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Collected Works

Series Eleven

The Collected Works of

ROMAIN ROLLAND

(1866-1944)

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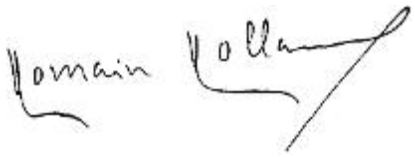

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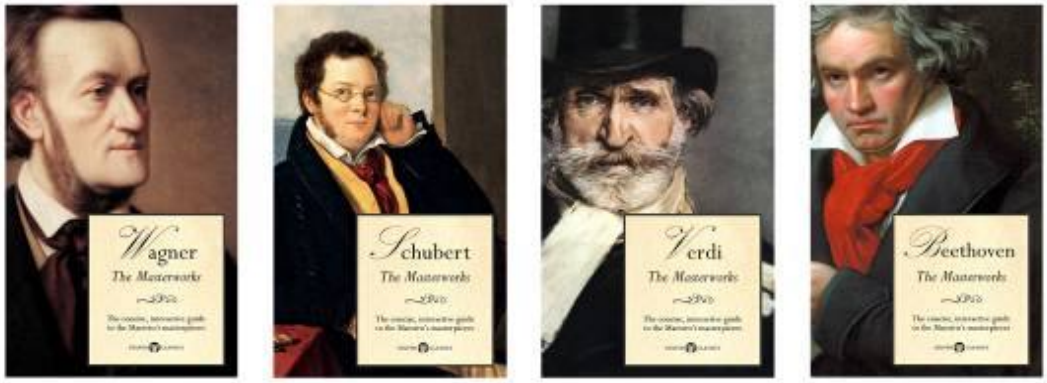

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DELPHI CLASSICS

The Collected Works of

ROMAIN ROLLAND

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Explore the French Masters at Delphi Classics…

Jean-Christophe

Clamecy, Nièvre, central France — Rolland's birthplace

The house in which Rolland was born

Dawn (1904)

Original French title: L'Aube

Translated by Gilbert Cannan

Dawn was first published in France in the literary journal *Cahiers de la Quinzaine* in 1904, before being translated into English by Gilbert Cannan and published in the USA in 1911 by Henry Holt and Company. It was the first of a ten volume novel series chronicling the life of Jean-Christophe Krafft, a German born composer of immense talent and vision, who faces struggles and obstacles throughout his life. The multivolume novel traces Jean-Christophe's life from childhood to death, as he confronts both internal and external challenges. The author first conceived of the work in 1890, but did not dedicate himself to the task of writing it until 1903. Rolland explicitly stated that the protagonist of the novel was inspired by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827).

Rolland asserted that the series should not to be understood in conventional narrative terms, but that it should be viewed as a 'musical novel', driven by emotion rather than events or action. The author even coined the term *roman-fleuve* (river-novel) to describe his work; it was later applied to other French novel sequences, including Marcel Proust's seminal *In Search of Lost Time*.

Dawn details the early years of Jean-Christophe's life as he begins his journey towards becoming a musical genius. It was first published in book form alongside the next three volumes in the series, *Morning*, *Youth* and *Revolt*, which chronicle the composer's musical development as well as his growing awareness of the hardships of the world.

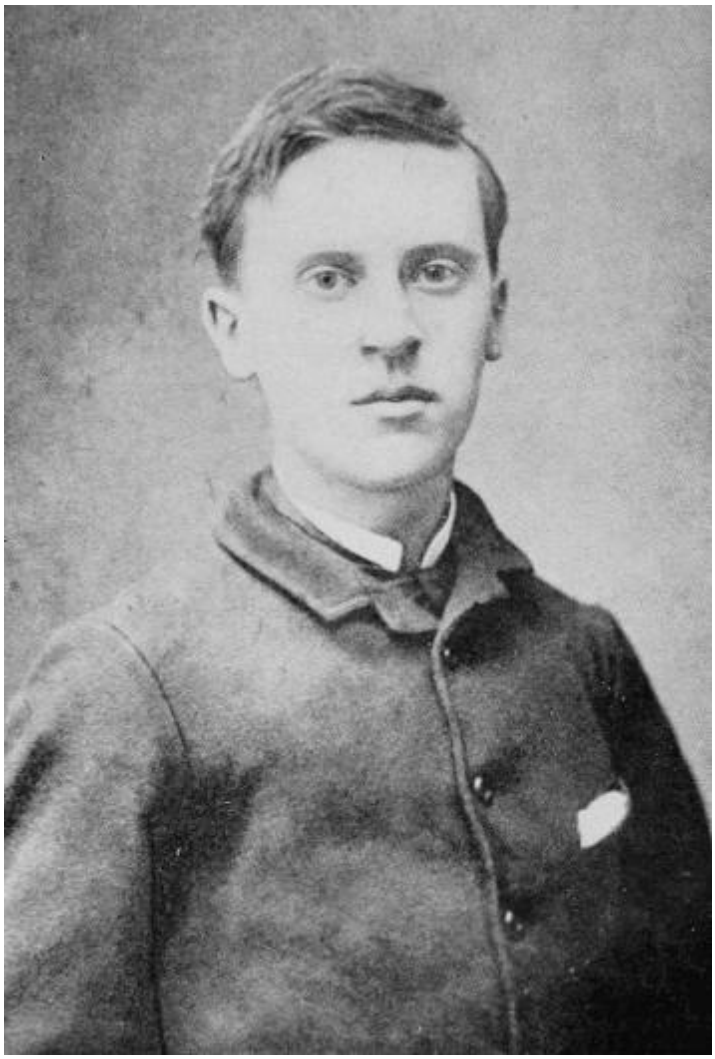
ROMAIN ROLLAND

Jean-Christophe

— L'AUBE —

PARIS
SOCIÉTÉ D'ÉDITIONS LITTÉRAIRES ET ARTISTIQUES
Librairie Paul Ollendorff
50, CHAUSSÉE D'ANTIN, 50
—
1906

The first collected edition's title page, 1906



Rolland as a child

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The first translator of 'Jean-Christophe', Gilbert Cannan (1884-1955) was a British novelist and dramatist. During World War I, he was a conscientious objector and was involved in the National Council against Conscription. After the war Cannan devoted himself to writing, translation work and travel, but a mental breakdown in 1923 proved untreatable. He became a mental patient at the Priory Hospital, Roehampton. He then spent the rest of his life confined to Holloway Sanatorium near Virginia Water where he died of cancer on 30 June 1955.

Portrait of Beethoven by Joseph Karl Stieler, 1820

PREFACE

"JEAN-CHRISTOPHE" IS THE history of the development of a musician of genius. The present volume comprises the first four volumes of the original French, viz.: "L'Aube," "Le Matin," "L'Adolescent," and "La Révólte," which are designated in the translation as Part I — The Dawn; Part II — Morning; Part III — Youth; Part IV — Revolt. Parts I and II carry Jean-Christophe from the moment of his birth to the day when, after his first encounter with Woman, at the age of fifteen, he falls back upon a Puritan creed. Parts III and IV describe the succeeding five years of his life, when, at the age of twenty, his sincerity, integrity, and unswerving honesty have made existence impossible for him in the little Rhine town of his birth. An act of open revolt against German militarism compels him to cross the frontier and take refuge in Paris, and the remainder of this vast book is devoted to the adventures of Jean-Christophe in France.

His creator has said that he has always conceived and thought of the life of his hero and of the book as a river. So far as the book has a plan, that is its plan. It has no literary artifice, no "plot." The words of it hang together in defiance of syntax, just as the thoughts of it follow one on the other in defiance of every system of philosophy. Every phase of the book is pregnant with the next phase. It is as direct and simple as life itself, for life is simple when the truth of it is known, as it was known instinctively by Jean-Christophe. The river is explored as though it were absolutely uncharted. Nothing that has ever been said or thought of life is accepted without being brought to the test of Jean-Christophe's own life. What is not true for him does not exist; and, as there are very few of the processes of human growth or decay which are not analysed, there is disclosed to the

reader the most comprehensive survey of modern life which has appeared in literature in this century.

To leave M. Rolland's simile of the river, and to take another, the book has seemed to me like a, mighty bridge leading from the world of ideas of the nineteenth century to the world of ideas of the twentieth. The whole thought of the nineteenth century seems to be gathered together to make the starting-point for Jean-Christophe's leap into the future. All that was most religious in that thought seems to be concentrated in Jean-Christophe, and when the history of the book is traced, it appears that M. Rolland has it by direct inheritance.

M. Rolland was born in 1866 at Clamecy, in the center of France, of a French family of pure descent, and educated in Paris and Rome. At Rome, in 1890, he met Malwida von Meysenburg, a German lady who had taken refuge in England after the Revolution of 1848, and there knew Kossuth, Mazzini, Herzen, Ledin, Rollin, and Louis Blanc. Later, in Italy, she counted among her friends Wagner, Liszt, Lenbach, Nietzsche, Garibaldi, and Ibsen. She died in 1908. Rolland came to her impregnated with Tolstoyan ideas, and with her wide knowledge of men and movements she helped him to discover his own ideas. In her "Mémoires d'une Idéaliste" she wrote of him: "In this young Frenchman I discovered the same idealism, the same lofty aspiration, the same profound grasp of every great intellectual manifestation that I had already found in the greatest men of other nationalities."

The germ of "Jean-Christophe" was conceived during this period — the "Wanderjahre" — of M. Rolland's life. On his return to Paris he became associated with a movement towards the renascence of the theater as a social machine, and wrote several plays. He has since been a musical critic and a lecturer on music and art at the Sorbonne. He has written Lives of Beethoven, Michael Angelo, and Hugo Wolf. Always his endeavor has been

the pursuit of the heroic. To him the great men are the men of absolute truth. Jean-Christophe must have the truth and tell the truth, at all costs, in despite of circumstance, in despite of himself, in despite even of life. It is his law. It is M. Rolland's law. The struggle all through the book is between the pure life of Jean-Christophe and the common acceptance of the second-rate and the second-hand by the substitution of civic or social morality, which is only a compromise, for individual morality, which demands that every man should be delivered up to the unswerving judgment of his own soul. Everywhere Jean-Christophe is hurled against compromise and untruth, individual and national. He discovers the German lie very quickly; the French lie grimaces at him as soon as he sets foot in Paris.

The book itself breaks down the frontier between France and Germany. If one frontier is broken, all are broken. The truth about anything is universal truth, and the experiences of Jean-Christophe, the adventures of his soul (there are no other adventures), are in a greater or less degree those of every human being who passes through this life from the tyranny of the past to the service of the future.

The book contains a host of characters who become as friends, or, at least, as interesting neighbors, to the reader. Jean-Christophe gathers people in his progress, and as they are all brought to the test of his genius, they appear clearly for what they are. Even the most unpleasant of them is human, and demands sympathy.

The recognition of Jean-Christophe as a book which marks a stage in progress was instantaneous in France. It is hardly possible yet to judge it. It is impossible to deny its vitality. It exists. Christophe is as real as the gentlemen whose portraits are posted outside the Queen's Hall, and much more real than many of them. The book clears the air. An open mind coming to it cannot fail to be refreshed and strengthened by its voyage down the river of a man's life, and if the book is followed to its end, the

voyager will discover with Christophe that there is joy beneath sorrow, joy through sorrow ("Durch Leiden Freude").

Those are the last words of M. Rolland's life of Beethoven; they are words of Beethoven himself: "La devise de tout âme héroïque."

In his preface, "To the Friends of Christophe," which precedes the seventh volume, "Dans la Maison," M. Rolland writes:

"I was isolated: like so many others in France I was stifling in a world morally inimical to me: I wanted air: I wanted to react against an unhealthy civilization, against ideas corrupted by a sham élite: I wanted to say to them: 'You lie! You do not represent France!' To do so I needed a hero with a pure heart and unclouded vision, whose soul would be stainless enough for him to have the right to speak; one whose voice would be loud enough for him to gain a hearing, I have patiently begotten this hero. The work was in conception for many years before I set myself to write a word of it. Christophe only set out on his journey when I had been able to see the end of it for him."

If M. Rolland's act of faith in writing Jean-Christophe were only concerned with France, if the polemic of it were not directed against a universal evil, there would be no reason for translation. But, like Zarathustra, it is a book for all and none. M. Rolland has written what he believes to be the truth, and as Dr. Johnson observed: "Every man has a right to utter what he thinks truth, and every other man has a right to knock him down for it…."

By its truth and its absolute integrity — since Tolstoy I know of no writing so crystal clear— "Jean-Christophe" is the first great book of the twentieth century. In a sense it begins the twentieth century. It bridges transition, and shows us where we stand. It reveals the past and the present, and leaves the future open to us….

GILBERT CANNAN

THE DAWN

Dianzi, nell'alba che precede al giorno,
Quando l'anima tua dentro dormìa….
Purgatorio, ix.

I

Come, quando i vapori umidi e spessi
A diradar cominciansi, la spera
Del sol debilemente entra per essi….
Purgatorio, xvii.

From behind the house rises the murmuring of the river. All day long the rain has been beating against the window-panes; a stream of water trickles down the window at the corner where it is broken. The yellowish light of the day dies down. The room is dim and dull.

The new-born child stirs in his cradle. Although the old man left his sabots at the door when he entered, his footsteps make the floor creak. The child begins to whine. The mother leans out of her bed to comfort it; and the grandfather gropes to light the lamp, so that the child shall not be frightened by the night when he awakes. The flame of the lamp lights up old Jean Michel's red face, with its rough white beard and morose expression and quick eyes. He goes near the cradle. His cloak smells wet, and as he walks he drags his large blue list slippers, Louisa signs to him not to go too near. She is fair, almost white; her features are drawn; her gentle, stupid face is marked with red in patches; her lips are pale and' swollen, and they are parted in a timid smile; her eyes devour the child — and her eyes are blue and vague; the pupils are small, but there is an infinite tenderness in them.

The child wakes and cries, and his eyes are troubled. Oh! how terrible! The darkness, the sudden flash of the lamp, the hallucinations of a mind as yet hardly detached from chaos, the stifling, roaring night in which it is enveloped, the illimitable gloom from which, like blinding shafts of light, there emerge acute sensations, sorrows, phantoms — those enormous faces

leaning over him, those eyes that pierce through him, penetrating, are beyond his comprehension!… He has not the strength to cry out; terror holds him motionless, with eyes and mouth wide open and he rattles in his throat. His large head, that seems to have swollen up, is wrinkled with the grotesque and lamentable grimaces that he makes; the skin of his face and hands is brown and purple, and spotted with yellow….

"Dear God!" said the old man with conviction: "How ugly he is!"

He put the lamp down on the table.

Louisa pouted like a scolded child. Jean Michel looked at her out of the corner of his eye and laughed.

"You don't want me to say that he is beautiful? You would not believe it. Come, it is not your fault. They are all like that."

The child came out of the stupor and immobility into which he had been thrown by the light of the lamp and the eyes of the old man. He began to cry. Perhaps he instinctively felt in his mother's eyes a caress which made it possible for him to complain. She held out her arms for him and said:

"Give him to me."

The old man began, as usual, to air his theories:

"You ought not to give way to children when they cry. You must just let them cry."

But he came and took the child and grumbled:

"I never saw one quite so ugly."

Louisa took the child feverishly and pressed it to her bosom. She looked at it with a bashful and delighted smile.

"Oh, my poor child!" she said shamefacedly. "How ugly you are — how ugly! and how I love you!"

Jean Michel went back to the fireside. He began to poke the fire in protest, but a smile gave the lie to the moroseness and solemnity of his expression.

“Good girl!” he said. “Don’t worry about it. He has plenty of time to alter. And even so, what does it matter? Only one thing is asked of him: that he should grow into an honest man.”

The child was comforted by contact with his mother’s warm body. He could be heard sucking her milk and gurgling and snorting. Jean Michel turned in his chair, and said once more, with some emphasis:

“There’s nothing finer than an honest man.”

He was silent for a moment, pondering whether it would not be proper to elaborate this thought; but he found nothing more to say, and after a silence he said irritably:

“Why isn’t your husband here?”

“I think he is at the theater,” said Louisa timidly. “There is a rehearsal.”

“The theater is closed. I passed it just now. One of his lies.”

“No. Don’t be always blaming him. I must have misunderstood. He must have been kept for one of his lessons.”

“He ought to have come back,” said the old man, not satisfied. He stopped for a moment, and then asked, in a rather lower voice and with some shame:

“Has he been … again?”

“No, father — no, father,” said Louisa hurriedly.

The old man looked at her; she avoided his eyes.

“It’s not true. You’re lying.”

She wept in silence.

“Dear God!” said the old man, kicking at the fire with his foot. The poker fell with a clatter. The mother and the child trembled.

“Father, please — please!” said Louisa. “You will make him cry.”

The child hesitated for a second or two whether to cry or to go on with his meal; but not being able to do both at once, he went on with the meal.

Jean Michel continued in a lower tone, though with outbursts of anger:

“What have I done to the good God to have this drunkard for my son? What is the use of my having lived as I have lived, and of having denied myself everything all my life! But you — you — can’t you do anything to stop it? Heavens! That’s what you ought to do…. You should keep him at home!…”

Louisa wept still more.

“Don’t scold me!… I am unhappy enough as it is! I have done everything I could. If you knew how terrified I am when I am alone! Always I seem to hear his step on the stairs. Then I wait for the door to open, or I ask myself: ‘O God! what will he look like?’ … It makes me ill to think of it!”

She was shaken by her sobs. The old man grew anxious. He went to her and laid the disheveled bedclothes about her trembling shoulders and caressed her head with his hands.

“Come, come, don’t be afraid. I am here.”

She calmed herself for the child’s sake, and tried to smile.

“I was wrong to tell you that.”

The old man shook his head as he looked at her.

“My poor child, it was not much of a present that I gave you.”

“It’s my own fault,” she said. “He ought not to have married me. He is sorry for what he did.”

“What, do you mean that he regrets?…”

“You know. You were angry yourself because I became his wife.”

“We won’t talk about that. It is true I was vexed. A young man like that — I can say so without hurting you — a young man whom I had carefully brought up, a distinguished musician, a real artist — might have looked higher than you, who had nothing and were of a lower class, and not even of the same trade. For more than a hundred years no Krafft has ever married a woman who was not a musician! But, you know, I bear you no grudge,

and am fond of you, and have been ever since I learned to know you. Besides, there's no going back on a choice once it's made; there's nothing left but to do one's duty honestly."

He went and sat down again, thought for a little, and then said, with the solemnity in which he invested all his aphorisms:

"The first thing in life is to do one's duty."

He waited for contradiction, and spat on the fire. Then, as neither mother nor child raised any objection, he was for going on, but relapsed into silence.

* * * * *

They said no more. Both Jean Michel, sitting by the fireside, and Louisa, in her bed, dreamed sadly. The old man, in spite of what he had said, had bitter thoughts about his son's marriage, and Louisa was thinking of it also, and blaming herself, although she had nothing wherewith to reproach herself.

She had been a servant when, to everybody's surprise, and her own especially, she married Melchior Krafft, Jean Michel's son. The Kraffts were without fortune, but were considerable people in the little Rhine town in which the old man had settled down more than fifty years before. Both father and son were musicians, and known to all the musicians of the country from Cologne to Mannheim. Melchior played the violin at the Hof-Theater, and Jean Michel had formerly been director of the grand-ducal concerts. The old man had been profoundly humiliated by his son's marriage, for he had built great hopes upon Melchior; he had wished to make him the distinguished man which he had failed to become himself. This mad freak destroyed all his ambitions. He had stormed at first, and showered curses upon Melchior and Louisa. But, being a good-hearted creature, he forgave his daughter-in-law when he learned to know her

better; and he even came by a paternal affection for her, which showed itself for the most part in snubs.

No one ever understood what it was that drove Melchior to such a marriage — least of all Melchior. It was certainly not Louisa's beauty. She had no seductive quality: she was small, rather pale, and delicate, and she was a striking contrast to Melchior and Jean Michel, who were both big and broad, red-faced giants, heavy-handed, hearty eaters and drinkers, laughter-loving and noisy. She seemed to be crushed by them; no one noticed her, and she seemed to wish to escape even what little notice she attracted. If Melchior had been a kind-hearted man, it would have been credible that he should prefer Louisa's simple goodness to every other advantage; but a vainer man never was. It seemed incredible that a young man of his kidney, fairly good-looking, and quite conscious of it, very foolish, but not without talent, and in a position to look for some well-dowered match, and capable even — who knows? — of turning the head of one of his pupils among the people of the town, should suddenly have chosen a girl of the people — poor, uneducated, without beauty, a girl who could in no way advance his career.

But Melchior was one of those men who always do the opposite of what is expected of them and of what they expect of themselves. It is not that they are not warned — a man who is warned is worth two men, says the proverb. They profess never to be the dupe of anything, and that they steer their ship with unerring hand towards a definite point. But they reckon without themselves, for they do not know themselves. In one of those moments of forgetfulness which are habitual with them they let go the tiller, and, as is natural when things are left to themselves, they take a naughty pleasure in rounding on their masters. The ship which is released from its course at once strikes a rock, and Melchior, bent upon intrigue, married a cook. And yet he was neither drunk nor in a stupor on the day when he

bound himself to her for life, and he was not under any passionate impulse; far from it. But perhaps there are in us forces other than mind and heart, other even than the senses — mysterious forces which take hold of us in the moments when the others are asleep; and perhaps it was such forces that Melchior had found in the depths of those pale eyes which had looked at him so timidly one evening when he had accosted the girl on the bank of the river, and had sat down beside her in the reeds — without knowing why — and had given her his hand.

Hardly was he married than he was appalled by what he had done, and he did not hide what he felt from poor Louisa, who humbly asked his pardon. He was not a bad fellow, and he willingly granted her that; but immediately remorse would seize him again when he was with his friends or in the houses of his rich pupils, who were disdainful in their treatment of him, and no longer trembled at the touch of his hand when he corrected the position of their fingers on the keyboard. Then he would return gloomy of countenance, and Louisa, with a catch at her heart, would read in it with the first glance the customary reproach; or he would stay out late at one inn or another, there to seek self-respect or kindliness from others. On such evenings he would return shouting with laughter, and this was more doleful for Louisa than the hidden reproach and gloomy rancor that prevailed on other days. She felt that she was to a certain extent responsible for the fits of madness in which the small remnant of her husband's sense would disappear, together with the household money. Melchior sank lower and lower. At an age when he should have been engaged in unceasing toil to develop his mediocre talent, he just let things slide, and others took his place.

But what did that matter to the unknown force which had thrown him in with the little flaxen-haired servant? He had played his part, and little Jean-Christophe had just set foot on this earth whither his destiny had thrust him.

* * * * *

Night was fully come. Louisa's voice roused old Jean Michel from the torpor into which he had sunk by the fireside as he thought of the sorrows of the past and present.

"It must be late, father," said the young woman affectionately. "You ought to go home; you have far to go."

"I am waiting for Melchior," replied the old man.

"Please, no. I would rather you did not stay."

"Why?"

The old man raised his head and looked fiercely at her.

She did not reply.

He resumed.

"You are afraid. You do not want me to meet him?"

"Yes, yes; it would only make things worse. You would make each other angry, and I don't want that. Please, please go!"

The old man sighed, rose, and said:

"Well … I'll go."

He went to her and brushed her forehead with his stiff beard. He asked if she wanted anything, put out the lamp, and went stumbling against the chairs in the darkness of the room. But he had no sooner reached the staircase than he thought of his son returning drunk, and he stopped at each step, imagining a thousand dangers that might arise if Melchior were allowed to return alone….

In the bed by his mother's side the child was stirring again. An unknown sorrow had arisen from the depths of his being. He stiffened himself against her. He twisted his body, clenched his fists, and knitted his brows. His suffering increased steadily, quietly, certain of its strength. He knew not what it was, nor whence it came. It appeared immense, — infinite, and he began to cry lamentably. His mother caressed him with her gentle hands.

Already his suffering was less acute. But he went on weeping, for he felt it still near, still inside himself. A man who suffers can lessen his anguish by knowing whence it comes. By thought he can locate it in a certain portion of his body which can be cured, or, if necessary, torn away. He fixes the bounds of it, and separates it from himself. A child has no such illusive resource. His first encounter with suffering is more tragic and more true. Like his own being, it seems infinite. He feels that it is seated in his bosom, housed in his heart, and is mistress of his flesh. And it is so. It will not leave his body until it has eaten it away.

His mother hugs him to her, murmuring: “It is done — it is done! Don’t cry, my little Jesus, my little goldfish….” But his intermittent outcry continues. It is as though this wretched, unformed, and unconscious mass had a presentiment of a whole life of sorrow awaiting, him, and nothing can appease him….

The bells of St. Martin rang out in the night. Their voices are solemn and slow. In the damp air they come like footsteps on moss. The child became silent in the middle of a sob. The marvelous music, like a flood of milk, surged sweetly through him. The night was lit up; the air was moist and tender. His sorrow disappeared, his heart began to laugh, and he slid, into his dreams with a sigh of abandonment.

The three bells went on softly ringing in the morrow’s festival. Louisa also dreamed, as she listened to them, of her own past misery and of what would become in the future of the dear little child sleeping by her side. She had been for hours lying in her bed, weary and suffering. Her hands and her body were burning; the heavy eiderdown crushed her; she felt crushed and oppressed by the darkness; but she dared not move. She looked at the child, and the night did not prevent her reading his features, that looked so old. Sleep overcame her; fevered images passed through her brain. She thought she heard Melchior open the door, and her heart leaped. Occasionally the

murmuring of the stream rose more loudly through the silence, like the roaring of some beast. The window once or twice gave a sound under the beating of the rain. The bells rang out more slowly, and then died down, and Louisa slept by the side of her child.

All this time Jean Michel was waiting outside the house, dripping with rain, his beard wet with the mist. He was waiting for the return of his wretched son: for his mind, never ceasing, had insisted on telling him all sorts of tragedies brought about by drunkenness; and although he did not believe them, he could not hate slept a wink if he had gone away without having seen his son return. The sound of the bells made him: melancholy, for he remembered all his shattered hopes. He thought of what he was doing at such an hour in the street, and for very shame he wept.

* * * * *

The vast tide of the days moves slowly. Day and night come up and go down with unfailing regularity, like the ebb and low of an infinite ocean. Weeks and months go by, and then begin again, and the succession of days is like one day.

The day is immense, inscrutable, marking the even beat of light and darkness, and the beat of the life of the torpid creature dreaming in the depths of his cradle — his imperious needs, sorrowful or glad — so regular that the night and the day which bring them seem by them to be brought about.

The pendulum of life moves heavily, and in its slow beat the whole creature seems to be absorbed. The rest is no more than dreams, snatches of dreams, formless and swarming, and dust of atoms dancing aimlessly, a dizzy whirl passing, and bringing laughter or horror. Outcry, moving shadows, grinning shapes, sorrows, terrors, laughter, dreams, dreams…. All is a dream, both day and night…. And in such chaos the light of friendly

eyes that smile upon him, the flood of joy that surges through his body from his mother's body, from her breasts filled with milk — the force that is in him, the immense, unconscious force gathering in him, the turbulent ocean roaring in the narrow prison of the child's body. For eyes that could see into it there would be revealed whole worlds half buried in the darkness, nebulæ taking shape, a universe in the making. His being is limitless. He is all that there is….

Months pass…. Islands of memory begin to rise above the river of his life. At first they are little uncharted islands, rocks just peeping above the surface of the waters. Round about them and behind in the twilight of the dawn stretches the great untroubled sheet of water; then new islands, touched to gold by the sun.

So from the abyss of the soul there emerge shapes definite, and scenes of a strange clarity. In the boundless day which dawns once more, ever the same, with its great monotonous beat, there begins to show forth the round of days, hand in hand, and some of their forms are smiling, others sad. But ever the links of the chain are broken, and memories are linked together above weeks and months….

The River … the Bells … as long as he can remember — far back in the abysses of time, at every hour of his life — always their voices, familiar and resonant, have rung out….

Night — half asleep — a pale light made white the window…. The river murmurs. Through the silence its voice rises omnipotent; it reigns over all creatures. Sometimes it caresses their sleep, and seems almost itself to die away in the roaring of its torrent. Sometimes it grows angry, and howls like a furious beast about to bite. The clamor ceases. Now there is a murmuring of infinite tenderness, silvery sounds like clear little bells, like the laughter of children, or soft singing voices, or dancing music — a great mother voice that never, never goes to sleep! It rocks the child, as it has rocked through

the ages, from birth to death, the generations that were before him; it fills all his thoughts, and lives in all his dreams, wraps him round with the cloak of its fluid harmonies, which still will be about him when he lies in the little cemetery that sleeps by the water's edge, washed by the Rhine….

The bells…. It is dawn! They answer each other's call, sad, melancholy, friendly, gentle. At the sound of their slow voices there rise in him hosts of dreams — dreams of the past, desires, hopes, regrets for creatures who are gone, unknown to the child, although he had his being in them, and they live again in him. Ages of memory ring out in that music. So much mourning, so many festivals! And from the depths of the room it is as though, when they are heard, there passed lovely waves of sound through the soft air, free winging birds, and the moist soughing of the wind. Through the window smiles a patch of blue sky; a sunbeam slips through the curtains to the bed. The little world known to the eyes of the child, all that he can see from his bed every morning as he awakes, all that with so much effort he is beginning to recognize and classify, so that he may be master of it — his kingdom is lit up. There is the table where people eat, the cupboard where he hides to play, the tiled floor along which he crawls, and the wall-paper which in its antic shapes holds for him so many humorous or terrifying stories, and the clock which chatters and stammers so many words which he alone can understand. How many things there are in this room! He does not know them all. Every day he sets out on a voyage of exploration in this universe which is his. Everything is his. Nothing is immaterial; everything has its worth, man or fly, Everything lives — the cat, the fire, the table, the grains of dust which dance in a sunbeam. The room is a country, a day is a lifetime. How is a creature to know himself in the midst of these vast spaces? The world is so large! A creature is lost in it. And the faces, the actions, the movement, the noise, which make round about him an unending turmoil!… He is weary; his eyes close; he goes to

sleep. That sweet deep sleep that overcomes him suddenly at any time, and wherever he may be — on his mother's lap, or under the table, where he loves to hide!… It is good. All is good….

These first days come buzzing up in his mind like a field of corn or a wood stirred by the wind, and cast in shadow by the great fleeting clouds….

* * * * *

The shadows pass; the sun penetrates the forest. Jean-Christophe begins to find his way through the labyrinth of the day.

It is morning. His parents are asleep. He is in his little bed, lying on his back. He looks at the rays of light dancing on the ceiling. There is infinite amusement in it. Now he laughs out loud with one of those jolly children's laughs which stir the hearts of those that hear them. His mother leans out of her bed towards him, and says: "What is it, then, little mad thing?" Then he laughs again, and perhaps he makes an effort to laugh because he has an audience. His mamma looks severe, and lays a finger on her lips to warn him lest he should wake his father: but her weary eyes smile in spite of herself. They whisper together. Then there is a furious growl from his father. Both tremble. His mother hastily turns her back on him, like a naughty little girl: she pretends to be asleep. Jean-Christophe buries himself in his bed, and holds his breath…. Dead silence.

After some time the little face hidden under the clothes comes to the surface again. On the roof the weathercock creaks. The rain-pipe gurgles; the Angelus sounds. When the wind comes from the east, the distant bells of the villages on the other bank of the river give answer. The sparrows foregathered in the ivy-clad wall make a deafening noise, from which three or four voices, always the same, ring out more shrilly than the others, just as in the games of a band of children. A pigeon coos at the top of a chimney. The child abandons himself to the lullaby of these sounds. He hums to

himself softly, then a little more loudly, then quite loudly, then very loudly, until once more his father cries out in exasperation: “That little donkey never will be quiet! Wait a little, and I’ll pull your ears!” Then Jean-Christophe buries himself in the bedclothes again, and does not know whether to laugh or cry. He is terrified and humiliated; and at the same time the idea of the donkey with which his father has compared him makes him burst out laughing. From the depths of his bed he imitates its braying. This time he is whipped. He sheds every tear that is in him. What has he done? He wanted so much to laugh and to get up! And he is forbidden to budge. How do people sleep forever? When will they get up?…

One day he could not contain himself. He heard a cat and a dog and something queer in the street. He slipped out of bed, and, creeping awkwardly with his bare feet on the tiles, he tried to go down the stairs to see what it was; but the door was shut. To open it, he climbed on to a chair; the whole thing collapsed, and he hurt himself and howled. And once more at the top of the stairs he was whipped. He is always being whipped!…

* * * * *

He is in church with his grandfather. He is bored. He is not very comfortable. He is forbidden to stir, and all the people are saying all together words that he does not understand. They all look solemn and gloomy. It is not their usual way of looking. He looks at them, half frightened. Old Lena, their neighbor, who is sitting next to him, looks very cross; there are moments when he does not recognize even his grandfather. He is afraid a little. Then he grows used to it, and tries to find relief from boredom by every means at his disposal. He balances on one leg, twists his neck to look at the ceiling, makes faces, pulls his grandfather’s coat, investigates the straws in his chair, tries to make a hole in them with his

finger, listens to the singing of birds, and yawns so that he is like to dislocate his jaw.

Suddenly there is a deluge of sound; the organ is played. A thrill goes down his spine. He turns and stands with his chin resting on the back of his chair, and he looks very wise. He does not understand this noise; he does not know the meaning of it; it is dazzling, bewildering, and he can hear nothing clearly. But it is good. It is as though he were no longer sitting there on an uncomfortable chair in a tiresome old house. He is suspended in mid-air, like a bird; and when the flood of sound rushes from one end of the church to the other, filling the arches, reverberating from wall to wall, he is carried with it, flying and skimming hither and thither, with nothing to do but to abandon himself to it. He is free; he is happy. The sun shines…. He falls asleep.

His grandfather is displeased with him. He behaves ill at Mass.

* * * * *

He is at home, sitting on the ground, with his feet in his hands. He has just decided that the door-mat is a boat, and the tiled floor a river. He all but drowned in stepping off the carpet. He is surprised and a little put out that the others pay no attention to the matter as he does when he goes into the room. He seizes his mother by the skirts. “You see it is water! You must go across by the bridge.” (The bridge is a series of holes between the red tiles.) His mother crosses without even listening to him. He is vexed, as a dramatic author is vexed when he sees his audience talking during his great work.

Next moment he thinks no more of it. The tiled floor is no longer the sea. He is lying down on it, stretched full-length, with his chin on the tiles, humming music of his own composition, and gravely sucking his thumb and dribbling. He is lost in contemplation of a crack between the tiles. The

lines of the tiles grimace like faces. The imperceptible hole grows larger, and becomes a valley; there are mountains about it. A centipede moves: it is as large as an elephant. Thunder might crash, the child would not hear it.

No one bothers about him, and he has no need of any one. He can even do without door-mat boats, and caverns in the tiled floor, with their fantastic fauna. His body is enough. What a source of entertainment! He spends hours in looking at his nails and shouting with laughter. They have all different faces, and are like people that he knows. And the rest of his body!… He goes on with the inspection of all that he has. How many surprising things! There are so many marvels. He is absorbed in looking at them.

But he was very roughly picked up when they caught him at it.

* * * * *

Sometimes he takes advantage of his mother's back being turned, to escape from the house. At first they used to run after him and bring him back. Then they got used to letting him go alone, only so he did not go too far away. The house is at the end of the town; the country begins almost at once. As long as he is within sight of the windows he goes without stopping, very deliberately, and now and then hopping on one foot. But as soon as he has passed the corner of the road, and the brushwood hides him from view, he changes abruptly. He stops there, with his finger in his mouth, to find out what story he shall tell himself that day; for he is full of stories. True, they are all very much like each other, and every one of them could be told in a few lines. He chooses. Generally he takes up the same story, sometimes from the point where it left off, sometimes from the beginning, with variations. But any trifle — a word heard by chance — is enough to set his mind off on another direction.

Chance was fruitful of resources. It is impossible to imagine what can be made of a simple piece of wood, a broken bough found alongside a hedge. (You break them off when you do not find them.) It was a magic wand. If it were long and thin, it became a lance, or perhaps a sword; to brandish it aloft was enough to cause armies to spring from the earth. Jean-Christophe was their general, marching in front of them, setting them an example, and leading them to the assault of a hillock. If the branch were flexible, it changed into a whip. Jean-Christophe mounted on horseback and leaped precipices. Sometimes his mount would slip, and the horseman would find himself at the bottom of the ditch, sorrily looking at his dirty hands and barked knees. If the wand were lithe, then Jean-Christophe would make himself the conductor of an orchestra: he would be both conductor and orchestra; he conducted and he sang; and then he would salute the bushes, with their little green heads stirring in the wind.

He was also a magician. He walked with great strides through the fields, looking at the sky and waving his arms. He commanded the clouds. He wished them to go to the right, but they went to the left. Then he would abuse them, and repeat his command. He would watch them out of the corner of his eye, and his heart would beat as he looked to see if there were not at least a little one which would obey him. But they went on calmly moving to the left. Then he would stamp his foot, and threaten them with his stick, and angrily order them to go to the left; and this time, in truth, they obeyed him. He was happy and proud of his power. He would touch the flowers and bid them change into golden carriages, as he had been told they did in the stories; and, although it never happened, he was quite convinced that it would happen if only he had patience. He would look for a grasshopper to turn into a hare; he would gently lay his stick on its back, and speak a rune. The insect would escape: he would bar its way. A few moments later he would be lying on his belly near to it, looking at it. Then

he would have forgotten that he was a magician, and just amuse himself with turning the poor beast on its back, while he laughed aloud at its contortions.

It occurred to him also to tie a piece of string to his magic wand, and gravely cast it into the river, and wait for a fish to come and bite. He knew perfectly well that fish do not usually bite at a piece of string without bait or hook; but he thought that for once in a way, and for him, they might make an exception to their rule; and in his inexhaustible confidence, he carried it so far as to fish in the street with a whip through the grating of a sewer. He would draw up the whip from time to time excitedly, pretending that the cord of it was more heavy, and that he had caught a treasure, as in a story that his grandfather had told him….

And always in the middle of all these games there used to occur to him moments of strange dreaming and complete forgetfulness. Everything about him would then be blotted out; he would not know what he was doing, and was not even conscious of himself. These attacks would take him unawares. Sometimes as he walked or went upstairs a void would suddenly open before him. He would seem then to have lost all thought. But when he came back to himself, he was shocked and bewildered to find himself in the same place on the dark staircase. It was as though he had lived through a whole lifetime — in the space of a few steps.

His grandfather used often to take him with him on his evening walk. The little boy used to trot by his side and give him his hand. They used to go by the roads, across plowed fields, which smelled strong and good. The grasshoppers chirped. Enormous crows poised along the road used to watch them approach from afar, and then fly away heavily as they came up with them.

His grandfather would cough. Jean-Christophe knew quite well what that meant. The old man was burning with the desire to tell a story; but he

wanted it to appear that the child had asked him for one. Jean-Christophe did not fail him; they understood each other. The old man had a tremendous affection for his grandson, and it was a great joy to find in him a willing audience. He loved to tell of episodes in his own life, or stories of great men, ancient and modern. His voice would then become emphatic and filled with emotion, and would tremble with a childish joy, which he used to try to stifle. He seemed delighted to hear his own voice. Unhappily, words used to fail him when he opened his mouth to speak. He was used to such disappointment, for it always came upon him with his outbursts of eloquence. And as he used to forget it with each new attempt, he never succeeded in resigning himself to it.

He used to talk of Regulus, and Arminius, of the soldiers of Lützow, of Koerner, and of Frédéric Stabs, who tried to kill the Emperor Napoleon. His face would glow as he told of incredible deeds of heroism. He used to pronounce historic words in such a solemn voice that it was impossible to hear them, and he used to try artfully to keep his hearer on tenterhooks at the thrilling moments. He would stop, pretend to choke, and noisily blow his nose; and his heart would leap when the child asked, in a voice choking with impatience: “And then, grandfather?”

There came a day, when Jean-Christophe was a little older, when he perceived his grandfather’s method; and then he wickedly set himself to assume an air of indifference to the rest of the story, and that hurt the poor old man. But for the moment Jean-Christophe is altogether held by the power of the story-teller. His blood leaped at the dramatic passages. He did not know what it was all about, neither where nor when these deeds were done, or whether his grandfather knew Arminius, or whether Regulus were not — God knows why! — some one whom he had seen at church last Sunday. But his heart and the old man’s heart swelled with joy and pride in

the tale of heroic deeds, as though they themselves had done them; for the old man and the child were both children.

Jean-Christophe was less happy when his grandfather interpolated in the pathetic passages one of those abstruse discourses so dear to him. There were moral thoughts generally traceable to some idea, honest enough, but a little trite, such as “Gentleness is better than violence,” or “Honor is the dearest thing in life,” or “It is better to be good than to be wicked” — only they were much more involved. Jean-Christophe’s grandfather had no fear of the criticism of his youthful audience, and abandoned himself to his habitual emphatic manner; he was not afraid of repeating the same phrases, or of not finishing them, or even, if he lost himself in his discourse, of saying anything that came into his head, to stop up the gaps in his thoughts; and he used to punctuate his words, in order to give them greater force, with inappropriate gestures. The boy used to listen with profound respect, and he thought his grandfather very eloquent, but a little tiresome.

Both of them loved to return again and again to the fabulous legend of the Corsican conqueror who had taken Europe. Jean-Christophe’s grandfather had known him. He had almost fought against him. But he was a man to admit the greatness of his adversaries: he had said so twenty times. He would have given one of his arms for such a man to have been born on this side of the Rhine. Fate had decreed otherwise; he admired him, and had fought against him — that is, he had been on the point of fighting against him. But when Napoleon had been no farther than ten leagues away, and they had marched out to meet him, a sudden panic had dispersed the little band in a forest, and every man had fled, crying, “We are betrayed!” In vain, as the old man used to tell, in vain did he endeavor to rally the fugitives; he threw himself in front of them, threatening them and weeping: he had been swept away in the flood of them, and on the morrow had found himself at an extraordinary distance from the field of battle — For so he

called the place of the rout. But Jean-Christophe used impatiently to bring him back to the exploits of the hero, and he was delighted by his marvelous progress through the world. He saw him followed by innumerable men, giving vent to great cries of love, and at a wave of his hand hurling themselves in swarms upon flying enemies — they were always in flight. It was a fairy-tale. The old man added a little to it to fill out the story; he conquered Spain, and almost conquered England, which he could not abide.

Old Krafft used to intersperse his enthusiastic narratives with indignant apostrophes addressed to his hero. The patriot awoke in him, more perhaps when he told of the Emperor's defeats than of the Battle of Jena. He would stop to shake his fist at the river, and spit contemptuously, and mouth noble insults — he did not stoop to less than that. He would call him "rascal," "wild beast," "immoral." And if such words were intended to restore to the boy's mind a sense of justice, it must be confessed that they failed in their object; for childish logic leaped to this conclusion: "If a great man like that had no morality, morality is not a great thing, and what matters most is to be a great man." But the old man was far from suspecting the thoughts which were running along by his side.

They would both be silent, pondering each after his own fashion, these admirable stories — except when the old man used to meet one of his noble patrons taking a walk. Then he would stop, and bow very low, and breathe lavishly the formulæ of obsequious politeness. The child used to blush for it without knowing why. But his grandfather at heart had a vast respect for established power and persons who had "arrived"; and possibly his great love for the heroes of whom he told was only because he saw in them persons who had arrived at a point higher than the others.

When it was very hot, old Krafft used to sit under a tree, and was not long in dozing off. Then Jean-Christophe used to sit near him on a heap of loose stones or a milestone, or some high seat, uncomfortable and peculiar;

and he used to wag his little legs, and hum to himself, and dream. Or sometimes he used to lie on his back and watch the clouds go by; they looked like oxen, and giants, and hats, and old ladies, and immense landscapes. He used to talk to them in a low voice, or be absorbed in a little cloud which a great one was on the point of devouring. He was afraid of those which were very black, almost blue, and of those which went very fast. It seemed to him that they played an enormous part in life, and he was surprised that neither his grandfather nor his mother paid any attention to them. They were terrible beings if they wished to do harm. Fortunately, they used to go by, kindly enough, a little grotesque, and they did not stop. The boy used in the end to turn giddy with watching them too long, and he used to fidget with his legs and arms, as though he were on the point of falling from the sky. His eyelids then would wink, and sleep would overcome him. Silence…. The leaves murmur gently and tremble in the sun; a faint mist passes through the air; the uncertain flies hover, booming like an organ; the grasshoppers, drunk with the summer, chirp eagerly and hurriedly; all is silent…. Under the vault of the trees the cry of the green woodpecker has magic sounds. Far away on the plain a peasant's voice harangues his oxen; the shoes of a horse ring out on the white road. Jean-Christophe's eyes close. Near him an ant passes along a dead branch across a furrow. He loses consciousness…. Ages have passed. He wakes. The ant has not yet crossed the twig.

Sometimes the old man would sleep too long, and his face would grow rigid, and his long nose would grow longer, and his mouth stand open. Jean-Christophe used then to look at him uneasily, and in fear of seeing his head change gradually into some fantastic shape. He used to sing loudly, so as to wake him up, or tumble down noisily from his heap of stones. One day it occurred to him to throw a handful of pine-needles in his grandfather's face, and tell him that they had fallen from the tree. The old man believed him,

and that made Jean-Christophe laugh. But, unfortunately, he tried the trick again, and just when he had raised his hand he saw his grandfather's eyes watching him. It was a terrible affair. The old man was solemn, and allowed no liberty to be taken with the respect due to himself. They were estranged for more than a week.

The worse the road was, the more beautiful it was to Jean-Christophe. Every stone had a meaning for him; he knew them all. The shape of a rut seemed to him to be a geographical accident almost of the same kind as the great mass of the Taunus. In his head he had the map of all the ditches and hillocks of the region extending two kilometers round about the house, and when he made any change in the fixed ordering of the furrows, he thought himself no less important than an engineer with a gang of navvies; and when with his heel he crushed the dried top of a clod of earth, and filled up the valley at the foot of it, it seemed to him that his day had not been wasted.

Sometimes they would meet a peasant in his cart on the highroad, and, if the peasant knew Jean-Christophe's grandfather they would climb up by his side. That was a Paradise on earth. The horse went fast, and Jean-Christophe laughed with delight, except when they passed other people walking; then he would look serious and indifferent, like a person accustomed to drive in a carriage, but his heart was filled with pride. His grandfather and the man would talk without bothering about him. Hidden and crushed by their legs, hardly sitting, sometimes not sitting at all, he was perfectly happy. He talked aloud, without troubling about any answer to what he said. He watched the horse's ears moving. What strange creatures those ears were! They moved in every direction — to right and left; they hitched forward, and fell to one side, and turned backwards in such a ridiculous way that he: burst out laughing. He would pinch his grandfather to make him look at them; but his grandfather was not interested in them.

He would repulse Jean-Christophe, and tell him to be quiet. Jean-Christophe would ponder. He thought that when people grow up they are not surprised by anything, and that when they are strong they know everything; and he would try to be grown up himself, and to hide his curiosity, and appear to be indifferent.

He was silent them The rolling of the carriage made him drowsy. The horse's little bells danced — ding, ding; dong, ding. Music awoke in the air, and hovered about the silvery bells, like a swarm of bees. It beat gaily with the rhythm of the cart — an endless source of song, and one song came on another's heels. To Jean-Christophe they were superb. There was one especially which he thought so beautiful that he tried to draw his grandfather's attention to it. He sang it aloud. They took no heed of him. He began it again in a higher key, then again shrilly, and then old Jean Michel said irritably: "Be quiet; you are deafening me with your trumpet-call!" That took away his breath. He blushed and was silent and mortified. He crushed with his contempt the two stockish imbeciles who did not understand the sublimity of his song, which opened wide the heavens! He thought them very ugly, with their week-old beards, and they smelled very ill.

He found consolation, in watching the horse's shadow. That an astonishing sight. The beast ran along with them lying on its side. In the evening, when they returned, it covered a part of the field. They came upon a rick, and the shadow's head would rise up and then return to its place when they had passed. Its snout was flattened out like a burst balloon; its ears were large, and pointed like candles. Was it really a shadow or a creature? Jean-Christophe would not have liked to encounter it alone. He would not have run after it as he did after his grandfather's shadow, so as to walk on its head and trample it under foot. The shadows of the trees when the sun was low were also objects of meditation. They made barriers along

the road, and looked like phantoms, melancholy and grotesque, saying, “Go no farther!” and the creaking axles and the horse’s shoes repeated, “No farther!”

Jean-Christophe’s grandfather and the driver never ceased their endless chatter. Sometimes they would raise their voices, especially when they talked of local affairs or things going wrong. The child would cease to dream, and look at them uneasily. It seemed to him that they were angry with each other, and he was afraid that they would come to blows. However, on the contrary, they best understood each other in their common dislikes. For the most part, they were without haired or the least passion; they talked of small matters loudly, just for the pleasure of talking, as is the joy of the people. But Jean-Christophe, not understanding their conversation, only heard the loud tones of their voices and saw their agitated faces, and thought fearfully: “How wicked he looks! Surely they hate each other! How he rolls his eyes, and how wide he opens his mouth! He spat on my nose in his fury. O Lord, he will kill my grandfather!…”

The carriage stopped. The peasant said: “Here you are.” The two deadly enemies shook hands. Jean-Christophe’s grandfather got down first; the peasant handed him the little boy. The whip flicked the horse, the carriage rolled away, and there they were by the little sunken road near the Rhine. The sun dipped down below the fields. The path wound almost to the water’s edge. The plentiful soft grass yielded under their feet, crackling. Alder-trees leaned over the river, almost half in the water. A cloud of gnats danced. A boat passed noiselessly, drawn on by the peaceful current, striding along. The water sucked the branches of the willows with a little noise like lips. The light was soft and misty, the air fresh, the river silvery gray. They reached their home, and the crickets chirped, and on the threshold smiled his mother’s dear face….

Oh, delightful memories, kindly visions, which will hum their melody in their tuneful flight through life!… Journeys in later life, great towns and moving seas, dream countries and loved faces, are not so exactly graven in the soul as these childish walks, or the corner of the garden seen every day through the window, through the steam and mist made by the child's mouth glued to it for want of other occupation….

Evening now, and the house is shut up. Home … the refuge from all terrifying things — darkness, night, fear, things unknown. No enemy can pass the threshold…. The fire flares. A golden duck turns slowly on the spit; a delicious smell of fat and of crisping flesh scents the room. The joy of eating, incomparable delight, a religious enthusiasm, thrills of joy! The body is too languid with the soft warmth, and the fatigues of the day, and the familiar voices. The act of digestion plunges it in ecstasy, and faces, shadows, the lampshade, the tongues of flame dancing with a shower of stars in the fireplace — all take on a magical appearance of delight. Jean-Christophe lays his cheek on his plate, the better to enjoy all this happiness….

He is in his soft bed. How did he come there? He is overcome with weariness. The buzzing of the voices in the room and the visions of the day are intermingled in his mind. His father takes his violin; the shrill sweet sounds cry out complaining in the night. But the crowning joy is when his mother comes and takes Jean-Christophe's hands. He is drowsy, and, leaning over him, in a low voice she sings, as he asks, an, old song with words that have no meaning. His father thinks such music stupid, but Jean-Christophe never wearies of it. He holds his breath, and is between laughing and crying. His heart is intoxicated. He does not know where he is, and he is overflowing with tenderness. He throws his little arms round his mother's neck, and hugs her with all his strength. She says, laughing:

"You want to strangle me?"

He hugs her close. How he loves her! How he loves everything! Everybody, everything! All is good, all is beautiful…. He sleeps. The cricket on the hearth cheeps. His grandfather's tales, the great heroes, float by in the happy night…. To be a hero like them!… Yes, he will be that … he is that…. Ah, how good it is to live!

* * * * *

What an abundance of strength, joy, pride, is in that little creature! What superfluous energy! His body and mind never cease to move; they are carried round and round breathlessly. Like a little salamander, he dances day and night in the flames. His is an unwearying enthusiasm finding its food in all things. A delicious dream, a bubbling well, a treasure of inexhaustible hope, a laugh, a song, unending drunkenness. Life does not hold him yet; always he escapes it. He swims in the infinite. How happy he is! He is made to be happy! There is nothing in him that does not believe in happiness, and does not cling to it with all his little strength and passion!…

Life will soon see to it that he is brought to reason.