

Chapter 1 : François de La Rochefoucauld (writer) - Wikipedia

16 mo. ix. Maxims and Moral Reflections of the Duke de la Rochefoucauld: with a Memoir by the Chevalier de Chatelain. London, 12 mo. The perusal of the Maxims will suggest to every reader to a greater or less degree, in accordance with the extent of his reading, parallel passages, and similar ideas.

The editors assure us: Few books as widely read have provoked as much resistance. Most of us can no more look at it without wavering than we could the sun. We cannot bear the thought that it might be true; the consequences would be too painful. So, to shut our eyes to it, to avoid facing it, we rely on every psychological defence we can muster. The book is a work of cynicism, pessimism, scepticism, Jansenism, or some other limited and limiting -ism; we ourselves are much wiser, and take a broader, more balanced view of humanity. Or it is inconsistent, and contains its own refutation. Or it is true only of La Rochefoucauld himself how corrupt he must be, to be capable of thinking us corrupt! Or it may be true of many people, but it is not true of us. Or if it is, it is true of us only in our worst moments, or only in some details. Or if we do happen to entertain the thought that it might be wholly true, we entertain that thought only while actually reading it; a few minutes later we put the book aside and turn our minds to other, more comfortable things; we live, in practice, as if we had never read it. It would be this: There is more pride than kindness in our reprimands to people who are at fault; and we reprove them not so much to correct them as to convince them that we ourselves are free from such wrongdoing. In addition, here are a few more representative maxims: We would have few pleasures if we never flattered ourselves. While laziness and timidity keep us to the path of duty, our virtue often gets all the honour. The sure way to be deceived is to think yourself more astute than other people. After that, I guarantee that he will be the first to subscribe to them. If you can avoid anger towards a book that should appear pretty stupid? Are you then quite wise? Most probably you are just uncouth, lacking refinement of thought to even think so deeply of your own nature. Uncouthness is sometimes enough to save you from being deceived by a clever man. A Better Guide to Reading: A better approach one this reviewer would recommend to reading these Maxims is to force yourself into being the subject of every maxim no matter how hard it is on your pride. Accept the hard truths and heap them on yourselves. Reflect on possible actions that reflected on your hypocrisies, vanities and pride. Reflect on your self-deceit until you can accept easily that indeed you are prone to it. In summation, all virtues are derided and exposed. Shown to comprise of a malignant core. Self-flattery and Self-interest They form the core of all virtues, just as surely as of all vices. Virtue would not go so far if vanity did not keep her company. Indeed it will be difficult to persuade any man of good sense that they are being condemned for any other reasons than hidden self-interest, pride, and self-love. But our greatest virtue is the capacity for hypocrisy without which virtue would long have disappeared then? Hypocrisy is a form of homage that vice pays to virtue. An Overexertion to Avoid: As earlier, one can also slip into an alternative escape hatch: But, it is only pride - masquerading again. There is not even the need to explain this further. There is no escape once you embark on an examination of the basis of our virtues and vices.

Chapter 2 : Maxims, and Moral Reflections

The Maximes (; Maxims and Moral Reflections), his principal achievement, is a collection of epigrammatic reflections on human behaviour, expressed in the most universal terms: the general tone is bitingly cynical, self-interest being seen as the source of all actions. If a more positive message is to.

Some apology must be made for an attempt "to translate the untranslatable. Though so often translated, there is not a complete English edition of the Maxims and Reflections. All the translations are confined exclusively to the Maxims, none include the Reflections. This may be accounted for, from the fact that most of the translations are taken from the old editions of the Maxims, in which the Reflections do not appear. Suard devoted his attention to the text of Rochefoucauld, the various editions were but reprints of the preceding ones, without any regard to the alterations made by the author in the later editions published during his life-time. So much was this the case, that Maxims which had been rejected by Rochefoucauld in his last edition, were still retained in the body of the work. Aime Martin in published an edition of the Maxims and Reflections which has ever since been the standard text of Rochefoucauld in France. They were first published with the Maxims in an edition by Gabriel Brotier. In an edition of Rochefoucauld ent. These fifty form the third supplement to this book. While the Reflections, in which the thoughts in the Maxims are extended and elaborated, now appear in English for the first time. And secondly, that it is an attempt to quote the preface of the edition of "to do the Duc de la Rochefoucauld the justice to make him speak English. The society of the last half of the seventeenth, and the whole of the eighteenth centuries, was doubtless greatly influenced by the precise and terse mode in which the popular writers of that date expressed their thoughts. To a people naturally inclined to think that every possible view, every conceivable argument, upon a question is included in a short aphorism, a shrug, and the word "voila," truths expressed in condensed sentences must always have a peculiar charm. It is, perhaps, from this love of epigram, that we find so many eminent French writers of maxims. No other country can show such a list of brilliant writers--in England certainly we cannot. Our most celebrated, Lord Bacon, has, by his other works, so surpa. The only Englishman who could have rivalled La Rochefoucauld or La Bruyere was the Earl of Chesterfield, and he only could have done so from his very intimate connexion with France; but unfortunately his brilliant genius was spent in the impossible task of trying to refine a boorish young Briton, in "cutting blocks with a razor. Voltaire, whose opinion on the century of Louis XIV. Descended from the ancient Dukes of Guienne, the founder of the Family Fulk or Foucauld, a younger branch of the House of Lusignan, was at the commencement of the eleventh century the Seigneur of a small town, La Roche, in the Angoumois. Our chief knowledge of this feudal lord is drawn from the monkish chronicles. As the benefactor of the various abbeys and monasteries in his province, he is naturally spoken of by them in terms of eulogy, and in the charter of one of the abbeys of Angouleme he is called, "vir n. From that time until that great crisis in the history of the French aristocracy, the Revolution of , the family of La Rochefoucauld have been, "if not first, in the very first line" of that most ill. The eighth Seigneur Guy performed a great tilt at Bordeaux, attended according to Froissart to the Lists by some two hundred of his kindred and relations. In he was created a baron, and was afterwards advanced to a count, on account of his great service to Francis and his predecessors. The second count pushed the family fortune still further by obtaining a patent as the Prince de Marsillac. His widow, Anne de Polignac, entertained Charles V. Quintin, and only regained his liberty to fall a victim to the "b. His son, the fourth count, saved with difficulty from that ma. Yriex la Perche, and murdered by the Leaguers in cold blood. His son Francis, the second duke, by his writings has made the family name a household word. The third duke fought in many of the earlier campaigns of Louis XIV. His son, the fourth duke, commanded the regiment of Navarre, and took part in storming the village of Neerwinden on the day when William III. He was afterwards created Duc de la Rochequyon and Marquis de Liancourt. The fifth duke, banished from Court by Louis XV. The sixth duke, the friend of Condorcet, was the last of the long line of n. In those terrible days of September, , when the French people were proclaiming universal humanity, the duke was seized as an aristocrat by the mob at Gisors and put to death behind his own carriage, in which sat his mother and his wife, at the very place where, some six

centuries previously, his ancestor had been taken prisoner in a fair fight. A modern writer has spoken of this murder "as an admirable reprisal upon the grandson for the writings and conduct of the grandfather. Sainte Beuve observes as to this, he can see nothing admirable in the death of the duke, and if it proves anything, it is only that the grandfather was not so wrong in his judgment of men as is usually supposed. Francis, the author, was born on the 15th December Sainte Beuve divides his life into four periods, first, from his birth till he was thirty-five, when he became mixed up in the war of the Fronde; the second period, during the progress of that war; the third, the twelve years that followed, while he recovered from his wounds, and wrote his maxims during his retirement from society; and the last from that time till his death. These four ladies are the d. His natural talents and his habits of observation soon, however, supplied all deficiencies. By birth and station placed in the best society of the French Court, he soon became a most finished courtier. Knowing how precarious Court favour then was, his father, when young Rochefoucauld was only nine years old, sent him into the army. He was subsequently attached to the regiment of Auvergne. Though but sixteen he was present, and took part in the military operations at the siege of Ca. By joining in the plots of Gaston of Orleans, he gave Richelieu an opportunity of ridding Paris of his opposition. When those plots were discovered, the Duke was sent into a sort of banishment to Blois. His son, who was then at Court with him, was, upon the pretext of a liaison with Mdlle. Vivonne, and that she was the mother of five sons and three daughters, nothing is known of her. While Rochefoucauld and his father were at Blois, the d. She and Rochefoucauld met, and soon became intimate, and for a time she was destined to be the one motive of his actions. Into this plot Rochefoucauld threw himself with all his energy; his connexion with the Queen brought him back to his old love Mdlle. The course he took shut him off from all chance of Court favour. The King regarded him with coldness, the Cardinal with irritation. Although the Bastile and the scaffold, the fate of Chalais and Montmorency, were before his eyes, they failed to deter him from plotting. He was about twenty-three; returning to Paris, he warmly sided with the Queen. He says in his Memoirs that the only persons she could then trust were himself and Mdlle. Into this plan he entered with all his youthful indiscretion, it being for several reasons the very one he would wish to adopt, as it would strengthen his influence with Anne of Austria, place Richelieu and his master in an uncomfortable position, and save Mdlle. But Richelieu of course discovered this plot, and Rochefoucauld was, of course, sent to the Bastile. During this period he was more or less engaged in plotting against his enemy the Cardinal, and hatching treason with Cinq Mars and De Thou. The bitter disappointment of the pa. The cutting cynicism of the morality was built on the ruins of that chivalrous ambition and romantic affection. He saw his friend Cinq Mars sent to the scaffold, himself betrayed by men whom he had trusted, and the only reason he could a. Rochefoucauld returned to Court, and found Anne of Austria regent, and Mazarin minister. They were bitterly disappointed. Mazarin relied on hope instead of grat. The most that any received were promises that were never performed. He was flatly refused. Disappointment gave rise to anger, and uniting with his old flame, the d. The plot was, of course, discovered and crushed. Beaufort was arrested, the d. This lady, young, beautiful, and accomplished, obtained a great ascendancy over Rochefoucauld, and was the cause of his taking the side of Conde in the subsequent civil war. Rochefoucauld did not stay long with the army. He was badly wounded at the siege of Mardik, and returned from thence to Paris. On recovering from his wounds, the war of the Fronde broke out. This war is said to have been most ridiculous, as being carried on without a definite object, a plan, or a leader. But this description is hardly correct; it was the struggle of the French n. With the general history of that war we have nothing to do; it is far too complicated and too confused to be stated here. The memoirs of Rochefoucauld and De Retz will give the details to those who desire to trace the contests of the factions--the course of the intrigues. We may confine ourselves to its progress so far as it relates to the Duc de la Rochefoucauld. Leaving her at Dieppe, he went into Poitou, of which province he had some years previously bought the post of governor. He was there joined by the Duc de Bouillon, and he and the Duke marched to, and occupied Bordeaux. Cardinal Mazarin and Marechal de la Meilleraie advanced in force on Bordeaux, and attacked the town. Rochefoucauld defended the town with the greatest bravery, and repulsed the Cardinal. Notwithstanding the repulse, the burghers of Bordeaux were anxious to make peace, and save the city from destruction. The Parliament of Bordeaux compelled Rochefoucauld to surrender. He did so, and returned nominally to Poitou,

but in reality in secret to Paris. There he found the Queen engaged in trying to maintain her position by playing off the rival parties of the Prince Conde and the Cardinal De Retz against each other. Rochefoucauld eagerly espoused his old party--that of Conde. In August, , the contending parties met in the Hall of the Parliament of Paris, and it was with great difficulty they were prevented from coming to blows even there. It is even said that Rochefoucauld had ordered his followers to murder De Retz. Rochefoucauld was soon to undergo a bitter disappointment. While occupied with party strife and faction in Paris, Madame de Chevreuse left him, and formed an alliance with the Duc de Nemours. Rochefoucauld still loved her. It was, probably, thinking of this that he afterwards wrote, "Jealousy is born with love, but does not die with it. The Duc de Nemours was soon after killed in a duel. The war went on, and after several indecisive skirmishes, the decisive battle was fought at Paris, in the Faubourg St.

Chapter 3 : The Moral Maxims and Reflections of the Duke de la Rochefoucauld - Sinopsis y Precio | FNAO

*Reflections or Sentences and Moral Maxims [Francois De la Rochefoucauld] on www.nxgvision.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. The philosophy of La Rochefoucauld, which influenced French intellectuals as diverse as Voltaire and the Jansenists.*

He distinguished himself as the most brilliant nobleman about the court, and by his share in the good graces of the celebrated Duchess of Longueville, was involved in the civil wars of the Fronde. He signalized his courage at the battle of St. Antoine, in Paris, and received a shot which for some time deprived him of his sight. By the former of these ladies, he is spoken of as holding the first rank in "courage, merit, tenderness, and good sense. Huet describes him as possessing a nervous temperament, which would not allow him to accept a seat in the French Academy, owing to his want of courage to make a public speech. The Duke de Rochefoucauld died with philosophic tranquillity, at Paris, in , in his sixty-eighth year. The "Maxims" receive a portion of their peculiar point from the very courtly scene of contemplation, and from the delicacy and finesse with which the veil is penetrated that is spread over the surface of refined society. It is well known that Swift was a decided admirer of Rochefoucauld, and his celebrated poem on his own death commences with an avowal of the fact. The family of La Rochefoucauld is one of the most ancient and illustrious in France. Its founder, according to Andrew Du Chesne, was one Foucauld, or Fulk, a cadet, as is supposed, of the house of Lusignan, or Lezignem, and connected with the ancient Dukes of Guienne, who appears, about the period A. He is described in contemporary charters as *Vir nobilissimus Fulcaldus*, and his renown seems to have been sufficiently extensive to confer his name on La Roche, which has ever since borne, and bestowed on his descendants, the distinctive appellation of La Roche Foucauld. Guy, the eighth Seigneur de la Roche Foucauld, is mentioned by Froissart as having performed, in the year , a celebrated tilt in the lists at Bordeaux, whither he came, attended by of his kinsmen and connections. Francis, the sixteenth seigneur, had the honor of being sponsor to, and bestowing his name on, King Francis I. The widow of his son and successor, in the year , entertained, at the family seat of Vertueil, the Emperor Charles V. The Emperor is reported by a contemporary historian to have said on his departure, that he had never entered a house which possessed such an air of virtue, courtesy, and nobility as that. Francis, the fifth count, was created the Duke de la Rochefoucauld in , and was father to Francis, the second duke, the celebrated author of the Maxims, who was born on the 15th December, The principal events of his life are matter of history rather than biography, as he was a leading actor in the numerous and complicated state intrigues which took place in France after the death of Louis XIII. It is extremely difficult at this period, and would hardly be worth while, to attempt to trace the course of these cabals and the wars to which they gave rise. Beyond the gratification of an absurd ambition, it is almost impossible to discover any object that the contending parties had in view; and the motives of individuals are still more difficult to penetrate, from the conflicting accounts given by the various actors themselves, of the transactions in which they were engaged. The impression left on the mind by a perusal of the histories of the times, is a painful sensation of the corruption of the government, the sad want of public, or even private, principle on the part of the higher classes, and the frivolity and folly generally prevalent in the society of the period. To these princes La Rochefoucauld appears to have remained faithful during all the subsequent mutations of the party. He took part in most of the military proceedings that resulted from the troubles of the times; and though he does not appear much in the character of a general, is universally allowed to have displayed the greatest bravery on all occasions. At the battle of St. Antoine, near Paris, he received a severe wound in the head, which for a time deprived him of sight, and was the occasion of terminating his military career. Before he had recovered, the Fronde had fallen before the gold of Mazarin and the arms of Turenne. La Rochefoucauld appears to have been a man of most amiable character and of high personal probity; for, amid the various party feelings of the writers of that period, scarcely any thing can be discovered in the accounts they have left which would throw discredit on him. He possessed brilliant powers of mind, but without any regular education; and an easiness of temper, combined, as it generally is, with fickleness and indecision, which is supposed to have led him to engage so constantly in the various intrigues of the time. He

has left us an entertaining sketch of himself, which is subjoined, together with another character of him by Cardinal de Retz, his great enemy, and also a character of De Retz, by La Rochefoucauld. In the leisure which succeeded to the stir of his early life. La Rochefoucauld composed the "Memoirs of his own Times," and the work on which his fame is founded, "Maxims and Moral Reflections. He appears to have taken considerable pains with their composition, submitting them frequently for the approval of his numerous circle of friends, and altering some of them, according to Segrais, nearly thirty times. Hallam observes, has been more highly extolled or more severely censured. Johnson has pronounced it almost the only book written by a man of fashion, of which professed authors had reason to be jealous. Rousseau calls it, Conf. This little collection was read with avidity; it taught people to think and to comprise their thoughts in a lively, precise, and delicate turn of expression. This was a merit which, before him, no one in Europe had attained, since the revival of letters. La Rochefoucauld is, at all events, the model of this mode of writing, in which success indeed is rare, but when attained, it has many charms for the reader. For first, it trieth the writer whether he be superficial or solid; for aphorisms, except they be ridiculous, cannot be made but of the pith and heart of sciences; for discourse of illustration is cut off; recitals of example are cut off; discourse of connection and order is cut off; descriptions of practice are cut off: Secondly, methods are more fit to win consent or belief, but less fit to point to action; for they carry a kind of demonstration in orb or circle, one part illuminating another, and therefore satisfy; but particulars being dispersed, do best agree with dispersed directions. And lastly, aphorisms representing a knowledge broken, do invite men to inquire further; whereas methods, carrying the show of a total, do secure men, as if they were at furthest. It is, besides, no mean advantage to be spared the exertion of wading through and deciding upon the successive stages, each perhaps admitting of discussion, of a tedious and involved argument, and to be presented at once with ready-made conclusions. Where so much proof is required, men are apt to think much doubt exists; and a simple enunciation of a truth is, on this account perhaps, the more imposing from our not being admitted, as it were, behind the scenes, and allowed to inspect the machinery which has produced the result. There is, besides, a yearning after infallibility to a greater or less degree latent in every human heart, that derives a momentary gratification from the oracular nature of these declarations of truth, which seem to be exempt from the faults and shortcomings of human reason, and to spring, with all the precision of instinct, full grown to light, like Minerva from the head of Jupiter. For the sake of rendering the turn of expression more smart and epigrammatic, truth is sometimes distorted, sometimes laid down in such general and unqualified terms as sober reason would not warrant. La Rochefoucauld is by no means free from this fault, which perhaps is inseparable from the species of composition we are considering, and may be regarded as the price we pay for its other advantages. But while the style of the "Maxims" has been almost universally admired, the peculiar views of morals they present have been the subject of much cavil. Now all this confusion might be avoided by stating to ourselves wherein the idea of self-love consists, as distinguished from all particular movements towards particular external objects, the appetites of sense, resentment, compassion, curiosity, ambition, and the rest. With regard to the question whether La Rochefoucauld meant to represent self-love, in its more extended sense, as the motive of all human actions, it seems not altogether fair to charge him with the inculcation of any particular theory or system, in the same manner as if the maxims were formal deductions from a regularly reasoned treatise, instead of being, as they are, unconnected observations on mankind and their actions. It opens gates suicidally on the morals of the actor, because a long course of imposition on others invariably ends in self-deceit; "We are so much accustomed to disguise ourselves to others," as our Author remarks, "that at length we disguise ourselves to ourselves. But this assumption is still more pernicious to the interests of virtue itself To use a common illustration nothing depreciates a sound coinage more than the existence of well-executed counterfeits. Nothing tends so much to disgust men with goodness, as the hollowness and artificiality of what is palmed on them for goodness. Repeatedly disappointed in their search for the reality, they are led to doubt its existence, and it is this feeling which is embodied in the bitter exclamation of the despairing Roman: It will readily be admitted also that any inquiry into the reality of virtue must go deeply into the theory of human motives. An action may be externally virtuous; but, when the motive comes to be examined, may prove to be deserving of censure rather than commendation. And it is evident that, to constitute a virtuous action a virtuous motive is

absolutely necessary. In these instances the result may be beneficial; but, so far as the actor is concerned, this is evidently an accidental effect to which it would be preposterous to give the name of virtue. Truly he may be said to have "anatomized" man and shown what breeds about his heart. The spectacle he offers us is, it may be admitted, decidedly gloomy, and by no means gratifying to human pride; but on the other hand, La Rochefoucauld is very far from denying, as has been represented, the reality of virtue. The reason appears to be, that a general statement of a principle, as it concerns no one in particular, comes home to no one more than another; but a close and searching scrutiny, like that of the maxims, into the motives of particular actions, must raise an uncomfortable sensation in every breast, which is thus, made to feel its own failings. Men have a direct interest in maintaining appearances; if they have not the virtue, they at least may "assume it," and they are naturally irritated at the dissipation of those delusions which facilitated the assumption. There may certainly appear some want of charity in any attempt to throw discredit on the motives of an action; but in practice it will be found that every well-constituted mind, in proportion as it becomes more sensible of the numerous and inherent failings of human nature, is more and more willing to make allowance for weaknesses it knows to be so difficult to remedy, for temptations which it feels are so hard to struggle with; and no longer thirsting for. It is his own heart that they should teach him most to reflect upon. He will thus avoid any breaches of charity, and be led to the true utility of the maxims, namely, the aid they give to the extirpation of the dangerous habit of self-deceit, the habit of all others the most fatal to virtue. They can hardly fail to open the eyes of men to the various and singular modes in which self-delusion operates, the readiness with which glosses over error, the acuteness with which it discovers excuses applicable only to itself, nay, the perverse subtlety with which it would palm off its very errors as instances of virtue. No man who is thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the maxims, can pretend to that degree of mental obliquity which looks for illustrations of their working solely in the conduct of others. Should it still be considered that La Rochefoucauld presents us with too low a view of human nature to serve the purposes of morality, it should be remembered, in his defence as an author, that the times in which he lived, and the political and moral state of the society of his day, are known to have closely corresponded with the general picture he has offered us, and in this respect may be said to afford him a complete justification. Neither is it fair as before remarked, to charge La Rochefoucauld with any deliberate system of vilifying human nature, or with any theory destructive to morality. Like Montaigne, he might plead, that he was not so much an instructor as an observer: First Published in I am of a middling size, active and well proportioned. My complexion is dark, but sufficiently uniform; forehead high and tolerably large; eyes black, small and deep set, and eyebrows black and thick, but well arched. I should have some difficulty in describing my nose, for it is neither flat, aquiline, large, nor pointed; at least, I think not: My mouth is large; the lips sufficiently red in general, and neither well nor badly shaped. My teeth are white and tolerably even. I have been sometimes told that I have rather too much chin. I have just been examining myself in the glass to ascertain the fact; and I have not been able to make up my mind about it. As to the shape of my face, it is either square or oval; but which, it would be very difficult for me to say. My hair is black, curling naturally, and, moreover, thick enough and long enough to give me some pretensions to a fine head. In my countenance there is something sorrowful and proud, which gives many people an idea that I am contemptuous, although I am far from being so. My gestures are easy, indeed rather too much so; producing a great degree of action in discourse. He has taken part several conclaves, and his conduct has always increased his reputation. His natural bent is to indolence; nevertheless, he labors with activity in pressing business, and reposes with indifference when it is concluded. He has great presence of mind and knows so well how to turn it to his own advantage all the occasions presented him by fortune, that it would seem as if he had foreseen and desired them. He loves to narrate, and seeks to dazzle all his listeners indifferent by his extraordinary adventures; and his imagination oft supplies him with more than his memory. He is incapable of envy or of avarice whether from virtue or from carelessness. He has neither taste nor refinement; he is amused in every thing, and pleased by nothing. He avoids, with considerable address, allowing people to penetrate the slight acquaintance he has with every thing. It never reposes out of itself, and only settles on strange objects, as bees do on flowers, to extract what is useful to it. There is nothing so impetuous as its desires, nothing so secret as its plans, nothing so clever as its conduct. We cannot sound the depths, nor penetrate the darkness of

its abysses. There it is concealed from the keenest eyes, it goes through a thousand turns and changes. There it is often invisible to itself; it conceives, nourishes, and brings up, without being conscious of it, a vast number of loves and hates. Some of these it forms so monstrous, that when brought to light it is unable to recognize them, or cannot resolve to own them. From this darkness, which conceals it, spring the ridiculous ideas it has of itself; hence come its errors, its ignorances, its grossness, and its follies with respect to itself. Hence it comes that it fancies its sentiments dead when they are only asleep, it thinks that it has no desire to arise from its repose, and believes that it has lost the appetite which it has satiated. But this thick darkness which conceals it from itself does not prevent its seeing perfectly every external objectâ€™ in this, resembling our eyes, which see every thing and are only blind to themselves; in fact, in its greatest interests and in its most important affairs, where the violence of its desires call for all its attention, it sees, it perceives, it understands, it imagines, it suspects, it penetrates, it divines every thing; so much so, that one is tempted to believe that each of our passions has a magic peculiar to itself. Nothing is so close and so firm as its attachments, which it vainly endeavors to break off at the appearance of the extreme evils which menace it. Sometimes however, it accomplishes in a short time, and without effort, what it had not been able to effect in the course of several years with all the efforts in its power; whence we may conclude, not unjustly, that its desires are excited by itself, rather than by the beauty and the merit of their objects; that its own taste is the price which gives them value, and the cosmetic which sets them off; that it is only itself which it pursues, and that it follows its own taste when it follows things after its taste. It is a compound of contraries, it is imperious and obedient, sincere and dissembling, compassionate and cruel, timid and daring; it has various inclinations according to the various temperaments which affect it, and devote it, sometimes to glory, sometimes to riches, and sometimes to pleasure; it changes them according to the changes of our age, our fortune, and our experience. It is indifferent to it, whether it has many inclinations, or only one, because it shares itself among many, or collects itself into one as may be necessary or agreeable to it.

Chapter 4 : Moral Reflections, Sentences and Maxims - Wikisource, the free online library

The full title of the text is Reflections or Aphorisms and Moral Maxims; and in centered text below the title are the words "Our virtues are usually only vices in disguise." The subtitle says as much as the title.

He joined the army the following year and almost immediately established himself as a public figure. He fought bravely in the annual campaigns, though his actions were never formally recognised. Under the patronage of Madame de Chevreuse, whom he met at this time, the first of the three celebrated women who influenced his life, he joined the service of Queen Anne of Austria. He was a conspicuous figure in the siege of Paris, fought in many of the frequent military engagements, and was seriously wounded at the siege of Mardyke. In the battle of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, in 1670, he was shot through the head. For some years thereafter, he retired to his country estate of Verteuil. He wrote his memoirs during this time, as did many of his prominent contemporaries. In 1681, the Dutch firm House of Elzevir surreptitiously published what purported to be his memoirs, which brought him both trouble and fame. Many of his old friends were offended. These memoirs were not a faithful copy of what he had written, and while he hastened to deny their authenticity, this was not generally believed. His son, the Prince de Marcillac, to whom he gave his titles and honors in 1681, enjoyed a considerable position at court. Like his contemporaries, he saw politics as a chessboard for powerful players, rather than as a struggle of ideologies or a means for achieving broad social goals. He appears to have been unusually scrupulous in his personal conduct, and his lack of success in the aristocratic struggles arose more from this than from anything else. He died in Paris on 17 March 1685. His literary work consists of three parts—his Memoirs, the Maxims, and his letters. The Memoirs are of high interest and literary merit. This work went unchallenged for more than a century. Only in 1820 did anything like a genuine, if still imperfect, edition appear. The author made frequent alterations and additions to them during his life and a few were added after his death. It is usual now to publish them in their totality of 1685. La Rochefoucauld reflects on the conduct and motives of mankind, from the point of view of a man of the world who intends not to sugar-coat his observations. In fact, in his introduction, he advises, After that I guarantee that he will be the first to endorse them and he will believe that they do credit to the human spirit. Self-love is the greatest of all flatterers. Sincere enthusiasm is the only orator who always persuades. It is like an art the rules of which never fail; the simplest man with enthusiasm persuades better than the most eloquent with none. Men are not only subject to losing all recollection of kindnesses and injuries done them, they even hate those to whom they are obliged and cease to hate those who have harmed them. The effort of repaying the kindness and avenging the evil seem to them a servitude to which they are unwilling to submit. If we had no faults, we would not take so much pleasure in noticing those of others. There hardly exist faults which are not more pardonable than the means by which one tries to hide them. The truest mark of having been born with great qualities is to have been born without envy. His letters number more than one hundred, and they are of both biographical and literary value. Influence[edit] Nearly all the great French critics of the 19th century wrote to some extent about La Rochefoucauld. Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche greatly admired La Rochefoucauld and was influenced not only by his ethics, but also his style.

*Moral maxims and reflections. With an introd. and notes by George H. Powell. With a front. by N. Monsiau [François La Rochefoucauld] on www.nxgvision.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers.*

Reflections; or Sentences and Moral Maxims From Wikiquote Jump to navigation Jump to search People too much taken up with little things usually become incapable of big ones. Quotes[edit] as translated by L. The great souls are not those who have fewer passions and more virtues than common souls, but only those who have nobler plans. Our virtues are usually only vices in disguise. Pride plays a greater part than kindness in the reprimands we address to wrongdoers; we reprove them not so much to reform them as to make them believe that we are free from their faults. People too much taken up with little things usually become incapable of big ones. The scorn for riches displayed by the philosophers was a secret desire to recompense their own merit for the injustice of Fortune by scorning those very benefits she had denied them; it was a private way of remaining unsullied by poverty, a devious path towards the high respect they could not command by wealth. A shrewd man has to arrange his interests in order of importance and deal with them one by one; but often our greed upsets this order and makes us run after so many things at once that through over-anxiety to have the trivial we miss the most important. In most men love of justice is only fear of suffering injustice. We are so used to disguising ourselves from others that we end by disguising ourselves from ourselves. We are never so ridiculous through qualities we have as through those we pretend to have. The stamp of great minds is to suggest much in few words, so, contrariwise, little minds have the gift of talking a great deal and saying nothing. To refuse to accept praise is to want to be praised twice over. It is more difficult to avoid being ruled than to rule others. There are people whose value consists in saying and doing foolish things that serve a useful purpose, and who would upset everything if they changed their behavior. The world more often rewards outward signs of merit than merit itself. We are held to our duty by laziness and timidity, but often our virtue gets all the credit. Our minds are better employed in bearing the misfortunes that do befall us than in foreseeing those that may. Repentance is not so much regret for the evil we have done as fear of the evil that may befall us as a result. When the vices give us up we flatter ourselves that we are giving them up. Desire to appear clever often prevents our becoming so. Hypocrisy is a tribute vice pays to virtue. Fortunate people seldom mend their ways, for when good luck crowns their misdeeds with success they think it is because they are right. Those who obstinately oppose the most widely-held opinions more often do so because of pride than lack of intelligence. They find the best places in the right set already taken, and they do not want back seats. Nobody deserves to be praised for goodness unless he is strong enough to be bad, for any other goodness is usually merely inertia or lack of will-power. True eloquence consists in saying all that is required and only what is required. Readiness to believe the worst without adequate examination comes from pride and laziness: Our wisdom is just as much at the mercy of chance as our property. Certain good qualities are like the senses; those who lack them can neither appreciate nor understand them. Commonplace minds usually condemn whatever is beyond their powers. The biggest disadvantage of a penetrating intellect is not failure to reach the goal, but going beyond it. Of all our shortcomings the one we most willingly own up to is laziness: There is a certain dignity of manner independent of fortune, a certain distinctive air which seems to mark us out for great things. This does more to set us above them than birth, honors, and merit itself. We try to make virtues out of the faults we have no wish to correct. It is less trouble for the right-thinking to let the wrong-headed have their way than it is to put them right. The very pride that makes us condemn failings from which we think we are exempt leads us to despise good qualities we do not possess. Timidity is a fault that it is dangerous to censure in those we want to cure of it. Some people are so shallow and frivolous that they are as far removed from having any real faults as from having any solid virtues.

Reflections; or Sentences and Moral Maxims (French: Réflexions ou sentences et maximes morales) is a collection of

DOWNLOAD PDF MORAL MAXIMS AND REFLECTIONS

aphorisms written by French nobleman François de La Rochefoucauld between and

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La Rochefoucauld composed the "Memoirs of his own Times," and the work on which his fame is founded, "Maxims and Moral Reflections." Voltaire's remark on the two is well known, that the "Memoirs are read, and the Maxims are known by heart."

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Reflections; or, sentences and moral maxims by François Duc De La Rochefoucauld Prince de Marsillac. Translated from the editions of and with introduction, notes, and some account of the author and his times by J. W. Willis Bund, and J. Hain Friswell.

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The Moral Maxims and Reflections of the Duke de la Rochefoucauld François, duc de La Rochefoucauld This early English translation of the pillar of French thought explores the enigma of amour-propre, or self-love.