confronting each other over the child's corpse. The dead girl's father was able to convince the Metropolitan that the conversion was false, and she was buried with the Orthodox rites. After this incident, which was, according to Lydie, the final nail in her grandfather's coffin (he died within two years), Fyodor changed his will, excluding his wife from the management of his 12-year old son Andrei's education, and enrolled the boy a Page to Tsar Nicholas I. Ekaterina retained half-rights of guardianship, but thanks to a corrupt co-guardian this also did not go well, and Lydie, by now addressing her dead grandmother directly, naturally blames her for the results: "you never used your maternal authority to guide him and turn him away from the path of evil!" (showing that mothers can never win). She relates several instances of pathological cruelty of her loathed grandmother, conveying the pain of genuine childhood trauma. She witnessed beggars sent away because they were not Catholic, or serfs beaten until half-dead – including one bleeding, pregnant woman – and then sent to exile in Siberia, because the manipulative estate manager had accused them of drinking, and Countess Ekaterina held drunkenness to be the most intolerable of all sins... Lydie's distaste for Catholicism would have been scarcely alleviated by later scenes of poor Catholic women touching her grandmother's tomb in order to imbibe her Sainthood – she whose alms were always given directly to the priests, never to the poor themselves. And she recalls witnessing her mother begging her grandmother on her knees to help her three grandchildren, imploring her to put some of her money out of reach of her profligate husband or

³ For a modern assessment of the incident, and a less starry-eyed view of Lydie's grandfather, including his role in the mob murder of Mikhail Vereshchagin, a writer accused of spying (Lydie refers to the episode in this passage, and Tolstoy depicts it in *War & Peace*), see Offord & Rjéoutski's introduction "Fiodor Rostopchin's life and career," on the University of Bristol website, and especially their note 5, containing bibliographical references to modern appraisals of the Moscow fire and Rostopchin's role in it.

they would be ruined, and her grandmother's response, "with that smile the memory of which makes my blood run cold, 'Eh, so much the better, they'll be more assured of getting to heaven.'" While somewhat lurid, Lydie's account of her grandmother's austere and exigent character is essentially borne out by descriptions of other family members and other contemporary accounts.⁴ After reading some of the family correspondence, Marthe de Hédouville remarked that the memory of Lise "remained alive and was amplified among the [Rostopchin] descendants, influencing for a long time their judgments, tastes, and religious and other stances." Generally, the Catholic and *francisés* descendants of the Comtesse de Ségur viewed her mother under a more favorable light than did the Rostopchin side of the family (hence their belief that Lise's conversion was genuine).

Elsewhere in the journal the closest Lydie comes to writing of her mother, who died when she was 20, is in a deeply felt 1870 entry on the philosopher, writer, music and literary critic, philanthropist, and scientific thinker Vladimir Odoyevsky, "a far more central figure in Russian cultural life of the nineteenth century than has generally been recognized" (Cornwell 1986, p. xi), who had died two years previously, and whose many letters to her mother Lydie was editing for publication. The passage, written in Russian, conveys well her familiarity with the intelligentsia of her time:

"'Memory of Prince Vladimir Fyodorovich Odoyevsky, the meeting of the Society of Lovers of Russian Literature, January 13, 1869.' This is a collection of various articles, written by Nik[olay] Vas[ilyevich] Putyata, Pogodin, Lopukhin, F. D. Timiryazev, and others, which were read by them at the first meeting of the Society after the death of that most dignified man and most wonderful Christian. I feel towards the deceased prince a deep love, respect, and tenderness, which is gradually growing in me, as I explore the meaning of his numerous letters to my late mother. Despite their age difference they were united by close friendship, which allowed the prince to address her in the tender familiar way in which a father treats his daughter. And my mother loved him, sincerely and devotedly, even though sometimes she liked to play jokes on him and make him angry, that is, she tried to make him angry, because no one ever managed to do that. I have recently heard from Baron Modest Andreevich Korf, who was for a long time a friend and at the same time a superior of the late prince, his aid at the Imperial Public Library, that the patience and humility of that man used to infuriate even Sergey Aleksandrovich Sobolevsky [a society wit and friend of Odoyevsky, as well as of Pushkin, Mérimée, and Stendhal], (who also recently passed away, at the beginning of this winter). He used to complain that he had never managed to anger Odoyevsky – and Sobolevsky was most skillful at enraging, offending, and distressing! He was smart, talented, brilliant, very well read, and his life orbited in the same sphere as the life of Odoyevsky. But what a great difference between their lives and the ways they died! Odoevsky will always remain in the memory of the people who knew him as a noble and pure reflection of love towards God, humankind, and science. All his life was a never-ending worship and industrious service to that lofty, inspiring fire. He was an exemplary Christian in the full meaning of the word, a valiant citizen, and a worthy son of science. His name will enter the annals of Russian history of development in the 19th century. But what would Sobolevsky's own friend say about him in ten years? '[indecipherable word] the deceased was and wrote hilarious rhymes!' And that's that. And who would pray for that poor soul who had released itself from Faith and given itself up to destructive, disgusting epicureanism? I am afraid to think about

⁴ For example, Lydie's aunt Natalya Naryshkina, her father's eldest sister, in a biographical memoir of her father, published in French and Russian in 1912 (*1812, Le comte Rostopchine et son temps*) described her feelings for her mother thus: "None of us ... in our childhood ever glimpsed gentleness or tenderness in her eyes. Her frightening strictness poisoned the days of our life in our paternal home. Few people liked her, all honored and admired her. She was quite charitable, but it was a cold charity" (cited by Hédouville, *Les Rostopchine*, pp. 23-24).

it! Yes, Sobolevsky lived for this life, and with it everything ended for him. But Odoyevsky lived for a different life, and his pure soul is now resting in the best of worlds. I am now busy copying his letters to my mother as a precious material for Russian literature and for the universal good" (pp. 75-76). (On the relationship of Odoyevsky and the Countess Rostopchina, see Cornwell, *Odoyevsky*, pp. 268-270.)

Women:

A masterful writer herself, Lydie read many women writers – of French writers, besides her fixation on George Sand, she read Mme de Stael, Mme de Maintenon, Mme de Genlis, Mme Augustus Craven (Pauline Marie Armande Aglaé Craven); among the English, Mrs. Gaskell [whom she called Mistriss [sic] Gaskell] (*Cranford*), Mistriss Trollope [Frances Milton Trollope], Mary Elizabeth Braddon; Charlotte Brontë as "Curren Bell"; Dinah Maria Mulock Craik, who published *The Woman's Kingdom* (1868) anonymously (Lydie finds it *ravissant*, p. 89); Mrs. Edwardes, Lady Charlotte Bury, Ouida (pseudonym of Maria Louise Ramé), Florence Marryat, and others; as well as the Norwegian writer Marie-Gabrielle Gjertz.

In December 1869 (pp. 47-50), she demolishes the last novel of the for a time popular writer Anastasia Marchenko, *Razluchniki* (*The Separate Ones*), published in 1858 under the male pseudonym "A. Temrizov" (cf. Ledkovsky, *Dictionary of Russian Women Writers*, 408-410). The work was a barely concealed libel of the family of Marchenko's estranged husband, 12 years her junior, who had left her for his sister's sister-in-law. As a well-informed member of the same social group, Lydie knew the inside story and describes the husband's wandering as entirely the fault of "that hateful woman," the ugly and ungrateful Marchenko, whose book ruined her children's lives and brought her lifelong unhappiness (according to Lydie). Her remarks on the effectiveness of libel and lies remain pertinent today: "[Marchenko's] goal, the defamation of the couple Gslavine, was completely met: the impression of general horror at the brother, accused of having sold his sister, and against this sister-in-law who played no less a role, will never be effaced; the unhappy victims will never recover from this blow: to obtain this result Mme Kiriakoff [Marchenko's married name] mixed falsehood with truth so artfully, she applied so skillfully Figaro's precept: "*Calomniez, calomniez, il en restera toujours quelque chose*," that even I, who know perfectly well [all the people involved] and the whole story in its smallest details, feel completely disoriented reading this unhealthy production, and am unable to untangle fact from fiction..."

She blasts the memoirs of her mother's recently deceased cousin Ekaterina Alexandrovna Sushkova (Khvostova, 1812-1868)), who spent her life rehashing Lermontov's youthful passion for her 16-year old self, and reminding all present of the few poems which he had dedicated to her (snorts Lydie, "most were already published"). Lydie mocks the looks of this woman who writes at length about her own faded beauty (pp. 38-46).

Contrasting with these reactions to women's memoirs from within her own circle is Lydie's reaction to Harriet Beecher Stowe's defense of the late Lady Byron, an exposé of Byron's reputed affair with his half-sister Aurora Leigh (which cost Stowe her own reputation). Citing the title as "History of the Byron controversy" (the full title is *Lady Byron vindicated: a history of the Byron controversy from its beginning in 1816 to the present time*), this "work that has revolutionized and impassioned England, indignant to see her idol knocked down from his pedestal," Lydie rails against the injustices (including from public opinion) visited upon his silent, suffering wife while Byron enjoyed the adulation of a public who considered him a poet-genius. She imagines these two deceased souls, "he with his shining cortège of glory and fame, the prestige of his genius and the smoke of all the incense which bathed him, and she who lived silent and forgotten, carrying in silence the weight of her pain

and the bitterness of her abandonment, who suffered in order to expiate his faults... scorned by men, she is great in the eyes of God!" (pp. 52-54). The theme of female revenge on the men who made them suffer would surface in Lydie's novel. (Elsewhere she lists the poems of Byron that she prefers [pp. 55-56], but all in all she is not a fan.)

The 8-volume *Memoires d'une Contemporaine*, the famous anonymous memoirs of the Dutch stage actress Maria Versfelt (also known as Ida Saint-Elme), whose many lovers included the French general Jean Victor Marie Moreau, leave Lydie more satisfied, probably in part because she did not know personally know the players, but also because of the writer's wit, brilliant imagination, and polished style (p. 29)

Was she a feminist? Not in modern parlance: of John Stuart Mill's *Subjection of Women* (1869), which she read in French in 1870, her review is brief and perhaps a bit condescending: "well-intentioned" (p. 57); she finds Richardson's virtuous *Clarissa* (read in Jules Janin's French translation) "the absolute model of feminine perfection"; and she praises feminine virtue (chastity) throughout. But these were the attitudes expected of a woman of her time, and her indignation at male arrogance and against misogynistic writing (not hard to find) was genuine. Having read the *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*, for example, she calls Chateaubriand a "swollen ball of amour-propre and ingratitude" (echoing a phrase used by both her father and grandfather in their descriptions of the archetypal Frenchman: "*un ballon gonflé de vanité*": cf. "Xenophobia in French") and she judges the language he uses toward his wife "simply revolting" (p. 94).

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