

La Bruyère

Les Caractères

Préface de Marcel Jouhandeau

Édition d'Antoine Adam



folio classique

Les Caractères

Jean de La Bruyère

Download now

Read Online ➔

Les Caractères

Jean de La Bruyère

Les Caractères Jean de La Bruyère

Une première moitié de vie occupée à préparer un livre, l'autre à le corriger et à l'amender. Comme Montaigne, et peut-être un peu plus que lui, La Bruyère est bien l'homme d'un seul livre, et ce livre est celui d'une vie. Entre le projet et le dernier état revu par l'auteur sur lequel est fondée la présente édition, les encouragements renouvelés d'un public ravi qui ne semble pas en avoir voulu à La Bruyère de l'avoir si sévèrement morigéné. C'est que *Les Caractères* sont tout d'abord le chef-d'oeuvre d'un genre pratiqué depuis l'Antiquité, le portrait, et d'une veine, la littérature morale, dans lesquels le Grand Siècle ne pouvait que se reconnaître et s'accomplir. Sous Louis XIV, on s'attache volontiers aux notations, ces marques où se découvrent les passions et rien n'intéresse plus que les passions. D'un mot, là où nous avons pu croire que La Bruyère fixait des images, il s'employait en vérité à nous donner à les lire. On ne sait en effet ce qui nous sollicite le plus : ce que regarde La Bruyère ou la manière dont il regarde. Cette oeuvre subtile et neuve appelait un soin tout particulier dans l'établissement du texte comme dans l'annotation. Elle bénéficie donc des progrès considérables accomplis dans ce domaine au cours des dernières décennies dans la connaissance du classicisme.

Les Caractères Details

Date : Published October 1st 1975 by Gallimard (first published 1687)

ISBN : 9782070366934

Author : Jean de La Bruyère

Format : Mass Market Paperback 508 pages

Genre : Philosophy, Classics, Cultural, France, European Literature, French Literature, Literature, 17th Century, Fiction

 [Download Les Caractères ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Les Caractères ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Les Caractères Jean de La Bruyère

From Reader Review Les Caractères for online ebook

Paz says

Para releer de vez en cuando.

Michel Van Goethem says

Les caractères
by Jean de La Bruyère

Artem says

??????? ?????????? ??????????. ????? ?????????? ??? ??? ? ?????????? ??? ????? ???????????? ?? ???????
?????????????? ??????????????????. ? ?????????, ?????? ?????? ??? ??? ? ? ??????.

Literaria Comunicación says

Leer 'Los caracteres' en el siglo XXI es una cura de humildad, pues nos demuestra que, en definitiva, no hemos cambiado tanto. Pienso, por ejemplo en los políticos y en quienes nos gobiernan y veo que el pensamiento de La Bruyère es totalmente actual: “Muchos hombres se parecen a esos árboles ya crecidos que trasplantados a los jardines sorprenden a quienes los ven colocados en hermosos lugares donde no los vieron crecer y de los cuales no conocen ni los comienzos ni los progresos”.

Fabrice44 says

My impression of the beginning of the book is that it was about a long list of description of pitiful character with everything they do wrong. I guess I didn't like the style : what was it supposed to teach me ? Not to behave like that ? Recognized those "caracteres"?

David Corbett says

A gift from my agent, in celebration of the publication of my book, The Art of Character. This is the kind of item only the French write, reminiscent of Stendhal's De l'amour and Flaubert's Dictionary of Accepted Ideas, except not as narrowly focused as the former nor as witty as the latter. A compendium of aphorisms on human nature, based liberally on the Moral Characters of Theophrastus. Inside baseball. Mind candy, to be read in morsels.

Med Redha says

Une lecture intéressante et riche, l'auteur a véritablement observé les mœurs de son temps pour les consigner dans ce recueil de portraits réalistes et intemporels ! Quelques longueurs cependant, le style est parfois un peu lourd et alambiqué, mais j'ai malgré tout passé un bon moment en compagnie des Caractères de la Bruyère !

Celui qui logé chez soi dans un palais avec deux appartements pour les deux saisons, vient coucher au Louvre dans un entre-sol n'en use pas ainsi par modestie. Cet autre qui pour conserver une taille fine s'abstient du vin, et ne fait qu'un seul repas, n'est ni sobre ni tempérant : et d'un troisième qui importuné d'un ami pauvre, lui donne enfin quelque secours, l'on dit qu'il achète son repos, et nullement qu'il est libéral. Le motif seul fait le mérite des actions des hommes, et le désintéressement y met la perfection.

Gregoire says

je ne suis pas toujours d'accord avec ses "caractères" mais quel régal de piocher dans l'intimité des pensées de cet homme lucide philosophe cultivé du XVIIe siècle français.

au hasard des "caractères" citation

"un dévot est celui qui sous un roi athée serait athée "

" les enfants n'ont ni passé ni avenir, et, ce qui ne nous arrive guère, ils jouissent du présent"

Stephen says

It's astonishing how immediate and relevant these late 17th century observations, anecdotes, and character sketches are, applied to today. I think anyone capable of reading literature critically will find a friend in La Bruyère. He's guided by an intense awareness of the folly of reputation and popularity. The best men aren't leading society and the most attractive women work too hard at it.

I have never totally warmed up to Montaigne because I think few people are actually gifted enough to keep everyone entertained with a tangent. And that's all Montaigne is, tangents, tangents, tangents, about the self, the ever-changing self. Imagine if you could cut away all the fat from the essayist, in the same way that Jefferson took a razor to the Bible. Then you'd end up with something like the wit and wisdom of La Bruyère.

It's impossible to pick out any handful of passages that rise above the rest. But personally I loved this one:

"Fascination is subjective; beauty is something more tangible and independent of opinion."

In our hopeless age we've confused this. Beauty itself is never at question. It's that we turn beauty into a popularity contest that's what's so wrong about it. Supposedly beauty should never be claimed because it's

too subjective. But it exists whether we like it or not. The problem is when we try and claim it. This requires fascination. And that's when politics and rhetoric enter into the equation. (Is there anything more rhetorical in the world than the words "I love you"? Another English translation for La Bruyère's observation has "despotic" for "subjective".) Meanwhile, beauty stands above opinion. Not unlike how poetry does, aided by those few poets who know how to claim it. And from whom.

This is just one of the nuggets you'll find in all of La Bruyère.

Frank says

Truly a great thinker and a witty one. Among La Rochefoucauld, Montaigne. He is mentioned now and then in Proust too. Yet when I was reading this book I hadn't even heard of Proust. Like many great books I read it by chance. After this book I read many other, my taste maybe changed too, yet, this remains one of my favourites and I guess it will continue to be such.

Lucinda says

A nightmare for any Literature class student

Marie-aimée says

Ce n'est pas un roman ! Mais il se lit comme tel.

Les caractères de La Bruyère dévoilent de nombreuses vérités critiques du XVIIIe. Symbolique, c'est un classique facile à lire car les idées sont variées mais cohérentes.

Vince Potenza says

La Bruyere was another of the of the authors mentioned and quoted (in French) in Cyril Connolly's *The Unquiet Grave*. This was the only selection of his works I could find in English translation and it's over a hundred years old. La Bruyere's Characters were famous in his day as insightful commentary on contemporary French society in the 17th century. He died in 1696 of apoplexy at the age of 51 while working on a new book, "Dialogues on Quietism."

To my modern sensibilities, the Characters — with titles like "The Rich Man," "The Poor Man," "The Man of Letters," "The Drawing-room Pedant," "The Perfect Woman" — seem more like caricatures than actual character studies, and that's probably not a real criticism because La Bruyere's primary goal, as was the goal of most of French society at the time, was to be above all things entertaining. So the Characters are amusing in the way that a modern-day impressionist is amusing.

The Reflections are a collection of aphorisms:

"Love and friendship exclude each other."

“However fastidious we may be in love, we forgive more faults in love than in friendship.”

“That love can die is proof of man’s limitations, and that the heart has its bounds.”

“To be deprived of the person we love is happiness compared to living with one we hate.”

And so on. This is hardly what I would call an outpouring of wisdom and they’re all very hit-or-miss as far as making any kind of impact at all.

Also included in this edition, however, are a selection of Characters and Maxims by Luc de Clapiers, Marquis de Vauvenargues, born of a noble but pretty much impoverished family. From his Maxims:

“Courage is the light of adversity.”

“We must not be too much afraid of being deceived.”

“We are not always as unjust to our enemies as we are to our relations.”

“Nature has endowed mankind with diverse talents. Some are born to invent, others to embellish; but the gilder attracts more attention than the architect.”

To me, these are more meaningful than pretty much anything La Bruyere says.

Vauvenargues’s Characters are similarly more insightful than La Bruyere’s, though written in a somewhat semi-pretentious tone. It seems clear his aim is to instruct rather than to entertain, and I think he succeeds to a great degree.

In ill health most of a life he spent in the vain pursuit of glory — including in the military — Vauvenargues died in 1747 at the age of 31, virtually unknown and unappreciated for many years. His surviving letters, some of which are quoted from in the Introduction to this book, are fascinating and should be published in English in their own right. Who knows what he might have accomplished had he lived?

The four stars are for him and what he might have become. La Bruyere by himself would only get two.

NOTE: Since I bought this book a newer and apparently more complete edition of La Bruyere’s Characters has appeared on Amazon: <http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1113...>

Leah says

From what I got out of it, it seems that according to La Bruyère's view the court of Versailles is a den of hypocrites, a woman is defined by her beauty (or lack thereof), "l'esprit" is essential to life, and life is really not all that great, anyway: “Les hommes semblent être nés pour l’infortune, la douleur et la pauvreté; peu en échappent; et comme toute disgrâce peut leur arriver, ils devraient être préparés à toute disgrâce.” It seems that life in 17th century Versailles was perhaps less enchanting than it is today. Makes me glad to be living in the 21st century, and grateful for my ever-so-slightly sunnier outlook on life.

Sunny says

ok overall. some interesting insights considering the time he wrote this book. its a collection of saying essentially about various characteristics of individuals. in places its pretty deep but most of it was pretty mundane stuff i thought. certainly worth reading although i was bored in places also. its easy to read and Bruyere qualifies a lot of what he writes by citing examples from people in the society (high class french society most of them).
