



**GEORGE SAND** at the age of 28.

*From a painting by Eugène Delacroix.*

LETTERS  
OF  
GEORGE SAND.

TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY  
RAPHAËL LEDOS DE BEAUFORT.

WITH  
*PREFACE AND BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH BY THE TRANSLATOR.*

*Illustrated with Six Portraits of George Sand  
AT VARIOUS PERIODS OF HER LIFE.*

In Three Volumes.

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## PREFACE.

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A FULL knowledge of the very deep interest felt in this country in regard to French literature, more especially the works of leading writers, induces the belief that the British reading public would favourably receive a translation of the most important letters of the late George Sand.

Those letters, it is certain, will greatly modify the views hitherto held by many people in this country respecting the scope of the genius of their author, who, in England, is still regarded chiefly as a novelist. They will also throw new light upon her moral and religious ideas. Further, they will be found to contain many somewhat interesting details, as yet unpublished in this country, and relating to the chief social, political, and literary events—European and French, chiefly the latter—which occurred during the period embracing the fall of Charles X., the Monarchy of July, the rise of Saint-Simonism and the various other schools of Socialism :

## Preface.

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those of Cabet, Blanqui, Proudhon, Leroux, Fourier, Lamennais, and others; the flight of Louis Philippe, the proclamation of the Second Republic, the insurrection of Poland, the expedition to Rome, the *Coup d'état*, the proclamation of the Empire, the Crimean war, the struggle for Italian unity, the war of 1866, the disasters of the Franco-Prussian war, the subsequent outbreak of the Commune, etc., etc.

The letters, it will be observed, are preceded by a biographical sketch, the facts contained in which are derived from unquestionably authentic sources. This will, it is hoped, enable the reader better to understand the various allusions made in the letters to the other literary productions of the author and to her domestic affairs. A few notes have also been added, for the convenience of those who may not have any extensive knowledge of the author's works and of the events referred to in her letters.

Nearly all the important works of George Sand have been translated into English. Of these, but a few novels have appeared in this country. In the United States, a far larger proportion of her writings has been so published. This difference of appreciation of the author is probably apparent only, and due to the non-existence of any copyright convention between France and the United States. However, in spite of the heavy

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costs involved in translation and the purchase of copyright, her works have secured publication in all the principal modern languages.

The work of translation and revision has been greatly facilitated by the collaboration of Mr. P. Varnals, whose assistance in his literary labours the translator has had previous occasion \* to recognise.

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\* In revising the MS. and proofs of *The Germans*, translated from the French of Father Didon.

LONDON, *January*, 1886.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

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AMANTINE LUCILE AURORE DUDEVANT, *née* DUPIN, known in literature under the pseudonym of GÉORGE SAND, was born in Paris on the 5th July, 1804, the year of the coronation of the first Napoléon as Emperor (16 Messidor, year XII., the last of the Republic).

Her father, Maurice Dupin de Francueil, was the son of M. Dupin de Francueil, a gentleman belonging to a family of noble but not exalted rank, and holding the position of Receiver-General for the Duchy of Albret.

M. Dupin de Francueil lived at the castle of Châteauroux, on the banks of the Indre, where, on the 13th of January, 1778, a son (Maurice) was borne to him by his second wife, Marie Aurore de Saxe, a natural daughter of Maurice, Count of Saxony, Duke of Courland and Marshal-General of France; the last-named title, previously held only by Turenne and Villars, together with a vast estate and a yearly pension of 50,000 *livres*, being bestowed by Louis XV. as a mark of his gratitude to the hero of Fontenoy.

Marie Aurore de Saxe had been previously married to the Count of Horn, a natural son of Louis XV., and Lieutenant-Governor of Schelestadt, in the province of Alsace, who died at a very advanced age only three months after the marriage.

Maurice de Saxe was a natural son of Augustus II., Elector of Saxony by the Countess of Königsmark, considered to be one of the greatest beauties of the time, and was related to the royal family of France through the marriage of his sister to the Dauphin, the father of Louis XVI.

The foregoing will enable the reader to perceive the real, though illegitimate affiliation, which George Sand herself points out as existing between her family and the Bourbons.

Whilst serving in Italy as an officer in the French army, Maurice Dupin de Francueil met with Antoinette Victoria Sophie DELABOËDE, whose devotion to him during a long and dangerous illness won his affection, and despite the fact of her having previously been the mother of two illegitimate children by different fathers, brought about a *liaison*, subsequently consecrated by marriage, and which resulted in the birth of the subject of the present sketch.

Contrary to the general rule of French marriages, the bridegroom was the younger of the parties, being but twenty-six, whilst his bride had reached thirty.

As George Sand, in her *Histoire de ma Vie*, herself observes, her mother was but a poor waif of the Paris streets, the daughter of Antoine Delaborde, a *maître-paulmier* and



## Biographical Sketch.

*maitre-oiselier*—that is, a bird-fancier—who carried on business on the Quai aux Oiseaux, and had previously kept a small dram-shop and billiard-room, somewhere in Paris.

The godfather of Antoinette Delaborde was a bird-fancier named Barra, a name that might still have been seen on the Boulevard du Temple, in 1847, over a shop crowded with cages of all sizes, where, as says George Sand, "might always be heard the joyous strains of a host of feathered songsters, regarded by me as so many sponsors and mysterious patron-saints, between whom and myself I have always fancied that there existed a special affinity."

Three years after his marriage with the Countess of Horn, M. Dupin de Francueil died. The guardianship of Maurice Dupin de Francueil thus devolved upon his mother, the countess, to whom his *liaison* with Antoinette Delaborde appeared in the light of a great grievance.

These feelings on the part of his mother produced no effect upon Maurice, who, on the 5th of June, 1804, had actually married his mistress, having, in the absence of consent on the part of the countess, provided himself with a forged certificate of parental authorisation.

The circumstances attending the birth of Maurice Dupin's celebrated daughter were somewhat peculiar. M. Dupin himself was in Paris, on leave of absence from service at Boulogne, where Napoléon had collected 100,000 men, in view of a descent upon the shores of this country. At a dancing party, where Madame Dupin was taking part in a quadrille, enlivened by the strains of her husband's violin, she was

suddenly compelled to withdraw, being seized with the pains of childbirth. A few minutes later Aurore Dupin saw the light.

When but four years of age, Aurore lost her father, who was killed by a fall from his horse when returning home late at night from a visit to some friends. At the time of his death, M. Maurice Dupin held the rank of captain in the cavalry, and was on the point of attaining the object of his ambition—appointment as an officer in the imperial body-guard.

Upon the death of Aurore's father, Madame Dupin quitted Paris for Nohant, near La Châtre, at the request of her mother-in-law, whose feelings, in regard to what she had formerly resented as a *mésalliance* on the part of her son, had been greatly modified by the terrible blow which the sad event had inflicted upon her.

All the affection hitherto bestowed by the countess upon her son was now centred in her grand-daughter.

Until reaching the age of fourteen, Aurore was brought up under the immediate care of her grandmother, at the *château* at Nohant. Her education was in accordance with the principles laid down in the *Émile* of Jean Jacques Rousseau, of whom the aged countess, a most intelligent and accomplished woman, was an enthusiastic admirer, and who, it may be mentioned, had at one time acted as secretary to her second husband.

In the work previously mentioned, *Histoire de ma Vie*, our heroine, speaking of her early years, says: "While I was yet

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very young, my mother commenced the cultivation of my intellectual faculties; my mind was neither particularly sluggish nor particularly active; left to itself it might have developed but slowly. I was rather backward in talking, but having once begun to speak I learned words very rapidly, and, when but four years old, I could read fluently. I was brought up with my cousin Clotilde. Our respective mothers taught us our prayers, and I recollect that I used to repeat mine by heart without a mistake, and also without having any idea of their meaning, except as regards the following words, which we were made to repeat when our little heads were laid upon the same pillow: '*Mon Dieu, je vous donne mon cœur!*' (My God, I give my heart to thee!) I do not know why I understood those words better than the rest, for they are highly metaphysical; but certainly I did understand them, and it was the only part of my prayers that conveyed to my mind any idea either of God or myself. As for the *Pater*, the *Credo*, and the *Ave Maria*, all of which I knew very well in French, with the exception of '*Donnez-nous notre pain de chaque jour*' (give us our daily bread), I might as well have repeated them like a parrot, in Latin; they could not have been more unintelligible to me.

"We were also taught La Fontaine's fables, and I knew nearly all of them; but they, too, were a closed book to me. The learning and repeating of them used to tire me so much, that I was fifteen or sixteen years of age before I perceived their beauty. . . .

"It was formerly the custom to fill the minds of children

with a heap of intellectual treasures far beyond their power of appreciation. I certainly do not find fault at their having some little trouble imposed upon them. In relieving the youthful mind of all such laborious exercise, as advocated by him in his *Émile*, Rousseau runs the risk of letting the brain of his pupil grow so dull as to become incapable of learning that which the master reserves for a more mature age. It is right to accustom children, at as early an age as possible, to a moderate but daily exercise of their mental faculties. But it is too much the fashion to prematurely place before them matters too subtle for their comprehension. No literature exists that is really suitable for little children. All the pretty verses written specially for their reading are too affected, and abound in terms which form no part of their vocabulary. Nursery rhymes are about the only productions that really appeal to their childish imagination.

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“My mother used to sing to me a rhyme on Christmas Eve; but as that only occurred once a year, I do not recollect it. What I have not forgotten is the absolute belief which I had in the descent down the chimney of Old Father Christmas, a good old man with a snowy beard, who, during the night, as the clock struck twelve, was to come and place in my little shoe a present which I should find upon awaking. Twelve o’clock at night! that mysterious hour unknown to children, and which is represented to them as the impossible limit to which they can keep awake! What incredible efforts did I not make to resist my tendency to sleep before

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the appearance of the little old man! I felt anxious yet afraid to see him! But I could never keep awake long enough, and the following morning my first anxiety was to go and examine my shoe in the fireplace. What emotion did I not feel at sight of the white paper parcel! for Father Christmas was extremely clean in his ways, and never failed to carefully wrap up his offering. I used to jump out of bed and run barefooted to seize my treasure. It was never a very magnificent affair, for we were not wealthy! It used to be a little cake, an orange, or simply a nice rosy apple. But, nevertheless, it seemed so precious to me that I scarcely dared to eat it. There, again, imagination played its part, for imagination fills a child's whole existence.

“I do not at all approve of Rousseau's wish to suppress the marvellous under the pretence that it is mere deception. Reasoning and incredulity come quite soon enough and of themselves. I quite remember the first year when doubts occurred to me as to the actual existence of Father Christmas. I was then five or six years old, and it then seemed to me that it must have been my mother who placed the biscuit in my shoe. It therefore appeared to me not so fine or so good as before, and I experienced a kind of regret at being no longer able to believe in the little man with the snowy beard. My son believed in it longer than I had. Boys are more simple than girls. Like myself, he used to make great efforts to keep awake until midnight. Like me, he failed to do so, and, like me, used to find in the morning the cake that had been miraculously kneaded in the kitchen in Paradise;

but, in his case also, the first year in which doubts were excited was the last of the old man's visit."

Deschartres, an ecclesiastic, who, prior to the Revolution, had entered the service of M. Dupin de Francueil as secretary, and had afterwards acted as tutor to his son Maurice, instructed Aurore in grammar, her grandmother teaching her music. Sacred history also formed part of her education, which, however, was not associated with instruction in the tenets of any religion. As regards acceptance or rejection of the miraculous, the mind of the pupil was left entirely free.

What may be termed the religious ideas of our heroine were thus formed under the somewhat contrary influences of an enlightened and free-thinking grandmother, imbued with the principles of Voltaire and Rousseau, and of a simple and illiterate mother who, though in no way bigoted, was yet profoundly religious.

The questions of religion and religious practices were frequently discussed by the countess and Madame Dupin. The latter, when rallied by her mother-in-law upon her non-compliance with the requirements of her Church in regard specially to confession, used to reply: "I have my own religion. Of what is prescribed I accept and reject as I think proper. I cannot bear priests; most of them are but hypocrites, and I shall never entrust them with thoughts which they could not rightly appreciate. I believe that I do no harm, but if I do it is unpremeditated. It may be that I shall never rid myself of my defects; that cannot be helped. But I love God with a

sincere heart; I believe He is too good to punish us in a future life. We are punished enough for our faults in this world. Yet I greatly fear death, because I am afraid to appear before God, although I have full trust in Him, and feel certain of never having intentionally offended against Him."

The Countess of Horn held in strong detestation, not only those whose religion savoured of bigotry, but the whole system of Catholicism. She called herself a deist, and disdainfully rejected all religious dogmas. Far from being an atheist, she believed in that sort of natural religion which was much extolled, but ill defined, by the philosophers of the eighteenth century. She held Jesus Christ in great veneration, and admired the gospel as containing excellent philosophy; but deplored the fact of truth having been always surrounded by a fabulation more or less ridiculous.

Far more attractive to Aurore than the cold and critical scepticism of her grandmother, was her mother's simple and earnest faith; for Madame Dupin's religion had in it something of the poetical, and that was precisely what suited the mind of her daughter, whose ardent imagination passionately thirsted for the marvellous, and would have been well satisfied with belief had not the frequent cold, matter-of-fact appeals made to her reason by the countess somewhat impeded the development of the faith which her mother sought to foster.

A similar comparison existed in the child's mind regarding the different disciplinary styles of her mother and the countess; the angry reproaches of the former never shocking

her feelings to the same extent as her grandmother's cold and dignified rebuke.

Thanks to the course of instruction provided for her, Aurore, when seven or eight years old, was fairly conversant with her native language. This progress was not without its disadvantages, for the study of grammar was now laid aside in favour of other subjects. Though a special feature was made of composition, and great attention devoted to the formation of her style, the attention of the pupil was only incidentally directed to the errors made by her in grammar, whilst at the same time her head was crammed with Latin, Greek, prosody, botany, whose barbarous terms and complex laws her memory was unable to retain, and arithmetic, for which she always displayed remarkable incapacity.

This cramming process produced its inevitable results—superficial knowledge and confused ideas of the numerous subjects with which the brain was burdened.

Madame Dupin viewed with disfavour the system adopted, often remarking: “What is the use of all that twaddle!”

It seems that the same latitude that was allowed to Aurore in religious matters was permitted in her course of reading, for, as we learn from the perusal of her *Lettres d'un Voyageur*, her imagination was nourished by Madame de Staël's *Corinne*, the works of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, the *Iliad*, Millevoye's poems, and Chateaubriand's *Atala*.

These works, it might be supposed, would have sufficiently taxed the brain of a child, but Aurore had an insatiable craving for knowledge. Lavater's system of physiognomy, by



no means the kind of work likely to invite a youthful mind, was eagerly devoured by her; Rousseau's *Confessions*, his *Nouvelle Héloïse*, his *Émile*, were all treated in the same fashion.

The dignified and rather frigid character of the countess inspired her grand-daughter with feelings of affection tempered with respect and almost veneration, whereas the simple and natural ways of Madame Dupin developed a boundless and profound love, which increased as years went by.

As is the way with elderly people, the aged lady who, since the death of her beloved son, had directed all her powers of affection towards her Aurore, jealously watched the progress of her grand-daughter's love for Madame Dupin. It seemed to her that she ought to possess the child's undivided love. These feelings often led to scenes between the countess and her daughter-in-law, and finally so obsessed the old lady that, notwithstanding her sound and clear judgment in all other respects, she allowed them to so completely master her as to become a fixed idea.

After a scene of unusual violence, it was decided that Madame Dupin should leave Nohant and retire to Paris, there to live on the income left to her by her deceased husband. Aurore was to remain under the entire and immediate care of her grandmother, and to see her mother only at rare intervals. On learning this the child could not repress her tears, her grief was intense; she would not hear of being separated from her mother. The latter, having exhausted all the arguments within the comprehension of a child, eventually pointed out

the advantages likely to accrue from staying with a wealthy parent who adored and had no other heir but her. She further placed before her daughter's eyes the contrast between the meagre living which the modest income of her mother could provide for her if persisting in the resolution to follow her to Paris, and the rather sumptuous life led at the château of Nohant. The child gave way, though in her mind she could not comprehend how a loving daughter could prefer wealth and comfort to a more humble life in the society of the dearest object of her affection.

Aurore's mother had been gone some time, and the means devised by the countess to conquer the whole heart of her grand-daughter showing, as yet, no signs of having produced the result so eagerly expected, she resorted to a most imprudent device for a lady so generally discreet. Having in vain appealed to the gratitude of Aurore, she sought to destroy in her the candid and spontaneous love she felt for her mother, by inveighing against Madame Dupin, and finally representing to the child how ignorant her mother was, how vulgar her relations, and how unfit an association for a young girl destined some day to become a wealthy lady, occupying some rank in society. Aurore, who, as previously remarked, had never ceased to love her grandmother, though less intensely than her mother, was quite startled. Although feeling the truth of some of the countess' remarks, her ardent soul could not understand her grandparent's thus speaking to her about her dear mother. Henceforth she grew colder towards the old lady. She lost all her former taste for study, and became mopish and meditative.

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As a last resource, and despite the fact that neither her own views nor those of Madame Dupin countenanced a religious education, the Countess of Horn decided in 1817 to place her grand-daughter in a convent, there to finish her education. Aurore was now nearly fourteen years of age. She left Nohant with her grandmother and went with her to Paris. After a few days spent in visiting her mother, M. and Madame René de Villeneuve, her father's cousins, and some other relations, it was arranged that she should enter the Couvent des Dames Anglaises in the Rue Saint-Victor, one of the most aristocratic boarding schools of Paris, where, after her first widowhood, the Countess of Horn had retired for three years.

Though she had left Nohant without almost any regret, she deeply felt the parting from her grandmother. However, the change of life and manners, life in common with others, and her new surroundings, so completely secured her attention that she soon reconciled herself to her lot, and, giving way to her irrepressible love of independence, soon became one of the *diabtes* \* in her form. She thus continued for two years, scarcely ever leaving her school for a day, the countess having thought fit to deprive her of her midsummer holidays, ostensibly because of her backwardness, but, in reality, because of her wish to cause Aurore to appreciate all the more her home at Nohant and the kindness of her grandmother, when once more with her.

Meeting with special kindness on the part of a pious

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\* Insubordinate pupils in a school.

though enlightened sister at the convent, the old religious feelings of Aurore were suddenly aroused, and her apathetic indifference all at once gave way to an almost frantic devotion.

In 1820, the countess having fallen seriously ill and fearing that her end was near, summoned her beloved granddaughter, who, now better able to appreciate her duties towards the old lady, nursed her with sincere and earnest devotion until her death, which occurred shortly afterwards.

In the anxiety she felt to withhold her grand-daughter from what, in her aristocratic prejudice, she considered the baneful influence of her illiterate daughter-in-law, the Countess of Horn had thought fit to insert in her will a clause intended to deprive Madame Dupin of the guardianship of Aurore, as tutor to whom she appointed her nephew, Count René de Villeneuve.

On the opening of the will, the clause in question (and which was actually illegal) was cancelled by mutual consent, and Madame Dupin undertook, with Deschartres, the trusted adviser and friend of the countess, as *co-tuteur* (co-guardian), the duties involved by the minority of her daughter.

Aurore was now almost marriageable, and it was arranged that she should return to the convent until a suitable opportunity offered for her establishment in life.

But a short time elapsed after her return to the Dames Anglaises, when, giving way to her religious enthusiasm, she informed her mother of her intention to take the veil and to enter the community in the midst of which she had been living for nearly four years.

Madame Dupin at once communicated with her husband's friends and relations and strenuously opposed the wish of her daughter. She called her to her side and compelled her to renounce the idea.

Aurore was now sent to some friends in the country, and her speedy marriage determined upon. One day, whilst she was partaking of refreshments out-of-doors, a smart and elegant young man approached, and, saluting the friends with her, inquired as to Aurore. "She is my daughter," was the reply of the lady addressed. "She shall be my wife then," said the young officer, "for you promised to give me one of your daughters, and mademoiselle is younger than your other daughter and more suitable to one of my age."

The young man referred to above was Lieutenant Casimir Dudevant, whose corps had recently been disbanded. He was the natural son of M. Dudevant, a colonel in the French army under Napoléon Bonaparte, who, in recognition of his services, had created him a baron of the Empire. By his father, Colonel Dudevant was related to Law, the celebrated Scotch *financier*; by his mother he was of Spanish origin.

But, to return to Lieutenant Casimir, who was then but twenty-seven years of age. He happened to meet again with Aurore Dupin at the house of mutual friends, where they were both making a short stay. He discovered that he had been the object of a practical joke in being misinformed respecting Aurore, as related in a foregoing paragraph, learned the real name and parentage of Mademoiselle Dupin, and soon fell in love with her, and with due respect

very frankly disclosed his feelings to her. Aurore felt rather pleased when, having declared his love, he bluntly added: "It is not, I am aware, the rule for men to propose direct to their intended affianced brides; but I love you, mademoiselle. I cannot refrain from informing you of my feelings, and, if my appearance does not displease you too much, if, in short, you would accept me as a husband, I will inform Madame Dupin of my intentions; if, on the contrary, you reject me, it is, I consider, needless for me to trouble your mother."

The incident having been brought to the knowledge of Madame Dupin by her daughter, she did her best to induce Aurore to accept what she considered a suitable offer; it having been previously ascertained that Baron Dudevant, who had no other child but Casimir, would leave his fortune to him.

Deschartres having been called upon to render accounts of his administration of his ward's estate and fortune, it transpired that receipts amounting in the aggregate to a sum of 18,000 francs (about £750), out of a total of about 600,000 francs (£24,000), the amount of Aurore's fortune, remained unaccounted for. Poor Deschartres was dumbfounded, and could not explain so unexpected a result of his maladministration; Madame Dupin insisted upon the production of the receipts, but Aurore, suddenly moved by pity towards her old tutor, who was now proposing to sell his own petty estate, situated in some unproductive part of the Department of Landes, assured the notary that the sum for which receipts

were not forthcoming had been previously paid to her by Deschartres, and that it was owing to her own negligence that he could not produce the receipts, she never having given him any. Madame Dupin, seeing that in this her daughter was only obeying the dictates of a kind heart, challenged her to affirm on oath that what she was then saying was the truth, and threatened to cause Deschartres to be arrested as a debtor, he having acknowledged the deficit. Mademoiselle Dupin, however, renewed her declaration, and thus saved the friend of her grandmother.

Everything having been satisfactorily arranged, Mademoiselle Aurore Dupin, then seventeen years of age, became, in 1822, the wife of Casimir DUDEVANT.

The young couple went to reside on the bride's own estate at Nohant. Nothing occurred to disturb the first years of our heroine's married life. Matrimony did not certainly appear to her in the ideal light she had formed of it; but her life was calm, and her husband's affection, though not so ardent as she might have wished, appeared to her to be real. In July, 1823, she gave birth to a son—her beloved Maurice.

From that time her husband seems to have gradually neglected her, to satisfy his tastes as a sportsman. An excellent shot, a daring horseman, an indefatigable huntsman, he often left her at two or three in the morning, to indulge in his favourite sport—hunting.

The young wife, delicate in health and ardent in her affection, deeply resented the frequent absence of her husband. She at first meekly remonstrated with M. Dudevant, who

would then stay at home for a few days, soon again to disappear. Months and years thus elapsed. When not out hunting, M. Dudevant indulged in feasting with his friends, eating enormously and drinking more (Madame Dudevant herself tells us so), and almost forsaking his wife for the pleasures of the field and the table.

Madame Dudevant's illusions concerning married life were totally dispelled! Instead of the companion she had dreamed of, her husband proved a more fit associate for the inmates of a barrack-room than of his young, accomplished, attractive, loving, and romantic wife. The health of the latter, which at the best of times had never been very good, was now, however, rapidly declining. Under medical advice, it was decided that M. and Madame Casimir Dudevant should undertake a journey to some of the watering-places in the Pyrenees, the pure air of the mountains being expected to impart new vigour to the seemingly impoverished blood of the wife, who was herself anxiously looking forward to the change of scenery and association to modify the behaviour of her husband towards her, and to re-establish the cordial understanding of the first few months of her married life.

A few months after their departure from the château at Nohant, M. and Madame Dudevant returned from the Pyrenees. Only one of the lady's aims had been secured: her health was much improved, but her husband was still conducting himself in the same inconsiderate and cold-hearted fashion towards her. She sought to drown her grief in the preoccupation afforded her by the education of her son



Maurice, and by the maternal cares required by her daughter Solange, born in 1829.

The mutual relations between the husband and the wife were growing worse daily. They at last reached a climax when, in his fits of drunkenness, M. Casimir Dudevant went so far as to ill-treat and strike his wife, who—as related in two letters written by her, on the 3rd and on the 8th December, 1830, to M. Jules Boucoiran, the tutor of her son Maurice—having discovered a letter written by her husband and containing the most odious imputations upon her, finally made up her mind to leave him; a resolution which she carried into effect in January, 1831. Her intention was to reside one half the year at Nohant and the other at Paris, her husband having engaged to allow her an income of a thousand *écus* a year (about £120). In 1832, she took her daughter with her to Paris. A year later, her son Maurice was sent to college.

Accustomed to luxury, Madame Dudevant found it impossible to live and to gratify her tastes with the income allotted to her. Too proud to ask of her husband, she collected all her energy, and thought of turning to account her knowledge of English (which she had learned at the convent where she was educated, the majority of the nuns there being British subjects), and tried her hand at translating, but without success. She in turn sought for occupation in dressmaking and millinery, but could scarcely earn *five pence* (*sic* in *Histoire de ma Vie*) a day, by working sixteen and even eighteen hours daily. Having learned drawing and painting, with which, when at Nohant, she occupied her leisure hours,

she contrived to find employment in which her knowledge could be utilised. A jeweller to whom she had been introduced, and who also dealt in works of art and fancy articles, proposed to her that she should decorate articles of *tabletterie* which, when finished, he would exhibit for sale in his window. The offer was accepted; but the materials were expensive, and although a small box, decorated with flowers by Madame Dudevant, realised a respectable sum—nearly five pounds—she thought she could find an occupation more profitable and better suited to her aptitudes.

A year previous to her rapture with her husband, Madame Dudevant had made, at Nohant, the acquaintance of a young man of generous impulses and noble aspirations, and her soul and his had been merged in mutual communion of ideas. That young man, Jules Sandeau, the future *Academician* and author of the delightful comedy entitled *Mademoiselle de la Seiglière*, was then in Paris studying law.

Having met Madame Dudevant, and she having informed him of the precarious state of her budget, he strongly advised her to embrace the career of literature. After much persuasion, it was arranged that the two young friends should write in collaboration an article\* for the *Figaro*, the director of which paper was M. Henri de Latouche, who, like themselves, belonged to Berry, and who, displaying the greatest interest in them, accepted their article and encouraged them to write others, which shortly afterwards appeared in the *Figaro*, and greatly puzzled the Paris press.

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\* *La Prima Donna.*

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Some time afterwards the two young friends wrote a novel entitled, *Rose et Blanche, ou la Comédienne et la Religieuse*,\* which they sold for 400 francs to a dealer in old books, to whom M. de Latouche had introduced the young authors.

But it was indispensable that the name of the author should be appended to the work. Madame Dudevant could not put her name to it for fear of a scandal; as for Sandeau, he was afraid of incurring the reproaches of his family, which objected to his pursuing a literary career.

The name Sandeau was curtailed, and *Rose et Blanche* appeared under the signature of *Jules Sand*.

Then it was that, as a matter of economy and in order the more easily to secure admission to places from which women are generally excluded, Madame Dudevant, acting upon the suggestion of Madame Dupin, her mother, who used to resort to such means of disguise when travelling about with M. Maurice Dupin, began to wear male attire.

Shortly before the departure of Madame Dudevant for Nohant, where she was about to spend three months, it was arranged between herself and Sandeau that they should each contribute a portion of a novel, whose title was to be *Indiana*.

On her return to Paris our heroine called upon Sandeau, in order to submit to him what she had done, and found that he had not yet written a single line of his allotted share of the work.

He began to read the work of his collaborator, but had not

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\* *Rose and Blanche, or the Actress and the Nun.*

proceeded beyond a few lines when he gave vent to enthusiastic expressions.

“You have written a masterpiece!”

“So much the better; let us go off at once to the publisher’s.”

“Wait a moment; you wrote that work alone—you alone must sign it.”

“Never! we will continue to sign *Jules Sand*.”

“Not at all,” replied Sandeau; “I am too honest to rob you of your glory. My conscience would never fail to reproach me with such an action.”

The young man was firm in his decision; and, in spite of the protests of M. de Latouche, declined to alter it.

At last an idea struck the director of the *Figaro*. “You wrote *Rose et Blanche*, and gave the name of its author as *Jules Sand*; Sand is, therefore, your common property. Madame needs only to select another christian-name. Now, madame, to-day is St. George’s day. Call yourself *George Sand*, and the difficulty is solved!” Madame Dudevant assented, and thus assumed a name upon which her genius conferred more imperishable titles of nobility than had been bestowed upon her either by birth or marriage. She will henceforth be known to us under the name of *George Sand*.

*Indiana* was sold for 600 francs, and proved a marvellous success.

Shortly after the publication of *Indiana*, the services of George Sand were retained by the *Revue de Paris* and the *Revue des Deux Mondes*.

Following *Indiana* came *Valentine*, *Lélia*, *Jacques*, *André*,

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*Leone Levi, Simon, Mauprat, La dernière Aldini, Lavinia, Metella*, and some others, all of which may be considered as belonging to her earliest style. These works, containing as they did eloquent and powerful attacks upon the institution of marriage, were denounced as scandalous, and their author accused of holding subversive ideas. The critics were divided, and their division resulted in several duels between the adversaries and the partisans of George Sand.

In 1834, she made a journey to Italy with Alfred de Musset, who then acted as her private secretary.

On her return, and in the period between 1835 to 1837, in addition to some of the masterpieces referred to above, she wrote *The Private Secretary, La Marquise, Les Maîtres Mosaïstes, Pauline*, etc. She also travelled through Spain with Chopin, and in *Un Hiver à Majorque* gave the impressions of her journey.

*Lélia* was, so to speak, the reflection of the various emotions, anxieties, and deceptions which she had experienced in her intercourse with Alfred de Musset, with whom she had visited Venice, and who seems to have left a deep and lasting impression upon her mind. The diverse incidents of that journey, variously related, are the subject of a certain number of George Sand's works published in 1834: *Le Secrétaire intime* and *Les Lettres d'un Voyageur*. In 1859, she again refers to that, to her, eventful journey, in *Elle et Lui*.

The growing reputation of George Sand had gathered round her a large host of friends, foremost among whom were the leading men of the day, and the various leaders of the divers schools which were contending with one another

for the honour of leading the social world in the path of progress. Each of them, so to speak, found in the author of *Indiana* a docile disciple, easily impressible with all ideas and theories, and admirably gifted to become the popular exponent of humanitarian and Socialist doctrines by clothing them with the poetic charm of her elegant style and imagination.

Then, for a moment, her talent ceased to be personal and original; she, as it were, only wrote under the dictation of other people, borrowing her philosophical ideas from Lamennais, her Republicanism from Michel de Bourges, and her Socialist tendencies from Pierre Leroux and Jean Reynaud.

*Horace, Spiridion, Le Meunier d'Angibault, Le Compagnon du Tour de France, Jeanne, La Comtesse de Rudolstadt, L'Orco, Le Pêché de M. Antoine, Consuelo*, etc., all belong to 1839, the writer's second phase.

George Sand now turned her attention to the drama. Her first efforts were not successful. *Cosima*, produced in 1840, before a public long accustomed to all sorts of scenic extravagancies, to entangled incidents culminating in impossible *dénouements*, was coolly received. It lacked effective situations and startling incidents; it was, in fact, too little *sensational*. In 1848, a new play, *Le Roi attend*, did not meet with any greater degree of favour. But *François le Champi, Claudie, Le Pressoir*, etc., soon followed, gaining the approbation of the public, and proving the inexhaustible fecundity of the genius which had given life to *Indiana, Valentine, Lélia, Jacques*, all those grand delineations of human nature, to which exception may perhaps be taken, though they can never fail to secure admiration.

## Biographical Sketch.

In 1848, George Sand took an active part in politics, associating her efforts with those of advanced Republicans. She wrote two *Lettres au Peuple*, the preface to the *Bulletin de la République*, contributed articles to the *Revue Indépendante*, and even founded a newspaper, *La Cause du Peuple*. In 1849, she wrote in collaboration with Barbès and Sobrier in the *Commune de Paris*, and contributed a preface to the serial, *Conteurs Ouvriers*.

In 1850, George Sand translated into French one of Mazzini's chief works, *Royalty and Republicanism in Italy*.

When that period of popular effervescence had vanished, she returned to the writing of dramas and novels, and, once more transforming her style, successively published *Les Maîtres Sonneurs*, *L'Homme de Neige*, *Pierre qui Roule*, *Jean de la Roche*, *Mademoiselle de la Quintinie*, *Le Marquis de Villemer*, etc. The two latter, in which the clerical party and the nobility were respectively attacked, put the seal to her reputation as a playwright.

Besides the works quoted above, George Sand wrote *Le Lys du Japon* (1866), a one-act comedy; *Malgré tout* (1870); *L'Autre*, a four-act comedy; *Le beau Laurence* (1870); *Francia, un bienfait n'est jamais perdu* (1872); *Nanon* (1872); *Contes d'une Grand'mère*, *Le Château de Pictordu* (1873); *Journal d'un Voyageur pendant le Siècle*; *Impressions et Souvenirs* (1873); *Ma Sœur Joanne* (1874); *La Laitière et le Pot au lait* (1875); *Les deux Frères* (1875); *Flamarande* (1876); the sequel to the *Contes d'une Grand'mère*, *Le Chêne Parlant*, *La Tour de Percemont*, *Marianne* (1876); *Dernières Pages*,

*Légendes Rustiques, Fanchette, Nouvelles Lettres d'un Voyageur* (1877).

Her last production was an article on the *Dialogues philosophiques* of M. Renan, and appeared in the *Temps* of June 6th, 1876.

In October, 1835, George Sand having obtained a judicial separation from her husband, the latter appealed against the decision, which however, in August, 1836, was confirmed by the royal court at Bourges.

According to the final judgment, George Sand recovered the full possession of her ancestral estate and fortune, upon agreeing to pay her husband a yearly income of 3,800 francs, in addition to his own remaining income of 1,200 francs. The guardianship of her daughter Solange was confided to her; and it was arranged that her son Maurice, who had been previously sent to the Collège Henri IV., a Government educational establishment at Paris, should spend one month of his midsummer holidays with his father and the other with his mother.

In May, 1847, George Sand's daughter became the wife of M. Clésinger, a talented French sculptor, from whom she eventually separated.

In 1863, Maurice Dudevant, known to the artistic and literary world under his mother's pseudonym of *Sand*, married Lina, the daughter of Signor Calamatta, a distinguished Italian artist.

Her constitution being generally weak, the health of George Sand was considerably shattered, in 1860, by an attack of



typhus fever. From that time, the illustrious writer became subject to frequent periods of indisposition, the attacks of which increased in gravity as she advanced in age. The fear of distressing her children and grandchildren, with whom she lived at Nohant, induced her to conceal the worst of her sufferings. In order to avoid very frequent visits from the doctor, she contrived to attend personally to herself. Only when her sufferings were too intense or too obvious was a practitioner called to the château; in most cases without her previous knowledge, or against her wish.

On the 31st of May, 1876, she was obliged to keep her bed. In the hope of saving her life, the doctors decided upon performing an operation, which, however, proved fatal. Inflammation set in, and, owing to the violence of her pains, she at last perceived that her end was fast approaching. A few hours before death, her sufferings abated. She died on the 8th of June, 1876, surrounded by her family and a few devoted friends.

George Sand was buried in the cemetery at Nohant, in the family vault, and in the presence of a vast concourse of the population, which had learned to love and respect her, thanks to her untiring and unostentatious charity. It is said that during her life she spent about 300,000 francs in acts of benevolence!

Until the time of her death, George Sand worked incessantly. Whenever her strength failed her, she occupied her time in reading or drawing, or in teaching her granddaughters, and making up dresses and bonnets for their dolls.

When not so engaged, she would dress the *marionettes* for her son Maurice's private theatre.\*

In June, 1877, M. Clésinger, her son-in-law, made a statue of her, which was placed in the *foyer* of the Théâtre Français, at Paris. A committee, presided over by Victor Hugo, took the initiative in opening a national subscription, for defraying the cost of a statue of the illustrious writer to be erected in one of the squares of Paris.

Such are the main facts of the life of that wonderful woman who, under a man's name, is most deservedly enjoying a European and, it may be said, a world-wide reputation and whom France justly considers as one of its brightest literary glories!

Though in the life of George Sand there were incidents to which exception may be taken, Heaven must be blessed for the painful circumstances which placed a pen in her hand, and thus evoked a genius which otherwise might have ever remained latent. Her faults were the product of the society in which she lived, and were amply atoned for by her constant maternal devotion and untiring and unaffected love of her fellow-creatures. Her mind may have been at times weak and erring, but her heart was ever noble and good!

A superior writer, a lucid exponent of philosophical and political doctrines, a sagacious mind, attentive to the least movements of the human soul, her writings possess the ampleness, the feeling, and, so to speak, the charm of

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\* Built on the estate at Nohant for the rehearsal of the plays written by George Sand and her son Maurice.

Lamartine's *harmonies*; like the poet's verse, she causes us to dream, yet with this difference, that the *rêverie* she awakes in us has always humanity for its aim, instead of tending towards the infinite, like the productions of the author of *Graziella*; and the charm of language having vanished, the meditation she provokes becomes social, instead of being, as with the poet, purely religious.

Early in childhood she was imbued with the great principles of Rousseau, and ever in after life the philosopher of Geneva was her master of predilection.

Her productions display irresistible charm. Her style is indefinable; it defies analysis. Splendour and precision seem to be its chief merits, apart from the admirable purity of language which she seems to have possessed at all times and, as it were, by intuition. Simple and bold, marvellously skilful in depicting or enabling us to foresee the most subtle details of fact or idea, abundant yet restrained, rich in resources of all kinds, and hardly ever allowing any image to mar the idea in view, docilely undergoing the moulding of inspiration, never losing any of its force or limpidity in its fanciful and multi-form mobility, such is that magical style to which nothing is foreign, neither the sublimities of nature, nor the sweet effusion of close intimacy, the spell of love, the fury of hatred!

Above all things, the mind of George Sand was that of a poet. But the versatility of her genius was not confined to romance. Although chiefly known in this country as a novelist, she was also in turn the powerful exponent of the philo-

sophical doctrines which enlisted her sympathies, a most brilliant political writer, and a distinguished playwright.

Her productions have often been denounced as immoral. She has long since been cleared from those imputations, and by the most competent of judges, so that there is no need here for any attempt to vindicate the morality of her works. Her novels may, in some instances, disturb and mislead ill-balanced minds; they will neither degrade nor corrupt them. When reading them, we experience a kind of painful admiration, and, on laying them aside, we aspire to truth with greater energy.

Victim of a social institution against which she had justifiable cause of complaint, she denounced the defects of French laws as regards the marriage tie, and proclaimed herself in favour of divorce when life in common has become unbearable. In her preface to *Indiana* she says: "Society should be taken to task for the disabilities it inflicts upon some of its members,—destiny for its whims. The writer is but a mirror which reflects those disabilities and those whims, a tracing machine, which, if the tracing be exact, the reflection faithful, need not apologise for showing facts as they are."

George Sand's mind was just and lofty, seeking social happiness in the solution of those fine humanitarian problems which party people obstinately stigmatise as utopian, in spite of the universal cry for the amelioration of the fate of the disinherited ones of mankind.

Some of George Sand's plays are not real dramas in the

full acceptance of the word. They are more suited to be read than to be performed. They are novels, almost *charades*. The personages therein speak, argue, discuss; they do not act.

In *Claudie, Mademoiselle de la Quintinie, Le Marquis de Villemer*, and *Le Pressoir*, however, she displayed such real powers of dramatic writing as to win for herself a place by the side of some of the leading French playwrights.

In her idyllic productions George Sand is truly great. In these she achieved for herself a reputation of her own, seldom equalled and never surpassed by other writers. When abandoning the dogmatic tone of the philosopher and the sectarian, she undertakes the part, truly suited to her, of the graceful narrator and poetess, her impassioned impulses, her keen, thrilling, and powerful accents shake our souls and cause the innermost fibres of our hearts to vibrate. With her master, Jean Jacques, she displayed boundless admiration for nature. How pure, how lucid, how free from redundancy, how soothing and refreshing—like the gay flowers and the balmy air of the dales, and the simple folk she depicts; how simple and unaffected, how true to nature her descriptions in such works as *La Petite Fadette, La Mare au Diable, Pierre qui Roule, Jean de la Roche*, etc., which the art of the narrator, the spirit of observation, and some pages full of unspeakable pathos raise above all contemporary romances.

Mr. Henri Martin, one of the most eminent historians of our times, says of George Sand: "A woman, born a great writer, and who will remain among the highest literary glories of France, stirred every soul by her pleadings against the

present state of society; at the same time expressing, in pictures of deep reality and marvellous poetry, a sentiment of nature which made of her the heiress and, as it were, the *daughter of Rousseau.*'

The late M. Saint Marc de Girardin, the eminent professor of literature at the Sorbonne, described George Sand's rural novels the *Georgics of France*, than which no higher praise could possibly be bestowed.

RAPHAËL LEDOS DE BEAUFORT.

LONDON, *January*, 1886.

CORRIGENDA. VOL. I.

- Page* 50, Footnote. The name "Lège" should be "Sèze."
- „ 69, „ Letter "p" dropped out of "peasant."
- Pages* 73, 221, 225, 226, 228, 233, 236, 241, 246, 250, 256, 257, Address. "Chatre" should be "Châtre."
- „ 74, 166, 187, 190, 288, Name "Francois" should be "François."
- Page* 196, last line of page, between words "and" and "discuss" insert word "to."
- „ 220, Footnote. Delete "Translator."
- „ 263, Footnote should read "this appearance of that constellation." Delete "Translator."
- „ 356, Heading of Letter. "Curê" should be "Curé."
- „ 376, the line of quotation commencing "La fourmi qu'est." After word "aim" insert apostrophe thus: "aim'", showing elision of letter "e."

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