



VINTAGE

ARISTOCRATS

STELLA TILLYARD

CONTENTS

Cover

About the Author

Also by Stella Tillyard

Dedication

Title Page

Preface

Prologue

CHAPTER ONE

CHAPTER TWO

CHAPTER THREE

CHAPTER FOUR

CHAPTER FIVE

Epilogue

Picture Section

Index

Acknowledgements

Sources and Bibliography

Family Trees

Copyright

About the Author

Stella Tillyard's bestselling *Aristocrats*, which started the vogue for eighteenth-century women's lives, was followed by *Citizen Lord*, her biography of the Irish rebel Edward Fitzgerald. She reviews for the *Sunday Times* and is a frequent contributor to Radio 4.

ALSO BY STELLA TILLYARD

The Impact of Modernism
Citizen Lord: Edward Fitzgerald 1763-1798
A Royal Affair

*For Deborah Colvin and Allen Martens, who
encouraged me*

Stella Tillyard

ARISTOCRATS

Caroline, Emily, Louisa and Sarah Lennox 1740–1832



Preface

'SALLY'S FEARS FOR her little one are, thank God, over. The nursing scheme would not do; she had quantities of milk, which makes one regret the more that it would not do, but her nipple could not be drawn out without the greatest difficulty, and the child not being strong could not do it. It was ill from being kept from the breast for so long, but now it has a good clean nurse, sucks, sleeps and thrives.'

This letter, written by Lady Caroline Fox to Emily, Duchess of Leinster about their sister Sarah is, in parts, so blatantly modern that it is hard to believe that it is dated 6 June 1769, and that it is almost 225 years old. It is not just the 'thank God' and the nipples. Its anxiety and relief create a resonant feeling that seems to erase the centuries between its writing and our reading.

Thousands of such letters – between sisters, husbands and wives, servants and employers, parents and children – are the raw material for this book. It tells the story of Caroline, Emily, Louisa and Sarah Lennox, a story of high politics, romance, family life and tragedy that begins in 1744 as the Jacobites were planning their last, desperate assault on the Hanoverian throne and ends in 1832, five years before the beginning of the Victorian age. Nearly a century's worth of letters, and from them time and again we get this sense of intimacy. And it is not just that the Lennox sisters write in a way which makes us feel close to them; they also write about things that are as important to us as they were to them. They discuss love, marriage, food, clothes, political ideas and scandals, war, books, period pains. Everything from conception to death is there,

written in voices that we have scarcely ever heard, the voices of eighteenth-century women.

But when we look again, sympathy dissolves into strangeness. Caroline Fox's frank description of breast-feeding problems may be modern, but wet nursing is not. When she worries about a son who is ill, we immediately sympathise, but the doctors' cures – mercury sulphide and ground woodlice – make us recoil. Emily and her husband grumble about their large family, but large means not 4 children or even 7, but 19. Caroline sends Emily news of Sarah's impending marriage and notes with apparent sincerity, 'happily for her she is not the least in love'. These vignettes make us aware of the distance which separates their response to love, marriage, child-rearing and scientific knowledge from ours, and may make us feel they are beyond our reach and understanding.

This sense of distance is heightened because the Lennox sisters' circumstances were extraordinary. They were rich and well educated, speaking French almost as well as English. Their connections gave them access to the newest ideas, the latest books and plays, the most fashionable thinkers, painters, doctors and all the products of the new consumer age. They were the daughters of one Cabinet minister and duke and sisters of another. Caroline Lennox married a man who, if he had played his cards better, might have become prime minister, and she was the mother of the most famous opposition politician of the eighteenth century. Emily Lennox married the senior peer of Ireland, and one of her sons became a prominent republican revolutionary. Louisa married Ireland's richest man. Sarah caught the eye of the young George III and, half resisting, half complying, allowed herself to toy with the idea of being made Queen of England. There is little familiar here, except for the way in which male lives and opinions shaped female ones.

Despite all this – the scores of servants, country houses and ruling families – the intimacy remains; there is a dual

sense of closeness and distance. It is this feeling, and the mixture of sympathy and astonishment that it evokes, that I have tried to capture in the pages that follow. I have written the book as a narrative so that commentary intrudes as little as possible on the Lennox sisters' lives and their emotional freshness. But I have framed the narrative with a prologue and an epilogue and broken it with short sections between chapters. I hope these breaks will not only bring readers up short and remind them of the distance between the eighteenth century and our own, but also hint at continuity. These are not, as sections between chapters usually are, discourses on memory, history or war. They are descriptions of things we share, ordinary milestones of innumerable lives: birth, naming, marriage and death.

Finally I have tried to make this book an amalgam of biography and history. The astonishing richness of my sources – thousands of letters, pictures, household accounts and rules, an inventory, library lists, travel journals, prayers, verses, autopsies, maps, parks and buildings – has allowed me to build up a picture of the every day as well as the dramatic in the Lennox sisters' lives. I have tried to merge genres in the belief that biography (especially biography that deals, as this does, with romance and royalty) often gives intimacy without context, and history without biography offers context without the warmth of individual lives. And what lives they were!

Prologue

ON A BLEAK spring evening in 1741 a crowd gathered in a dark, narrow London street. At its edge well-to-do City merchants on their way westwards through Hatton Garden mingled with the wretched and curious poor, washed up from tenements to the North, East and South, looking for a handout or a meal. In the middle, dozens of women in their best clothes jostled and flowed towards the door of a large double-fronted house like filings drawn towards a magnet. The light filtering out of the house windows sent dim rays over the crowd, illuminating little bundles tied in rags and wrapped in flannel blankets; some sleeping, some gazing about, some sick and crying. All the women gathered round the door carried these small emblems of shame and poverty.

For an hour the crowd ebbed and surged and waited. Then at eight o'clock, in imitation of the mothers' misery and sin, the light in the house's entry way went out. The door opened. The crowd fell silent and a bell rang. A woman sprang forward and plunged with her child into the darkness. The door closed behind her.

Inside the house the woman was ushered into a room on the right of the hall. She gave her name but it was not written down. Then she watched as her child, a boy, was stripped layer by layer of the stain of her folly and poverty. First his clothes were taken off and cast away. Then a little memento she had hoped would stay longer with him than she could was catalogued and set aside. Then Doctor Nesbitt, donating his services for the occasion, inspected the child and pronounced him sound. Finally he was given a number, One, as the first child in the hospital. Distraught

and relieved, the mother looked on in silence. A few minutes later she was dismissed, came out of the house and lost herself in the darkness of the crowd. The door closed behind her.

Soon the bell rang again. Another woman darted up with her bundle, entered the house and returned empty-handed. The bell rang, again and again, until thirty women had taken in their children and come out without them and the Foundling Hospital was full.

For four days the house was quiet. The infants slept and sucked, motherless and nameless. Then, on the evening of 29 March, Hatton Garden was crowded and noisy once again. Heavy four-wheeled carriages, with lamps burning and footmen aloft, lumbered across the cobbles. On their sides were tiny emblems with mottoes curling underneath that dignified those inside. By the lighted entrance of number 61, the footmen jumped down and opened the heavy leather-covered doors. Noble men and noble women, physicians, merchants, doctors and Members of Parliament were handed out. Taking care to avoid the mud, they went inside and up the stairs. The state room on the first floor was alive with light. Light twinkled and sparkled from belts and buckles, from necklaces and ornaments. It lay puddled like mercury in the folds of silk gowns and in silver bowls and cups. Servants carrying candles went up and down the stairs and announced the new arrivals: the Duke of Bedford, President of the Hospital; the Earl and Countess of Pembroke; the Duke and Duchess of Richmond with their eldest daughter; William and Anne Hogarth; Lord and Lady Albemarle; Captain Robert Hudson; Mr Lewis Way. Their names rang out over the rustle of gowns, the clink of shoe buckles and the murmur of greetings.

The company sat and the Reverend Samuel Smith read evening prayers. Then the infants, numbered one to thirty, were brought in for christening. Beyond the impromptu font sat not their mothers and fathers but a surrogate

family of the finest, wealthiest and worthiest in the land. The Reverend Samuel Smith took the first child from his nurse, approached the font and dabbed the baby's forehead with holy water. The little child, newly clothed in lace and cotton, with a cap jammed tightly on his hairless head, was baptised Thomas Coram, after the hospital's founder. Eunice Coram followed. The aristocracy lent the children their family names. Charlotte Finch was named for the Duchess of Somerset, John Russell for the Duke of Bedford, Charles Lennox for the Duke of Richmond, Sarah Cadogan for his wife. Caroline Lennox was named for the Duke's daughter, an anxious, intelligent girl of eighteen sitting with her parents. Secure in their names, the rich and the mighty bestowed them on little children, sending them forth watered with greatness. Their impoverished, orphaned little doubles would, as long as they lived, reflect the importance of their patrons.

After the baptismal ceremony the company departed, clattering westwards in their carriages out of their namesakes' lives. Lady Caroline Lennox, trundling back to Richmond House in Whitehall, left little Caroline to a life in the shadow. Darkness descends over her as it did over the house in Hatton Garden that night. Perhaps she became a servant, perhaps even a milliner or a mantua maker. But it was just as likely that, like one of Lady Caroline's own children, she would die of a fever before she could understand that she had been orphaned into a life of misery.

CHAPTER
ONE
—♦—
**CAROLINE
AND EMILY**

PART ONE

‘I know the step I am going to take is a wrong one’.
Caroline to Henry Fox, 28 April 1744.

AT THE AGE of eighteen, Caroline Lennox was a plump, nervous girl with hurried, wide-open dark-brown eyes, a small mouth dimpled at the corners and a full, soft chin inherited from her father, the second Duke of Richmond. Her eyebrows were straight and dark and long. Her nose turned up slightly at the end.

Caroline was born in Richmond House in Whitehall in 1723, the first of seven children of the Duke and Duchess who survived to maturity. Richmond House occupied a commanding position in London and Caroline grew up watching the world go past its windows. Her father had inherited a dilapidated brick house in Whitehall. In the 1730s a large chunk of his income was spent building an imposing three-storeyed pedimented modern residence with gardens on one side and stables the other. The drawing-room looked north over the Privy Garden, an open space with shrubs and grass which had once been part of the Royal Palace of Whitehall. Members of Parliament, clerks, messenger boys, friends and lovers met there to gossip, flirt and swap stories. To one side of the Privy Garden stood the Banqueting House, decorated by Charles I, Caroline Lennox’s great-great-grandfather. Beyond that again the clean white spire of St Martin-in-the-Fields rose

in front of the theatres in Covent Garden and Drury Lane and the slums of Seven Dials.

To the south and east of Richmond House a lawn sloped down to a balustraded terrace which looked over London's busiest street, the River Thames. On a fine day the occupants of the house could sit on sheltered benches, watch the sun coming up beyond the dome of St Paul's Cathedral, and follow its progress across the river to the slums of Southwark, round past the pavilions and long walks of Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens and see it sink in the west behind the villages of Richmond and Kew.

The Thames carried people and goods up and down and from side to side. Travellers from all over the world, after disembarking down river, continued upstream in smaller boats. From London Basin, where large merchantmen moored, lightermen in skiffs and barges brought the city supplies: flour and grain from East Anglia, fish from the North Sea, wine and cognac from France, fine wool from Spain, silk from China, carpets from Turkey and timber and spices from Madagascar and the East Indies. Occasionally the lighterman brought more durable plunder: paintings from Italy and The Netherlands and crate-loads of Roman statues, some lacking arms, some heads, some legs, that were reassembled and displayed in the halls and libraries of the rich. Snug in their niches, these remade senators and muses guarded public policy and private pleasures, lending the dignity of antiquity to political squabbles and experiments with electromagnetism alike.

Boats also brought more mundane things: wax and tallow to light the houses of London, stone to build them and coal to heat them. The coal barges, disgorging their dusty contents into basements along the riverbank, were of particular importance to Caroline Lennox and her father. For it was in coal that the Richmond family fortunes lay, and it was due to the huge expansion of the coal trade in

the eighteenth century that Caroline's father was a man of such immense wealth.

Caroline's grandfather, the first Duke of Richmond, was born in 1672. He was the youngest of Charles II's many illegitimate sons. His mother, Caroline's great-grandmother, was Louise de K roualle who, as a young woman of twenty, was sent over to England with Louis XIV's courtiers and diplomats conducting the negotiations for what became the secret and notorious Treaty of Dover. Louise ousted Charles's reigning mistress and, over the years did the King, her country and herself stout service. The Treaty, signed in 1670, bound England and France to peaceful coexistence and held till the revolution of 1688 brought William of Orange to the English throne. Louise was created Duchess of Portsmouth by Charles II. Louis XIV, for his part, recognised her service to his country by granting her the Stuart family lands in France. With the land came two ch teaux, Aubigny and La Verrerie. Louise eventually retired to Aubigny and Caroline visited her there in the late 1720s.

In return for royal largesse, Louise gave Charles years of service in the bedchamber and a son, Caroline's grandfather, named Charles Lennox. During his boyhood the child was given a plethora of titles to cover his bastardy. He was created Duke of Richmond, Baron of Settrington and Earl of March in the English peerage, and Baron Methuen of Tarbolton, Earl of Darnley and Duke of Lennox in the Scottish peerage. When his mother died he added the title of Duc d'Aubigny to this list and did homage for it to the French crown.

To this sonorous but worthless panoply Charles II added something more substantial: an annuity of two thousand pounds and a royalty of twelvecence per chaldron on coal dues at Newcastle. In effect the young Duke was given a substantial slice of the crown's tax revenue, which

increased in direct proportion to mining and manufacturing.

As manufacturing increased, so did the number of laden barges leaving the Tyne and the wealth of the Dukes of Richmond. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the coal dues already produced five thousand pounds a year, a sum on which an aristocrat, his family, servants and horses could all live in style. By the 1790s the amount had shot up to over twenty thousand pounds annually, prompting the radical Tom Paine to remark 'the Duke of Richmond takes away as much for himself as would maintain two thousand poor and aged persons'. Little of this wealth would come down to Caroline, of course. It was mostly reserved for the male heir, for the continuation of the family line and maintenance of the family properties. But in her childhood Caroline basked in the warm glow of the coal money. She was painted, pampered, richly clothed and well fed. If her own share of the family's dividend from Newcastle, her dowry, was relatively modest, it was backed up by an immense family fortune and enhanced by a great name. With ten thousand pounds and the Lennox name and connections, Caroline was well endowed for the only career open to a woman of her class - marriage into a noble and wealthy family and a job at Court.

When Charles II died in 1685, Louise de K roualle took her son back to her ch teau at Aubigny and brought him up as a Catholic and a Frenchman. Duke of Richmond as he was, Charles Lennox was always a Frenchman first and an Englishman second. As a young man he served with the French army against the Prince of Orange. But, like his mother, Richmond had an eye for the main chance. Realising that his titles, his annuity and his coal dues would make him a man of far greater influence and consequence than his French army pay, he renounced his religion

(consoling himself with the mysteries of Freemasonry instead), and came to England.

Richmond successfully petitioned William III for his titles, income and property, becoming, by way of payment, a Staunch Anglican, a Whig and a supporter of the Hanoverian succession. His children and grandchildren became English subjects and courtiers in their turn. Once he had regained his property and revenues, Caroline's grandfather began to look around for a job at Court and a military commission. But he was conspicuously unsuccessful, partly because he was a newcomer tainted with Frenchness and partly because he was better at holding his drink than any steady employment. So he spent much of his time hunting in Sussex, where he eventually bought the country estate of Goodwood near Chichester, and gambling in London and on the Continent. He was cosmopolitan, charming and feckless, equally at home in Paris and in London. His sense of belonging in France was inherited by his children and grandchildren who always felt that the social and sexual casualness of French aristocratic life chimed better with the family's easy-going informality than the hectic mixture of restraint and intrigue that characterised the English court.

The Lennox children were almost bilingual and read French as easily as English. In Caroline's library and in those of her sisters, French books took up almost as much room as English ones. French was the language of philosophers and the language of romance. Cheap novels, or 'story books', as Caroline called them, books too ephemeral to merit binding and shelving in the library, were very often imported from Paris and stacked in Caroline's dressing-room, and in them, romantic heroines, faced with moral and marital dilemmas, whispered, schemed and (usually) capitulated in the language of love and dalliance. So, for Caroline, dropping into French at

amorous or difficult moments had both literary and family sanction.

On his trips to London and to Europe, Caroline's grandfather put off boredom with long bouts of gambling, playing for large stakes with British officers and courtiers who thronged London and the Low Countries during the wars with Louis XIV. In The Hague in 1719, Richmond racked up a large debt to the Irish Earl of Cadogan, one of Marlborough's staff officers and confidants. To pay him off and to seal his friendship, Richmond gave his heir, the Earl of March, as husband for Cadogan's daughter Sarah, accepting a reduction of five thousand pounds in her marriage settlement to make up the difference. The wedding, as Caroline's father was later fond of telling her and her siblings, was very quickly arranged. He was eighteen years old and about to embark on the Grand Tour. His bride to be was only thirteen. They were brought together and told by their fathers that they were going to be married straight away. The little girl was speechless but the horrified young man burst out, 'surely they are not going to marry me to that dowdy!' After this fruitless objection the ceremony was performed. When it was over, the Earl of March, accompanied by his tutor, set off for Italy. His wife went back to the nursery. Thus, in an extreme form, Caroline's parents acted out the powerlessness of aristocratic children, who could become pawns in a parental chess game, who were sacrificed for family alliances or sold for money and prestige.

When he grew up, Caroline's father developed a taste for practical jokes, and came to see his marriage as one of them. He loved to tell its story to his children because it ended happily. When he returned from his continental travels three years later, the Earl was very reluctant to call on and claim his wife. He went to the theatre instead. Like many of those present, he was more occupied in looking at the boxes and stalls than the stage. Noticing one

particularly sumptuous young woman, he turned to his neighbour and asked who she was. 'You must be a stranger in London,' came the reply, 'not to know the toast of the town, the beautiful Lady March.'

It was a *dénouement* as sentimental as Caroline's father could have wished, and he followed it with a well publicised happy marriage. He was never ashamed to demonstrate, in portraits, letters and drawing-rooms his love for his wife and children. Horace Walpole, a voluptuary of gossip who for nearly half a century recorded the scandals of the Whig circle in which the Lennoxes moved, noticed his familial content. At a ball given by a family friend in November 1741, Walpole reported that Caroline's father sat by her mother all night, 'kissing her hand and gazing at his beautiful daughters'. The Duchess returned her husband's feelings. After a quarrel in September 1740 she wrote to him, 'of all the time that I have loved you, I never felt more love and tenderness for you than I did yesterday. I haunted all the places where you had been last. One was to go among your trees where you stood so long on Sunday ... and as much as I love you I hate myself.'

The second Duke of Richmond's marriage was the most dramatic event of his life. It was involuntarily undertaken, done to him rather than by him, and in it lay the seeds of Caroline's own fascination with the institution of marriage itself. Caroline inherited a good deal of the first Duke of Richmond's recklessness, although it was overlaid with her father's prudence and carefulness, and she believed that love and impulsiveness went together. She championed marriages for love, but at the same time she knew that, although her parents' marriage had been at best a matter of convenience, at worst a cynical sacrifice of youth to pleasure, it was a marriage that worked. She could neither condone nor condemn arranged marriages, and since that was what her parents wanted for her, she solved her dilemma first by remaining unmarried for much longer than

most girls and then by making a spectacular choice that flouted her parents' wishes.

After his own marriage Caroline's father continued to take what life had to offer with gratitude and restraint, seeing no reason to become a man who seized the initiative. As a result his career was dignified rather than spectacular. After the accession of George II, the Duke was appointed a Lord of the Bedchamber, while Caroline's mother became Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Caroline. Once ensconced in his post, Caroline's father pursued his earnest desire to erase any lingering traces of wild roistering, whoring and gambling from his family's reputation. He was a model grandson to Louise de K roualle, soaking up without complaint the emotion and expectation she diverted on to him from her unsatisfactory son. When the first Duke died in 1723, Louise shed what she described as 'very bitter' tears. After all, she told the new Duke, it was her son that she had lost. But she recovered quickly, and added that she would survive her bereavement because she knew her grandson loved her. 'I dare flatter myself, my dear boy, that you have a sincere tenderness and affection for a grandmother who has the most lifelong devotion to you; and I shall not consider myself so unhappy, my dear Lord, if you are just a little bit sensible of it.' She felt that to make an adequate demonstration of his love, the second Duke should produce an heir. The Richmond line needed securing and, besides, she said, she wanted another portrait to hang in her ch teau alongside the previous Ducs d'Aubigny. She was pleased enough with the birth of Caroline in 1723, but disappointed with the Duchess of Richmond a year later. Sarah's second child, a boy, lived only a few hours. Louise wrote and, in a perfunctory way, thanked God that Sarah hadn't died too. But, she went on relentlessly, 'She has not kept her promise to me though. For in her last letter she promised me a son, but - the dear child - I'm sure she is

very sorry to have failed in her promise! But I hope that her third will be an increase of the right sort in your family.'

The Duke and Duchess worked tirelessly to gratify this hard taskmistress. They had twelve children, seven of whom lived to maturity. After Caroline's birth in 1723 came Emily, in 1731. Charles, who eventually became the third Duke, was born in 1735, too late for Louise de K roualle, who battled on in hopes until she was eighty-nine, but had finally died a year before. George, in homage to the King, arrived in 1737, then Louisa in 1743, Sarah in 1745 and Cecilia in 1750.

Throughout her childhood Caroline was continually hustled from place to place as the Court moved about, disbanded and re-formed. If the King was at St James's, the Lennox family could live in the comfort of Richmond House a mile or so away. But if the King moved to Kensington, Hampton Court or Windsor the whole Lennox family went too. Each move of the Court was like an army decamping: the crush and chaos of wagons piled high with family furniture, silver and clothes chests; the barking of dogs, neighing of horses, crying of children and shouting of courtiers and servants; the noisy rumble through the streets; the undignified scramble for the best lodgings at the other end.

During the social and parliamentary season when the Court was assembled, Caroline might not see her parents for days on end. She lived in their lodgings, chattering in French to her nanny and later doing her lessons with her French governess, while her parents went to work. Caroline's mother waited on the Queen, carrying out tasks whose humbleness was barely mitigated by her salary of  500 a year or the dignity of her office. She ordered meals and clothes, dispatched servants to fetch books, cards, prints, workbags or pastimes, and rationed visitors. Caroline's father performed similar jobs for the King. In compensation for the dullness of their days, Lords and

Ladies of the Bedchamber were the monarchs' companions and perhaps their friends.

For a woman at Court, waiting on the Queen was the highest available position. It marked the limit of her possible career. But for men, the Bedchamber was only the beginning: an ambitious courtier used the job as a jumping off point. He saw and perhaps helped determine who was in and who was out of favour and he was ideally placed to lobby the monarch for a better position. Caroline's father, however, was ambitious not for advancement but for sobriety and dignity. He stayed on for seven years, the picture of steadiness but not of success. The King called him an affectionate and sincere friend, and in 1735 rewarded him with the Mastership of the Horse, a step up in rank but sideways into the royal stable. There Richmond managed the monarch's movement from palace to palace and from England to the Continent faithfully until his death. It was his job to accompany the retinue wherever it went in England. When George departed for Hanover at the beginning of each summer, the Duke went as far as Harwich, where he handed the King over to the Royal Navy and to his Hanoverian counterpart and gratefully departed for Goodwood and other pursuits.

Richmond's life was not all courtly business. The Duke inherited his father's interest in Freemasonry, enjoyed practical jokes and revelled in the theatre. When he sat to Philips in the late 1740s, he presented himself as both courtier and collector and a private man. He put on formal but by no means ducal dress, alluding to his station by wearing the royal-blue ribbon of the Order of the Garter. One hand he kept gloved like that of a courtier, the other left bare like that of a man about to greet his onlooker in an intimate and informal way. On the table he put a document referring to himself as Master of the Horse. Behind him, opening out of the formal drawing-room is the library at Richmond House, a secluded room with leather-bound

volumes ranged along its shelves. In the doorway stands a draped classical figure, gesturing at once to the Duke's status as a man of learning, his position in the Society of Antiquaries and his love of collecting.

Richmond collected ideas as well as objects. As a follower of Newton and something of a gentleman scientist, he patronised research into marine life in the Solent and built up a collection of exotic plants and animals. He belonged to the Royal Society and often entertained scientists and savants who toured Europe's drawing-rooms explaining the latest theories and discoveries. Medicine was another of his hobbies and he was an eager participant in new operations and cures, believing that the body could be the site of learning as well as the home of the soul.

Objects of all sorts accompanied new ideas into Richmond's houses. He amassed statuary and paintings, and became president of both the Royal Society of Antiquaries and the Society of Arts. But his special passion was for plants and animals. Newton had brought order to the physical universe, so the story ran, and now scores of collectors were trying to do the same for flora and fauna, with menageries and botanical gardens.

In the 1730s scores of animals were brought to Goodwood and many were eventually housed in heated catacombs under the park. In this menagerie were five wolves, two tigers, two lions, three bears, two leopards, a chimpanzee, three racoons, an armadillo and a host of lesser birds and beasts. The Duke was constantly on the look out for rarities and chafed at failure to secure them. His fellow courtier Lord Hervey, who was not an animal lover, joked that the erotic behaviour of Richmond's animals was 'an allegorical epitomy of the whole matrimonial world'. But the Duke's interest in the animal kingdom was more than simply materialistic. He felt that capturing and cataloguing the beasts of the wild brought them out from disordered nature into the ambit of human

rationality. By virtue of being studied, animals became almost human, and they certainly became beloved. When a lioness from the menagerie died, Richmond built her a magnificent tomb in the Goodwood grounds where she reposes in marble amongst the trees.

Owning a menagerie, then, involved much more than admiration of animals. Acquisition and taxonomy were forms of conquest, of bringing strange species under man's control. Richmond's collections were part of the explosion in consumption that accompanied industrialisation and the acquisition of foreign territories. The Duke wanted as many animals and plants (he was particularly keen on trees that could fit in with prevailing tastes in landscaping) from all over the world and he paid a lot of money for rare animals and seeds and hired experts to find and look after them. Tigers came from India, lions from Africa, monkeys from the East Indies, vultures and bears from Europe and North America, cedars from Lebanon and maples from New England.

The women of Goodwood also went on this journey of discovery and ownership. In the 1730s naval captains returning to Portsmouth often sailed home with sacks full of shells for the Duchess and her daughters. The Duchess, Caroline and, as soon as she was old enough to help, Emily spent hours arranging the shells into intricate patterns which were built into a grotto in the park. The shell grotto was a tiny, vaulted room where the discarded houses of sea-creatures, flung by the seas on to distant beaches, were carefully sorted and assembled into a rococo caprice that celebrated nature's diversity, man's seafaring prowess and women's artifice. Cornucopias of shells were filled with shell fruits and shell sweetcorn. Shells covered the walls like stuccoed plaster. They were woven into ribbons and bows, twisted into ropes and written in initials: CR for the Duke, EL for Emily Lennox and CL for Caroline.

The shell house was a microcosm of the Lennox family's world, displaying a love for order, rationality and the modernity represented by the natural sciences. But it was also about impersonation and play, plain on the outside, riotous and eccentric within, a place where shells were turned into apples and pears and ribbons. Science and feeling, order and capriciousness mingled together. It was crucial to the family that rationality and sentiment were not exclusive; the Duke and his children always wanted to show both.

Growing up in this world of exalted sense and feeling, Caroline Lennox inherited her parents' belief in rationality and politeness and openly stressed their emphasis on feeling and passion. But she also came to long for a world in which there could be, sometimes, if not privacy, then seclusion and time for private reflection.

From the very beginning, Caroline was an anxious little girl, living her life in what she later called a 'hurry of spirits'. She loved reading and stories and, as a child, developed what became a lifelong taste for Roman history. From her parents she imbibed strong notions of probity, duty and family loyalty, and constantly worried that she might not live up to their expectations of good behaviour. None the less, she was a self-possessed and mature girl, assured in company and schooled in the art of polite conversation. Because her early years were spent without nursery companions, Caroline was the centre of the family world; attention was lavished on her both by her parents and by the ageing Louise de K roualle when the Lennox family visited her for the winter season of 1728. She got used to being painted, with her mother, with a pony or acting in Dryden's *Indian Emperor* at the age of nine.

Yet it was not an altogether happy childhood. The Duke and Duchess had little success in producing a son and heir, and Caroline matured in an atmosphere of anxiety about childbirth and sadness about infant sickness and death.

Two boys were born, in 1724 and 1730, but neither lived very long. These deaths devastated the household because each swept away the chance to secure the dynasty. Worse still, from Caroline's point of view, her young sister Louisa, born in 1725, died of a fever at the age of three. By that time Caroline was five years old and well able to understand that death was unsparing and inevitable.

This early experience of death left Caroline pessimistic and fearful. She came to feel that any joy she had was bound to be snatched away, and she also became obsessed with the frailty of young children. 'Want of spirits,' she said, was her 'natural disposition' and she believed that because experience had told her that 'joy and happiness' were not to be had, her melancholy was fully justified. If she did feel happy she tended to regard her situation with mistrust and work herself back into a state of unease: 'I can't but always reflect how much more than my share of happiness I have enjoyed already, and that very reflection makes me dread what is to come.'

Caroline tried to temper her habitual sense of foreboding with the consolations of religion. 'For,' she said, 'without religion, the life of man is a wild, fluttering, inconsistent thing without any certain scope or design.' But Caroline's faith was no more than conventional and it never made up for life's sorrows or obliterated her fear of death. It was in fact to men and women rather than God that she turned for understanding. She liked to study the behaviour of the 'human species' as she called it and she read constantly, at home, out of doors in the formal gardens at Goodwood or by the Thames at Richmond House. Histories, geography, philosophy, travels, letters, memoirs of courtly life, plays, novels, scandal sheets, criminal confessions were, in London and the country, her company and her education. Aristocratic girls got no formal schooling: a series of masters and intermittent parental instruction supplemented her own restless enquiry after knowledge.

So it was from the word of man rather than of God that Caroline constructed her understanding of the world. 'I love a likeness to a storybook,' she exclaimed, and she found such likenesses in the intrigues and scandals of her parents' circle. And to the inventors of movable type she was proportionately grateful; printing, she declared - along with the great savants of her day - 'has made a more total change in this world than any other thing.' Aphorisms of this sort appealed to Caroline, partly because she had a very good memory and could recall them at will, partly because she enjoyed the display of learning (though not, she always said, of wit) for its own sake.

Books supplied emotion as well as instruction; they made her cry and laugh, and Caroline fervently believed in the importance of passion and its expression. She regarded herself as a woman of strong feelings, 'apt to cry' as she put it, and she intensely disliked people who were even-tempered or reserved. Emotional coldness was akin to bad behaviour in her creed, besides being bad for well-being. Caroline easily lost her temper if she was provoked or neglected and with it her equanimity and tranquillity. Then she demanded both attention and solitude. 'I find when I have anything on my mind I'm much better when I live quietly and sit at home reading or working and have time to reason myself into submitting myself to my affliction. At all times any hurry puts me more out of humour and out of spirits than anything.' Sketching out her ideal kind of life, Caroline laid great stress on a quietness which was almost wholly lacking at Goodwood and at Richmond House. 'Living alone suits my disposition best, at least passing a good deal of my time so. I love to saunter about the gardens, looking at plants etc by myself or being shut up in my dressing room reading or writing.'

When her sense of oppression lifted, Caroline was the last person to want complete seclusion. She enjoyed company more than she realised and had considerable

social poise. From her earliest childhood she had been at home in the drawing-room and, if the company was sufficiently serious to suit her ideas of good taste, she delighted in formal assemblies, where people worked their way around conversational groups. She professed to hate political chat and gossip about people she did not know, but gossip about people she did know was quite another matter. There she was unashamedly curious. Taking her cue from scandal sheets and novels, she used to question servants about their employers. She loved to dig over the gossip of the day with women friends – ‘a little nap, a little chat and now and then a little cards’ – and regarded herself as a connoisseur of human nature.

There was another side to this intelligent, worried, poised and slightly pedantic young woman – an irresistible pull towards those things she professed to dislike: wit, recklessness, bustle and ambition. ‘I don’t think wit a necessary ingredient at all,’ she said severely. But wit fascinated her, and so did excess, that quality of her grandfather’s which her father had worked so hard to suppress in himself and his family. While she wrote peevishly, ‘I am apt to grudge people their victuals,’ she secretly found appetite – a hunger for women, for power, for food, for cards, for the latest extravagant fashions – overwhelmingly attractive.

This horrified fascination for what she thought of as wickedness was encapsulated in Caroline’s attitude towards Voltaire. Voltaire had come into the acquaintance of her family circle during his exile in England between 1726 and 1729, when Caroline was a little girl. As a young woman she read his *Lettres philosophiques*, which appealed to her love of aphorism and of explanations of the human condition. When *Candide* appeared, Caroline couldn’t put it down or stop thinking about it. The book was a satire on optimism, and as such in tune with Caroline’s own sense that life was fraught with dangers. She felt she

shouldn't like it but she did, and therein lay its peculiar fascination. 'Candide is a wicked book to be sure, but infinitely clever in my opinion, and diverts me vastly.' And again, see-sawing backwards and forwards between disgust and delight, 'there is wit in it, but the plan of it is gloomy and wicked to a degree. I think there are some droll things in it; its mighty entertaining.'

Round about 1742, when she was nineteen years old, reckoned a beauty and destined by her parents for a great match, Caroline met a Voltaire of her own, Henry Fox, and fell deeply and passionately in love with him. In 1742 Henry Fox was thirty-seven years old, an ambitious and able Member of Parliament, obsessed with politics and particularly with managing the tricky affairs of the House of Commons.

The Duke and Duchess could not decide whether it was Fox's antecedents or his behaviour that they disapproved of most. Fox's father, Sir Stephen Fox, had been a Tory servant of the Crown who had made his name and fortune as Paymaster General of Charles II's forces at the end of the previous century. At first Fox looked set to follow his father's footsteps. After Eton and Oxford (where he astonished fellow students by reciting reams of Latin verse from memory) he travelled on the Continent. By the 1730s his sights were set on Parliament. But by then to be a Tory was to be condemned to the back benches. After the Jacobite rebellion of 1715, which was supported by a sprinkling of Tories, Toryism was tainted with treachery and disloyalty towards the Hanoverian dynasty; it offered no hope for an ambitious politician. Nothing daunted, Fox changed sides and put himself under the tutelage of the Duke of Richmond's fellow courtier Lord Hervey (who shortly afterwards began a long affair with Fox's brother Stephen). In 1735 Fox was elected Whig MP for Hindon. He moved quickly up the Whig hierarchy, impressing everyone

with his command of detail, ability to manage men and cynical approach to political problems. In 1743 Fox was given a position at the Treasury, the first rung on the ladder to power.

Fox was not a handsome man. He was short, stout and pear shaped, weighing in at over twelve stone. His face was dominated by a double chin, a heavy black jaw and eyebrows that jumped out of his face like rippling caterpillars. But this ungainliness was offset by qualities that Caroline found very attractive. He read widely, wrote verses and had a talent for friendship and domesticity. Even his reputation for atheism, gambling and womanising (made flesh in an illegitimate child of a year and another not yet out of the womb, who was born in 1744) were irresistible to her. Here rolled up in one hirsute form was the personification of the forbidden; and Fox offered it all to her with such persuasive charm that she was overwhelmed.

Caroline and Fox had met at Goodwood in the 1730s and on many occasions since in Whitehall drawing-rooms and at the theatre. By the beginning of the next decade Fox was looking for a way out of his bachelor life. His brother Stephen had recently got married (albeit to the thirteen-year-old daughter of one of Fox's mistresses) and to everyone's surprise had given up Hervey and settled down to an unimpeachable life as a father and country squire. Fox was mildly envious. He fell in love with Caroline, sensing that she could offer him companionship, devotion and a few good contacts besides.

Caroline's parents were happy to entertain Fox as a friend but adamant that he was impossible as a suitor. They recoiled from Fox's naked ambition, his thirst for power and money and his reputation for atheism. They despised his fortune as too little and his presumption as too great. But Fox had made up his mind. Sometime in March 1744 he met Caroline at the theatre and asked her to marry him. Caroline said neither yes nor no. She replied, true to the