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# 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.  
VOL. II.

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CHARLES DICKENS AND STAFF,  
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CORRIGENDA. VOL. II.

*Pages 4, 5;* Letter to M. Girerd, Nevers, 6 March, 1848. Instead of "Michael" read "Michel" throughout.

*Page 10,* instead of "poked out" read "forked out."

„ 10, bottom of page, for "I have made acquaintance with Jean Reynaud Barbès and M. Boudin, a candidate for the representation of the Indre" read "I have made the acquaintance of Jean Reynaud, Barbès, and M. Boudin, a candidate for the representation of the Indre."

„ 28, top of page, instead of "flies for his life" read "flees for his life."

„ 94, instead of "5th of March, 1849" read "15th of March, 1849."

„ 97, instead of "If the Red Republic joins in the fray" read "if the Red Republic join in the fray."

*Pages 144, 152, 220,* "Jérôme" should be written "Jérôme."

*Page 177,* instead of "The logic of facts compels them to admit the principle of the Jesuits of the Inquisition of '93, etc." read "The logic of facts compels them to admit the principle of the Jesuits, of the Inquisition, of '93; etc."

„ 185, instead of "I find myself once more owing the people" read "I find myself once more loving the people."

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# LETTERS OF GEORGE SAND.

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To MAURICE SAND, Paris.

NOHANT, 18th February, 1848.

MY DEAR BOY,

I am very glad to hear from you. I am not very cheerful when you are not with me, although I do my best to drive away melancholy. But it is no doubt necessary that you should stir yourself a little, that you should breathe the pure and balmy air of Paris, and pay your homage to the divine decree of the jury of painting. You must expect the worst, so as to save yourself the grievous disappointment of former years.

You must send me *at once* the official record of my father's services. I informed you some time ago that it was of the utmost importance that I should have this without delay; I also told you to make inquiries from your uncle on the subject. But you plunge yourself into the delights of Carnival, and forget your errands. In a few days I shall reach a period of my father's life with which I am entirely unacquainted. The Villeneuve family cannot give me any

particulars. I wrote to General Exelmans, but he is a Bayonne, and goodness knows when he will reply, and what events he will recollect. My uncle ought to know what campaigns my father was engaged in from 1804 to 1808. Do not forget, above all, the record of services; that is a sure guide for the leading facts. Lose no time in sending it.

. . . Borie is quite upset at the idea that they are on the point of having a *revolution* in Paris. I do not myself see that the *banquet business* justifies any such action. The prohibition of the journalists' banquet is but an intrigue between Ministers on the point of being ousted from office and Ministers aiming at power. Should any row take place in connection with the banquet, the result will only be that harmless idlers will get knocked about and assassinated by the *mouchards*, and I scarcely believe that the bulk of the people will side with M. Thiers in his quarrel with M. Guizot. Thiers is, no doubt, a better man; but he will not give bread to the poor any more than the others. I, therefore, do not advise you to have anything to do with the manifestation; for people are likely on that occasion to be knocked down without any advantage to the good cause. Were it necessary that you should risk your life for the country, I should not interfere, you know that well enough; but it would really be too-stupid to get a skull-dragging for the sake of Odilon Barrot & Co. Write to me what you may see from a distance (if you should see anything at all!); but do not, under any pretence, get into the scrimmage, if such there should be, which I do not believe.

Were you not aware that Bakoumine had been *banished* by our honest Government? About a month ago I received a

letter from him, which I fancy I read to you, but you do not remember it. I replied to him, confessing that we are governed by the *canaille*, and that we are very wrong to put up with it. Besides, Italy is quite upset. Sicily proclaims its independence, or very nearly so. Naples has risen in revolution, and the King gives way. That news is now quite confirmed. But the only thing they will gain by it will be to pass from a despotic to a constitutional Government, from violence to corruption, from terror to infamy, and when arrived at that they will, like us, long remain in their new condition. . . .

We are a generation of *loafers*, and the new deity is called *Circulus*. Let us endeavour, in our own little sphere, not to become ignoble, so that if perchance in my old days, or in yours, there should be a change from all that, we might enjoy it without having to blush at our past. . . .

*To M. GIRERD, Nevers.*

PARIS, Monday Evening, 6th March, 1848.

FRIEND,

Everything goes well. Personal griefs disappear when public life calls and absorbs us. The Republic is the best of families; the people the best of friends. We must not think of anything else.

The Republic has carried the day in Paris; the question now is whether it should also carry the day in the provinces where its cause is not popular. It was not I who obtained your appointment, but I confirmed it; for the Minister holds me in some-way responsible for the conduct of my friends, and gave me full power to encourage, stimulate, and reassure

them against all intrigues on the part of their enemies, all weakness on that of the Government. You must then, dear brother, act with vigour. Situated as we now are, we must not only display devotion and loyalty, but also fanaticism if need be. We must rise above ourselves, abjure all weakness, and even shake off our affections if they should counteract the progress of a power elected by the people, and truly, *thoroughly* revolutionary. Do not pity Michael's fate. Michael is rich; he is now what he wished, what he chose to be. He betrayed and forsook us in the days of adversity; now his pride, his spirit of domination are roused. He will have to give the Republic some real guarantees of his attachment to its institutions before obtaining its confidence. Parliamentary representation is an honour to which he may pretend, and which his talent will perhaps secure for him. It is in Parliament that he will show himself as he now is, and disclose his opinions as they now are to the whole nation. Nations are generous, and freely forgive those who atone for their errors.

As for the duty of a provisional Government, it consists in selecting *reliable* men, so as to bring about sincerely Republican elections. We must therefore impose silence upon friendship, and refrain from imprudently influencing public opinion in favour of a man who is strong enough to rise again if his heart is pure and his will honest.

I cannot too strongly advise you not to hesitate in sweeping away all tainted with the *bourgeois* spirit. Later on, the nation, mistress of its destinies, may, if it should deem fit, display indulgence, and it will do well to prove its strength by its meekness. But, to-day, if it be more mindful of its friends than its duty it will be lost, and the men employed by it at the beginning of its career will become parricides.



Letters of George Sant

MEMBERS OF THE  
SOCIETY OF  
POOR

You see, friend, that there is for me no possible compromise with logic. Let it be the same with you. Should Michael, and many other apostates whom I know, stand in need of the sacrifice of my life, I would gladly make it, but that of my conscience, *never*. *Michael forsook democracy out of hatred for the demagogy*. But *demagogy* exists no longer. The people proved itself to be grauder, nobler, and purer in motive than all the wealthy and learned people of this world. Calumniating the masses to-day and flattering them to-morrow inspires me with but little confidence, and I should have far more esteem for Michael were he still to protest against the Republic. I should then say that he is mistaken, but that his convictions are earnest and sincere.

His efforts are now perhaps directed towards bringing about an aristocratic republic, wherein the rights of the poor and weak will be denied and trampled down. Should he act thus, he will break off the alliance so sublimely cemented on the barricades between the rich and the poor. He will kill the Republic, and deliver it into the hands of intriguers; and the people, now conscious of its strength, will not tolerate them any longer. If betrayed, they will give way to condemnable excesses; society will become the prey of fearful anarchy, and the rich who have torn down the sacred compact will, in their turn, become poor, in the midst of social convulsions to which everything will succumb.

They will be punished by their own sins; but it will be too late to repent. Michael does not know, and never knew, the people; why does he not make himself acquainted with them to-day? He would then appreciate their strength and respect their virtues.

I wish you courage, good-will, and perseverance fit to contend against all emergencies.

Yours for life,

GEORGE.

I shall be to-morrow evening, 7th of March, at Nohant, where I intend spending a week, after which I shall probably come back here in order to devote myself entirely to the new duties which the situation imposes upon us.

*To M. CHARLES PONCY, Toulon.*

NOHANT, 9th March, 1848.

The Republic for ever! What a dream, what enthusiasm, and, at the same time, what admirable and orderly behaviour, is that of Paris! I have just arrived from there; I have visited all parts of it. I saw the removal of the last barricades. I have witnessed the nobleness, the sublimity, the simplicity, the generosity of the French people assembled at Paris, the heart of France, the heart of the world; indeed, the most admirable people in the world! I have lately spent many sleepless nights, many days on my legs. We are all excited, intoxicated, and delighted at having gone to sleep in the mire and woke up in heaven. Let all those who surround you have courage and confidence!

We have secured the Republic, it is safe now; we will all perish rather than abandon it. The Government is composed of men excellent as a rule, though perhaps not quite efficient for a task which would require the genius of Napoléon and the heart of Jesus. But the union of all

those men, full of talent and generous impulse and goodwill, is sufficient to master the situation. They mean good, they seek it, and try to do it. They are all sincerely guided by principles superior to the individual capacity of each of them. The will of all, the right of the people. The people of Paris are so kind, so indulgent, so confident in their own cause, and so *strong*, that they themselves help their rulers.

Could such a disposition last for ever it would be a social ideal. It ought to be fostered. From one end of France to the other, everybody must keep the Republic and protect it from its enemies. The desire, the principle, the fervent wish of the members of the provisional Government is that the people should send to the National Assembly men who are truly its representatives, many of whom, as many as possible, should come from its own ranks.

Your friends ought to think of the foregoing considerations, and turn their eyes upon you at the forthcoming elections. I am very sorry to be unacquainted with the influential people of our political views in your town. I should beseech them to select you, and order you, in the name of my motherly affection for you, to accept without any hesitation. See to everything yourself; direct public opinion, for it needs guidance. It is no longer a question of vanity or ambition, as was formerly the case. Every one of us must put his hand to the helm, so as to help in steering the ship of the State, and place his whole time, his whole heart, his own intelligence, his whole virtue at the disposal of the Republic. Poets may, like Lamartine, be great citizens. As for the working classes, they must let us know their wants, their aspirations. Write to me soon, saying that that is your opinion, and that you will

endeavour to enforce it. Had I any friends here, I should do my best to make them share my views on that subject.

In a few days I shall probably start for Paris, there to establish a newspaper or perform any other useful work. Depend upon it, I shall select the best possible means to further our aims! My heart is full and my head distracted.

All my physical sufferings, all my private troubles, are forgotten. I am full of life, strength, and activity; I feel as though I were only twenty years of age. I came here in order to help my friends as far as lay in my power, to revolutionise Berry, which seems to lack enthusiasm. Maurice is doing his best at Nohant. Everybody does what he can. In the meantime, my daughter has been safely delivered of a girl. Borie will probably be elected deputy for the Department of the Corrèze. In the meantime he will help me to organise my paper.

I hope that we shall all meet again in Paris, full of life and resolution, ready to die on the barricades if the Republic should succumb. But no! the Republic will live; for now is its time. Upon you, who have sprung from the people, devolves the duty of defending it to the last.

Many kisses to Désirée and Solange. I bless and love you all.

Write to me here. Your letter will be forwarded to me to Paris, should I be there.

Show this letter to your friends. Upon this occasion I authorise and request you to do so.

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To M. MAURICE SAND, Nohant.

PARIS, 24th March, 1848.

MY DEAR BOY,

I am as busy as a statesman. To-day I wrote two governmental circulars, one of which is intended for the Ministry of Public Instruction, the other for the Ministry of the Interior. What amuses me is that those circulars are intended for the mayors, so that you will receive your *mother's* instructions through official channels.

Ha, ha! Mister Mayor,\* you must now walk straight; and, to begin with, you will have to read every Sunday, to your assembled National Guards, one of the *Bulletins de la République*. When you have read it you will have to explain it, after which you will have to see that it be posted upon the church doors. The postmen have received instructions to report any mayor failing to carry out the foregoing regulations. Do not, therefore, neglect them. By carefully reading those *bulletins*, you will soon perceive that they clearly define your duties as a mayor and as a citizen. You will have to do the same with the circulars of the Ministry of Public Instruction. I am harassed right and left. I don't know how to reply to all who call on me. Yet I am quite willing to do so.

While I am thus busy, my two *Letters to the People* are being printed. I am about to write a review † with Viardot, ‡

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\* Maurice Sand had just been appointed mayor of the *Commune* of Nohant-Vic.

† *La Cause du Peuple* (*The People's Cause*).

‡ Paul Viardot.

a prologue\* for Lockroy.† I have induced Ledru-Rollin to ask Pauline ‡ for a *Marseillaise*. At all events, Rachel sings, so they say, the true *Marseillaise* every evening at the "Français," § in a most admirable manner. I intend going to-morrow to hear her.

My publisher is beginning to pay me. He has already *poked out* (sic) 3,000 francs, and promised the rest some time next week; I therefore hope to be soon out of difficulties. Of course you understand that I refrain from asking our Government for a penny piece. But, should I find myself in straits, I would request a loan from them, and thus avoid the risk of a catastrophe. You also will understand that the fact of my being the author of the official Acts of the Government must not be divulged on the house-tops. I do not sign my name to any of them. You must have received the first six numbers of the *Bulletin de la République*; the seventh will be my own production. I shall keep the whole series for you; you may thus post yours without caring whether they get destroyed by the rain or not.

In to-day's *Réforme* you can see my report of the fête of Nohant-Vic, and your name figuring foremost in it. Everything is going as well here as it is going wrong in our Department. I warned Ledru-Rollin of what was taking place at La Châtre. He is about to send a special representative there. Keep that piece of news to yourself. I have made acquaintance with Jean Reynaud Barbès, and M. Boudin, a candidate for the representation of the Indre. The latter

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\* *Le Roi attend* (*The King is waiting*).

† A distinguished journalist.

‡ Pauline Viardot, an actress.

§ Le Théâtre Français—the principal French theatre.

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appears to me a rather staunch Republican; he is, indeed, on intimate terms with Ledru-Rollin. We may, perhaps, have to back him up. I believe that the elections will be delayed. But you must not say so, and above all must not neglect the political training of the people entrusted to your care. You have your own part to perform; every one has a duty to fulfil with respect to those elections, even Lambert, who must exert himself to preach the Republic to the inhabitants of Nohant.

I am still living in your shanty, and shall probably stay in it. From an economical point of view it answers my purpose, and the members of the provisional Government are not deterred from calling on me there. Solange writes to me that she is quite well, and is starting for Paris. Clésinger\* will, by degrees, secure success. The Republic acknowledges his talent, and, when rich, will give him work.

Rothschild is now indulging in the expression of fine sentiments towards the Republic. The provisional Government is closely watching his movements, and would send the Mobile Guards after him if he were to attempt to run away with his money. That is another piece of news which, I need not tell you, must be kept to yourself. Funny things, indeed, are now happening daily.

Both the Government and the people here are expecting that the provinces will return deputies holding reactionary views, and are agreed upon *pitching* them through the window. Come, and we will go together to see the performance and laugh over it. People here are as bold as they are timorous in our part of the country. The people are

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\* A celebrated sculptor, Solange Sand's husband.

playing their last card, but the game is worth it. Farewell, dear boy; a thousand kisses.

Le Pôtu\* goes every evening to a club of Correziens. . . . There they only speak *patois*. It must be grand!

He (Borie) intends starting for his Department as soon as I settle down. He is quite annoyed at having to wait for me, often until one or two in the morning, in the ante-rooms of the Ministers upon whom I call, for he always comes with me. He says that that is a *confounded nuisance*. I fancy that he will be returned to Parliament, where he will no doubt propose the adoption of some protective measure in favour of *chestnut growers*.

Do not fail to tell your National Guards that their doings constitute the leading topic of the day in Paris. That will flatter them a little.

Keep up your energies, for we are going at fine speed. Emmanuel † was threatened for two whole hours by ruffians who wanted to kill him, they not wishing to give up the keys of the Lyons powder magazine and eight pieces of cannon. He, however, managed to pacify them, thanks to his eloquence and pluck; for he can display the latter whenever required.

Despite all obstacles, you will see that we shall have the Republic. The people have risen here, and the masses offer a *derisively* fine spectacle. Every day, and at every point of the town, they are planting *trees of liberty*. I saw three of them yesterday in different streets; they were immense pine-trees, carried on the shoulders of fifty workmen. Preceding them came drums, flags, and crowds of those handsome toilers of the soil, powerful, grave in their

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\* Victor Borie.

† Emmanuel Arago.



countenances, with wreaths of foliage on their heads, and spades, pick-axes, or hatchets on their shoulders; what a magnificent sight, far above all the *Roberts* in the world!

*To M. DE LAMARTINE, Paris.*

PARIS, April, 1848.

SIR,

I fully understand you. Your object is to avoid a revolution, bloodshed, violence, the too prompt advent of a blind democracy, in many respects still barbarous and uncivilised. I believe that you exaggerate the state of infancy of that democracy on the one hand, and that, on the other, you feel doubts as to its convulsions being likely to bring about its rapid and divine progress. How can you feel doubts about it? you, who were never admitted to decipher God's designs, and can therefore appreciate how dear to Him is that poor humanity in labour! you who, from the sublime revelations which penetrated into your poetic and artistic soul, can judge of the miracles which the Almighty keeps in reserve for the understanding of the weak and the oppressed! What! in a few years, you scaled the loftiest regions of human thought, and, making your way through the darkness of Catholicism, were carried by the Spirit of God high enough to utter this oracle, which I repeat from morning till night:

“The more light there is, the better one sees God!”

The light that sprung from you has scattered the mist of faint smoke and light fogs in which the vanity of the world wanted to detain you; and, now, you are unwilling

to believe that its divine will, which performed that wonder with a single individual, can cause the same lights of truth to flash upon a whole nation? You believe that it will wait centuries before bringing into reality the magic picture which it allowed you to glance at? No, indeed! No! its dawn is nearer at hand than you think, and if nearer, it is because it is inscribed upon the dial of centuries. You have made a mistake as regards the appointed hour, great poet and great man! You believe yourself to be living in the times when the duty of righteous men and of men of genius was identical, and tending equally to delay the ruin of societies still good and durable! You believe that the ruin is only beginning, whereas it is consummated, and one single stone is alone preventing the edifice from falling to pieces! Do you then wish to be that last stone, the keystone of that impure vault, you who hate impurity from the bottom of your heart, and, in your lyrical impulses, deny Mammon in the face of the world?

If the society of the business men, with whom you condescend to associate were to frankly occupy itself with the emancipation of the human race, I would admire you as a saint, and say that to condescend to eat at the publicans' table in order to cause truth to dawn upon them is to unite the meekness of Jesus with His genius. But you know full well that you cannot bring about such results. The miracle which consists in converting and touching corrupted or ignorant souls is in the hands of the Eternal alone, and it appears that He does not intend thus to begin the work of regeneration, since He does not enlighten or soften any of those souls. The under strata of society are alone being worked upon, and the upper strata seem intended to be put

aside as mere dross. Why are you with those whom God does not wish to enlighten, and not with those whom He enlightens? Why do you place yourself between the wealthy *bourgeois* and the proletariat, preaching to the one resignation—that is the continuation of its sufferings until a new state of things, which your business men will delay as much as they possibly can—to the other, sacrifices resulting only in insignificant concessions, themselves brought about by fear rather than by persuasion?

If fear alone can shake and vanquish the latter, do, for heaven's sake, side with the disinherited of this world in their menaces, even if you should have the next day to interfere in order to prevent their carrying them out. Since you want action, since you are an active nature anxious for something to do, that is the only action worthy of you; for times are ripe for it, and it will surprise you, in the midst of the impartial calmness wherein you are wrapped up, closing both eyes and ears, before the ebbing and roaring tide. It is time yet, and, since your heart is full of truth and its love, there is between you and this people but an error of calculation as regards the calendar, which each of you consults in a different light. Do not cause posterity to say: "That great man died with his eyes open to the future and closed to the present. He predicted the reign of justice, and, by a strange contradiction—too frequent, alas! among celebrated men—he held to the past and did his best to prolong it. It is true that one verse from him was of more worth and effect than all the political labours of his life; for, that verse was the voice of God speaking within him, and to those political labours he was doomed by human error; yet it is cruel to think that he can only be reckoned among the lights, and not among the heroes

of the period of struggle whose rapid progress and close issue he failed to perceive."

If you should become President of the Chamber, and remain, while occupying the presidential chair, the same as you are in the vaulted hall at Saint-Point, so much the better. I believe that you could do a deal of good there, for you are conscientious, full of integrity, incorruptible, sincere, honest in the full political acceptation of the word, I am well aware of that now; yet how much more strength, enthusiasm, abnegation, and pious fanaticism you would require to be as a politician the same man as you are as a poet! No, you never will be that; you will be afraid lest you should appear odd and ridiculous; you will give way to prejudices; you will think that business men are to be treated in a businesslike manner. You will forget that, outside the deaf and narrow walls of Parliament, the voice of a man of heart and genius will resound abroad and stir the whole world.

No, you would not dare to do it! Having spoken the beautiful things that fill your speeches, you will, in an afterthought—an afterthought which so fully justifies M. de Talleyrand's hateful saying—endeavour to calm the irritation brought about by your bold speeches, and rub the sponge of oblivion over your fiery words. As in your verse, you will again say: "Be not afraid of me, gentlemen, I am not a democrat; I should too much fear that I might appear before you as a demagogue." That you will not dare to do!

It is not for fear of low-minded men that you will do it; I am aware that you would readily face misery and tortures, but it will be for fear of scandal, for fear of those self-sufficient noneatities who pose as statesmen, and might say with scornful pity: "He is mad, ignorant, and of coarse taste; he

flatters the people; he is but a poet, he is not a statesman, a profound politician like us." Like them! like them who, infatuated with themselves, stand with one foot in the gaping abyss which already carries them away, without their being aware of it!

But what of that, if the whole universe were to refuse to acknowledge the courage of a great man, if the people themselves, in their blind ingratitude, were to twit you with being a fool, a dreamer, and a simpleton. . . . But no, you are not a fanatic, and yet you ought to be one, since you are one of those to whom God speaks on Sinai. You may also re-enter private life, but you ought not to be an ordinary citizen. You are expected to carry into the icy midsts, in which corrupted hearts get paralysed and languish, the fire that inflamed you in your meeting with the Lord.

You are a man of intellect and honesty; it remains for you to be a virtuous one.

May the source of light and love cause the zeal for its glory to absorb your heart, O creature of élite!

*To MAURICE SAND, Nohant.*

PARIS, 17th April, 1848.

MY DEAR BOY,

My opinion is that the Republic has been destroyed in principle and in its future, at least in its immediate future. It was to-day sullied by demands for blood. During the whole of the day liberty, equality, fraternity were trampled upon. It is the counterpart of the manifestation against the *busbies*.

It was not only the *busbies*; it was the whole *bourgeoisie* armed and in full uniform; it was the whole suburbs, those same ferocious suburbs which, in 1832, used to yell: "*Death to the Republicans!*" To-day they shout: "*Long live the Republic!*" but "*Death to the Communists!*" "*Death to Cabet!*" Those cries were uttered by 200,000 voices, the majority of which repeated them though quite unaware of what Communism is. To-day, Paris behaved like La Châtre.

I must tell you how all this occurred, for you would be unable to make anything out of the various newspaper accounts. Keep that *secret* for yourself.

Three, or rather four, conspiracies have been set on foot during the last week.

First of all, Ledru-Rollin, Louis Blanc, Flocon, Caussidière, and Albert wanted to oust Marrast, Garnier-Pagès, Carnot, Bethmont—in fine, all the moderate men of the Republic—from the provisional Government. They would have retained Lamartine and Arago, who, preferring power to opinions, which they do not possess, would have gone over to them and the people. It was a well-meant plot. All the others were intended to bring us back monarchical institutions, the reign of bankers, extreme poverty and neglect of the poor, unbridled luxury for the rich; in short, the system which causes the working classes to be slavishly dependent on the work which masters mete out to them, cavilling about it and withholding it as they please. That conspiracy could, therefore, have saved the Republic, proclaimed at once the diminution of the taxation of the poor, taken measures which, without ruining honest fortunes, could have brought France safely through the financial crisis she is suffering from; it could have modified the form of the electoral law, which is bad and

likely to give unsatisfactory results; it could, in fine, have brought about all the reforms that are now needed, enlisted the sympathies of the people in favour of the Republic, which, thanks to the *bourgeois*, goes thoroughly against it in the provinces, and succeeded in securing for us a National Assembly which would have required no compulsion in order to vote useful measures.

The second conspiracy was that of Marrast, Garnier-Pagès, and Co., who wanted to arm the *bourgeoisie* and to induce it to declare itself against the people, at the same time preserving, under the name of Republic, Louis Philippe's system.

The third was, so they say, that of Blanqui, Cabet, and Raspail, who intended to attempt a *coup de main*, with the help of their disciples and friends of the *Jacobin* clubs, in order to put themselves in the place of the provisional Government.

The fourth was a complication of the first: Louis Blanc, with Vidal, Albert, and the *working men's school* of the Luxembourg, bent upon securing his appointment as Dictator and sweeping all before him. I have no direct proof of that, but it now appears to me pretty certain.

This is the story of those four conspiracies:

Ledru-Rollin, unable to arrange with Louis Blanc, or thinking himself betrayed by him, failed to act adequately, in fact, took no prominent part in the proceedings.

Under the pretence that Cabet was bent upon bloodshed and pillage, Marrast and Co. secretly called to their aid all the suburbs and all the armed *bourgeoisie*, and succeeded so well in impressing everybody with that belief, that Ledru-Rollin's honest and respectable party, supported by Barbès, Caussidière, and all my friends, never stirred, being unwilling, in the

midst of the confusion of a popular authority, to give help and protection to Cabet, who is an ass, or to Raspail and Blanqui, the *Marat* of the present times. The conspiracy of Blanqui, Raspail, and Cabet did not perhaps exist by itself, though it was possibly part and parcel of Louis Blanc's. The former cannot, by themselves, rely upon more than a thousand faithful followers throughout the whole of Paris. They, therefore, do not deserve all the noise made about them.

Louis Blanc's conspiracy, supported by 30,000 workmen belonging to the various trade unions, closely united by the formula of the organisation of labour, was the only one which could really cause any uneasiness to Marrast's party. But then it would have been crushed by the armed National Guards, if it had made the semblance of a movement.

Each of the foregoing combinations had a different pretext for making a demonstration to-day.

That of Louis Blanc's workmen was to meet in the Champs de Mars, in order to elect their staff officers.

That of Marrast's suburbs was to assemble to receive its officers.

As for the Mobile Guards, and Caussidière's and Ledru's police, their object was to prevent Blanqui, Raspail, and Cabet attempting a *coup de main*.

As for the latter, they met with the avowed object of carrying patriotic offerings to the Hôtel de Ville.

In the midst of all this, two men thought of themselves, without playing any part in the manifestation. Leroux was ready to usurp Cabet's rule over the Communists. But he had not enough steadiness in his ideas, nor enough audacity to carry out his designs. He did not put in an appearance.

The other was Lamartine, a kind of Lafayette minus his



shrewdness, who wants to become President of the Republic and will perhaps succeed in his endeavours, because he respects all ideas and all men, without believing in any idea or loving any man. Without his having done anything, the honours and the triumph of the day belonged to him.

This is how matters passed :

At two o'clock Louis Blanc's 30,000 workmen came to the Champ de Mars, where they were told that Louis Blanc had not been ; on hearing which they grew quite cool and dissatisfied. At the same hour, at the various points, the National Guards of Paris and its suburbs appeared, at least 100,000 men, who marched to the Invalides, the esplanade of which they merely crossed on their way to the Hôtel de Ville, which they were bent upon reaching at the same time as the workmen.

The movement was most cleverly executed. The working men carried banners, upon which were inscribed their various mottoes and devices : *Organisation of labour ; No more exploitation of man by man.*

Their object was to secure definitively from the provisional Government its adherence to those principles. It is thought that, if any of the members of the Government had refused, the working men would have insisted upon their resignation. They would have endeavoured to carry their aim peacefully, for they were unarmed ; though, being all of them National Guards, they could easily have brought their arms with them.

But they had no chance of enforcing their wishes ; they were only allowed to tender their offerings and make their requests with the greatest civility ; for they had scarcely entered on the Quai du Louvre, when they were hemmed in

by two rows of National Guards, armed to the teeth, with loaded guns and pouches full of cartridges. Arrived at the Pont des Arts, the workmen were further divided. A third row of National and Mobile Guards was placed in the centre. So that five rows were walking abreast: three rows of armed *bourgeois* in the centre and on the flanks, two rows of unarmed workmen on the right and left of the centre row; and, in the intervals, patrols of mounted National Guards, stupid and ugly as usual.

It was a fine, yet sad spectacle, that proud and dissatisfied populace walking in the midst of all those bayonets! Those who carried the bayonets kept shouting and bawling: "*Long live the Republic! Long live the provisional Government! Long live Lamartine!*" The working men replied: "*Long live the good Republic! Long live Equality! Long live Christ's true Republic!*"

Crowds of spectators covered the footpath, embankments, and all available places. I was with Rochery, and it was impossible to walk otherwise than with the body of workmen, always kind, polite, and brotherly. Every five minutes the workmen had to come to a standstill, and the National Guards sent forward several of its platoons, so as to preserve a space between each body of workmen, and even between each trade union. The workmen were, so to speak, caught in the meshes of a vast net. They fully realised it, and restrained their indignation.

Arrived at the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, they had to wait a whole hour so that the Mobile and *bourgeois* Guards might take up their positions. At the windows of the Hôtel de Ville the provisional Government were posing like so many Apollos. Louis Blanc assumed the correct attitude

of a Saint-Just. Ledru-Rollin showed himself but little, and made the best of a bad bargain. Lamartine was triumphant throughout. Garnier-Pagès had a regular Jesuit's countenance; Crémieux and Pagnerre were lavish of their hideous faces and were *royally* bowing to the populace.

The poor workmen were kept back behind the *bourgeois* guards, along the houses round the square. The troops at last opened their ranks so as to leave a passage for them, so narrow that instead of four abreast, in which the workmen were before, they had to walk in twos, being thus permitted to reach the railings, behind which stood 100,000 bayonets and loaded guns. The armed Mobile Guards, excited or deceived as to the real intentions of the working men, would have fired on them at the first command. The great Lamartine condescended to come down on the landing of the outside staircase to give them empty promises.

I could not hear the speeches; but they lasted fully ten minutes, and, satisfied or not, the workmen had to listen, after which they broke up their meeting, going home through the back streets, while the *bourgeois* and the National Guards were being pompously reviewed by Lamartine and the others.

As I had worked my way into the midst of the boyish Mobile Guards as far as the centre of the square in order to see better, I then made off so as to be spared the grand honour of being reviewed with them, and went to dine at Pinson's,\* feeling quite depressed at seeing how low the prospects of the *Republican Republic* stand, perhaps for many years to come.

This evening I went out with Borie to see what was going on. All the workmen were gone; the streets were in

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\* A fashionable restaurant-keeper.

the power of the *bourgeois*, students, shopkeepers, idlers of all sorts, who shouted: "*Down with the Communists! Death to the Cabetists! Death to Cabet!*" And children in the streets, not knowing what they were saying, were echoing those cries for blood. That is how the *bourgeoisie* is educating the people. The first cry of *death* and the delightful word *lanterne*\* were to-day flung at the Revolution by the *bourgeois*. They will do fine things if they have their own way.

On the Pont des Arts we heard the drums beating the charge, and, by the light of the torches, we saw an immense line of bayonets moving quickly in the direction of the Hôtel de Ville. We ran there. It was the Second Legion, composed of the leading *bourgeois* of Paris and others of the same rank, about 20,000 men altogether, deafeningly vociferating that eternal cry of "*Death to Cabet!*" "*Death to the Communists!*" I certainly do not much care for Cabet; but why, out of three men of whom he is not the worst, is he always taken to task? Blanqui and Raspail, without doubt, deserve more hatred, yet their names were not even once pronounced. It is that they do not represent ideas, and that is precisely what the *bourgeoisie* wants to do away with. Tomorrow people will shout: "*Down with all the Socialists!*" "*Down with Louis Blanc!*" and when, having long cried "*Down with!*" when grown quite used to hearing the word *lanterne*, when the ears of the masses have been accustomed to those threats of *death*, people will wonder if those same masses turn round and take their revenge. It is infamous! Had that unfortunate Cabet put in an appearance he would have been torn to pieces; for the great majority of the people fancied they saw in Cabet a redoubtable enemy.

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\* *A la lanterne!* is an equivalent for the expression, "Hang him!"

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We followed that crowd of madmen as far as the Hôtel de Ville, and they marched past the building (which all the members of the provisional Government had left) still bawling the same burden and firing a few shots in the air. Those *bourgeois*, who will not allow the lower classes to fire squibs, had their own guns loaded with bullets, and might have killed some of the people looking on from their windows. They did not mind that, they were like a wild host of bloodthirsty beasts. Had any one found fault with them they would have killed him. The poor little Mobile Guards fraternised with the *bourgeois*, not knowing what they were about. On the staircase General Courtais and his staff were repeating, "Death to Cabet!"

What a fine day's work!

We returned home late. The whole quay was full of groups of people. In each group a working man defended, not Cabet—nobody cares for him—but the principle of liberty violated by that brutal demonstration, and the whole group was cursing Cabet and interpreting Communism exactly after the fashion of Delaveau's vine-dressers. I heard those isolated orators, whom everybody gainsaid, uttering very good and wise things. They were telling the wags, who ridiculed Communism, that the more stupid that doctrine appeared to them the less justified they were in persecuting it as dangerous; that Communists were but few and very peacefully disposed; that if they liked *Icarie*\* they certainly had a right to dream of it, etc.

Then came up patrols of Mobile Guards—they were as numerous as the groups; they went about, took part for a moment in the discussion, uttered regular slang jokes, re-

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\* The ideal country of Communism.

quested the people to break up their meeting and move on, and went away, repeating as a pass-word given upon receiving their glasses and cigars: "*Down with Cabel! Death to the Communists!*" Those Mobile Guards, so intelligent and so gallant, are already deceived and corrupted. Those working men, on joining the fine *bourgeois* regiments, accepted *bourgeois* ideas with their glittering brand-new uniforms. They often left their hearts in their blouses. They did the work of the aristocracy and reaped the fruits thereof.

In all that the evil, the great evil, does not so much, as people say, arise from the fact of the working classes being as yet unable to grasp ideas. Neither does it proceed from a want of mature ideas.

All the ideas that are yet unknown, and not yet understood, would meet all requirements if men who represent those ideas were *good*; it is not the ideas that are defective, it is the *characters* of those who seek to spread them. Truth only lives in straightforward souls; to exercise its influence it must be spoken by pure lips. Men are false, ambitious, vain, selfish, and the best of them is not worth the devil; it is very sad indeed!

Barbès and Etienne Arago are the most honest characters whom I ever met with. They are as brave as lions, and, when they take up a cause, devote themselves to it with all their hearts. I have made the acquaintance of Carteret, General Secretary of Police. He is a noble-minded man. As for Barbès, he is a hero. I fancy Causidière is also very good, but they are all in the background; all prominent men live with this ideal—self, self, self.

We shall see to-morrow what the people will think of all that on waking up. It is, indeed, quite possible that they

may not be satisfied ; but I am afraid that it will be already too late to shake off the yoke. The *bourgeoisie* have taken their revenge.

That *wretch* of a Cabet, Blanqui, Raspail, and a few others miss the truth because they preach only one side of it. We cannot embrace their cause, and yet the persecution which attaches to them paves the way to that to which we shall soon be subjected ourselves. The principle is violated, and it is the *bourgeoisie* who will again raise the scaffold.

I am very sad, my boy. If this should go on, and there should be nothing to do in a certain sense, I shall go back to Nohant, there to write and console myself beside you. I am anxious to see what sort of men the members of the National Assembly will be, after which I really believe there will be nothing for me to do here.

TO THE SAME.

PARIS, 19th April, 1848.

I hope that you sleep in full security, and that, if the rumours which are night and day circulated through Paris have reached the provinces, where they must assume dreadful proportions, you do not believe a word of them. We are again going through the *year of fear*. It is fabulous ! Last night every quarter of Paris pretended that two of its pickets had been attacked and carried off. That meant many pickets carried off, although in reality not a dog had stirred.

This morning at daybreak the *rappel* was beat. Orders were then countermanded, although the National Guards were told to remain in readiness for any emergency. Every hour

a fresh story was circulated. Blanqui was arrested, or Cabet, who *flies for his life!* had attacked the Hôtel de Ville. Leroux has become invisible; I believe he has gone to Boussac. Raspail gives himself out as dead. And yet the whole of Paris, without excepting all the clubs, the provisional Government, Caussidière himself, and the rank and file of the National Guards, have all been thrown into the wildest state of excitement by those three very men—Cabet, Blanqui, and Raspail. The Mobile Guards are being told that the suburbs are looting everything; the suburbs are informed that the Communists are making barricades. It is a regular farce. They were all bent upon frightening one another, and succeeded so well that they are all frightened in earnest.

I came back at two o'clock yesterday morning all alone from the Ministry in the Rue de Grenelle, and this morning at half-past one, still alone. The moon is shining as brightly as possible. Not a soul in the street, except patrols every few yards. When a poor belated foot traveller appears at the corner of a street, the patrol cock their rifles, present front, and watch him pass. It is sheer madness; it is truly, as I told you, the same thing as in '89, and now I fully understand the latter. You know that it never was clearly explained, and that twenty different causes were, with much probability, ascribed to it. Now I feel certain that all those causes existed then as to-day, and that it was not due to any one particular cause.

There are moments in revolutions, when each party tries to make use of fear to hamper the action of its adversaries. It is now the case with the four latent conspiracies which I pointed out to you yesterday. People to-day speak of a fifth one, and I believe myself there are two or three others. The Legitimists wanted to frighten the Republic; the middle party,



Guizot and the Regency party, Thiers and Girardin, I feel sure, have also played their game, with or without the hope of bringing about a conflict.

But all those threats are mutually paralysed ; all the clubs are sitting permanently during the nights, their members are all armed, the premises are barricaded ; no one is allowed to leave, afraid as they are of being assassinated ; and, as they are all equally afraid of one another, they all remain shut up and dare not budge ; therefore, the evil brings its own remedy. Some, among the most excited, are of opinion that they should be the first to attack ; but, being afraid of being themselves attacked first, they keep on the defensive. It is stupid, and the expected tragedy becomes a comedy.

I have just left portly Ledru-Rollin, endeavouring to haul himself on to the top of a horse as stout as himself, in order to take a ride through Paris, laughing at and not caring a fig for all that is going on. Étienne is wild, and says that it all bothers him. Borie and his cousin are shut up in the *National Palace Club*, and swearing, I am sure, at being kept out of their beds.

The population, expecting to hear the *tocsin* and the booming of guns, only sleep with one eye shut. M. de Lamartine, wishing to be on the best of terms with everybody, offered to shelter in his official residence the *great Cabet*, who poses as a martyr. Everybody says : " We are betrayed ! " In short, it is superb. If you were here, we should spend the rest of the night in walking about the streets, so as to witness the great mystification. It is such, that many serious men are quite deceived by it.

If I chose, I could also give myself out as a victim ; for, because of unusually strong lines written by me in one of the

*Bulletins*,\* the whole class of *bourgeois* let loose upon me an incredible burst of fury. I am certainly very cosy, all alone in your garret; yet, if I wished to pose as a victim, I need only write to-morrow to all the papers that, like Cabet or the late Marat, I am left without a stone whereupon to rest my head.

To-morrow the Government will make known the important measures which they took yesterday with regard to progressive taxation, financial laws, collateral succession, etc. That will no doubt be the end of the panic, and from general stupidity will proceed general good. I hope also that it will bring about the end of the financial crisis. Amen! Thus will be played the first act in the great drama whose *dénouement* is unknown to anybody.

Good night, my Bouli! † Do not be uneasy: if one single shot were fired I should let you know at once; therefore do not fret. I kiss you. I saw Solange to-day. She is quite well. Nothing new as regards my business affairs. My *Revue* does not go well: people are too preoccupied, everybody is living in anxiety as regards the future.

Good night, once more. I am on the lock-out for a civil outbreak: as yet the only noises that reach my ears are those of the Luxembourg clock striking the hours, and the squeaking of your weathercock.

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\* The *Bulletins de la République*, a publication to which George Sand contributed.

† Her son's pet name.

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To THE SAME.

PARIS, 21st April, 1848.

Do not worry yourself. You did not tell me what your reasons were for dismissing your council, although that should have been your first care.

Be it as it may, rest assured that they shall not have the best of you. I mentioned the matter to Ledru-Rollin, who said that you probably did not take that step wantonly, that very likely the circumstances required the measure, and that you ought to be backed up and assisted. I have just written to Fleury rather stiffly upon the subject; you must therefore heed neither recriminations nor menaces.

Any man, whether a member of the provisional Government or mayor of Nohant-Vic, who just now acts in a revolutionary spirit, meets with resistance, reaction, hatred, and threats. Could it be possible otherwise, and what would be the merit of our being *revolutionaries* if everything went on smoothly, if we only needed to wish in order to succeed? No, we are now, and shall perhaps for a long time yet, be engaged in an obstinate struggle.

Have I lived otherwise since I began to exist, and could we have believed that three days of street fights would give to our ideas an undisturbed reign, free from obstacles and perils?

The counter-revolution is smouldering under the thatch of cottages as under the marble of palaces. Let us still advance! Do not fret, be firm, and above all accustom your nerves to that state of struggle which must soon become our normal condition. As you know, people get accustomed

to go to sleep in the midst of noise. You must not believe that we can ever come to a standstill. Our victory and our rest lie in our going ahead.

The fête of *Fraternity* has been the most glorious in history. One *million of souls*, forgetting all resentment, all clashing of interests, forgiving the past, heedless of the future, and embracing one another throughout Paris to the cry of *Long live Fraternity!* It was sublime. I should have to write twenty pages to give you an account of all the events of the day; but I can scarcely dispose of five minutes. As a spectacle, you can hardly form any idea of what it was. You will find a very brief account of it in the *Bulletin de la République* and in the *Cause du Peuple*. By-the-bye, do you receive the latter publication? I have to deal with the most detestable lot of publishers that ever were; they do not send the copies and are surprised at not getting subscriptions. I am going to change all that.

But, talking about the fête, I must tell you that it has a far more important bearing than all the intrigues of the afternoon of the 15th. It shows that the masses do not grasp the differences, the shades that exist between our ideas, but that they keenly feel great things and *mean to have them*. Courage, then! To-morrow, perhaps, the grand compact sworn to by the multitude will be broken in the conscience of individuals; but, as soon as the struggle threatens to take place, the people (that is, *all the people*) will rise and say:

“No more speeches, but let us fight!”

Ah! how I missed you yesterday! The sky, the city, the horizon, the green country, the domes of the stately buildings, viewed from the top of the Arc de Triomphe, through rain and sunshine, what a frame for the most

gigantic human scene that ever took place! From the Bastille, from the Observatory to the Arc de Triomphe, and far beyond outside of Paris, over an area of five leagues, 400,000 rifles close together like a moving wall, the Artillery, all the troops of the line, the Mobile Guards, the National Guards of the city and the suburbs, all the uniforms, all the gorgeous pageant of the army, all the rags and tatters of the *holy mob*, and as spectators the whole population of all ages and both sexes, singing, shouting, clapping hands, and mixing with the procession. It was truly glorious. Read the papers; they are well worth reading. You would have gone mad at all that! I witnessed the spectacle during two whole hours, and was not satisfied then. In the evening the illuminations, the march-past of the troops, carrying torches, a regular stream of fire. Ah, my poor boy! where were you? I thought of you all the time. You must come up here for the 8th of May, even if they should burn Nohant during your absence. Farewell, I love you.

*To CITIZEN CAUSSIDIÈRE, Prefect of Police.*

NOHANT, 20th May, 1848.

CITIZEN,

On the 15th of May I was in the Rue de Bourgogne, mixed with the crowd, curious and anxious, like a good many more, about the issue of a manifestation whose only aim seemed to be a popular expression in favour of Poland. While passing a café, I had pointed out to me a very excited lady, at a ground-floor window, haranguing the mob and receiving a sort of ovation. Some persons, who were close to me, assured me that the lady was George Sand. Now, citizen,

I can assure you that it was not I, and that I was in the crowd, but one more witness of one of the most regrettable events of the 15th of May.

Since I have the opportunity of furnishing you with the particulars of the events of that extraordinary day, I will tell you what I saw.

The manifestation was very largely attended ; I followed it for three hours. For the majority of the citizens who joined it in its progress, and for those who applauded it as it passed by, it was nothing more than a manifestation in favour of Poland. People were surprised and delighted at the free passage accorded to that demonstration as far as the gates of the Assembly. They supposed that orders had been given to allow the petition-bearers to enter the House ; nobody foresaw that scenes of violence were likely to occur in the midst of the representatives of the nation. Rumours from the interior of the Assembly were finding their way out of doors. Some were saying that, in compliance with the wish of the people, the Assembly had unanimously declared itself in favour of Poland and the organisation of labour. The petitions were being read at the tribune and favourably received.

Suddenly, the amazed crowd learned the news of the dissolution of the Assembly and the formation of a new Government, some members of which were likely to entertain the wishes of the impassioned group which was then using violence towards the Assembly, but quite opposed to the wishes of the multitude. The crowd immediately broke up, and the military authorities were enabled, without the slightest opposition, to at once resume possession of the newly appointed executive power.

My object is not to give here an account of the opinions and sympathies of the various fractions of the people who took part in the manifestation; but everybody in France has the right of raising his voice and saying to the National Assembly: "You have luckily passed through an incident inevitable in times of revolution, and, thanks to Providence, it passed off without bloodshed. In the midst of the perturbed ideas which that event is about to bring for the first few days, you must prove, citizens, that you are able to master your emotion and not forget the precepts of an equity superior to the passing troubles of the situation.

"Do not confound order, that official word of the past, with sour and provoking mistrust. It is very easy for you to maintain order without encroaching upon liberty. The liberty of the people, conquered by them, belongs to them; you have no right to tamper with it, and, since it is not the whole people, but a very small fraction of them which committed themselves on the 15th of May, you cannot, you must not, restrain the rights and liberties of France as a chastisement for the faults of a few.

"Take care, and do not act under the influence of reaction; for it was not on the 15th of May that you ran a serious danger, it is to-day, behind the rampart of bayonets which protects your doings. For you, the danger does not lie in facing a parliamentary outbreak. Every man entrusted with a mandate like yours must coolly consider the outbreak of those little storms; yes, for you the serious danger lies in failing to fulfil the duties imposed upon you by that mandate, by causing the Republic to enter upon a monarchical or dictatorial course; that would be equivalent to stifling the cry of France, which begs for life, and to whom a return to the past would bring

death; in fine, that danger would be the bringing about, out of fear for the limited anarchy from which you have just escaped scot-free, a general anarchy which you could no longer control.

*To CITIZEN LEDRU-ROLLIN, Paris.*

NOHANT, 28th May, 1848.

DEAR FELLOW CITIZEN,

You are not aware that I write in a paper which is hostile to you, to yourself personally less than to anybody else, but which gets angry at many things and against many people without my being responsible for all the sympathies and antipathies of the chief editor. You, no doubt, have not the leisure to read all the papers; but you formerly could manage to chat from time to time with me for a few minutes; I, therefore, insist upon your reading my production; that, I hope, will not require many more minutes than listening to me used to take.

It is probably because you do not know that I write in the *Vraie République* that I want you to hear that news from me; but I also want you to know that I do not accept the responsibility of attacks against persons; that is why I sign everything I write.

When I agreed upon giving my co-operation, the struggle had not begun; seeing it breaking out, I vainly endeavoured to temper it. But the outbreak of the 15th of May took place, and it would have been cowardly on my part to withdraw. That is why I remain on the staff of a newspaper which collectively taunts you with being a King, a Consul, a Directory, etc., and reproaches you with remaining in power



*Letters of George Sand.*

while Barbès is imprisoned. That places me in a false position to which I must submit in my small sphere, like a great many more who submit to it in a much higher one. I am certain that you must not give way to reaction without having tried to crush it. Yet, I cannot say that in a newspaper. That would be inopportune and imprudent; it might, perhaps, be taking a view different from that which you decided upon, so far as the means are concerned.

As regards politics, in the true sense of the word, I am most incapable, that you know. Yet I have a request to make of you; it is to let me know whenever you consent to my saying in that newspaper, which inveighs against you, but in which I shall always retain the right of expressing my opinion under my own responsibility, what I know and think of your character, of your political views, and of your revolutionary line of conduct.

Should you not have the time to think about it, I shall not be angry with you, and shall not think myself *indispensable* to your justification in the eyes of some persons whose judgment you can very well afford to dispense with. But, out of duty to my conscience and to my affection towards you, I feel it necessary to tell you all that, although my so doing may perhaps appear to you an impertinent assumption of *importance*; you will understand it as I give it, in good faith and cordially.

People tell me here that I compromised myself in the affair of the 15th May. That is quite impossible, you know. They also tell me that the executive Committee refused to prosecute me for my alleged participation in that affair. If so, I thank you personally for it; for there is nothing more hateful to me than to appear to play a part with the sole

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object of exhibiting myself. But should people accuse you of the slightest partiality towards me, I would beseech you to let them prosecute me. I have absolutely nothing to fear from the most minute inquiry. I *knew* nothing either before or during the outbreak, at least nothing more than could be seen or gathered in the streets. As regards my opinion of the facts, that I do not conceal, I publish and sign it; but I do not believe that that is *conspiring*.

Farewell, and yours in heart,

GEORGE SAND.

*To CITIZEN THÉOPHILE THORÉ, Paris.*

NOHANT, 28th May, 1848.

DEAR THORÉ,

I will send you a new production of mine, not a striking protest, as you said in your letter, but the continuation (and not the end) of my life's protests.

As for the events of the 15th, I will leave them unnoticed. The outbreak is over now, and I have no right to condemn it, since it is put down; and I will abstain from passing any remark upon the men who brought it about, and with whom we have no sympathy. But I can tell you that, when I learned from the crowd that strange mixture of names uttered in defiance of the future, I went back home fully determined not to risk one single hair of my head for such men as Raspail, Cabet, or Blanqui. So long as their names are inscribed upon our banner I will hold aloof. They are but pedants and theocrats. I will not be subjected to individual whims, and will exile myself the day we commit the mistake of placing them in power.

Do not tell me not to be alarmed, that word is not French. I am too wearied of life to avoid the risk of losing it, too much opposed to proprietorship not to desire being released from its responsibilities; too much used to fatigue or to labour to understand the advantages of rest.

But my conscience is timid and my scruples go far whenever the question is to advise and stir the masses in the streets. There is no doctrine too new or too rash; but *action* is not to be resorted to without careful consideration. Like a man, I understand the emotion of the struggle and the attraction of the fight. In my youth, I would have followed the devil himself, had he given the word to fire. But I have learned so many things since, that I much fear the morrow of a victory. Are we ripe for a good reckoning with God and men? I say *we*, because I cannot, in my mind, separate our cause from the people's. And then! the people are not ready, and too much urging retards their progress; that seems a rather illogical fact, but facts are so seldom logical! Yet that is a very true fact, and far more obvious in the provinces than in Paris.

Barbès is a hero, he reasons like a saint, that is, very falsely in a worldly point of view. I love him tenderly, and do not know how to take his defence, because I cannot admit that, on that deplorable day of the 15th, he had *right* on his side in the name of the people. Those who were called *factionnaires* were, indeed, more so than most people think. In a political sense they were less so than the National Assembly itself; but in a moral and intellectual sense they were *factionnaires* without a doubt.

Through surprise, audacity (and even force, had they been able to resort to it), they wished to impose upon the people an

idea which the people have not yet accepted. They would have established, not the law of fraternity of Jesus, but that of Mahomet. Instead of religion, we should have had fanaticism. It is not thus that true ideas gain adherents. Three months after such a philosophical usurpation we would have been, not Republicans, but Cossacks. Even supposing those sectarians to have mustered 10,000 men each, and the exaltation of their united numbers to have sufficed to hold Paris during a few weeks against the provinces, would, I ask, those sectarians have supported one another? Would Blanqui have submitted himself to Barbès? Would Leroux have tolerated Cabet? Would you yourself have been accepted by Raspail? What a struggle there would have been in the midst of that impossible association! You would have been led into more blunders than the Provisional Government; you could not have succeeded in calling together an Assembly, and would have found yourselves already entangled with Europe.

The reaction would not proceed from the *bourgeoisie*, which a leader can always easily intimidate when having the people with him; it would proceed from the people themselves, who are independent and proud of their beliefs, more so than respecting their material existence, and do not accept interference with their ignorance when that is all with which they can oppose progress.

Since you are alone and hidden, my poor boy, I can chat with you and disturb your solitude for a few moments. That is always one way of passing time away. Excuse, then, my doing so and lecturing you. You are too hasty and too harsh in your judgment of persons. You are too ready to accuse, to

denounce to public opinion the men who seem to forsake or to betray our cause. Men are weak, unsteady in their resolutions, selfish; I am fully aware of that, and there is not one who, since the 24th February, has not been unequal to his task. But, in condemning them from day to day, we have ourselves been unequal to ours. We did too much journalism after the manner of the past, and not enough preaching as became a doctrine of the future. That produces an altogether bad policy, inefficacious if not dangerous. You were not yourself deficient in shrewdness and intellect, for, despite your impulsive nature, you always succeed in grasping most accurately the weak point of the situation.

Yet a little more *propriety* (in my eyes a spirit of charity is the only true politeness), a little less precipitation in proclaiming as traitors irresolute and light-headed people, would not have injured your propaganda.

*We all made mistakes*, said Napoleon upon his return from Elba. The same can be said of us all to-day, and such a confession made in good faith brings about all the more union and strength between people. In one of the numbers received to-day you say yourself: *Our friends of yesterday, who will still be our friends of to-morrow.* It is, then, true that we must not fall out with those who fought with us yesterday, and who will come back and fight in our ranks to-morrow, when the reaction which they hope to control shall have hurled them from power.

I do not believe that people may all at once become wretches and apostates; yet, chiefly in times of crisis like these, our life is so uncertain, so hard, so disturbed, that, if judged from day to day, we may easily be found fault with. But

there can be no justice in a judgment thus borne upon a varied series of daily facts. We must see the whole in order to form a sound opinion.

A month ago I felt much incensed against M. de Lamartine. I doubted his loyalty, and suspected him of hankering after supreme power. And yet he compromised and perhaps lost his *bourgeois* popularity in order to preserve his democratic popularity. You may say that that is well-advised vanity; however that may be, he, nevertheless, has had the good taste to make the best and, under the present circumstances, the most courageous choice. As to you, it now occurs to me that Ledru-Rollin ought to retire from power, and my reasons for thinking so are still stronger than yours.

But I will wait, for I hope that he will have that good impulse when he clearly sees the situation. I know him, he has feeling and a good heart, and, because he does not now see things as we do, it does not follow that he will not feel as we shall when the great popular fibre shows clearly to all of us which road to follow.

I know others whom you accuse, and whose intentions are nevertheless good. Do not accuse, I beseech you, in the name of the future of our unfortunate Republic, which is being blighted in the bud by our suspicions and discords! For all that, we must not swerve in our principles. We must not be afraid of telling men, even those whom we love, when they are mistaken, and not lose anything of our vigour of discussion respecting ideas and even facts. What I most earnestly request from you is to abstain from condemning intentions, motives, characters. Even should you be in the right, that would be bad policy, chiefly in the form, like that followed in the past by the *Riforme* against the *National*.

Those are the commonplaces which I wished to have exposed to you verbally, previous to all those catastrophes, and which I sometimes used to tell Barbès. But our interviews were so short that we scarcely had time to interchange our ideas, and that was a pity. We ought sometimes to listen to commonplaces, they are often pregnant with truth.

What particularly shocks me in the affair of the 15th is that absence of forms and ceremonies, which latter, if you like, I will call the intellectual *savoir-vivre*. The people possess, above all things, that *savoir-vivre* of aspiration which causes their public manners to clash with ours in the times we live in. That has been fully proved since the 24th February. We have seen them, throughout those manifestations, associating publicly with their enemies, and sacrificing all their legitimate hatred, all their justifiable resentment to the idea of fraternity or generosity. We, certainly, do not willingly do as much in our private intercourse. Ah! well, the people possess in the highest degree respect for public intercourse. On the 15th May, they appeared in front of the Palais Bourbon with pacific intentions (the ringleaders excepted). They were allowed to pass. Whether by premeditation or inspiration, the bayonets disappeared before them. They proceeded as far as the gates, singing and laughing. The head of the procession pushed open the gates, the middle knew nothing about it—I was there. They were under the belief that they were admitted, received by the Assembly with open arms. As for me, I had no such belief. I considered that the fear of bloodshed had induced the *bourgeoisie* to present, if not a good heart, at least a good face to bad fortune, and I overheard it said that this gracious reception should not be abused, that the power of numbers should simply be displayed, and that

the people should march past decently and peaceably, thus respecting the Assembly and so teaching it to respect the people. You know the rest; the bulk of the people did not enter, they remained calm, awaiting a result which they did not foresee, whilst all who were so unlucky as to penetrate within the accursed precincts of the House, behaved there without dignity, order, or self-possession. At the approach of the bayonets they all fled. Ought a revolution to take to flight? Those who had made up their minds to some resolution, if, indeed, any such were there, should have risked their lives. That, at least, would have been a protest. I swear that had I entered, I should not have come out *alive* (taking for granted that I had been a man).

There was, thus, neither protest nor resolution, nor even a riot. There was simply but a *coup-de-tête*, and Barbès was deceived by it only because he wished to be. A knight of the cause, as you truly call him, he declared to himself that he ought to sacrifice himself for it and with it. Honour to him at all times! but woe be to us! Our idea has been lowered in the person of others. It is not the want of success that condemns it; far from it. But it is the want of bearing and of a general understanding. They led there by surprise and by deceptive means, people who knew nothing of the whole affair, and there was in that something quite contrary to the French character, something savouring of sectarianism, something, in fact, that I cannot bear, and that I should openly disavow, were it not that Barbès, Louis Blanc, and yourself have been compelled to submit to its fatal consequence.

Such is, my dear friend, all I wish to tell you, and do not treat lightly the sentiment of a woman. Women and children,



always disinterested in political questions, are in more direct intercourse with the spirit which breathes from above upon the agitation of this world. I will write in the *Vraie République* in spite of all, and without putting any moral condition upon my collaboration. But in the name of the cause, in the name of truth, I ask that your spirit should be not less active but purer, your word not less bold but calmer. Great convictions confer serenity. Do not allow yourself to be accused of personal ambition. Political passion is always supposed to conceal that afterthought in men. In fact, without fear of being presumptive, I beg you to listen to me. I possess in myself the advantage of the infancy of the soul and the experience of old age. My whole heart is in what I tell you; when you are thoroughly acquainted with me, you will know that you can blindly trust to the instinct of that heart of mine.

I have also been strongly advised to conceal myself; my friends wrote to me from Paris that I should be arrested. I do not believe anything of the kind, and am content to wait. Still I am not very safe here. The *bourgeois* made the peasantry believe that I was the ardent disciple of *Father Communism*, a very wicked fellow who upsets everything in Paris and requires that children under three years of age and old people above sixty should all be put to death. This may seem to be a joke; it is nevertheless the plain truth. Outside of my own neighbourhood people believe it, and threaten to smother me in a ditch. You see what we have come to. I, nevertheless, do not feel uneasy, and walk about without being interfered with. Never were men so fervent as now . . . in word. But what a cowardly and stupid education is imparted by the clever to the simple!

Good night! Conceal yourself still. You would have nothing to fear from an inquiry; but it would involve a loss of time to you, and that reaction will soon vanish as an actual fact. As for the general fact, I believe that it will still last a few months. True Republicans are too much divided, that is where the evil lies.

Write to me and burn this letter. Courage and fraternity.

G. SAND.

*To CITIZEN ARMAND BARBÈS, Dungeon of Vincennes.*

NOBANT, 10<sup>th</sup> June, 1848.

DEAR AND WORTHY FRIEND,

Your letter only reached me to-day, the 10th of June. Thanks for your kind thought; I wanted it, for I have not spent an hour, since the 15th May, without thinking of you and fretting about your situation. I know that you heed it a great deal less than we do; still it is pleasant for me to learn that it has materially become tolerable. Yes, indeed! I can assure you that I have not enjoyed the sweet warmth of the sunbeams without somehow reproaching myself with it, when remembering that you were deprived of it. And I who used to tell you: "three months of freedom and basking in the sun will cure you!"

They say that I was an *accomplice* in something; in what, I really do not know. I have had neither the honour nor the credit of doing anything for our cause, not even that of committing a folly or an *imprudence*, as the saying is. I knew nothing, I understood nothing of what was going on; I was there as a spectator, surprised and upset; but it had not yet been *forbidden* by the laws of the Republic to belong to a

group of idlers. The most contradictory news was being circulated through the crowd. People even went as far as to say that you had been killed. Fortunately that was contradicted shortly afterwards by another version. Yet what a sad and painful day!

The following day was dismal. The whole population in arms, furious or alarmed; the people provoked, hesitating, and, at every moment, whole legions passing by, shouting together, some, "*Long live Barbès,*" and others, "*Down with Barbès!*" There was still fear among the victors. Are they calmer to-day after all that display of terrorism? I doubt it.

In fine, I know not for what reason, it appears that people wanted to do me an unkind turn, so my friends advised me to flee to Italy. I did not heed them. Had I expected to be sent to prison beside you I should have shouted, "*Long live Barbès!*" in the face of the first National Guard I might have come across. That might possibly have constituted a sufficient offence; but, being a woman, I am always compelled to draw back before the fear of insults worse than blows, before those low and coarse invectives which the *brave and gallant* defenders of the *bourgeoisie* are not above addressing to the weakest—to women—in preference to men.

I left Paris in the first place because my money was all gone; in the next, so as to avoid the risk of Maurice's being arrested, which latter event must inevitably have happened had he heard the torrent of insults which was being poured forth against all his friends, and even against his mother, through that immense camp and guard-house into which they had turned the Paris of the people, the Paris of *February*. See what a difference! Throughout the month of March I was free to come and go quite alone through Paris at any hour of the day.

or night, and I never met with a low working man or a *rough* but he made room for me on the pavement, and did so with civility and affableness. On the 17th May I scarcely dared to venture out in broad daylight with my friends; *order* was reigning!

But I have spoken enough of *myself*. Yet I dare not converse with you about *yourself*; you know why. But, if you are allowed to read the papers, and if the *Vraie République* of the 9th June has reached your hand, you will have seen that I was writing to you before having received your letter. You must pay attention only to the last paragraph of the article. The early part is intended for that being of many *facets* called the public, the end for you.

Ah! my friend, how grand and beautiful is your faith! Your main thought, in your prison, is to save those who seem compromised, and to comfort the afflicted. You try to cheer me up, whereas it is I who properly should cheer you. It is true, I know, your courage does not want stimulating; if anything, you possess too much. As for me, I feel no courage for others. Their misfortunes break me down, and yours has fearfully depressed me; I fear the future, I envy those who only fear for themselves, and whose sole preoccupation is to know what fate has in store for them. Methinks the weight of their anguish is light indeed, compared with that which crushes my soul.

I feel for all beings who suffer, who do evil or allow it to be done without understanding it; I feel for our working classes who are so unfortunate, and still persist in presenting their backs to the whip and their hands to fetters. From the Polish peasants who want to be Russians, to those *lazzaroni* who strangle Republicans; from the intelligent population of Paris, who, like so many simpletons, allow them-

selves to be deceived, to the peasantry of our provinces who would kill the *Communists* with pitchforks, I see nothing but ignorance and moral weakness among the majority of the dwellers on this globe of ours. The struggle, I am aware, has begun in earnest. We shall perish in it, that is my consolation. After us, progress will follow its course. I have doubts neither in God nor man; but I find it impossible not to proclaim the bitterness of the stream of anguish and suffering which carries us, and wherein, though swimming, we nevertheless swallow much that is unpalatable.

Farewell, dear brother and friend. Borie and Maurice love you well; rest assured they are here beside me. Were we in Paris we should come to see you; you would already have seen us; believe it, and you will see us as soon as we are there.

Adieu; write if you can, and remember that in me you possess a sister, I will not say as kind, but fully as devoted as the other.

G. S.

*To JOSEPH MAZZINI, Milan.*

15th June, 1848.

What can those do who have devoted their lives to the idea of paternal equality, who have ardently loved mankind, and who worship in Christ the symbol of the people redeemed and saved? In short, what can Socialists do when ideal deserts the bosoms of men, when humanity despairs of itself, when the people disown their own cause? Is not that what threatens to happen to-day, perchance to-morrow?

You are full of courage, friend; that is to say, you preserve

your hopes. As for me, I shall keep my creed; the pure and bright idea, eternal truth, will always shine in the sky, unless I should grow blind. But hope is the belief in the near triumph of creed, and I should lack sincerity were I to say that that disposition of my soul has undergone no modification within the last two months.

I see civilised Europe rushing, through the impulse of Providence, along the road to great struggles. I see the idea of the future grappling with the past. That vast movement of ideas is an immense progress, after the long years of stupor which marked a period of stagnation in the formation of oppressed societies. That movement is the effort of life endeavouring to break the stone of the sepulchre in order to leave its grave, although it may be buried under the débris. It would therefore be insensate to give way to despair; for, if God Himself has breathed on our dust in order to animate it, He will not let it be scattered by the winds. Yet, is it towards definitive resurrection that we are rushing, or is it only a prophetic agitation, a tremor, the forerunner of life, after which we must slumber again, not so deeply, it is true, though still overpowered by a fatal languor? I fear the latter.

As for France, the question has reached its last stage, and stares us in the face unmistakably, without complication, as being one, between wealth and poverty. It might still be resolved peaceably; the *pretenders* are not serious obstacles, they will vanish like bubbles in the air. The *bourgeoisie* wants to reign. For the last sixty years it has been striving to realise its motto: "*What is the tiers état? \* Nothing. What*

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\* The representatives of the middle classes elected to the States General (*Etats Généraux*) during the *ancien régime*; also the middle classes.

should it be? *Everything.*" Yes, the *tiers état* wants to be everything in the State, and the 24th of February freed it from the obstacle of royalty. It is thus indubitable that France must henceforth be a Republic, since on the one hand the poorest and most numerous class prefers that form of government which throws open to it the gates of the future; and, on the other hand, the wealthiest, most influential, politically the most powerful class, finds its interest in an oligarchy.

Some day, universal suffrage will do justice to that pretension of the *tiers état*. The former is an invincible weapon which the people did not know how to handle, and which at the first trial was turned against them. The political education of the masses will be achieved quicker than is supposed, and an equality, progressive but uninterrupted in its onward course, can and must proceed from the principle of the sovereign rights of the people. That is the logical fact as it presents itself. But are logical deductions always the normal law of man's history? No! in most cases there is another logic than that of the general fact: it is that of the particular fact, which confuses the whole, and with us the particular fact is, that the majority of the *tiers état* fails to understand the situation.

That want of intelligence may cause our next revolution to be violent and terrible, and, through attempts at domination (*liberticide*), it may exasperate the sufferings of the masses. Then the solemn progress of time will be interrupted. Excessive poverty will not call its sufferings virtue, but abjection. It will have recourse to its own strength; it will violently dispossess the rich, and wage a fearful contest in which the importance of the aim in view will seem to justify any means.

Fatal epochs in the lives of nations are those when the victors, for having committed excesses in the exercise of their power, become vanquished in their turn!

The Socialists of the times we live in do not wish for the solutions of despair. Profiting by the lessons of the past, enlightened by a loftier comprehension of Christian civilisation, all those who deserve that appellation, whatever the social doctrine they may belong to, repudiate for the future the tragical part played by the old Jacobins, and beseech, with folded hands, the conscience of man to get enlightened and to decide in favour of God's law.

But the idea of despotism is in its essence so identical with that of fear, that the *bourgeoisie* trembles and threatens at the same time. It is so afraid of Socialism that it wants to annihilate it through calumny and persecution; and whenever some far-seeing one's voice is raised in order to point out the danger, a thousand others are at once raised to bring anathema upon the obnoxious prophet.

"You are provoking hatred," they will say; "you are calling down vengeance upon us. You *make* the people *believe* that they are miserable; you point us out as objects for their fury. You only pity them in order to excite them. You remind them of their poverty only because we are rich." In short, charity, brotherly love, all that which Christ used to preach to men of His time, has become a fiery predication, and, were Jesus to appear among us, He would be attacked by the National Guards as an anarchist and a factious citizen.

That is what I fear for France, the Christ of nations, as she has been lately very rightly termed. I fear the want of intelligence of the rich and the despair of the poor. I fear the state of struggle which is not yet in men's minds, but



which may become acts, if the ruling class does not enter upon a frankly democratic and sincerely fraternal path. Then, I declare, there will be great confusion and sore misfortunes, for the people are not ripe for self-government. They possess powerful individualities, intellects able to cope with any situation. But such are not known. They do not exercise over the people the prestige which the masses require in order to love and believe. The masses have no faith in their own element, they have just proved it at the last general elections; they seek for guides above them, they love great names and celebrities, whoever they may be.

The people will therefore again look for liberators among *bourgeois*, self-styled democrats, Socialists, or others, and they will once more be deceived in their expectations, for, but with a few exceptions, perhaps, there does not exist in France a democratic party sufficiently enlightened to undertake a dictatorship of public safety. Will they rely upon the wisdom or the inspiration of a single individual? That would be a retrograde step, reversing all the progress of mankind during the last twenty years.

No man will ever be superior to a principle, and the principle which must impart life to new societies is universal suffrage, the sovereignty of all. To govern themselves, the people will therefore need the concourse of all, the reactionary *bourgeoisie* and the democratic as well as the Socialists. In order to get enlightened, they need the peaceful and legal rivalry of all those divers elements.

Let a democratic and social majority appear within our Assembly, and in time we shall be saved; but, should that majority be thoroughly reactionary and bent upon its aim, the dissolution of social order will begin, the insolent dream of

an oligarchic republic will disappear with an extreme crisis, and the destinies of France will be left to chance for a long time to come.

That is what people just now cannot mention in France without bringing upon themselves party hatred. The reaction taxes such foresight with being an appeal to civil strife. The moderate party smiles with an air of self-reliance, and scorns any solution but that which it pretends to have hit upon, though in reality it has none to offer. Every philosophico-political *coterie* possesses its own man, its *fetish*, sufficient, so that *coterie* says, alone to save the Republic, and about this no doubt is permitted. Every satisfied ambition becomes optimist then and there; discontented ambitions declare the Republic to be lost, for want of their collaboration.

In the midst of these conflicts of personal interests, faith in principles becomes obliterated, or, at least, the intelligence of those principles diminishes in people's minds. All the fears of, as also all the cravings for power, converge towards the same end: respect for national representation, jealous appeal to its omnipotence. But this is not sincere respect, not an earnest faith. That Assembly, which, no doubt, represents a principle, is not a principle in action. It is something as hollow as a formula; the image of something that ought to be. Every shade of public opinion finds some proper names for it, which it recognises; although everybody says to himself: "Except Peter, James, and John, none of the representatives are representative at all."

Proper names are the enemies of principles, and yet they alone stir the people. The latter seek who shall represent them, they, the eternally represented, and look, among extreme individualities, some for M. Thiers, others for M. Cabet, others

for Louis Bonaparte, others again for Victor Hugo, a strange and monstrous product of the poll, and which proves how little the people know of where they go and what they want.

It is, however, easy to throw sufficient light on the question for the people, "To be or not to be?" but the people are not aware of the means. In order to dazzle and bewilder them, the great phantom of political falsehood has been invented, and, when I say falsehood, I am doing too much honour to the odd and ridiculous element which, just now, is guiding public opinion in France. We possess a trivial expression which you will translate by some equivalent in your language. It is the political *canard* (hoax). Every morning, some wonderful, in most cases absurd, ignoble story, starts from I know not what cesspools in Paris, and goes the round of France, exciting the population on its passage, proclaiming to them the advent of a fresh saviour, or of an ogre ready to devour them, thus rousing foolish hopes or stupid fears in their bosoms, and, through a mysterious community of feeling, impersonating itself in the individuals who are liked or disliked in each locality. Thus they endeavour to brutify that intelligent but credulous and impressible people; but, as that is not an easy task, they only succeed in exciting and maddening it. The masses are nowhere quiet, nowhere do they understand. Here, they shout, "Down with the Republic!" and "Equality for ever!" Elsewhere, "Down with Equality!" and "The Republic for ever!"

Whence can light proceed amidst such a conflict of false ideas and deceiving formulæ? Grand and noble laws can alone explain to the masses that the Republic is not the property of such and such a class, of such and such a person, but the doctrine of the safety of all.

Who will make those laws? A truly National Assembly. The present one is unfortunately subjected to every sort of prejudice, and gives way to all the influences which bring about the downfall of monarchies.

You see, my friend, how difficult it is for a society to transform itself without struggle and violence. And yet our very ideal was to bring about that transformation without internecine discord, without an impious struggle between citizens of the same nation. I must admit that, putting royalty aside, after that short and glorious impulse of the people of Paris, an impulse which cannot be called a fight, but which was rather a powerful manifestation in which some citizens offered their lives to God and to France, like a sacred hecatomb, my soul had not grown hard enough to consider without horror the idea of a social war. I did not believe in that eventuality, and no such outbreak can, indeed, be expected on the part of that magnanimous population amongst which social ideas have penetrated deeply enough to make it eminently peaceful and generous. Blind and ungrateful *bourgeoisie*, which does not perceive that those ideas saved it in February, and which endeavours to turn against the Socialist a factious rage, provoked by that *bourgeoisie* in the breasts of the people! Stupid caste, as rash as an expiring monarchy, which plays its last game, which, like the kings of yesterday, seeks its support in material strength, and which, for the last three months, has laboured towards its own ruin with deplorable ardour.

From one end of France to the other that caste obeys the same byword, and is not afraid of uttering death-cries against those whom it calls factions, forgetting that those same people whom it incites against one another may lose in

a day the benefit of a moral civilisation acquired in twenty years, and become once more, under the impulse of fear, suspicion, and wrath, the people terrible for all, the people of '93, who were the weird glory of their times, and this would be the bloody shame of the new cause.

Let us still hope that our nation will be stronger and grander than the baneful passions which they seek to arouse in it. Let us hope that it will turn a deaf ear to the provoking agents who try to excite it to their advantage, and who fancy that after they have let it loose upon us, it will not rush the next day against them. It rests with the reactionary *bourgeoisie* whether the people of France will imitate the *lazzaroni* of Naples.

But that impious conspiracy will fail; God will interfere, and perhaps the wealthy class will also open its eyes. We, the friends of mankind, do not wish the rich to be punished. Like Jesus, we say: "Let them be converted, and live!"

Let us pray that such may be the case. Ah! how little they know us, those who believe us to be their enemies and inexorable judges! Are they not aware that it is impossible to love the people without detesting the evil which the people might commit! Do they not perceive that the work they pursue, in trying to foster brutal and sanguinary ideas in the people, grieves us far more than all the evil which they might do us! We love the people as one loves a child; we love them as one loves that which is miserable, feeble, deceived, and sacrificed; as one loves what is young, ignorant, pure, and bearing within itself the germ of an ideal future. We love it as one loves the innocent victim snatched from the altar, as one loves Christ on the cross, hope, the idea of justice, in short, as one loves God in the person of mankind! Can we

love thus and desire the object of our love to debase itself in misery or tarnish itself with pillage?

You might as well ask a mother whether she wishes the offspring of her bosom to become a bandit and a murderer!

And yet such are the accusations brought against us. People say that our ideas of fraternal equality are the signal bell for murder and arson, and, in so saying, they ring in the ears of the masses the maddening tocsin, pointing out to them invisible enemies whom they incite them to murder. They mark the doors of our houses. They would wish for a St. Bartholomew of new heretics, and they shout to the masses: "Kill! so that there may be no one left between you, the people, and us, the *bourgeoisie*, and then we shall reckon together."

But the people will not kill. Yet, what would I care if they killed me, provided my blood could appease the wrath of heaven or even that of the *bourgeoisie*? But blood intoxicates and fills the atmosphere with a contagious influence. Murder maddens; insults, harsh words, threatening utterances kill morally those who give expression to them. The education of hatred is a school of brutality and impiety which ends in slavery. *Bourgeois, bourgeois!* be yourselves. Speak about charity and fraternity; for when you have morally killed the people, you will find yourselves confronted by Cossacks, Neapolitan lazzaroni, and Gallician peasants.

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To MADAME MARLIANI, Paris.

NOHANT, July, 1848.

Thank you, friend; I should have felt uneasy about you had you not written, for, in the midst of public troubles, we always fear having to record some private one. We suffer and fear for all those we love. I am broken-hearted, I need not tell you, and no longer believe in the existence of a Republic which begins by killing its proletariat. That is a strange solution of the problem of pauperism. It is pure Malthusianism.

What! did Miss Ashurst\* arrive in the midst of that tragedy? Poor child! she came to witness the funeral of our honour. She came too late! She will not have seen the Republic. Kiss her for me; I am glad she is with you, and feel certain that you will be satisfied with each other. I wish I could come and kiss you both. But, for the present, besides the fact that I perhaps might find it difficult to behave myself *with prudence* in Paris, my presence here is required in order to keep at bay a numerous gang of fools from La Châtre, who daily talk about coming here to set fire to my house.

Those fellows are brave neither physically nor morally, and when they come strolling about the neighbourhood I go into their midst, and they doff their hats to me. But, when they have passed me, they venture to shout: "*Down with the Communisques!*" † They intended to frighten me, and perceive at last that they cannot do so. But it is hard to say to what they may not be driven by a dozen reactionary *bourgeois*, who tell them the most ridiculous stories respecting me. Thus, at

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\* An English lady, friend of Mazzini.

† Term employed by the illiterate, meaning *Communists*.

the time of the events in Paris, they pretended that I had concealed Ledru-Rollin, 200 Communists, and 400 rifles in my house!

Others, with better intentions, though just as stupid as the former, came rushing to my place in the middle of the night, to tell me that my house was surrounded by brigands, and they so fully believed it that they brought the gendarmes with them. Fortunately, all the latter are my friends, and do not credit all the foolish rumours, which, if they did, might result in my being some fine morning arrested without any formality. The authorities are also in our favour; but, should they be removed, which is quite possible, we might be subjected to some little persecution. All my friends, wrongly, I think, have left the country. We must bear up against these little storms, inevitable results of the generally disturbed state of affairs.

Good night, my friend. What days of tears and indignation! I, who formerly used to be so proud and happy to be a Frenchwoman, I to-day am almost ashamed of it! Happen what may, I love you.

GEORGE.

*To M. GIRERD, Representative of the People in the National  
Assembly, Paris.*

NOHANT, 6th August, 1848.

MY FRIEND,

I am indeed the author of the *XVIIth Bulletin*, and I accept all the moral responsibility of my authorship. My opinion is, and always will be, that if the National Assembly intended to destroy the Republic, the latter would have the right to defend itself, even against the Assembly.



As for the *political* responsibility of the *Bulletin*, it so happens that it cannot be ascribed to anybody. I might have fathered it upon M. Ledru-Rollin, and people too might have dispensed with fathering upon me the *moral* responsibility of it. But, at a moment when everybody's time was engaged, I should have thought I was acting against my conscience had I refused to *give* a few hours of my time to a labour, *gratuitous* both as regards money and vanity. It was the first time in my life, and will probably be the last, of my writing a few lines without signing them.

But, since I had agreed to leave to the Minister the responsibility of a writing of mine, I must also have accepted the censure of the Minister himself, or of the persons whom he had appointed to examine my production. That was on my part proof of private confidence in M. Ledru-Rollin, the greatest indeed which a writer who respects himself can give to a political friend.

With him, therefore, rested the political responsibility of my words, and the five or six *Bulletins* which I sent him were examined. But *Bulletin XVI.* arrived at a moment when M. Elias Regnault, *Chef du Cabinet*, had just lost his mother. My manuscript was evidently not read before being sent to the press. I do not know whether anybody revised the proofs. As for me, I never revise any.

All that scandal, which for my part I scarcely foresaw and have never understood even up to the present, was only the result of a moment of disorder in the study of M. Elias Regnault, a disorder with which, considering the circumstances under which it took place, it would be both cruel and cowardly to reproach him.

Since, until that famous *Bulletin*, they never had any

occasion to leave out a single word in my articles, neither the Minister himself nor his *Chef du Cabinet* had any cause to suspect an unusual discrepancy between our opinions.

M. Jules Favre, chief secretary, who, I believe, was also the chief editor of the *Bulletin de la République*, was evidently absent or otherwise engaged. It is, therefore, unjust to ascribe to the Minister, or to his officials, the selection of that article out of three projects drawn up upon the same subject, each *in a different shade of opinion*. My talent is not versatile enough to draw up so many projects, and it would have been asking too much of my readiness to oblige, to expect me to furnish three versions of the same idea. I am not aware that there are three ways of saying the same thing, and if so, I am unacquainted with them. Besides, I must say that the subject had not been pointed out to me.

Another point which I clearly recollect, and which it is right to bear in mind, is that the article was sent by me on Tuesday, the 12th of April, when the events of the 16th could no more occur to my mind than to the minds of all those who, like myself, live outside of politics properly speaking. As a consequence of the painful preoccupations of the *Chef du Cabinet*, that article appeared only on the 16th; a sufficient proof that, amidst the general excitement, people wrongly endeavoured to give special significance to fears which I had only generally and vaguely expressed.

That is the explanation which you request from me. As far as I am concerned, people may incriminate my thoughts at will, that will leave me absolutely indifferent. But I do not admit that any person has the right to take me to task for them, nor am I acquainted with any law authorizing anybody to examine my conscience, in order to ascertain whether I

possess such or such opinion. A writing which we intend to submit, *before publication*, to the decision of a third party, and which, under the circumstances, we do not take care either to revise or to read afresh, is an *incomplete deed*, an *unachieved fact*, nothing else but a thought which has not yet left the innermost recesses of our conscience.

What relates to me matters little indeed. Truth and friendship alone make it a duty for me to acquaint you with the surroundings of the facts, that is, the part certain persons are suspected to have taken in them.

If the *XVIIth Bulletin* has been a brand of discord *between Republicans*, which I was far from suspecting during the five or ten minutes that I spent in writing it, it was not, at least, written in prevision or expectation of the outbreak of the 15th of May, of which I do not approve. I believe you know me sufficiently to be aware that, had I approved of it at the time, its failure would not induce me to deny it now.

I am, friend, yours in heart,

GEORGE SAND.

*To M. EDMOND PLAUCHUT, Angoulême.*

NOHANT, 24th September, 1848.

SIR,

Excuse my having so long delayed answering the letter which you wrote to me on the 19th of July last. You had addressed it to Paris, and, owing to circumstances which it would be too long to mention here, it only came to hand a few days ago with a parcel of other letters.

You ask me whether Socialism fought in Paris during the outbreak of June. I should think so, although none of my

friends among the working men thought it incumbent on them to join in that frightful struggle. I was here at the time, and did not witness it; I therefore can only form my judgment by induction. I believe that every shade of Socialism took part in the outbreak, because every shade of opinion, even combinations of ideas and doctrines with which we are unacquainted, possesses adherents among the great people of Paris.

But I do not believe that Socialism started or led the movement. I doubt whether it could have regulated and controlled it had the insurgents carried the day. The *milice* must, I think, have displayed all sorts of despair, and, as a matter of course, all sorts of whims; for, you are aware of it, like critical diseases, despair has its whims. Louis Bonaparte's election coming with that of Raspail now throws sufficient light on the confusion of the events of June.

In short, a great fact dominates all, and it is, I believe, adequately defined by the expression, *malady of despair*. Despair cannot argue, it cannot wait. There is the misfortune. The population had no confidence in the National Assembly, and we now see that its instinct did not mislead it; for, excepting a deserving Republican minority, and an infinitesimal Socialist minority, the National Assembly evades all the vital questions of democracy.

But, for a long time yet, the issue of any struggle will not be favourable to the people. The *bourgeoisie* has been too much frightened. It believes that it is to be robbed of everything—money and life; and it finds a support, in the majority of the people, which also fears for the shadow of property which it possesses itself or covets. I believe that the question is deferred because it is badly put on either side.

There are, according to my idea, two sorts of property—individual and social. The *bourgeois* only admit the former; certain Socialists, driven to extremities by that monstrous negation of social property, will only admit the latter.

And yet, the more civilised and perfect societies become, the more they increase the *commonwealth*, in order to counteract the abuse and excess of private property. But there must also be limits to that extension of the commonwealth; otherwise, individual liberty and the security of the family might vanish.

That is why M. Duclerc gave expression to a truly social thought when he wanted to give to the State the monopoly of railways and fire insurances. Those were thoroughly logical measures, intended to spread according as society secured the advantages arising from them. Thus, all that relates to roads of communication, public ways, canals, and riches which by their nature are common to all, the great financial measures bearing upon mortgages, and likely to bring money to a cheap rate, all that will have to be *socialised* in time, provided goodwill exists. But now that goodwill is wanting, truth has been exceeded by the Socialist schools, which go so far as to deprive each individual of his house, his field, his garden, his garments, and even his wife.

The *bourgeoisie* has become the prey to a fear, at the same time pusillanimous and furious. And then the speculators who, under the late monarchy, laid their hands upon those common riches (and in that sense Proudhon is perfectly justified in saying possession is robbery), decline now to restore to the community that which essentially belongs to it. If they could, as in feudal times, possess the bridges, the roads, the rivers, the houses, and even the men, they would

think that perfectly legitimate, so faint is the distinction which they make as regards the community between mine and thine.

Had the people who fought in June understood that distinction? We are led to believe so from the fact of the dissolution of the national workshops having served as the cause or pretext for the outbreak. It seems that the masses resorted to arms in order to assert their right to labour. But accomplished facts are seen through such confusion, and, I repeat it, the last elections in Paris are so unaccountably strange, that one does not know what to think of the masses.

Is it out of hatred to the dictatorship of Cavaignac that they are craving for that of one of Napoléon's nephews? It is impossible to say. We are living upon a volcano, and it is to be regretted that the people are not aware of their true strength. That strength resides in universal suffrage, which always enables the people to make up for their mistakes and to modify their constitution. But the excess of their sufferings caused the masses to ignore their strength, and, by the storms which they raised, by the strange wishes which they put forward during the elections, they compromised the very principle of their sovereignty.

It was perhaps in order to preserve that inviolable sovereignty for the people and in spite of themselves, that Cavaignac fought against them. I do not know. We must believe that in order not to hate him for having taken upon himself to be, in appearance, the public executioner for the *bourgeoisie*.

Such are, sir, my ideas respecting our misfortunes. Those ideas are rather vague, as you see, for the mind cannot be very lucid when the heart is so deeply rent. Faith in the

future ought never to be shaken by those catastrophes, for experience is a bitter and bloody fruit ; but how can we help being mortally grieved by the spectacle of civil war and the murder of the people ?

Thanks for the quotation from Pascal which you sent me ; it is indeed very fine and striking. You wish to know in what paper I write. I do not write in any at present ; at least, I cannot give expression to my thoughts while we are in a state of siege. I should have to make concessions to the pretended requirements of the time of which I do not feel myself capable. Besides, my soul is broken down and discouraged for some time to come. It is still ill, and I must wait until its cure is effected.

Accept, sir, for yourself, and please to convey to your friends, the expression of my fraternal sentiments.

GEORGE SAND.

*To JOSEPH MAZZINI, London.*

NOHANT, 30th September, 1848.

FRIEND,

I do not know whether you received the two letters which I wrote to you to Milan, one of them during our horrible events of June, the other some time afterwards. Being aware that you are courageous enough to write to those you love, I presume that you never received them, since you did not answer. God alone knows the obstacles that may stand between us ! No European police can have any pretext for thus interfering, for we are henceforth among those who conspire in broad daylight. But we live at a time when everything cannot be explained. Should you receive this letter, be

so good as to drop me a note, that I may know that you are aware that I am thinking of you.

Happily I heard about you from Eliza Ashurst. Nearly all the letters which you wrote to her parents were forwarded to her to Paris, whence she sent them to me here, and whence again I forward them to London. You see that your small slips of paper are circulating a good deal, and interest more than one family. I therefore learnt your misfortunes, your sufferings, your agitation; I did not want to read them in order to appreciate them. I need only interrogate my own heart to find therein all your sufferings, and I know that you must also have felt mine. What happened in Milan has dealt a mortal blow to my soul, just as what happened in Paris must have broken down your own. When nations fight for liberty, the world becomes the fatherland of those who serve the cause. But your situation is more logical and clearer than ours, although it contains the same elements. You are facing the foreigner, and his crimes can be explained as the struggle between truth and falsehood. As for us, who recovered all in February, and who now are losing all, and are murdering one another without helping anybody, we offer to the world an unheard-of spectacle.

The *bourgeoisie* is triumphing, I hear you say, and it is only natural that selfishness should be the order of the day. But why does the *bourgeoisie* triumph, when the people are sovereign masters, and when universal suffrage, the principle of the people's sovereignty, is still standing? We must at last open our eyes, and the vision of reality is horrible. The majority of the French people are blind, credulous, ignorant, ungrateful, wicked, and stupid; in fine, are *bourgeois*-like! There is, in industrial towns and in large centres, a sublime



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minority, having nothing in common with the country people and destined for a long time to come to be crushed by the majority and sold to the *bourgeoisie*. That minority bears in its bosom the people of the people. It is the true martyr of mankind. But, by its side and around it the people, even those who fought with it on certain days, are monarchical. We who did not witness the outbreak of June have hitherto believed that the suburbs of Paris fought for their right to labour. No doubt all did so instinctively; but the new elections give us the figures of the opinions expressed. The majority belongs to a pretender, then to a few who buy the votes, and lastly, in smaller numbers, to the Socialists. And yet Paris is the heart and the head of the Socialists. But the Socialist leaders are neither heroes nor saints. They are tainted with the immense vanity and meanness which are the leading characteristics of the reign of Louis Philippe.

No idea has hit upon the formula of life. The majority of the Chamber are voting for the people's death, and the people do not rise spontaneously under the standard of the Republic. Some want an emperor, others kings, others again some bloated initiators and theocrats. There is not one who feels in himself what he is and what he must be. There is dreadful confusion, a complete moral anarchy, and a morbid state wherein the most courageous lose all spirit and wish for death.

Life will, doubtless, proceed from that dissolution of the past, and whoever knows what an idea is cannot be shaken in his faith, so far as principles are concerned. But man only spends one day here below, and abstractions can only satisfy the frigid. In vain are we aware that the future is ours; we go on struggling and working in order to secure that future

which we shall not see. But what a sunless and joyless life! what a heavy chain to bear! what profound weariness! what loathing! what sadness! That is the bread steeped in tears which it is our lot to eat. I confess that I am unable to accept consolation, and that hope irritates me. I am as fully aware as anybody else that we must go ahead; but those who tell me that our object is to *personally* reach some more favourable and smiling lands, are regular children, who believe themselves certain to live a whole century. I prefer to be left to my grief. I have strength enough to empty the cup, but I do not want people to tell me that it is full of honey when I see in it the tears and the blood of mankind.

I have seen your friend Eliza. She came to spend a few days here. We talked a great deal of you; but I will frankly tell you that she produced on me quite a different impression from that which you made. After seeing you, I loved you a great deal more than before; with her, it has been the reverse. She is very kind, very intelligent, she must possess great qualities; but she is infatuated with herself. She has the vice of the day, and that vice no longer finds me tolerant as of yore, since I saw it, like a nasty worm, spoiling the finest fruit and poisoning all that might save the world. I fear the reading of my novels has been painful to her and partly contributed to excite her in a sense which is not at all mine. *Man and woman* are everything for her, and the question of *sex*, in a sense at which the thought of man or woman should never exclusively stop, obliterates in her the idea of the *human being*, which is always the same being and ought never to perfect itself either as a man or as a woman, but as a soul and the child of God. That preoccupation produces in her a sort of hysterical state, for which she cannot account, but which

exposes her to the designs of any scoundrel. I believe her conduct to be chaste, but her mind is not so, and that is, perhaps, worse. I should prefer her having lovers and never speaking about them, than having none and being constantly talking of lovers. In short, after having spoken with her, I experienced the same feeling as when one has partaken of food and is troubled with indigestion. I was on the point of telling her so, and that was, perhaps, my duty. But I perceived that it would grieve her, and I was not sure that I could do so usefully.

At any rate, she professes a sort of adoration for you, a regular worship, which you ought to appreciate, for it is deep and sincere. But again, while speaking about you, she tried my patience without being aware of it. She wanted to hear my opinion respecting the sentiments which you profess towards women, and, in order to get rid of so stupid a question, I rather brusquely told her that you did not have the least affection for them, that you had no time to love them, and that, before women, you saw the *man* that is mankind, which comprises both sexes in a more elevated sense than that of individual differences. Thereupon, she grew animated and spoke of you as one might of the hero of a novel, which annoyed and hurt me. In fine, she is a regular Englishwoman, a prude without *pudeur*; and, for the matter of that, she is also a regular *Englishman*, for the mind has no sex, and every Englishman believes himself the finest man of the finest nation in the world!

And, yet, I feel we must be indulgent towards those happy beings who still find, in the small satisfactions or illusions of their vanity, a refuge against the troubles of the times. We are much to be pitied, we, who can no longer live

as individuals, and are in the midst of humanity in travail, like the storm-beaten waves of the sea.

You have again met with your mother and your sister; so much the better. I will not trouble you about my domestic troubles. They are always the same and will not alter. My home is at least sweet and quiet, my son always good and composed, and the two other children whom you know, diligent and affectionate towards me. I do not ask God for anything for myself, I do not even pray to Him to spare me the bitter grief which proceeds from other sources. I pray to Him to deliver other people from the anguish which I suffer. But that is still asking more than His terrible decrees have decided to grant our unfortunate race.

Farewell, friend; I love you,

G. SAND.

*To M. EDMOND PLAUCHUT, Angoulême.*

NOHANT, 14th October, 1848.

SIR,

The ideas which I expressed to you, *currente calamo*, in my last letter, are too incomplete to be published. People may without ceremony exchange ideas by letter, but they should bring under the notice of the public only that to which they have given their best attention, and that, not out of self-love and vanity of the writer, but out of respect for the idea itself which must always be expressed in the best possible form. I am now engaged, with one of my friends, upon as complete although as short and as simple a work as we can make it, upon the question which I hastily referred to in my

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letter. The pamphlet\* will shortly appear, and I will send you several copies of it. If, thus developed, the principle appears to you just and satisfactory, you will be able, by means of the influence which you possess around you, to extend it and to back it up with fresh proofs; for an idea is not the property of anybody in particular, and its application is the work of all.

I thank you for the affectionate and sympathetic expression which you addressed to me personally. My sentiments are only worth anything because they are in keeping with those of generous minds, and because they confirm those sentiments as they themselves are confirmed by them.

Please to accept, sir, for yourself and friends, the expression of my fraternal devotion.

GEORGE SAND.

I open my letter in order to reply to a question which you put to me, and I cannot give a satisfactory answer, because I am, like yourself, in great doubt in the face of the political facts. In the first place, I think I agree with you on this point: The institution of the presidency is bad, and it is a kind of semi-monarchical restoration. In the next place, supposing we assent to the appointment of a President, is he to be appointed by the people or by the National Assembly? In principle, all democrats agree that he should be appointed by the people; otherwise we should be going back to the indirect vote.

But, in fact, some most sincere Republicans voted in favour of the President's being appointed by the Assembly, thinking that the requirements of politics necessitated that infringement

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\* *Travailleurs et Propriétaires*, by Victor Borie.

of the principle. As for me, I confess that I detest what they to-day call politics, that is to say, that art which is awkward and devoid of sincerity, and is always baffled in its calculations by fatality or Providence, and whose object is to substitute, for logic and truth, foresight, expedients, transactions, the State reason of monarchies; in fine, the instinct of the people will never ratify the acts of politics properly speaking, because popular instinct is grand when animated by the breath of God, whereas God's spirit is always absent from those meetings of individuals at which such little expedients are manufactured with such great means.

And yet, the people are going to make a blunder, and to illustrate their want of enlightenment and inspiration in the choice of their President. At least, the election of the pretender is foreseen and feared. How can we help that? By respecting the rights of the people, we at least leave to them the intelligence and faith in the principle, and it is better that they should, at the outset, make a bad use of those rights than lose the notion of their rights and duties by cautiously and skilfully seconding the exigencies of politics.

If they should make a bad choice, they will also be able to undo it, whereas, if they make no choice at all, there is no reason why they should not have to submit to that which will have been made without them.

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*To M. ARMAND BARBÈS, Dungeon of Vincennes.*

NOHANT, 8th December, 1848.

DEAR FRIEND,

I wrote to you three or four letters, which I sent to Paris, but which the bearers have been unable to remit to you, either because they went the wrong way about it, or because there is singular ill-luck between us. I send you herewith the last, so that you may see that I never ceased thinking of you.

This time, I am assured that my letter will reach you. As regards politics, I have nothing special or important to tell you. On that subject I know what you think, and you what I think. What I am most anxious for is that you should not believe that I forget you for a single instant, you *the best of all*. You, no doubt, are acquainted with what is going on in the outward world.

I presume that you are not deprived of newspapers, although, everything considered, it would perhaps be bliss to ignore how absurd, blind, and misled a great portion of France is at present. But, in spite of the infatuation for the Empire, which is the weak side of the public spirit, there is, in other respects, a tangible change, a real progress in ideas. That is chiefly striking in the provinces, where personal questions lose their importance to make room for, I will not say questions, but want of principles. For my part, I am scarcely satisfied with our Socialists; their divisions, their splits savour of pride and intolerance, defects inherent to the part of *men with ideas*, and with which, you are aware, I always reproach them. But it is the will of God that we should go thus, and that our

disputes should serve for the instruction of the people, since we cannot teach them better examples. Provided that aim of popular education be reached, what does it matter if So-and-so leave behind him a more or less spotless name!

Yours, thank heaven! will always be a symbol of grandeur and holy abnegation. If you were proud, that would comfort your martyrdom, but pride is not in your nature; you are above it, and your only comfort is the hope of better days for mankind.

Those days will come; shall we see them? What does it matter? Let us nevertheless work on. As for me, I easily accept all personal vexations. But I confess that courage fails me in trying to bear up with the sufferings of those I love, and that, since the 15th of May and the 25th of June, my soul has been overwhelmed by your captivity, and by the misfortunes of the proletariat. I find the cup bitter, and wish I could drink it in your stead.

Farewell; write to me if you can, even if only a line. I still cherish the dream that you will come here, and will consent to rest for some time after that terrible life which you endure with too much stoicism. I fail to understand the procrastination, or rather the inaction of the authorities concerning you. Methinks you must infallibly be acquitted if you condescend to tell the truth respecting your intentions, and to answer your traducers' words.

Maurice requests me to say he loves you. If you only knew how much we talk about you in our family! Farewell again.

Your sister,

GEORGE.



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To M. EDMOND PLAUCHUT, Angoulême.

NOHANT, 13th February, 1849.

Allow me, citizen, to defend before yourself and friends the work of my friend.\* That work does not appear to me incomplete from its own point of view, and you would be more satisfied with it were you to put aside your own standpoint, as I myself did. But you must consider that that little book, although in a very modest form, is a work of philosophy, the examination of a principle much rather than one of social practice, or of political economy.

The question was to set forth that principle, and to know whether it was just and admissible. It appears so to you, since you accept its preface. The book is but the historico-philosophical development of that principle, which I here repeat in order that we may understand one another better.

Property is of two natures, common and private.

When, while talking, M. Borie and myself came upon that formula, our first exclamation was: "There is scarcely any new idea, and what we have just met with is probably nothing but a reminiscence. If all our recollections were clearly present to our minds, we should see that we have read that formula in the works of the philosophers of all ages."

As for me, I have no learning, although I have read much. But my memory is deficient in accuracy. M. Borie, being much younger, discovered the texts far more easily than I could have done; and that is why he very quickly achieved that work, which I myself could only have done very slowly.

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\* Victor Borie, author of *Travailleurs et Propriétaires*, the work here referred to.

It also seems to me that his starting-point, for his opinions are not absolutely the same as mine, gave more force to his arguments on common property. Besides which, those arguments were more likely to be accepted, coming from a mind hostile to absolute Communism, than if they had been uttered by me; for I long believed in the absolute Communism of property, and perhaps that, even when admitting individual property, as I do to-day, I should make that property so small that few people would be content with it.

You now reproach M. Borie with not having suggested some practical means, by defining, in clear and precise terms, that which belongs to the province of individual property, and that which belongs to the province of common property. That is, I believe, where the author ought to have stopped in a small work of that nature; for the means are always an arbitrary thing, a thing essentially apt to be discussed and modified, a thing in fine which, proposed by a person to-day, will at once be much improved if many other persons take the trouble of examining and perfecting it. According to my idea, the nature of means little matters *a priori*; and as for the nature of principles, that is for us of extreme importance.

Do you believe that the day when men shall have agreed upon the principles of justice and fraternity they will be short of means? Do you also believe that, even at the present moment, there is not an abundance of means? Is it practical intelligence which is wanting in France? Not in the least. Means are to be had by the shovelful, and, if we had a Legislative Assembly composed of intelligent Socialists (enough of them could indeed be found to fill the Palais Bourbon\*) more

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\* The palace in which the sittings of the Chamber of Deputies are held.

than one man of genius would be seen to contribute his own means. Those means would no doubt differ; but, if all intelligences were united by the same social religion, they would come to some understanding, and, from amendment to amendment, they would give birth to equitable and true laws which would save society.

Do you believe that, as regards means, Proudhon does not possess in his bank wherewith to bring back material life to that exhausted body called society? And do you believe that there do not exist other great financial intellects which vegetate in obscurity through being unable to display themselves? I therefore say that to propose a means pure and simple is purely childish, if he who proposes it does not feel himself specially fitted for the means, and if he has not, besides, the *means* of propagating his *means*. A *practical* system can be proposed by a social meeting, or by a widely read journal, or, again, by some practical celebrity. But to disseminate the labour of minds over a multitude of single proposals is a thing which I cannot approve.

It is that multitude of private systems which prevented our following a single one at the beginning of the Revolution. Proudhon is now speaking, and, although he does not heed the principles with which we are preoccupied, my opinion is that we must study him attentively, and keep ourselves ready to second him, if he should be on the road, or even on the incline, which leads to truth in practice; for to cultivate a religion within oneself is one thing, and to practise that religion with the consent and in the community of one's fellow-men is another. It is necessary that each should make concessions in order to reach the accord which alone renders practice possible; and that is very likely what Proudhon would do if he

found himself in the midst of an organising committee, in the presence of minds as powerful as his own, and bent upon a common aim.

I do not know whether I intelligibly express myself; but if you do not understand me it must be my fault. This is in short what I mean to say: We must seriously apply ourselves to set forth the principles, and, at the same time, to make ourselves most modest and accessible to proposed means. We must not believe that our means is the only one, and we must persuade ourselves that the means is only to be found in common and through peaceful discussion. Proudhon's error lies in believing that everything is contained in a means. Alas! were that means perfect, it would fall on barren land, if offered to a recalcitrant majority. But that narrow belief of Proudhon is perhaps useful for concentrating his intellectual force.

Some men, though possessed of that narrowness of view, become nevertheless great for that very reason; for instance, Voltaire and so many others, who, by dint of rejecting what to them appeared useless, rendered themselves useful and powerful in their speciality. Let us foster the growth of practical men amongst us and refrain from believing that they are not required. But let us likewise refrain from believing that all men are practical; for, although there are more such men in France now than at any former period, they are still, and will perhaps always be, a precious minority compared with the population.

That is why I was not sorry to see M. Borie stop precisely before the means; if he has a means, he should expose it in another book, in a special work, if he thinks fit. But we are not yet, in France, able to bring forth simultaneously the

theory and its application. Pierre Leroux failed in that, despite his genius.

Observe that there is more than one means of defining individual property and common property. Proudhon will tell you that his system conciliates all others. Another will propose a mortgage bank; that would, I believe, be the dream of M. Borie, for instance, and I know some other persons who also believe in that means, under various forms. A third party will step in and descant upon progressive taxation; a fourth orator will dwell upon means more modest, but which could be applied immediately if the National Assembly had a little faith and will. The unification of the railway systems by the State, mutual insurances under various forms, all tending to constitute a *real* social fund; for we already possess a fictitious one which rests upon the imposts, but is not equitably settled, and by which the wealthy classes alone profit.

You see, therefore, that there are many means, and I believe that they are all good. Had I any financial aptitude, I am sure that I could find half-a-score more to propose. I say that they are all good by themselves, and would be excellent after being blended together in a system agreed upon by the nation. But where is the agreement? The rich will not, and the poor cannot. A principle can be formulated in three words, and rests upon purely philosophical reasons. The latter can easily be accepted by everybody, because almost everybody is struck by what is true and noble; who will dare to say that Socrates, Jesus, Confucius, and the other great initiators made mistakes? But, when we come to palpable facts, everybody has his opinion, and we are obliged to consult everybody in order to act.

That is why the very sentiment of fraternity and justice

must repel any thought of anger that may agitate our bosoms. If we love humanity, we are in duty bound to respect it and to regard as sacred the liberty it possesses to make mistakes.

What! God suffers that error and we should not? Why do you grow indignant against the rich? Could you dread the rich if the poor were free from avarice and prejudice? The rich ill-treat the people only because the people bend their necks. If the people knew their rights, the rich would stoop down to the dust, and we should have so little cause to dread them that nobody would take the trouble to hate them. The obstacle is not there; it is among ourselves, and our most implacable adversaries are, at present, with the exception of an imperceptible minority, the very people whom we wish to defend and save. Let us then be patient! When the people are with us we shall have no more enemies, and we shall be too mighty not to be, once more, generous.

As for me, I will not for the present put into black and white, to be read by the public, the thoughts which are now rushing into my head, and that, because I am anxious to avoid being carried away by emotion. I am not always as calm as I appear. Like anybody else, I feel the blood flowing through my veins, and there are days when indignation might cause me to forget my principles, the religion that I cherish within my soul. As you ably put it, I obey *prudence*, but not for my own sake. I am deficient in that quality as regards my personal security; but our passion does harm to others; its teachings are bad, its magnetism baneful. I have enough virtue to hold my tongue; I should not have enough of it to speak always with meekness and charity. Yet, be sure, charity alone can save us.

This letter is quite confidential for yourself and friends.

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Because of *Bulletin XVI.*, my name is now the scarecrow of reactionaries, and avowed relations with me might seriously compromise you. I think it my duty to warn you of that. If you think anything in my letters worth publishing, I fully authorise you to do so, since you possess a newspaper of your own; but, in that case, give it as being your own, for it is not what I *say* which frightens and irritates people, it is my name.

As far as I am concerned, I have been compelled to refuse contributing for several friends of mine, and, were I to write in your paper, I should not feel at all easy.

Accept, citizen, the assurance of my fraternal sentiments.

G. SAND.

*To M. ARMAND BARBÈS, Bourges.*

NOHANT, 14th March, 1849.

DEAR FRIEND,

I received your letter of last December. Do not feel uneasy about it. If I have not written to you since, it is that I hoped to go to Paris, and would have preferred to see you; but I could not quit my *Isle of Robinson*.\* Besides, in spite of the appearance of serenity which we owe, as an example or as a consolation, to those we love and with whom we are constantly in close contact, I was under the influence of a physical and moral depression which, in writing, I could not have concealed from you.

I afterwards had the intention of going to Bourges,

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\* A humorous allusion to Robinson Crusoe's island.

but met with opposition to it at home. I only gave way before the following consideration, which everybody pointed out to me: "You are," they said to me, "the bugbear, the scapegoat of Socialism. People pretend that you are conspiring, and, the quieter you keep, the more they accuse you. If you should go to Bourges, people will try all sorts of means to vex you." To that I replied that I did not mind; but they at once retorted that the ill-will of a certain party would, in the event of my going, affect you and increase the chances of your being convicted.

I can scarcely believe it. I cannot persuade myself that people take so much notice of me, or that our adversaries themselves can be cowardly and wicked enough to display towards you all the hatred which they are supposed to entertain for me. Did they deceive me in order to shield me from some imaginary peril? That may be. But I had to give way, my son joining in also and telling me the only thing which, to me, appeared rational. It is that, without regard for my age or for the gravity of our fate and of the circumstances, the reactionary journals would take advantage of my presence in Bourges in order to calumniate and profane the holiest of friendships, by means of ignoble insinuations. That would be in accordance with the dictates of order, and we know what they are capable of. Did not a newspaper, edited by bigots and priests, say a few years ago that I was in the habit of going to the barriers\* in order to get drunk with Pierre Leroux?

I should, for my part, have despised those stupid and outrageous insults, of which I am quite *blasé*; but they remonstrated that, if it came to your knowledge, that would

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\* Outside the gates of Paris.



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profoundly distress you in your friendship towards me, and that, instead of bringing you comfort, I should thus be for you a new cause of indignation and grief.

It was my duty to give you a full explanation; for my first impulse was to go to see you and to kiss your worthy sister, and our first impulses always proceed from the conscience as well as from the heart. The remarks of my friends and relations shook my determination. You will judge between us.

I only wrote to you a word forwarded by Dufraisse, and nothing by Aucante. I did not know whether they could succeed in reaching you and handing you a letter. Dufraisse was to write to me in that respect on his arriving at Bourges. He perhaps did so, but I have not received anything. There exists, perhaps, a *cabinet noir*,\* established for the occasion. So that I should still be without news from you, had not that kind Emile Aucante succeeded in seeing you. He told me that your appearance was healthy, and that you said you were pretty well.

That is a blessing for me in the midst of my sadness and anxiety, for the future belongs to us, and you must stay with us in order to see it. Take care of yourself, and do not waste your strength. Always keep calm. Henceforth, long oppressions are not to be dreaded. Conspiracies will no longer be required. Heaven is conspiring, and we mortals need only allow the stream of progress to carry us. It flows rapidly now, and all the persecutions to which we are subjected have at last a manifest, immediate usefulness. Ah! your fate is glorious,

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\* *Cabinet Noir*, a department of the Ministry of the Interior, to which letters addressed to suspected persons were forwarded from the General Post Office for examination.

friend, and if you were not the worthiest of all I should envy your fate. You are, perhaps, the most beloved and esteemed man of modern times in France, despite the terrors roused in the midst of the ignorant masses by the perfidy of those you know.

All those whose minds are at all enlightened and whose souls are at all just, hail your name as one entirely spotless, and the symbol of the chivalrous spirit of Republican France. You do not *shield* yourself from anything, while all the rest eagerly seek for shelter and protection. That is *why* those who have not the courage to imitate you tax you with being mad. But in my eyes you are the only wise and logical man, as you are also the best and most loyal. Somebody, yesterday, was comparing you before me with Joan of Arc, and I said that, in our revolutionary annals, after the purity of the incorruptible (but terrible!) Robespierre, we wanted somebody purer still, Barbès, just as firm and incorruptible, but irreproachable in his sentiments of frankness and humanity.

I say all that, and yet I do not approve of the 15th of May. What I saw of it with my own eyes was nothing better than improvised orgies, and I knew that you were against anything of that kind. In principle, the people have the right, in my opinion, to break up their own representation, but only when that faithless expression of their will itself breaks the principle by which it was invested with the national sovereignty. Had that Assembly rejected the Republic on the 4th of May, even if it had then, *in principle*, constituted itself into an aristocratic republic, if it had continued to destroy universal suffrage and to proclaim the monarchy, then, believe me the 15th of May would have been a grand day, and we should not be where we are now. But, however ill-intentioned the majority of the Assembly was

even then, there were not yet sufficient motives to induce the people to have recourse to that extreme means.

That is why the people kept quiet, why the clubs alone acted, and we know full well that, in those outbreaks of the most fiery portions of political parties, there are ambitions on the one hand and agents of provocation on the other. Do you recollect that, on the days preceding that unfortunate morning, I took the liberty of calming your excitement as much as lay in my power ?

I should have wished for more meekness and patience in the forms of our opposition in general. Our friends appeared to me too ready for suspicion, accusation, and insult. I believed those "moderate" Deputies to be better than they seemed ; I endeavoured to convince myself that they were mostly weak-minded and timid men, though honest at heart, and that they would accept truth if we succeeded in showing it to them without personal passion, and in respecting their vanity still more perhaps than their interests. That was probably a mistake, for the way in which they have acted since proves that, with or without the events of the 15th of May, that with or without the outbreak of June, they would welcome back the reaction more readily than the democracy. But, whatever might have been their conduct, we should not have to reproach ourselves with having shown an excess of precipitation, and compromised for the time being the fate of the Republic.

In short, I had better speak frankly, and I feel certain that you think as I do, the 15th of May was a mistake, it was more than a political mistake, it was a moral fault. Between the hypocritical idolatry of the reactionaries for stationary institutions, and the uncontrolled passions of turbulent minds towards scarcely settled institutions, there is a middle and straight path to follow.

Respect for an institution which displays evident germs of progress, patience towards excesses, and great prudence in revolutionary action may, I admit, enable us to clear those obstacles, but they also drag us far backward, and, as has already been the case, compromise our first conquests. Ah! if we had had sufficient motives, the people would have been with us; but ours were but pretexts, just like those we find when wanting to fight with somebody whose appearance we dislike. It is quite true that the face of a man and his words show and prove what he is, and that some day or other, if he should be a rogue, honest people will have the right to chastise him. But there must have been very grave and conclusive facts, otherwise our precipitation is an unjust tendency against which human conscience rebels. That is why, on the 15th of May, the clubs were alone.

In all that, though like myself, bent upon biding our time and the *maturity of social questions* (you said so before me and your club two days prior to the outbreak), you did that which I should probably have done in your position; they said to you: "It is a revolution; the people want it, the people carried the day, abandon them or join them." You accepted the error and the fault of the people, and you followed their impulse in order to prevent them from any abuse of their strength if they carried the day, or to perish with them if they should fall.

I am bold enough to tell you that I regretted that you declined to plead. You would not have had to *defend* yourself; there is no fear of your ever doing so, poor dear martyr! but you would have had the opportunity of uttering useful words. It is true that you might possibly have had to separate your cause from that of certain co-accused who, though

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perhaps much more *guilty* than yourself, readily consent to plead. I cannot be the judge of your personal motives, but I feel certain beforehand that your decision has been, as usual, the noblest and most generous.

What I never clearly understood, and what you will explain to me only when we meet again—for, until then, rest assured I shall accept all from you with the most absolute confidence in your intentions—is the vote of the milliard. I do not much mind that in itself, but I do not understand the *political* opportuneness of that appeal for money at such a moment.

Had the reactionary representatives voted for it under the influence of fear as in *Prairial*,\* they certainly would afterwards have followed the example of their fathers, that is to say, they would have provoked a counter measure and perjured themselves as soon as possible. The dissolution of the Assembly by force would appear more logical to me, if, at that moment, you had had the right to do so. But why that proposal of taxation in the midst of a turmoil yet without issue or definite expression? In order to save the Assembly by offering it that means of coming to a compromise with the excited mob? Or was it in order to quell the mob and prevent its making further demands?

That is, I believe, the great grievance of the reactionaries against you, for the fact of going to the "Hôtel de Ville" in order to master or direct a movement which took place, so to speak, without your personal intervention, is an act for which the most hostile to you ought, in their own interest, to dis-

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\* A term signifying *Grass Month*, employed in the calendar adopted by the first French Republic, a period corresponding with late May and early June.

culpate you. I have been spurred on by the desire of openly taking your defence in a special writing, to which at a decisive moment I should have given the greatest publicity; but you would have had to give your assent to it in the first place, and I doubt whether you would have done so; in the second place, it would have been necessary for me to be thoroughly acquainted with what you intended to say to the independent public on the subject.

I found myself within a vicious circle; for, to all appearance, the defence, from the point of view of my friendship and solicitude, would have displeased you, while a defence in accordance with your very frank admissions, would have insured your conviction by those upon whom to-day your liberty depends. I felt very unhappy to be unable to do anything to prove to you my affection and admiration without running the risk of causing you either injury or displeasure. My character is perhaps inclined towards means more normal and slower than those which you would accept in practice.

Thoré, they say, used to reproach me with my tolerance and my optimism in regard to facts. I do not, however, think that I disagree with you in theory, and I have still present to my mind the recollection of one of our last conversations in my garret, in which you rejected the idea of a dictatorship for our party, because, as you said, a dictatorship is impossible without terror, and terror is henceforth impossible in France.

We to-day possess the proof of that impossibility, now that we see the nation republicanise and *socialise* itself more rapidly and more thoroughly, under the arbitrary rule of reaction, than we ourselves succeeded in doing when we were in power. We must, therefore, acknowledge that the times are

changed, that terror, that extreme means, which did not insure success for our fathers, and was only, after all, of short duration and followed by a long and deep reaction, can no longer be reckoned as a means upon which the revolutionaries of any party can rely. It is now receiving its death-blow at the hands of our adversaries; thank God that it is at theirs, and not at ours!

You said in the garret, I fully remember: "The terror? that now could not last more than a month at most; and afterwards we should perhaps have twenty years of monarchy." And now we may reverse that remark! To further the interests of the *bourgeois* Republic, Cavaignac indulged in a military terror. Socialism, so to speak, joined the Royalist and Imperialist reaction in order to upset it. In its turn, that reaction is indulging against us in a small terror after the fashion of 1815. Socialism, the *Mountain*,\* the army, the people, everything is inveighing against it, even the *moderate* factions, even part of the *bourgeoisie*. They only await the awakening and disabusing of the peasants in order to scatter that insignificant force. And then, if up to that time we are fortunate enough to resist provocations, if we have sufficient strength and virtue to bear up for a time with persecutions and misery, we shall no longer need to employ that powerless and dangerous weapon known as *the terror*.

For the last quarter of a century Frenchmen are enjoying a sort of constitutional liberty which, if we think of the future, is, I grant, an hypocrisy, but which is at least a reality if we compare it with the past. Their manners have grown accustomed to that liberty; but with them the balance must

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\* The Jacobin party.

be kept steady between more and less: they dread the *more*, and that is their weakness; but they are revolted by the *less*, and that is their strength against all the means borrowed from the past.

I do not agree with all my friends on that point. Several of them contemplate applying the means of the past to the future; you know whether I respect and defend the past; but I believe that I am consistent with truth when stating that the present is essentially different from the past, and that we must not begin anything again, that we must not copy anything, but invent and create all. No doubt I agree with them respecting the *sovereignty of the aim*, and the proverb, "Qui veut la fin veut les moyens," \* is true, only we must not strain it so as to say to-day: "Qui veut une fin d'avenir et de progrès veut les moyens du passé," † because, whatever we may do, the past is always retrograde.

But I have allowed myself to indulge in speaking to you about a topic which ought to remain foreign to our correspondence; for you have enough to do with your own thoughts, and in your prison you have much more need of tributes of affection than political discussion. I had made up my mind never to tire you with the latter, and you recollect that even in Paris I should have wished those who love you to talk to you, for two hours a day at least, about the state of the weather in order to compel you to let your mind rest. If I myself have indulged in the fault with which I used to reproach other people, I never intend to do it again, and I only did so in order to gratify the want I

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\* "Who wills the end wills the means."

† "Who wishes for a future and progressive aim wishes for the means of the past."



felt of expressing fully my views to you in this solemn moment, which is perhaps about to separate us for a time, I will not say more or less long, but more or less short.

Let me know the means of corresponding with you in a prompt and, as far as possible, discreet manner, wherever you may be.

The book I sent you possesses another merit besides that of being an Elzevir, it is the work of an early Christian, persecuted by the whole world at a time when Christianity and the Papacy itself represented progress and the future. It is the production of a prisoner and of a martyr. It contains many beautiful pages, and a rather curious mixture of Christianity and paganism, which denotes a period of transition like our own. I know not whether you are a better Latin scholar than I; that would not mean much more than zero. But the Latin of that book is easy, and Latin is a language which people can always pick up again and understand in a few days. Besides, it is one of those books intended more for reference, than for reading; and, lastly, I sent it you as I might have sent a ring, it being the only portable object of which I could dispose. If you should require any real books, let me know, and I will send you all you ask for.

Farewell; reply to me only when you have leisure and feel so inclined. A letter from you brings me joy, but I do not wish that joy to cost you effort or fatigue.

Aucante, who saw your sister, does not hold out any hope of her being able to come and see me. I deeply regret it. Please to tell her so; but she must not refuse me the hope of making her acquaintance in better times, which, please God, may soon come! I know that she is a woman of admirable

character, and loves you as you deserve. I request you to kiss her for me ; she cannot refuse the intermediary. I also request you to remember me to worthy citizen Albert, your companion in courage and misfortune, and to shake hands with him on my behalf, as heartily and with as much faith and hope as I did myself at the Luxembourg.

Maurice and Borie kiss you affectionately. I this morning received from Paris a long letter from Marc Dufraisse, who had promised to give me a full account of you, and who has sent some twelve pages of information. You thus see whether we feel concerned about you.

Farewell again, friend. Do your best to help me to write to you sometimes. I do not need to advise you to keep up your courage, you already possess too much as regards all that relates to yourself. Remember only that I love you with all my heart.

GEORGE.

*To JOSEPH MAZZINI, Florence.*

NOUANT, 5th March, 1849.

FRIEND,

Your letter from Florence came to hand to-day. Several days ago I wrote to you there under cover to M. Cajali. Are you sure that you always give me correct addresses? In two different letters you gave the address of M. Cajali as *Marseilles* and *Florence*. Were you assuming that name, or is it that of a friend domiciled at those two places? Do not fail in future to be very precise, for I fear my letters get lost or delayed.

Now, thank God, I can write to you under your own name.

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That name is the symbol of liberty in Italy ; it is like that of Republic, which displays or conceals itself, according as God manifests Himself to men through patriotism or withdraws Himself from their hearts. Ah ! my dear Joseph ! since I last wrote to you great things have happened in your country, and thanks partly to you. I was then ignorant of the events in Tuscany, as also of all that is about to take place in Piedmont. Isolated Rome used to cause me to tremble. Henceforth everything depends upon the courage and faith of your people.

Our reactionary papers write infamously about the Italian question, as they generally do concerning every vital movement of humanity. Those of our shade of opinion vainly request intervention against the Austrians and Russians, who threaten the newly struck spark of our liberties. Our Government is deaf and dumb. One hardly knows whether treacherous or stupid.

The fatality which pursues our times resides in the fact that healthy outbreaks do not occur simultaneously. If Italy had thus risen in February ! if it had proclaimed the Republic in Rome at the same time as Vienna drove off her Emperor ! and if, now, France were to wake up and impose silence upon perfidious aristocracies ! But that day of unanimous impulse will come, and then monarchies will be abolished for ever. Whatever may be the issue of your Italian Republic, what it does to-day will not be lost, and your labour will bear its fruits in a durable manner before a century has elapsed. It now rests with men whether that miracle will at once be forcibly obtained from God. The arrow has been shot ; if it should miss its aim that, at any rate, will not be your fault, and you have no reason to feel anxious and doubtful respecting

yourself and the future, even if you must again witness another delay. We were, are, and shall be with the truth; why, then, should we grieve? Let us exert ourselves to the best of our ability, and die looking onward; for those who fell and whom we leave behind fell uselessly.

I feel almost disposed to scold you for expressing from time to time doubts about me, when asking whether I am *dissatisfied* with you. That is the sequel to the *action* which, at different times, you bring against yourself, poor and dear holy man that you are! You accuse yourself, whenever humanity hesitates or recedes, as though it were your fault, as though you had not always been first in the breach and the most exposed. You are too good and too grand not to be sad and timid. Would that I could give you a little of that pride which others possess in excess! You would then suffer less. But that humility of your heart is the cause of people loving you as much as they regard you, I would say as they admire you were I not addressing you yourself. You are so simple and meek that you perhaps would not believe it. Believe, at least, that I love you with all my heart, and never doubt it, or I shall myself believe that you no longer love me.

My son and friends kiss you.

Write to me.

G. SAND.

*To MAURICE SAND, Paris.*

NOHANT, 13th May, 1849.

My Boy,

I believe that you ought to come back, even though you should afterwards return in the event of nothing happening of all that people apprehend. That is no foolish anxiety on my part; but I quite perceive that the situation is more strained than it has ever been; and, not only by the newspapers, but also by all the letters which I receive, I plainly see that the authorities thoroughly mean to come to blows. They will do such things that the population, which is a collective being and a compound of a thousand ideas and diverse passions, will probably be unable any longer to perform the miracle of remaining calm, and united as a single man in the presence of the senseless provocation of a faction which risks its last stake. The struggle will be terrible; there are so many parties opposed to one another that its issue cannot be foreseen, and we shall witness mistakes more horrible, if possible, misunderstandings more bloody, than in June. If the Red Republic joins in the fray, it will fight to the death; for, in its opinion, the European Republic is staked against European absolutism. Such is, at least, my idea, and it may break out at any moment. You, perhaps, do not read the papers; but if you were to follow the stormy debates of the Assembly, you would perceive that every day, every hour, gives birth to an incident which is like a firebrand hurled into a powder magazine.

You must therefore come back, I pray you, for in this world I possess only you, and your death would cause mine. I may yet be of some slight use to the cause of truth; but, if I were

to lose you, everything would be at end with me. I possess the stoicism of Barbès and Mazzini. It is true they are men, and have no children. Besides, in my opinion, it is not by means of a struggle, by a civil war, that we in France shall gain the cause of mankind. We possess universal suffrage. Woe be to us if we do not know how to use it; for that alone will enfranchise us for ever, and the only case in which we should have the right to take up arms would be that in which the attempt were made to deprive us of our electoral rights.

But will that population, so crushed in misery, so brutalised by the police, so provoked by an infamous policy of reaction, possess the true superhuman logic and patience of biding the unanimity of its moral forces? Alas! I fear not. It will resort to physical force. It may win the game; but the risk is so great that none of those who truly love the people would either advise them or set them the example to do so. In order to be neither with the people nor against them it is necessary not to be in Paris. Come back, then; and, believe me, it is high time you should leave there. Bring Lambert with you; I advise him to accompany you. I shall feel more easy to see you all here.

I kiss you, my boy, and beg of you to think of me.

*To M. THÉOPHILE THORÉ, Paris.*

NOHANT, 26th May, 1840.

DEAR FRIEND,

It has long been my intention to write to you; but I have always delayed doing so, as I expected to have time to see you in Paris, where I spent three days, at the beginning of this

month, on business. I could not, however, find the time to call upon you. Besides, I was looking forward to congratulating you upon your election, and sharing with you the pleasure which that would have caused you ; but you failed, although securing a large number of votes. I fell ill again on my return here ; indeed I have always been ill for the last two years ; not so as to cause any anxiety to those who value my life, but sufficiently to lose my time and grow melancholically weary under the weight of an extraordinary physical depression. I am just now passing through a phase of material powerlessness. I feel neither disheartened nor weary at anything, when life returns to me ; but at times, for whole days and whole weeks, life quits me ; I then grow weary at being unable to live, and at being compelled to think without being able to write down my thoughts. That state will not always last, for I intend seeing a few years yet. I am sure those new years of life will do me good, and, like the elder of Israel, I shall be able to exclaim : "*Now I can die.*"

The other obstacle which I mentioned to you, and which did not proceed from me, is now almost wholly removed. Wait yet a little while and I will help you. I have asked for particulars respecting Mazzini. I intend writing his biography ; but do not mention it, for if those particulars were not to reach me I could not keep my word ; besides which, I never like my work to be advertised beforehand. One then feels obliged to do extra well, and that is discouraging. At all events, you are doing very well without me. Your paper is not *badly edited*, as you yourself used to remark. On the contrary, it strikes me that your talent and lucidity are progressing, and I noticed articles from your pen which were not only good, but really fine. On the other hand, I am sorry for

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that sort of polemics with the *Peuple*.\* You are too pugnacious; you have got the devil in you. You are also too vindictive. Why do you think the *National*† will not alter its views? You are well aware that, ever since Carrel's ‡ time, I have had personal cause to complain of the *National* more than anybody else. The minds of its editors are not at all in sympathy with me. In the times we live in, there is perhaps nothing more deplorable or irritating than to see those who formerly used to lead us on the road to progress trying now to close it against us, the people, because they have exhausted their ideas and their legs are weary, and they cannot bear to be left behind. But they are at last in that situation that they must follow us or die, and, if they try to proceed, why should we not hold out our hands to them? Is it not our duty to be the knights of the Revolution, like the people who behaved so nobly in February, like Barbès, our model knight? . . . Are not the opinions of the *National* and its party now in a pitiable plight? I am scarcely acquainted with the men who, in Paris, belong to that political shade; but there are some in our provinces, many among the elected whom the people chose as Socialists, and I can assure you that they are not traitors, they are sincere men whose eyes are open. We should certainly not have scored so fine a result in the Departments where the triumph of the *Red list* is announced, had we only admitted declared Socialists (*Socialistes de la Veille*); and I believe that the reason why we did not secure a Socialist majority in Paris is that we too sedulously displayed uncompromising and unmitigated Socialism in the choice of our candidates.

I know full well that your opinion is that I am kind-

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\* † Name of a newspaper.

‡ Armand Carrel.



hearted. It is true that I have always been of the stuff of which dupes are made; but are not confidence and forgiveness the duties of every religion? You often said so before, and, even to-day, we do not seek to establish a sect, but to proclaim a religion.

I also am sorry that you should have quarrelled with Proudhon. I know that we never shall agree with him on some points, which, moreover, are offensive to us. But what a useful and vigorous champion of democracy is he; what immense services has he not rendered for a year past! It grieved all those who view things in a simple manner and at a distance, to find you, one fine morning, fighting together, at a time when the living forces of the future should be bound in perfect accord. And, bear in mind, that is the view of the majority. People read all opinions for and against, and they conclude by saying: "They are both right, from their own point of view. They are, therefore, wrong not to unite their two right views in a single one likely to profit us."

All that seems paradoxical. As far as I am concerned, it sounds like the arguments of a sick person. But the majority in France is womanly, childish, and sick. Do not altogether lose sight of that. Torches like your ardent and young mind are doubtless required. I have no wish to extinguish them. But I should also like to see you refraining from burning, in your onward course, that which can be preserved, and which we shall be compelled to have with us when the conflagration has spread.

Good night, friend. Believe that my heart is with those who fight, and consequently with you.

GEORGE.

*To JOSEPH MAZZINI, Rome.*

NOHANT, 23rd June, 1849.

Ah, friend, brother, what events! and how can I depict to you the profound anxiety, the deep admiration and the bitter indignation which fill our hearts? You saved the honour of our cause. But, alas! Ours as a nation is lost. We are in perpetual anguish.

We daily expect some fresh disaster, and only learn the truth long after facts have taken place. To-day we know that the struggle is obstinate, that Rome is behaving admirably and yourself too. But what shall we learn to-morrow? Will God reward so much courage and devotion? Will He abandon His own people? Will He grant His protection to the most criminal folly and treachery which mankind ever tolerated? It seems, alas! that He intends to try and break us in order to purify us, or with the view of leaving the present generation as an instance of infamy on the one hand, of expiation on the other.

Happen what may, my distressed heart is with you. If you should be victorious, I shall nevertheless preserve a mortal grief at that impious struggle of France against you. If you should succumb, you will be none the less grand, and your misfortune will make you dearer if possible to your sister.

*To THE SAME.*

NOHANT, 5th July, 1849.

MY BROTHER AND FRIEND,

Let us go to the bottom of the question since you wish it. We will overlook the fact of my being disgusted and discouraged, the situation being a purely personal one, which

does not prove anything for or against your views and means. In my last letter, I purposely omitted answering what you said about Louis Blanc, because I did not wish to be led to speak of Ledru-Rollin. I thought it useless to trust to paper judgments, which, in the present state of suspicion on the part of the police, may at any time fall into the hands of our enemies. But, since you renew your question, it is my duty to you to explain myself.

You are now engaged in politics and in nothing else. At heart, I know, you are as much of a Socialist as I am; but you put off the question of the future until better times, and believe that a purely political association between a few men who represent the Republican situation, such as it may now be, is a duty for you. You do that, you overcome your repugnance. (You wrote so to me in the letter to which I replied.) In fact, you believe that there is nothing else to do. That is possible; but is it a reason for doing it? That is the question.

You take a broad view of things; for you, individuals are not of much account or weight. You accept man, provided he represent an idea; you take him as a symbol, and add him to your sheaf, without being really sure that he is a tried weapon. In my opinion, Ledru-Rollin is a weak and dangerous weapon, destined to break in the hands of the people. Let us be fair, and give the man his due. I begin by telling you that I feel sympathy and even affection for him. I am without any personal prejudice against him; on the contrary, my taste would lead me to prefer his society to that of the majority of politicians with whom I am acquainted. He is amiable, communicative, confident, personally brave, feeling, warm-hearted, and disinterested in money matters. But I

believe I do not mistake, I feel I am quite sure of what I advance when, after saying thus much, I declare to you that he is not a man of action; that political self-love is very strong in him; that he is vain; that he loves power and popularity as much as Lamartine himself; that he is a *woman* in the bad acceptation of the word, that is to say, full of personality, of amorous spite and political flirting; that is, weak, not as brave morally as he is physically; that his *entourage* is wretched, and that he tamely submits to bad influences; that he loves flattery; that he is unpardonably flighty; that in fine, in spite of his precious qualities, impelled by his incurable defects, he will betray the true popular cause. Yes, remember what I say, he will betray it, unless circumstances should occur wherein he may find his vanity and his power profited by serving it. He will betray it, without meaning to do so, without perhaps being aware of it, without understanding what he intends to do. His aversions are strong if not tenacious. He will pay attention, in connection with great events, to small considerations which will prevent his doing good, but will satisfy his passion, his fancy of the moment. He will accept compromises respecting the most serious matters, and through motives the frivolity of which nobody will ever suspect.

He is capable of anything, and yet is thoroughly honest but weak-minded. He will go to the right, to the left; he will, in fact, slip through your fingers. Before you, he will break off relationship with an enemy; the next day, you will learn that he has spent the night over a reconciliation. Nothing more impressionable, nothing more versatile, nothing, as you will find, more whimsical than he! You will tell me that you know all that; you *must* know it since you have seen

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him, and since there is in him a certain amiable but dreadful *naïveté*, which, after a month or two of examination, dispels all doubts as to his true nature. People more shrewd and less optimist than I sometimes am, do not even require so long a time to form their opinion. You will therefore tell me that that does not trouble you; that, since he is the most popular man of the Republican party in France, you accept him as the instrument which God places in your hand. Which of us is right or wrong? I cannot say; but our dispositions are quite opposed. In your opinion, it is not necessary to regard and to love a man much in order to employ him and judge him fit for your holy work.

As for me, I am capable of regard and love for a good and amiable man, as a private individual; as such, I should warmly take up his defence against his enemies, I should dare to serve his interest, I would even share his grief. There are several friends of mine whose ideas I do not relish, whose conduct I do not approve, but whom nevertheless I love, and to whom I am much devoted, so far as private intercourse is concerned. But as regards public matters the thing is different. Were I a politician, I should be inflexibly stern. I should wish to save the life, the honour, and the liberty of those men; but I should decline to entrust them with a mission, and nothing could induce me to yield on that point, neither the consideration of their talent, nor that of their popularity (popularity is so blind and stupid!), nor that of momentary utility. I do not believe in momentary utility. We pay too dearly for it on the morrow for any real utility to be in it.

Such is, therefore, for France the leader of the political association formed under the title of *Proscrit*.\* It is possible

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\* Name of a newspaper.

that the shade of politics which Ledru-Rollin represents may be the only one possible in connection with immediate Republican government: that shade of politics will be entitled to respect for a certain time.

I should, thus, not fight against it if I were a man and a political writer, so long as it did not commit any grave faults, and especially as long as we were in presence of formidable enemies, against whom it might be the only rallying point. But I could no longer place my heart, my soul, and my talent at his service. I should decline to enter the lists against his party until the day when he should become the avowed and active persecutor of a more advanced party (the more faithful representation of reason and truth by the people). That day, alas! will not be delayed long.

Your ardent soul, I anticipate its reply, responds, "We must never abstain for an hour, for a moment!"

I feel that that reply is noble, but not rigorously true; I believe that all the evil comes from this, that nobody will ever abstain for a time from active interference. Some are driven to do so by their passions, others by their virtue, and their numbers are limited. But whoever would be thoroughly imbued with the spirit of history and the nature of the laws which rule over human destinies, must understand the necessity of secluding himself on certain days, and say: "I have in my soul a truth superior to that which men accept to-day. I will announce it when they are capable of understanding it."

I only say this with regard to politics; for, whilst standing on a philosophical, or, if you please, Socialist ground, we can and must speak out right, and no Government has the right to prevent our doing so. Ideas have always the right to fight

against ideas. But there are times when men must not fight against certain other men without serious and pressing motives.

You will again tell me that I am making an arbitrary distinction between politics and Socialism, an idea against which I have myself fought over and over again. When I fought it was really against the politicians who, in regard to the *National*, were doing that which the *Proscrit* is on the point of doing by excluding *men of system*. The editors of the *Proscrit* to-day proclaim themselves *Socialists*; but, believe me, they are scarcely more so than the men of *yesterday*. They admit the *programme of the Mountain*, that is something; but towards any one who might endeavour to step beyond it, however little, they would be just as intolerant, just as sarcastic, just as wroth, as the *National* used to be in 1847. They are not strong enough to triumph by argument; they would do so by means of violence; indeed, they would be driven to it in order to keep their position, and, in defence of their action, would allege the necessities of politics. In point of fact, politics and Socialism are, for them, things still very distinct, whatever they may say, and Socialists ought to consider themselves forewarned on that point. There is, therefore, even to-day, a necessity for distinguishing what we must do or abstain from in such a situation.

If Ledru-Rollin and his followers were in power, and I were a political writer, I should think I was doing my duty as a Socialist in discussing the spirit and the acts of his government, but I should think also I was committing a wrong action, as a politician, in attacking the intentions of the man, and publishing respecting him, or loudly telling everybody what I write here to you. I should not wish to conspire against him for the sole reason that I do not trust him. In

fine, I should leave aside bitter acrimony and personality which, up to the present, are unfortunately the bases of all politics.

But I am not, *I will not be* a political writer, because, in order to be read in France to-day, one must take men to task, raise a scandal, provoke hatred, and give rise to libellous talk. If an author limit himself to dissertation, to preaching, to explaining, he only wearies his readers, and might as well not write.

Émile de Girardin possesses *form* when he likes. He does not possess any real depth. Louis Blanc possesses both. Nobody heeds him. He owes it to himself to be always writing, because he has a party, and, having formed that party, he cannot forsake it; but, outside of his party, he possesses no power.

Let us speak of Louis Blanc now, since you wish it. In my opinion, he alone is right, he alone possesses true ideas. You speak to me of his personal faults. He, no doubt, has his faults, and Ledru-Rollin is certainly more conciliating, more attractive, and consequently more popular. But, in political life, Louis Blanc is a *reliable man*. What matters to me that in private life he may have as much pride as the other has vanity, if, in public life, he knows how to sacrifice pride or vanity to his duty? I rely on him, I know where he is going to, and I also know that he will not allow himself to be driven one inch from his course. I have found asperities in him, but never any weakness; secret sufferings, at once, however, conquered by a profound and tenacious sentiment of duty. It is true that he is too advanced for his time, that he cannot be immediately useful. His party, too, is weak and small; to secure any action it would have to join that of Ledru-Rollin. But that



is what I should never advise him to allow, for Ledru-Rollin will never sincerely unite with him, and will henceforth, more than formerly was his wont, do his best to paralyse or annihilate him.

Louis Blanc cannot any longer accept the responsibility of the blunders of Ledru-Rollin's party. He must not do so. Let him keep apart, if necessary; his day will come later on, let him reserve himself. His views are indeed the true ones. Shall we not, after many useless and deplorable struggles, be compelled eventually to *give to each according to his wants*? If not, what is the use of our agitations, and for what and for whom are we labouring? You would like him to put his formula in his pocket for a while, and to employ his talent, his merit, his individual worth, his courage, in the interest of the politics of transition. I also would advise him to do so, if he could join men *like you*, if he could feel certain of not closing the future against his idea, in accommodating it to the necessities of the present, if every one of his prudent and patient steps towards that future are not to be retrograde, if, in fine, he could and should trust himself.

But he cannot do so. Ledru-Rollin will betray him; not wilfully or deliberately, no! When questioned, Ledru speaks like ourselves. He understands the unlimited progress of the future, he is too intelligent to contest it. Under the influence of men like yourself and Louis Blanc he would embrace that progress. But destiny, that is his organisation, will carry him whither he must go. Treachery to the cause of the future. If I am wrong, so much the better! I shall be the first, ten years hence, if we are still in this world and it has gone on satisfactorily, to make honourable amends to him. But, to-day, my conviction is too deeply seated to permit me to

associate my name with his in a work, the first act of which is to reject, to insult, and to curse Louis Blanc in imputing to him as a fault his not having effected the good which he was either not able to effect, or was prevented from effecting.

That, dear friend, is one of the causes of my discouragement. I believe that people have made a mistake, that you yourself mistake a fact, that you have not discovered the true element of salvation for France, and consequently for Italy, whose cause is bound up with our own, I perceive that it would be of no avail to contend against the current which carries you towards that choice, and I abstain from interference, feeling ever sad, but ever attached to you by the liveliest faith in your sentiments, and the tenderest and deepest affection.

Your Sister,

GEORGE.

*To M. ERNEST PÉRIGOS, La Châtre.*

NOHANT, July, 1849.

My heart is full. They are going to shoot that poor Kléber, who came to Nohant after the events of June, and was truly a man of sense and courage. The murderers! It seems to me like a repetition of 1814.\*

From the point of view of criticism, you are right. There is in novels, in poems, on the stage, and even in history, such an affected and frequent display of love for the creature and

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\* An allusion to what is known as *La Terreur Blanche* (The White Terror), the period of Bourbon reprisals after Napoleon's exile to Elba and subsequent final overthrow.

the reality of life and of the affections, that in reality those sentiments are not to be found there at all. Literature wants to idealise. It will never succeed. It lies, it must lie, since art is a fiction, or, at the least, an interpretation in novels and poems. Man there looks superb, grand, a hundred feet high; yet his worth there is less than in reality; that is no paradox. It is not true that we have all deserved hanging. But what you say about our having all been demented, if only during one hour of our life, is truly correct. I will go farther and say that we all *are* mad, childish, weak-minded, inconsistent, silly or fantastic, when we are not rogues. That is precisely why we are better than the heroes of novels. We have the miseries of our condition, we are real personages; and, when displaying good impulses, good intentions, good actions, we please God and those who love us by reason of the contrast between our good and strong actions and our poor or bad inclinations. As for me, truth affects me more than beauty, and kindness more than grandeur. It affects me more as I grow older and fathom the abyss of human feebleness. I like, in Jesus, the fainting on the Mount of Olives; in Joan of Arc, the tears and the regrets which make her a human being. I no longer like that stiffness and tension of heroes which one only sees in legends, because I no longer believe in them. Be sure that nobody has yet succeeded in depicting or describing true love, and, had anybody succeeded, the *public* might not have understood it. The reader wants an ornament to truth, and Rousseau did not dare to tell us why he loved Thérèse. Yet he loved her, and was right to love her, although she was not even worthy of the devil. People sought to make him ashamed of that attachment. He did his best not to be humiliated by it. Neither himself nor others

ever understood that his grandeur lay in being able to love the first dunce that came in his way. Why was he afraid of telling those who thought her ugly and stupid that he found her beautiful and intelligent? It is that he used to write novels, and did not confess to himself that life, real life, though more vulgar, is more tender, more generous, humbler, better, in fine, than fictions. And yet fiction is necessary. Man—youth above all—is eager for it. You have said so; yet you used to curse novels on account of their lies, and your head was so full of them that you could not look at the future except through their prism. Why should they tire us of life before having lived? and why should we be tired of them when we begin to live in earnest? That solution may occupy you for an hour or two yet, and you will succeed with it better than I; for you are at an age when the mind is still able to analyse and ponder. Write, therefore, the sequel and end of these fine pages, for you leave us in doubt or in expectation of a certainty, and I am quite sure that Angèle made life sweeter and more complete to you than Shakespeare, Byron, and others.

I kiss Angèle, and remain yours in heart.

GEORGE.

*To M. CHARLES PONCY, Toulon.*

NOHANT, July, 1849.

DEAR BOY,

I have been wishing to write to you for a long while; but in the present sad times we dare scarcely talk with our friends, we feel so demoralised, so gloomy. It is so difficult not to become selfish or wicked. We fear to grieve those we

love by telling them all the grief we bear within ourselves, and yet, all that is cowardly and impious. God forsakes those who doubt Him; He performs miracles only for believers. The scepticism of the twenty years of Louis Philippe's reign is the cause of all that happens to us.

But Rome believed! Rome hoped and struggled. Alas! and we killed her. We are murderers, and they speak to our soldiers of glory! O Lord, O Lord! do not let us doubt you any longer! We have still a little faith left. If we should lose that we shall have nothing.

I hope Mazzini is bodily saved. But will his soul survive so many disasters? You are right when you say that he lived thirty years only to die, as he is going to do one of these days; for Europe is delivered over to assassins, and, if he does not rush into their hands he will sooner or later fall into them. I have received an admirable letter from him. But I will not tell you what his projects are. I fear the privacy of letters is not respected in the post.

As for you, my boy, you are tired, wearied by office life. You pine for manual labour, your workman life. That is easily conceivable. As for me, I wish I were a peasant and could till the soil eight hours a day. And yet my occupation is more pleasant than yours, since I am free to choose my sedentary work. But I have no heart for anything. All that is written or to be written seems cold to me. Words can no longer convey our feelings of grief and anger, and, in these times, we only live by passion. All reasoning is useless, all preaching is vain. We have to deal with men who have neither law, nor faith, nor principles, nor heart. The people submit to them. One feels inclined to reproach the people with the infamy of the men who lead, deceive, and crush them.

Ah! my boy, what a fearful phase of history we are passing through! We shall come out of it victoriously, I doubt not. But, in order that a nation so much demoralised should raise and purify itself, it must have expiated its egotism, and God, I fear, has exemplary chastisements in store for us.

Nothing new here. Maurice, Borie, and Lambert are still sharing my secluded life. We are busy together; we endeavour to devote only a few short hours to the reading of newspapers and to the indignant comments which that reading provokes. In spite of ourselves, we return to the subject oftener than we wish. At least we have the consolation of being all of the same mind and of not quarrelling bitterly, as is now the case in many families. Home life generally feels the counter shock of public misfortune. Our home is united and brotherly. We fret together and with the same heart. We try to cheer one another, and the one most grieved often contrives to comfort the others. Love me, my boy. Grief ought to unite and strengthen the bonds of affection. I bless you tenderly, as also Solange and Desirée. My children kiss you.

*To JOSEPH MAZZINI, Malta.*

NOHANT, 24th July, 1849.

Oh, my friend! affection is selfish, and, when I learnt that sad *dénouement*, a thousand times sadder for France than for Italy, I confess that at first my only anxiety was for you.

May God forgive me, and may you, a saint also, forgive me! A friend I have in Toulon wrote to me, before saying a word of anything else, that you were in safety, and I blessed him from the bottom of my heart.

You may naturally imagine that my heart is broken. However innocent we may be of the crime committed by the nation to which we belong, there is a sort of intimate community of feelings which fills our hearts with the remorse which ought to haunt others. Yes, indeed, remorse and shame. I who was so proud of France in February. Alas! What has become of us, and what expiation does not divine justice reserve for us before permitting our rehabilitation?

As for you, despite your defeat, exile, and persecution, you are happier than I; you are so by the sole fact of your being a Roman; for you are more of a Roman than any of those who are born on the banks of the Tiber. And you . . . you are happier than anybody else in the world, because alone with Kossuth you did your duty. When I say you and Kossuth, I mean those who *were* and those who *are* with him. For the most obscure devotions are as dear to God as the most illustrious. And now, friend, despite misfortune, despite grief, have you not that self-satisfaction, that profound peace of the soul which feels itself discharged of its obligation towards heaven and towards men? Have you not fulfilled a holy mission to the last? Have you not sacrificed all to truth, honour, justice, and faith? Do you not enjoy days of resignation and undisturbed nights? I feel certain that you are calm and that you relish the austere joys of faith. We may have faith for others, for mankind, when we carry it within ourselves, when we are ourselves the living and militant faith.

Yes, you have acted and thought nobly in all things. You did well to save honour to the last extremity, and you also did well, when that last extremity came, to save the life of the besieged women, children, and aged people. The monuments

of art come afterwards, although our newspapers were more anxious about the fate of the frescoes of Raphael and Michael Angelo than about that of the widows and the orphans.

All you wished for and achieved was just. The whole world feels it, even wretches who believe in nothing, and the whole world will proclaim it aloud when the hour comes.

As for me, that is all I have to tell you. It is the only consolation I can offer you. For the present, I am humiliated and discouraged in my national sentiment. But I am proud of the combatants and victims still left on this earth, and I am proud of you. Let me hear from you if possible. If you should require any money, write to me and explain how I can convey it to you. Address your letters, under cover, to M. Victor Borie, at La Châtre (Indre). I kiss you with all my heart. Maurice sends his respectful and affectionate regards.

I received your two letters from Rome.

*To JOSEPH MAZZINI, . . .*

NOHANT, 10th October, 1849.

DEAR AND EXCELLENT FRIEND,

I received your first letter, afterwards your second, and finally your *Revue*. I had already read, in our French newspapers, your letter to MM. de T— and de F—. That letter is a masterpiece. It is an historical document, which will take its place in the eternal history of Rome and in that of republics. It caused a very great impression here, even in the times of folly and exhaustion in which we live, even in



our humiliated and debased country. Public opinion did not disown it, it is the cry of honour, of justice, and truth, which ought to cover the Jesuitical rabble with shame and remorse. But I believe that certain foreheads can blush no longer; there is no hope of their owners' conversion, the people know it now, and speak of nothing less than their death. Irritation is great in France, and profound vengeance is smouldering in the expectation of satisfaction. But the nation as a whole does not deeply feel these things. The great majority of Frenchmen are ill, chiefly with ignorance and uncertainty. Ah! my friend, I believe that we are, yourself and I, revolving within a vicious circle, when we say—you, that we must begin to act in order to come to an understanding; I, that we must come to an understanding before acting. I do not know how the movement of ideas in Europe proceeds; but here, it is dreadful to see how people hesitate before flocking to one banner. The game would no doubt be won if all that is brave, patriotic, and indignant agreed to act in common. That is, unfortunately, where the difficulty lies, and it is because Frenchmen are influenced by too many different ideas and systems that you see our Republic stop short in its progress, paralysed and seemingly smothered by its secret palpitations, and all of a sudden, so powerless or preoccupied, that it allows a loathsome *camarilla* to take the helm and to commit the grossest iniquities in its name with impunity. I believe that you do not pay sufficient attention to the striking distinction which exists between other nations and ourselves.

The idea is the same in Italy, Poland, Hungary, and perhaps Germany. The point is to obtain liberty. Here we dream more, we dream about equality; and, while we

seek for it, liberty is stolen from us by thieves devoid of any ideal, and who are only concerned about facts. As for us, we do not pay enough attention to facts, and ideas make us stupid. Alas! do not deceive yourself. The Republican party in France is dead or at the point of death. God will no longer employ a few men to initiate us, apparently in order to punish us for having too much exalted the worship of the individual. He wants everything to be done by all, and that is the necessary result, too little foreseen, perhaps, of the institution of universal suffrage. In Rome, you made a magnificent application of it; but I feel certain that it only succeeded because of the danger, because of that necessary fact—the achievement of liberty. If, instead of following the tasteless and silly policy of Lamartine, we had thrown down the gauntlet to absolute monarchies, we should have war without, union within, and, consequently, strength within and without. The men who inaugurated that policy, through powerlessness and stupidity, were urged by the wiles of Satan without being aware of it. The evil spirit led us where it pleased the *day* it advised us to accept peace at any price.

We must now wait until the masses be irritated. I have not come to that conviction by taste. It is not at all to my taste to wait; for the present times and things so weigh upon me that I often wonder whether I shall live until they are over. Ten times a day I feel the earnest desire of not seeing any more of them but of blowing my brains out. But that matters little. Whether or not I be patient to the last, the masses will neither slacken nor hasten their progress. They want to know, they want to learn by themselves; they mistrust those who know more than they; they reject

initiators, they betray or abandon them, they calumniate, and would even kill them if necessary. They abhor authority, even that which comes in the name of the spirit of progress. The masses are not disciplined and scarcely disciplinable. I assure you that if you lived in France, I do not say Paris, for Paris does not always represent the opinion of the country, but in the heart of France—you would see that nothing is to be done, except by a propaganda, and yet, when one possesses a certain name, one must not carry it on personally; for it would only meet with mistrust and contempt on the part of the proletariat.

“And yet the proletariat does sometimes exhibit proofs of infatuation,” I hear you remark. I know that; but such infatuation does not last, and produces more words than actions. In France a dreadful intellectual inequality exists. Some know too much, others do not know enough. The masses are in a state of infancy, individuals in a state of pedantic and sceptical senility. Our revolution was so easy to make, it would have been so easy to preserve, that the evil must be very deeply rooted in the mind, and the cause of that evil must reside somewhere else than in facts.

This all leads us, I doubt not, to a grand and splendid future. Universal suffrage, with the sufferings of the poor on the one side and the heartlessness of the rich on the other, will give us, in a few years, a people who will vote like one man. But until then the people will not have the courage to proceed, like Rome and Hungary, by sacrifice and heroism. They will patiently bear up with their troubles, for, unfortunately, one can live in misery and ignorance. To awaken people now invasions and great foreign troubles are needed. If it should please God thus to arouse us from our torpor, may

His will be done! We should then attain our object more painfully but more rapidly.

It is, indeed, my friend, necessary to reason thus in order to explain the political torpor which impassibly witnesses so many infamies. Otherwise we must curse our fellow-creatures, and hate or forsake their cause. But I do not tell you all this in order to debar you from acting in the sense which you think efficacious. We must always act when having faith in action, for faith can work miracles. But if in the party of ideas in France you do not find the aid worthy of a great nation, remember the judgment which I submit to you, so as not to feel too much contempt towards us when the day comes. Rest assured that our last word is not spoken. We are what the constitutional *régime* made us, but we shall be ourselves again. We are not all corrupted. In proof of this observe the significant fact of the Paris people at the theatre hissing the entrance of the French into Rome.\*

Good night, dear brother and friend; write to me only when free from fatigue and having leisure. I do not wish for a pleasure which would cause you an hour of pain or lassitude. Whether you write or not, I always think of you: I know you love me, and I love you likewise. Maurice and Borie kiss you fraternally.

Yours with all my heart,

G. SAND.

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\* This happened at the Porte-Saint-Martin theatre on the 29th September, 1849, at the representation of a spectacular drama by Messrs. Labrousse and Laloue, entitled *Rome*. After the fourth night the drama was prohibited.

To M. X \* \* \*

NOHANT, January, 1850.

SIR,

Whilst thanking you for the great praise and kindness which you accord to me, allow me to rectify several facts entirely mistaken in my biography, written by you, fragments of which I notice in a review.

I know, as does everybody else, what sort of importance we ought to attach to those contemporaneous biographies made by inductions, by deductions, and by more or less ingenious, more or less gratuitous, suppositions. Mine especially has no chance of being faithful, written as it is by a writer with whom I have not the honour of being acquainted, and who has not received any sort of communication from me, or from persons who really know me.

Such biographies may possess a serious value as literary criticism, but as historical documents it may be said that they have no existence.

I should easily prove that, in examining from beginning to end the work of which I am the subject. It does not contain one fact correctly stated, not even my name or my age. My name is not Marie, and I was not born in 1805, but in 1804. My grandmother never was at the Abbaye-aux-Bois. My father was not a colonel. My grandmother used to place the Gospel far above the *Contrat Social*. When fifteen years of age I was not in the habit of handling guns; I did not ride on horseback; I was in a convent. My husband was neither old nor bald; he was twenty-seven, and had a good head of hair. I never inspired passion in any ship-owner at Bordeaux. The twentieth chapter of a celebrated

novel is but a chapter of a novel. To construct a writer's life with chapters from his novels is truly too easy; and people must suppose him to be very simple or very awkward to believe that if in his books he were to allude to personal situations or emotions, he would not take the precaution of so surrounding them with fiction as to completely mislead the reader with regard to his personages or to himself.

The trait which you ascribe to M. Roret is very honourable, and I believe him quite capable of it; but he never brought me a thousand francs after the success of any work, after having previously destroyed the original agreement, since I never had the pleasure of treating with him respecting anything.

Neither M. de Kératry nor M. Rabbe were ever called upon by M. De Latouche to give their opinion of *Indiana*. In the first place, M. De Latouche used to judge for himself. In the second place, he never had any intercourse with M. de Kératry. I did not, after the success of *Indiana*, take new apartments or hold receptions. During five or six years I lived in the same garret and received the same intimate friends.

I have come to the first of facts, which I am anxious to contradict, all the others being of comparatively slight importance to me. I will quote your own words, sir, if you please.

“In the midst of the intoxication of success she committed the fault of forgetting the faithful companions of her hard struggling days. Sandeau, wounded at heart, started alone for Italy, on foot, penniless.”

(1.) M. Jules Sandeau never started for Italy *on foot and penniless*, although you seem to insinuate that if he were

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penniless it was my fault ; which would lead one to suppose that, though no longer on speaking terms with me, he would have accepted some money from me : an injurious supposition which you, no doubt, did not intend to make. I assure you, and he would himself do so if necessary, that he possessed resources of his own. (2.) He did not start with a wounded heart. I have letters from him as honourable for him as for myself, which prove the contrary ; I have no reason to publish those letters, considering that he speaks of me therein with the affection and regard he owes me. I will not here defend M. de Musset against your attack. He is strong enough to defend himself, and for the present I alone am in question. Let it, therefore, suffice for me to say that I never confided to any one that with which you believe yourself acquainted respecting his conduct towards me, and that, therefore, you have been led into an error by somebody who fabricated those statements. You say that after our journey into Italy I never saw M. de Musset again. You are wrong, I have seen him very often, and have never met him without shaking hands. It is a great satisfaction to me to be able to affirm that I never entertained bitterness of feelings against anybody, as, in like manner, I have never left any durable and justifiable bitterness of feeling in anybody, not even in M. Dudevant, my husband.

You have never met me with M. de Lamennais, either in the forest at Fontainebleau or anywhere else in the world.

A thousand pardons, but you did not know either him or me by sight the day when you so singularly met us, as related by you, I must confess, with much wit. I never went a step out of doors with M. de Lamennais, whom I always knew as an invalid and a hermit. Since we are on the subject

of M. de Lamennais, the following is the second fact which I am particularly anxious to deny. You say that when, later on, the name of the chief editor of the *Monde* was introduced in conversation, I used to exclaim: "*Do not mention him! It seems to me that I have known the devil!*"

I declare, sir, the person who related this to you must have burdened his conscience with a huge lie. *My intimacy* with M. de Lamennais, as it pleases you to term my respectful relations with that illustrious man, never altered. You say that *George Sand soon broke an intimacy which could only have become serious by distraction or surprise*. The only possible distraction and surprise respecting M. de Lamennais are those of which you are the victim when speaking in that manner of one of the purest and brightest glories of our century.

My admiration and veneration towards the author of *Paroles d'un Croyant* have always been, and will always remain without limit. It would not be difficult for me to furnish you with proof of that, and that proof would have struck you if you had had the time and patience to read all my writings.

I still overlook a great many errors without gravity, and respecting which I simply laugh at in my own little corner—not at you, sir, but at those who pretend to furnish documents for the history of living persons—to come to this sentence: *She used to turn a deaf ear whenever he spoke of too direct an application of his system.*

I know that this is not meant as a calumny; but it is gratuitous ridicule which you endeavour to cast upon no less a respectable man than M. de Lamennais. Could you not find two victims less sacred than an old man on the brink of the grave, and a noble proscribed philosopher? I feel sure that



when you think of it you will regret having given way to the ironical *penchant* which is the quality, the defect, and the misfortune of French youth.

Allow me also to tell you that a certain pleasant anecdote respecting a M. Kador, whom I do not know, is very good, but entirely groundless.

Lastly, modesty compels me to say that I do not improvise quite as well as Liszt, *my friend*, but not my master. He never gave me any lessons, and I do not improvise at all. The same sentiment of modesty also compels me to state, that to wear a smock is no disqualification for sitting at my table, and that I do not possess so much elegance and charm as you are disposed to attribute to me. In this, it certainly grieves me to gainsay you; but, I believe that it will leave you quite indifferent, and that in taking me for the *héroïne* of the witty novel of which you are the author, your only aim was to display the talent and imagination with which you are gifted.

G. SAND.

To M. ALEXANDRE DUMAS, JUN., Paris.

NOHANT, 14th August, 1850.

I have not thanked you personally, sir, and it would much grieve me if you deprived me of the pleasure of doing so verbally at Nohant—that is, in the country, where people can talk more and better in a day than in a whole year in Paris. I am still uncertain whether I shall come to Paris before the end of the month. I have been ill in bed, and therefore delayed.

If you could come here between now and the 25th I should

be happy and grateful. If not, be good enough to send my sealed parcel to M. Falampin (excuse the name, it was not I who thus christened the good fellow), Rue Louis le Grand, 33.

I will not yet give up the hope of seeing you here with your father. He wrote to me a few days ago that he would do his best to come, provided he were sure to be kissed with a good heart. Tell him that I am not of an age to deprive him and myself of so sincere a mark of friendship, and fully intend to receive him with open arms. If you should both deprive me of that pleasure, I shall see you again in Paris next month, provided you have not gone off again to Silesia or elsewhere.

Before shaking your hand here to thank you for your kindness to me, I wish to shake it in a wholly disinterested manner for the lovely book which I am now reading.\* It is charming to meet again with Charlotte, Manon, Virginie, and all those beings we so much love, and over whom we have wept so much! The idea is new and singular, but nevertheless appears quite natural as one reads on. It is impossible to manage it more skilfully and more simply. If you preserve Paul and Virginia pure and faithful, as I hope, I will thank you doubly for the pleasure of reading. You succeeded in adapting Goëthe, without offending the susceptibilities of the public. In fact, the original was not better than your adaptation, and you do not ascribe to the author less wit and genius than he really possessed. I hear some people decrying a little the boldness of your subject, but at present I do not find in it anything which profanes, debases, or vulgarizes

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\* *Le Régent Mustel*, a novel by Alexandre Damas, Jun.

those beloved or admired types. I am impatiently awaiting the end. Farewell again, and hoping in any case to see you soon,

I remain, yours at heart,

GEORGE SAND.

*To JOSEPH MAZZINI, London.*

NOHANT, 25th September, 1850.

Write to-day? No, I could not. The present situation is nauseating, and I could not find a word of encouragement to offer to the men of my own time. And yet I am not ill; my personal situation is not painful; my mind is calm and my heart satisfied with the affections that surround me. But hope has not revived in me, and I am not of those who can sing songs that do not come from the soul. Humanity in my time appears to me like an army in full rout, and I am convinced that in counselling the runaway to turn and face the enemy and still dispute every inch of ground with him, we shall only add a few crimes and murders to the horror of the disaster. "The executioners themselves are intoxicated, lost, dead, stultified. They also rush to their ruin, but the more they are told to stop the more will they strike, and, as for the cowards who flee, they will allow their leaders to be murdered, will witness the striking down of the noblest victims without uttering a word. Whatever I do, that is the only prospect I see. I thought I was ill, and used to reproach myself with my faintness; but I can no longer think it a reproach that I suffer for so just a cause. I may be wrong; God grant that it is so. With you, stoical martyr, I will not, I cannot or must not obstinately contend that I am right. But while respecting in you that virtue of hope, I

cannot at will cause it to bloom in myself. Nothing can revive me. I have no feelings but those of grief and indignation. Do you know the only thing of which I feel capable? Ardent malediction upon that human race which is so selfish, cowardly, and perverse. I wish I could say to the nations: "It is you who are the great criminals, you imbeciles, braggarts, and poltroons who allow yourselves to be reviled and trampled upon. You it is who will answer before God for the crimes of tyranny, for you could have prevented them and did not, and do not even now wish to do so. I thought you were grand, generous, and brave. You, no doubt, are so, under the pressure of certain events, and when God works miracles in you. But when God extends His clemency to you, when you again find an hour of calm or hope, you sell your conscience and your dignity for some little pleasure and welfare, for rest, wine, and coarse illusions. With promises of prosperity and diminution of taxes, you can be led anywhere. What is obtained from you by urging you to suffering, heroism, and devotion? A few isolated holocausts which your masses witness in cold blood!"

Yes, I would like to rouse the people from their torpor and shame, to make them indignant with themselves, to cause them to blush for their degraded condition, and I might perhaps again find some glimmer of eloquence which the prospect of their unintelligent wrath, the near certainty of being massacred by them the next day, would cause to flow forth more ardently and more fruitfully. The only thing that deters me is a lingering feeling of compassion. I could not say to the child who drowns itself: "It is your fault!" I think of the sufferings and miseries of those who, whilst guilty, are so cruelly punished.

I have no longer the heart to cast in their teeth the anathema which they deserve. I restrain myself; I return to fiction and artistic faction. I make popular types such as I no longer see, but such as they should and might be. In art, this substitution of dreaming for reality is still possible; in politics, all poetry is a falsehood, which conscience rejects.

But art is not any the more made at will; it is fugitive, and the conscience of a duty to fulfil does not compel inspiration to descend. The dramatic form of art, being novel to me, has of late reanimated me a little, and it is the only study to which I have been able to devote myself for a whole year.

That will perhaps be useless. The censure\* which leaves a free course to the revolting obscenities of the theatre, will not perhaps permit honesty to be ably preached to the men, women, and children of the people. I have refused to have my dramas played at the Théâtre Français; I wish to go to the Boulevard with Bocage.† We shall probably not be allowed to go there. The more certain it appears that we wish to indulge moral preaching in some sweet and chaste forms, the more we shall be interfered with. But, if we wished to indulge the scandal of vulgar humour there, the obscene couplets of the Vaudeville, the diverting prettinesses of the good tunes of the Regency, we should have a free field like others.

Shall I return towards the contemplation of facts? Shall I rejoice in the amelioration of manners? Shall I say that it

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\* The authorities empowered to prohibit objectionable plays.

† A French actor.

is indifferent whether we contribute or not, provided that good is done, and that true happiness smiles around us? I should in vain seek this consolation in my own circle. The people of the provinces are frightfully egotistical. The peasant is ignorant, but the artisan, who understands, who reads and speaks, is to-day ten times more corrupt. This abortive Revolution, these intrigues of the *bourgeoisie*, these examples of immorality given by the authorities, this impurity assured to all apostacies, to all iniquities, are treasons to all; in a word, the work of the people, who have suffered and who suffer them. Some of our workmen shudder at the thought of want of employment, and confine themselves to muttering big threats. Others fuddle themselves with wine. Others, again, dream and plot terrible reprisals, without any idea of reconstruction, after having made a clean sweep of everything. Systems, you say? Systems have scarcely penetrated the provinces. There they have done neither good nor ill; people do not trouble about them, but it would be better that they should be discussed, and that every one should give expression to his own hopes. We are not so advanced! Will the taxes be paid or not? That is the whole question. People do not even trouble themselves about the encouragements with which agriculture can no longer dispense, under pain of perishing.

We do not know what the promises of credit made by the democracy may signify. Nobody believes in them. Every form of government is fallen into public contempt, and the proletariat which speaks out sums up thus: *Humbugs, the whole lot, we must make a clean sweep of them!*

Without doubt there are some groups which still believe and understand; but there is not much more virtue in them

than in the others. A spirit of association is unknown. In the provinces the press is dead, and people have failed to understand that a few pence produced millions!

The article in the second number of the *Proscrit* on the organisation of the democratic press is vigorously true in indicating the evil, and perfectly useless for providing a remedy. It is easy to show what can be done; it is impossible to make devotion expand where there is none. Our *Travailleur*\* is ruined. Our friend, the editor, is in prison; his wife and children in distress. Three or four of us are sharing the burden. The *bourgeois* of the party are deaf, the people still more so. Who has paid for the banquet given to Ledru-Rollin two years ago, and which appeared so fine, so spontaneous, and so popular? We. And so it is always. As for the money it matters little; but devotion, where is it? Crowds go to a banquet as to a fête that costs nothing. They amuse themselves, they make a noise, they rave, they talk for a week, then all excitement subsides, and everybody finds that he has been drawn into it, and wonders what it was all about!

If I cast my eyes elsewhere what shall I see? Provinces a little more spirited, though without any better result. Is it to the *Mountain* that we must look for the production of all Socialist opinions? Or to Paris, in the suburbs decimated by civil war, and trembling before an army which they know full well is not what they believe it to be? No, nowhere; I am unfortunately too certain of it! This is a period of torpor. Divine sentiment, lofty instincts, cannot perish; but they no longer rule. Nothing will prevent the invasion of reaction. It is only to the divisions of those

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\* Newspaper published at Châteauroux.

gentlemen and to their intrigues that we are indebted for still retaining the word "Republic" and a sham Constitution. The coalition of foreign kings, the discipline of their armies, blind instruments with them as with us, the egotism and degradation of their subjects, who are like ourselves subservient, will settle the question between the three dynasties now contending for the throne of France.

But alas! I have said what I wished to leave unsaid. Do you know that I no longer dare to write to my friends, or to speak to those who are near me, for fear of destroying the last illusions which sustain them? I ought to give up writing; for I feel sure that all my letters are read by the authorities; at least, all those I receive have been opened, and bear the clumsy traces of hands which have not even tried to conceal the marks of such violation. They keep watch over our hopes in order to baffle them, over our discouragements in order to rejoice at them. All the public departments are full of men who have deserved the galleys. People scarcely venture to send a hundred francs through the post. It is useless to complain. Provided they be of the *right shade of opinion* the thieves can act with impunity.

Such is France! The people know, but are heedless. What word could cause the authorities to blush? What word could rouse the oppressed from their torpor?

We might dip our pens in our hearts' blood and in our gall, and only produce still greater evil. For there are times when man is like a somnambulist walking over the housetops—shout in order to warn him of his danger and you only hasten his fall.

And yet you act and write in spite of all those considerations. You must do so, since you are sustained by faith.



But, though you should hate and disown me, I feel that it is impossible for me, in good faith, to have any *faith* at all.

Thanks for your reply to Calamatta; I believe that is all he desires.

Farewell, friend! I am broken-hearted; but I always love and admire you.

To THE SAME, London.

NOHANT, 15th October, 1850.

MY FRIEND,

You are wrong, I have not submitted to any influence. I live too much secluded for that. I declined your offer before having received a word from Louis Blanc, and, between my first letter to you and the second, I received from him no communication likely to influence my decision.

Louis Blanc did not, so far as I am aware, refuse to contribute to the work of the *Proscrit*. It was you who told me that he wished to keep apart, and, according to himself, he was not even consulted. From his letter to me it does not follow that he had resolved to break off openly with that section of the party. It seems to me on the contrary, that if he had been asked to do so he would have joined it, although loyally making reservations as regards the future. *The doctrine of abstention*, if we may thus call that of which I spoke to you, is quite personal to myself, and if I ascribed it to Louis Blanc, it was in answer to what you told me about him. You are in a better position than I for ascertaining his disposition and intentions. Try, then, to get him into your centre of action, if you think it useful to do so, and if he is willing.

He tells me, and I know him to be firm and sincere, that

he will always know how to sink personal questions in presence of a duty. Let him, therefore, decide for himself where his political duty lies. I am not competent to do it. If, like myself, he knew the antipathy Ledru-Rollin feels for his ideas and for his person, he would never act in concert with him on any subject whatever. But I do not take upon myself to repeat what I hear. Besides, you would yourself think it a very contemptible occupation; so should I, looking at it as quite arising out of vanity. But, as a matter of reason, I can scarcely conceive it to be in accordance with the logic of duty to rush blindly at the rope which awaits in order to strangle us.

That is precisely the service which Ledru's followers are anxious to render to Louis Blanc's. What has happened once will happen again.

You, my friend, think that my mind is too much engrossed by personal questions; but in fact persons represent principles, and you see that you are yourself separated from Louis Blanc by a formula. He says: To every one according to his wants. That is the first proposition of a very simple triple formula, existing in the minds of all. The second you admit: To every one according to his works.

That of the Saint-Simonians is the third. This, whilst exclusive and isolated, is useless, but, associated with the others, possesses a right and a value of its own: To every one according to his capacity.

Yes, I believe that we must admit those three propositions in order to completely sum up social doctrine. But I fail to see that Louis Blanc, who attached himself specially to the first, ever declared himself against the other two, to the existence of which I believe the first to be indispensable.

To exhausted man, dying of misery, ignorance, and degradation, bread is necessary above all things. So long as the question of bread is dealt with last, man will starve physically and morally. Besides, in Louis Blanc's simple formula, I do not perceive a material solution of the question.

Whether we develop the formula and say: "To every one according to the wants of his stomach, of his heart, and of his intelligence;" or, "To every one according to his appetite, his conscience, and his genius;" the same idea is conveyed.

In this, I agree with Leroux, who has taken it as the starting-point for a strange system of *triade*, in which I fail to follow him.

You see, therefore, that in principles I no more disagree with you than with Louis Blanc, and I cannot understand the contentions which those formulæ, in whatever way they may be presented, give rise to in your mind or in his. Either *I* am not intelligent enough to grasp the matter, or the difference is purely imaginary and only relates to purely political prejudices; or, again, *you* have not sufficiently questioned and understood each other. That is the defect of formulæ. There is a moment when the general sentiments, being in accord, accept them, in practice, as the expression of an irrefutable truth; but, so long as they linger in the sphere of metaphysical discussion, they assume, for diverse minds, diverse mysterious significations, and people quarrel over words without agreeing as to the idea. Whenever I have heard people disparaging Louis Blanc, they have done so by means of *inductions* which, in my opinion, were in nowise the true *deduction* of his formulæ.

As for me, I confess that I am so wearied, so tired, so fatigued, so distressed to see facts always impeded by words and the *substance* sacrificed to *shadow*, that I no longer trouble about formulæ, and that had I found one, I should part with it very cheaply. What I am concerned about to-day, what causes you to believe that I am not in agreement with you whilst I myself do not think so, is the character, the intuition, and the wish of men. I ask myself what their aim is, and that is sufficient for me. I then create a centre of action, start a newspaper, and issue a manifesto.

Your own manifesto is just and beautiful, so far as I can judge. Were it isolated, I should not make any reservation; but it is surrounded by a group, which thinks fit to take Louis Blanc's Socialism to task because of the political and social powerlessness of the Provisional Government. In my opinion, that group is wrong. It has chosen as its leader a man whom, as a private individual, I esteem, but in whom, as a politician, I do not believe; and, moreover, its members declare rather openly against one in whose character I firmly believe; my conscience forbids me to associate my signature with theirs.

I will even go further. Even were Louis Blanc to put his signature to that manifesto, I should not follow his example, because I know things with which he perhaps is unacquainted, because I recollect things which I must not divulge, having discovered them in the confidence of intimacy.

Love me, then, my friend, as though there were nothing the matter, and, because I decline to perform an act which you advise, do not suppose that there is between us any difference of sentiment or principle. Consider that there

is nothing more than a different way of appreciating a passing act.

The reason why your tender reproaches leave me unmoved is my deep-seated conviction that, if you stood in my position, you would do as I do.

Moreover, if you *were* in my position, you would be a Communist like me, neither more nor less, because I believe that you have only judged Communism by the light of works still incomplete—some of them absurd and objectionable, and not deserving any attention. The true doctrine is not yet expounded, and will perhaps not be in our time. In my heart and conscience I feel it deeply, but it would probably be impossible for me to define it, for the reason that a single individual cannot advance too far from his historical centre, and that, were I to possess the science and talent of which I am deficient, I should not, for that, hold the divine key of the future. So many improvements seem impossible which will be thought quite natural in a time not so remote as we may think. My Communism supposes men quite different from what they are, but such as I *feel* they ought to be.

The ideal, the dream of my social happiness, is in the sentiments which I find in myself, but which I could never thoroughly demonstrate to hearts closed against such sentiments. I am quite certain that, were I to fathom your soul, I should discover in it a paradise similar to that which is in my own. I say with you that it is not capable of realisation at present; but how and why should we curse and reject the tendency which, in spite of themselves, draws men towards it, and which some of them, even now, understand more or less accurately?

Good evening, friend ; night approaches, and I do not wish to prolong the discussion. I do not think it necessary ; you know me and fully understand me. If we do not keep up the same pace, we at least, I believe, follow the same path ; but you halt at a stage where I do not consider I ought to stop. You will soon overtake me, and, if your attempt should be successful, I will praise the Lord and bless you too.

GEORGE.

*To M. CHARLES PONCY, Toulon.*

NOHANT, 6th June, 1851.

I am happy, my boy, to hear of the amelioration of your fate. At last, there is daily bread for you. It is indeed hard to have a heart, to have arms and a soul, and to be unable to employ them in feeding those we love ! The way in which you were elected is charming. It was a real victory.

I was in Paris when your letter arrived ; I found it on my return. I came back suffering from quinsy and in a highly feverish state, produced during the last fortnight of my sojourn in Paris, where I had not a minute's rest. Your second letter confirms your satisfaction. Being all three in good health, everything is therefore going on smoothly with you. I yesterday came across a small book of yours, entitled *Lieds* ; I had not previously seen it. Letters, newspapers, and books reach us here in the morning. The letters are brought to me in bed ; as for the printed matter, under the pretence of reading the newspaper, my young people mislay the books, or let them lie about, which all comes to the same

thing. Thus, when looking over some old papers and books, I found yours amongst them. Those *Lieds* contain some lovely things; and I perceive that practical life, to which, whether rich or poor, we must of necessity devote the best part of our time, does not extinguish the sacred fire in you. If poetry does not fill the cupboard, it at least preserves the life of the soul, and that itself, united to the tender affections of the heart and to family ties, is still a valuable gift from God.

I was forgetting to tell you something about *Molière*.—No, the worry of the censorship only resulted in vain menaces. There was nothing in the play to justify the attacks of ill-will. I will send it to you, in four acts, as it was performed, and in five, as I had originally written it. You will find it historically impartial. You will only see a scene wherein, after several personages have drunk the health of the king and queen, and that of the princes of the Fronde, a huntsman that of his dogs, a country maid to her geese, *Molière* drinks the health of the people. That is the passage which the censorship wanted to suppress absolutely. I stood firm; I challenged them to forbid the play. I requested them to do so, telling them that I should never have a finer opportunity of proclaiming the firmness and virtues of the censorship. They gave way, and the passage was retained. How very stupid those people are! So stupid, indeed, that one feels compelled to take pity on them.

At the early representations the public showed themselves very well disposed towards *Molière*. But, *between ourselves*, I must say that the public of the Boulevards, that fivepenny public which really represents the people, and to whom I sacrificed the wealthy people of the Théâtre Français, did not

acknowledge my devotion. The masses are still ungrateful or ignorant. They prefer murder, poisonings, and crimes generally to a literature possessed of style and feeling. In fact they are the worthy children of the people of the *Boulevard du Crime*,\* and it will be hard to ameliorate either their taste or their morality. My play, neglected by that sort of public, only ran twelve nights, and secured but a very sparse attendance of the lower classes, being patronised only by the *litterati* and the *bourgeois*. It was sad to see. We must not however, even say so, and, above all, must not lose courage. The loss of money is but a vexation; the loss of moral work and useless devotion are troubles which must not be allowed to worry us too much; and there is but one useful device. Onward! Onward! Good evening, dear children, Désirée Solange; I embrace you with all my heart.

*To M. ERNEST PÉRIGOS, La Châtre.†*

PARIS, 25th October, 1851.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am much affected by your praises, for they are most affectionate, and feel very flattered by your verses, which seem to me to be very good. I am scarcely a judge of poetry, although I am very fond of it. But yours seems to me to be full of ideas, and, in point of style, it really

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\* One of the Paris Boulevards was thus nicknamed, because of the character of dramas that used to be performed in its theatres, the favourite haunts of the lower classes.

† In answer to some verses he had addressed to her after a performance at Nohant of *Nello*, subsequently performed at the Odéon under the title of *Maitre Favilla*.



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is very fine. Now, am I deserving of all that? Certainly not; but if what you say of me is the expression of your opinion, I am grateful, without vanity.

I see you are quite imbued with the truth which I looked upon as my method and aim in art, and I think you express it better in your verses than I could in my prose. It is that, in the abstract order of things, truth is the ideal, as reality is the lie. God tolerates reality, but does not accept it; just as we aspire towards ideal and do not reach it. Ideal does nevertheless exist, since it is to become reality in the bosom of God, and even, let us hope so for the future of the world, reality upon this earth.

I long since contemplated sending you a copy of my complete works illustrated, not to condemn you to read them all, but as a keepsake from me. Before forwarding, I wait until the volumes have been stitched, for loose sheets are very inconvenient and soon get dirty.

Kiss Angèle and your children for me, if they are with you, and do, both of you, reserve a good corner for me in your hearts. I am, you know, anxious about that.

GEORGE SAND.

*To M. SULLY-LÉVY, Paris.*

NOHANT, 24th December, 1851.

MY DEAR MR. LÉVY,

I fully intended seeing you in Paris. During the early part of my stay, being unable to find the leisure, I did not write to you, contemplating doing so as soon as my play\* should have been performed and my other busi-

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\* *Le Mariage de Victorine.*

ness affairs settled. My intention was to spend a fortnight in Paris. Events, however, happened there. I felt no uneasiness for myself and wanted to stay; but I felt anxious about Maurice, whom I had left at Nohant. An outbreak was feared in the provinces; we have a great regard for the labouring classes, and, for that very reason, we should not, under any consideration whatever, have advised them to rise, supposing that we had possessed any influence. I am not aware whether other Socialists think as I do, but I did not perceive in the *coup d'état* a more disastrous issue than in any other similar attempt, and I never thought that the peasants could oppose any useful resistance to regular troops. It is not that the people may not sometimes work miracles; but, in that case, they must be urged on by some great idea, some grand impulse; and I do not believe that it is so now with the peasantry. They, therefore, rise only in defence of their interests, and, in the times we live in, it is not to their interest to rise.

I, therefore, apprehend an outbreak—not in our own district, our peasantry is too Bonapartist for that, but near us, in the surrounding Departments—and a state of things in which we find ourselves compromised between the people we love and blame and those we do not love, but do not wish to see oppressing and ill-treating others. The situation must have been delicate, and I wanted to be present. I therefore started, as it were, between the bullets, on the 3rd of December, with my daughter and granddaughter, and I am waiting until the situation be a little less strained and mistrust less prevalent, before returning to Paris in order to settle my affairs. Here much useless and unjust intimidation [were in my opinion indulged in; for, I feel almost certain that nobody

intended to stir. Many persons were arrested who, had they been left at liberty, would not have said or done anything. Let us hope the authorities will grow tired of their own rigour, which cannot serve any useful purpose, and has indeed been quite uncalled for.

I intend letting you know when I shall go to Paris, and expect that you will come and see me. Could I have been useful to you, for I always think of you on every occasion, I should have found the time to let you know. But I had no opportunity. I failed to dispose of either *Nello* or the other piece. I was on the point of coming to some arrangement, when I had to leave everything half done. If my three plays had been brought out, I should, I hope, have found the means of securing your engagement at one of the three theatres. I trust a favourable opportunity will present itself; but I should like to know first what you desire. You told me that you had an engagement proposed to you at the Vaudeville, but that it did not suit you. You told me you were anxious to appear in drama, and to begin at the Porte Saint Martin. But you are aware that I have been unable to make any arrangement there, because they refuse to engage Mademoiselle de Fernand.

I regret to have still so little influence; I hope that eventually I shall obtain a little more, and then you may depend on me to do all I can to help you.

Good night, I hope to see you soon, my dear sir. My children greet you cordially, and Emile Aucante intends writing to you soon.

*To HIS HIGHNESS PRINCE JÉROME NAPOLEÓN, Paris.*

PARIS, 3rd January, 1852.

PRINCE,

The pains you took to call upon an old sufferer I regarded as such a great proof of benevolence and kindness of heart, that I should not have dared to request you to come again.

My daughter tells me that I was wrong to doubt the frank sympathy with which you would have accepted my invitation. Rest assured that I will never have any doubt about you, and, as a proof, I take the liberty of telling you that, if this wretched habitation and cheerless face of mine do not frighten you, they will both feel revived and comforted by your kind friendship.

GEORGE SAND.

*To M. CHARLES PONCY, Toulon.*

PARIS, 4th January, 1852.

MY VERY DEAR CHILDREN,

I thank you for your nice and kind letters, and for all the happiness you wish me. Even supposing I could be happy in the midst of so much desolation and anxiety, it would be necessary for me to know you are happy in order to be completely so myself. But we are living in a time when we can only wish one another a good stock of courage in order to confront the unknown and to dispose of doubts.

Hope always remains, at the bottom of man's heart; but how faint and glimmering in the present moment is the light

of that little lamp that shines within us! Will the 8,000,000 votes teach the President that his strength is in the people, and that, in the exercise of his powers, he must rely upon democracy as at the outset?

But I will not sadden you with my reflections. I do not wish to cause Désirée to dream and sigh, or lovely Solange to feel drowsy—she who, happily for her, does not yet understand what life is. Give a tender kiss to those two dear creatures for me, my good Charles, and tell them that I bless them like my own children.

Always overwhelmed with work and in bad health, I push on with my daily task.

Let us have faith, my friends, and depend upon the goodness of God, here below and yonder.

I kiss you cordially; so do my children, who love you tenderly.

*To PRINCE LOUIS NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE, President of the  
Républic.*

PARIS, 20th January, 1852.

PRINCE,

I requested an audience of you; but, absorbed as you are in great labours and immense interests, I have little hope of seeing my prayer granted. But, even supposing it were, my natural timidity, my physical sufferings, and the fear of troubling you would probably not allow me to express to you freely the reasons which led me to quit my retreat and my sick bed. I therefore take the precaution of writing this to you, so that, if my lips and heart should fail me, I can at least beseech you to read my parting prayer.

I am not Madame de Staël. I possess neither her genius nor the pride with which she struggled against the twofold might of genius and power. My soul, more broken or more timid, comes to you without ostentation and without stiffness, without secret hostility; for, if my feelings were different, I should exile myself from your presence and should not come to conjure you to listen to me.

Yet, the object of my visit constitutes a very bold attempt on my part; but I make that attempt with so complete a sentiment of annihilation, as far as I am personally concerned, that, if you fail to be touched by it, you cannot take any offence at it. You have known me proud of my own conscience. I never believed I could be proud of anything else; but here my conscience dictates submission to me, and, if it were necessary for me to take upon myself every humiliation and every agony, I should do so with pleasure, being convinced that I should not lose your esteem for that womanly devotion which man always understands and never scorns.

Prince, my family is scattered to the four winds. The friends of my youth and of my old age, those who were my brothers and my children by adoption, are in prison or in exile. Your rigour fell on all those who take, who accept, or who submit to the name of Socialist Republicans.

Prince, you are too well aware of my respect for human proprieties to fear that I should herein advocate before you Socialism such as it is interpreted from certain points of view. It is not my mission to defend it, and I should misappreciate the benevolence which you extend to me, by listening to me, were I to treat in all its bearings a subject so vast, and your conception of which is certainly as clear as my own. I have always considered you as a Socialist genius, and, on the second

of December, after the stupor of an instant, in presence of that last shred of Republican society trampled under the feet of conquest, my first utterance was: "O Barbès, behold the sovereignty of the aim! I did not accept it, even from your austere lips; but now God is justifying you and imposing that sovereignty upon France as her last chance of salvation in the midst of the corruption of morals and the confusion of ideas. I do not feel strength enough to be its apostle; but, imbued as I am with religious confidence, I should think it a crime in the midst of that vast acclamation to give vent to an expression of reproach against heaven, the nation, or the man whom God calls and the people accept." You, doubtless, little care to know what I said in my heart, what I said and wrote to all my own people; but it is all-important that you should know this, you, who could not have dared so much merely from selfish motives, you who, in order to achieve such events, had before your eyes an ideal apparition of justice and truth. I have not been the only one of my creed to accept your advent with the submission which we owe to the logic of Providence; others, many other opponents of *sovereignty of the aim*, believed it their duty to remain silent or to accept, to submit or to hope. In the midst of the oblivion in which I have thought it proper that you should bury your recollections, there may still float a waif which I can invoke—the esteem which you have for my character, and which I flatter myself to have justified since by my silence and reserve.

If you do not accept in me what people call my opinion—a very vague expression for depicting the dream of the mind, or the meditation of the conscience—at least I am certain that you do not regret having believed in the righteousness and

disinterestedness of my heart. I appeal to that confidence which has been sweet to me and to yourself too, in your hours of solitary *réveries*, for they who believe are happy, and to-day perhaps you look back with regret to your prison at Ham, where you had no opportunities of knowing men as they are. I therefore dare to say to you : Prince, believe me, withdraw your indulgence from me if you will, but believe me, your armed hand, after having crushed those who openly resisted, is now striking, through numberless preventive arrests, harmless mental opposition, which only awaited a day of calm or liberty in order to allow itself to be morally vanquished, and believe me, Prince, that those who are honest enough, pure enough, to say : "What matters it that good comes through him whom we did not want ! So long as it *does* come, blessings on him !" are the soundest and most moral portion of the vanquished parties. They perhaps constitute the firmest help that you can wish for in the consolidation of your future work. How many are capable of loving good for its own sake, and happy to sacrifice themselves to it, if they should appear to be an obstacle in its path ? Such are precisely the people who are harassed and imprisoned under the branding accusation—here are the very terms of the warrants : "of having excited their fellow citizens to commit crimes." Some were stunned, stupefied by such an unheard-of accusation, others readily gave themselves up, desiring public acknowledgment of their innocence. But where will rigorous measures stop ? In periods of political agitation and anger fatal mistakes are daily committed. I do not wish to mention any particular instances, to complain of any particular facts, still less to draw up categories of innocent and guilty. My aim is loftier, and, having a personal grief of my own, I



come to lay before you the recital of all the sufferings which affect my heart and of all others. And I say to you: The prisons and the lands of exile might return to you, forces vital for France. You wish for that; you will certainly wish it, but not at this moment. Here, a reason, a matter of fact, a purely political question arrests you. You consider that terror and despair ought to hover for some time yet over the vanquished, and you allow the work of reprisals to go on unchecked, while you hide your face. I will not take the liberty of discussing a political question with you, that would be ridiculous on my part, but, from the depth of my ignorance and powerlessness, I cry unto you with a bleeding heart and my eyes full of tears.

Enough, enough, victor! spare both the strong and the weak, spare the women who weep as the men who do not; show yourself to be meek and humane, since you are so inclined. The fate of so many innocent or unfortunate beings requires that you should do so! Ah! Prince, the word "deportation,"\* that mysterious punishment, that everlasting exile under an unknown sky is not of your invention; I wish you only knew how it alarms even the calmest and the most indifferent of men. May not proscription beyond the mother country excite a contagious desire of emigration which you will be compelled to repress? And what of the preventive prison, where sick and dying prisoners are now huddled together on straw, in a mephitic atmosphere, and trembling with cold? and the anxiety of mothers and daughters who do not understand anything of political reasons, and the stupor of the peaceful workmen, of the peasants, who say: "Do they send

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\* Term employed to designate transportation of political offenders.

people to prison who have neither killed nor robbed? They will send us all there, then? And yet we had such confidence in the future when we voted for him!"

Ah! Prince, my dear Prince of yore, hearken to the man within yourself, who is yourself, and who will never be able to reduce himself to a state of abstraction in order to rule. Politics, no doubt, effect great things; but the heart alone works miracles. Observe your own, it already bleeds. That poor France of ours is bad and turbulent on the surface, and yet, beneath her armour, she possesses a woman's heart, a large motherly heart which your breath may re-animate. It is not only through governments, revolutions, or ideas that we have so often been capsize.

Any social reform, any movement of men and things, ought to be good for a nation. But what is wrong with us, what is the cause of our being at present perhaps ungovernable by the logic of facts alone? The reason why you may probably see human docility elude the most vigorous and learned policy, is the absence of Christian virtue, it is the drying up of hearts and feelings. All parties have been subjected to the attack of that baneful evil, a result of foreign invasion and of the repression of national liberty, and, as a matter of course, of national dignity.

It is that which, in one of your letters, you called the abnormal development of the stomach, the atrophy of the heart. Who will save and purify us, who will soften our savage instincts? You have wished to concentrate France in yourself, you have assumed her destinies, and you are now responsible, before God, for her soul far more than for her body. You have acted, you alone can act; I long since foresaw it, long since felt sure of it, and predicted it to you at

a time when few people in France believed it possible. The men whom I then told so used to reply :

“——So much the worse for us ! we shall not help him ; and if he does good, we shall have neither the pleasure nor the honour of having contributed to it. No matter !” they would add, “let good only be done, and then let the man be glorified !”

Among those who used to talk thus, and are still ready to do so again, are some, Prince, who are treated in your name as enemies and suspicious persons.

There are others less resigned no doubt, less disinterested perhaps, there are some probably soured and exasperated who, if they saw me at this moment imploring the grace of all, would disown me rather harshly. What matters it to you who, by showing clemency, can raise yourself above all ; or to me who am willing, through devotion, to humble myself in the place of all ? You will wreak the greatest vengeance upon those just mentioned if you compel them to accept life and liberty, instead of enabling them to proclaim themselves martyrs to their cause.

Will not those who perish at Cayenne or during the voyage leave a name in history, whatever may be the point of view from which they are considered ? If recalled by you, not from pity but your own sheer will, they were to become troublesome to the elect of five millions of people—there are three or four thousand of them, I hear—who could then blame you for wishing to render them powerless ? During that hour of respite given by you to suffering, you would learn to know the men who love the people well enough to annihilate themselves in presence of the expression of the people’s confidence and will.

Amnesty! Amnesty soon, my Prince! If you should not heed my prayer, what will it matter to me that I have made a supreme effort before lying? But methinks I shall not have displeased God, I shall not have debased human liberty in my own person, and, above all, I shall not have rendered myself unworthy of your esteem, which I prize far more than peaceful days and a quiet death. When a warrant was issued against me, I might have fled abroad, Prince; one can always run away. I might have published this letter *in factum* so as to make enemies for you in case you might not even read it. But, happen what may, I will not do so. There are things sacred to me, and, in begging an interview of you, in coming to you with hope and confidence, I must, in order to be loyal and satisfied with myself, have burnt my ships behind me and put myself entirely at your mercy.

GEORGE SAND.

*To His HIGHNESS PRINCE JÉRÔME NAPOLEON, Paris.*

PARIS, 2nd February, 1852.

DEAR PRINCE,

Count d'Orsay, who is so kind, and always in quest of agreeable news for his friends, tells me to-day that you feel some sympathy, almost some affection, for me.

Nothing could cause me greater pleasure; but, besides, as I had just been telling him, cherishing towards you, and in all earnestness, those very feelings, I foresee in you a sincere and devoted help for such as suffer from the fearful interpretation given, by certain agents, to the intentions of those in power.

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I hope that you will be able to obtain the rectification of many errors, of many injustices, and I know that you wish to do so. Oh Lord! how unfeeling people are to-day! You are not heartless, yourself! and you arouse feelings in those who are devoid of them!

You called on me while I was at M. d'Orsay's; that gentleman informed me of your intended visit; I hastily returned home, but was too late. You had left word that you might call again at about six o'clock, but you were unable to do so. I am doubly sorry for it, and for myself, and for my poor prisoners from the Indre, whom I should so much like you to save. M. d'Orsay told me that you could do so; that you possess some influence over M. de Persigny. I must say that the latter has been very kind to me, and offered me pardons for those of my friends whom I might name. The President of the Republic told me the same thing. My friends had so strongly forbidden me to mention their names that I was obliged to decline the President's kind offer.

M. de Persigny, with whom I felt more at ease, having insisted, and having directed a letter to be written to me with that object, I believe I may, without compromising anybody, accept his goodwill as a personal favour.

If that is humiliating for anybody, it is for myself alone; and I accept the *humiliation* without any false pride, with even a feeling of sincere gratitude, without which it seems to me that I should be disloyal. I therefore wrote down several names, and now rely on the promises made. But my real aim is to obtain a full amnesty for all the arrested and accused in the Department of the Indre;\* that ought to be all the easier,

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\* Victims of the *coup d'état* of the 2nd December, 1851.

seeing that no insurrectionary outbreak occurred there; that all the arrests were preventive only; and that no conviction has as yet taken place. The question is therefore only the opening of the prisons, conformably with the ministerial circular, to all those who are but slightly implicated, and to obtain *un arrêt de non-lieu*,\* or the abandonment of the prosecution, of all those against whom suspicion is a little stronger. A line from the Minister to the Prefect would settle the whole affair.

The Courts, if entrusted with such cases, but as to which I am ignorant, are but blind slaves.

M. de Persigny could scarcely promise that to me; but you could strongly urge it, and would certainly obtain it.

I need not tell you that my heart will be full of gratitude and affection for it. *Your own* will plead within you far better than *mine*.

You told the people at my house that you were on the point of starting for the country. I hope my letter will reach you there, and that you will write to the Minister. You will also see him on your return, will you not, Prince? And I will teach the inhabitants of my Berry that they must love you as I do myself, with a heart that has maternal age—that of the best affections.

GEORGE SAND.

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\* *Nolle prosequi.*

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*To PRINCE LOUIS NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE, President of the  
Republic.*

PARIS, 3rd February, 1852.

PRINCE,

In an interview in which embarrassment and emotion led me to be more prolix than I intended, I obtained from you words of kindness which cannot be forgotten. You were good enough to tell me: "Ask me for whatever pardon you may wish."

I had the honour to reply that nobody had authorised me to implore you. I had not seen anybody in Paris; I called upon you first.

I should only have importuned you with a matter of detail had I insisted upon the arrests which took place in my province, and whose consequences do not appear serious to me, since no insurrectionary outbreak occurred there, and that even if we suppose there to have been a thought of resistance, it is impossible that the authorities should intend to punish a thought not actually carried into action. I might have feared this to be the case when I left the province, where the authorities seemed bent upon alarming and causing disaffection in the population by unjustifiably rigorous measures. But when I heard you answering me with so much meekness and humanity, I could no longer feel any uneasiness, and there remained for me no other step to take on behalf of my countrymen of the Indre but to hasten their release by applying to your Minister.

But, if I flatter myself with the hope of easily obtaining pardon for men respecting whom no decision has yet been taken, I am not without apprehension as regards those whose

fate has been elsewhere rigorously sealed. I to-day saw two whom I know to be completely innocent, if the punishment be intended for the act of conspiring, not for an opinion . . . and which latter cannot be, is unheard of in our customs, in the ideas of our generation, and must be quite impossible to the heart of Prince Louis Napoléon. I found them resigned to their fate, and, thanks to the system of excess which you have just put an end to, imbued with the monstrous idea that they were being punished, not for their acts, but for their principles. I strongly denied that supposition, which was grievous to me after what I heard you say. I told them that I had faith in you, and that personality is unknown to the heart of a man penetrated, as you are, with a mission superior to the passions and resentments of vulgar politics.

I said that I should come to beg their pardon of you, or the commutation of their sentence. They at first refused the offer; but when they saw how strong was my conviction, they acquiesced. They authorised me to take advantage of your generous offer, which I should have been so grieved to be obliged to decline. •

You would not esteem those two men were I to tell you that they will retract their principles and abandon their sentiments. They have always been, they will always be foreign to conspiracies, to secret societies, and the absolute form of your government cannot induce you to dread the public expression of doctrines which you would not tolerate.

I take upon myself the debt of gratitude.

You know that, for my part, it will be deep and sincere. Do not disdain a sentiment so rare in this world, and with which you will perhaps meet to a larger extent among the vanquished than among those who profit by the victory.



Prince, I recollect having written to you, while you were at Ham, that you would be Emperor some day, and that on that day you would not hear any more of me. You are now eight million times above an Emperor of Germany or Russia, and yet I am imploring you. So act, that I may be proud of having perjured myself.

It may be against your present intentions to let it be known that it is to me, a Socialist writer, that you are granting the commutation of the sentences of two Socialists. If so, trust to my honour and my silence. I have not acquainted anybody with the object of this letter, and, satisfied with being secretly proud of your beneficence, I shall, if such be your will, never disclose the happy result of this letter.

GEORGE SAND.

If you do not reject my prayer, condescend to let me know at what moment you will deign to receive me, that I may name to you the two persons whose fate interests me.

*TO THE SAME.*

PARIS, 12th February, 1852.

PRINCE,

Permit me to bring under your notice a painful supplication, that of four soldiers sentenced to death, who, in their profound ignorance of political matters, have selected as their intercessor with you one who is proscribed. The wife of the proscribed neither asks nor hopes for anything as regards her own misfortune, and is no more

acquainted with the signatories of the petition than I am myself, but forwards with it a few beautiful lines, which will touch you more, I feel certain, than would any pleading of mine. The poor distressed seamstress, reduced to poverty with her three children, ill herself, but mute and resigned, is far from suspecting that I shall make you read her orthographical mistakes. As for me, I did not intend importuning you any more; but when I saw that it related to a sentence of death, and not to the troubles of my vanquished party, I felt that a moment of hesitation would deprive me of the little sleep still left to me.

I could not either refuse to present to you the supplication of the unfortunate Émile Rogat, which was handed to me in the absence and on behalf of Prince Jérôme Napoléon. That Prince it was who said to me, at the moment when I was, for the first time, about to approach you in trembling: "Oh! as for being kind, he is kind. Trust in him!" That was an encouragement so well founded, that I owe him gratitude for it. As regards the triple pardon which you granted for me, I am anxious to tell you something which I am quite sure will interest and satisfy you. I have several things to tell you, it is my duty to do so, and this time I shall not have to apologise for so doing.

When you have a moment to spare, as they say in society, grant it to me; you will always find me ready to take advantage of it with the liveliest gratitude.

GEORGE SAND.

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*To M. JULES HETZEL, Paris.*

PARIS, 20th February, 1852.

MY FRIEND,

I would as readily know you yonder as here, despite the embarrassments, so injurious to my brain and health, in which your absence may leave me. Here no reliance can be placed upon anything. The pardons or justice which are promised remain, in most cases, but dead letters, thanks to the resistance of a reaction stronger than the President, and also thanks to a confusion which we cannot quickly get rid of, if ever we get rid of them at all. One half of France has turned informer against the other half. The blind hatred and atrocious zeal of a furious police have been satiated. The silence enforced upon the press, the *hearsay*, gloomier and more injurious to absolute governments than the liberty to contradict, have so confused public opinion that it believes and disbelieves all rumours with as much reason for doing the one as the other. In fact, Paris is a chaos, and the provinces a tomb. When in the provinces and witnessing the annihilation of minds there, one is obliged to reflect that all energy was before concentrated in a few men who to-day are either prisoners, dead, or banished. In most cases, those men made a bad use of their influence, since the material hopes they gave, being once annihilated with their defeat, neither faith, nor courage, nor righteousness, remained in the souls of the partisans they had secured.

Whoever lives in the provinces believes, therefore, and must believe, that the Government is strong and founded upon a conviction, a general will, since there is not one

in a thousand who offers resistance, and when such resistance does occur it is timid and overwhelmed by the weight of its own moral powerlessness. On arriving here, my impression was that we must temporarily submit ourselves, with the greatest calm and possible faith in Providence, to a dictatorship imposed upon us by our very thoughts.

I hoped that, since there existed an all-powerful man, he could be approached and besought respecting the life and liberty of several thousands of victims (most of them in his eyes innocent even). That man proved himself accessible and humane while listening to me. He offered to grant me all the pardons I might ask for, promising shortly to proclaim a general amnesty. I refused individual pardons. I retired, hoping for an amnesty for all. The man was quite in earnest, quite sincere, and it seems that it was his own interest to be so. I called upon him again about a fortnight ago for the *second and last time*, in order to save a personal friend from deportation and despair (for he was in despair). I said in unmistakable terms (and I had written in unmistakable terms too, when I requested an audience) that that friend would not *repent* his past, and would not bind himself in anywise for the future; that I myself remained in France, a sort of scapegoat that might be struck whenever the authorities felt so disposed. In order to obtain the commutation of sentence which I begged for, in order to obtain it without compromising or lowering the person to whom it applied, I dared to rely upon a generous impulse on the part of the President, to whom I represented that person to be his *incorrigible personal enemy*. Upon this the Prince there and then offered to grant him a full pardon. I was obliged to refuse in the name of the person to whom that pardon would have applied, and to thank

the Prince in *my own name*. I thanked him with the greatest sincerity, and, from that day, I regarded myself as in duty bound not to complacently allow people in my presence to calumniate the trait in the Prince's character which dictated such action. Having been made acquainted with his manners by people who have long been in close contact with him and do not love him, I know that he is neither debauched, nor a thief, nor bloodthirsty. He spoke with me for some time, and with sufficient abandonment to enable me to notice in him certain good instincts and tendencies towards an aim which should also be ours.

I said to him: "May you succeed! but I do not believe that you have gone the right way to do so. You are of opinion that the end justifies the means; I believe in and profess the contrary doctrine. I would not accept the dictatorship even of my own party. I am obliged to submit to yours, since I have come disarmed to request a pardon from you; but my conscience cannot change. I am, I remain what you know me to be; if that is a crime, do with me as you please."

Since that day, the 6th of February, I have not seen him; I wrote to him twice, in order to ask him to pardon four soldiers sentenced to death, and to recall a dying convict (*déporté*). I was successful. My applications related to Greppo and Luc Desages, Leroux's son-in-law, as also to Marc Dufraisse. Everything was granted. Greppo and his wife were set at liberty the next day. Luc Desages was not released. That, I believe, is owing to an error of designation which I made when furnishing the President with the name and the place of his trial. In my letter I rectified my mistake, and whilst doing so pleaded, for the third time, the cause

of the prisoners of the Indre. I say *pleaded*, because, the President and his Minister subsequently having unhesitatingly replied to me that they did not mean to prosecute for opinions or presumed intentions, people incarcerated as suspected persons were entitled to liberty and were about to obtain it. Twice they drew up the list, twice they gave orders under my eyes, and *ten times*, during the conversation, the President and the Minister told me, each in turn, that the authorities had gone too far, that they had used the President's name to cover private revenge, that all such action was heinous, and a stop would be put to that atrocious and deplorable fury.

*Such were my complete relations with the Government, consisting of a few solicitations, letters, and conversations. I have since done nothing but rush from Carlier to Piétri, and from the secretary of the Minister of the Interior to M. Baragnay, in order to ensure the execution of what had been granted or promised me for the Berry people: Desages, Fulbert Martin, still detained here though acquitted; Madame Rolland, arrested and imprisoned; and, in fact, several others with whom I am acquainted, and to whom I did not think myself justified in refusing my time and trouble (that is to say, in the state I then was in), my health and life.*

To reward me, they say and write to me from all parts: "You compromise yourself, ruin yourself, dishonour yourself; you are a Bonapartist. Solicit and obtain favours for us, but hate the man who grants them; and, if you do not say that he devours children alive, we shall put you under the ban."

That does not at all frighten me; I so fully expected it! But it inspires me with profound contempt for party spirit; and I heartily send in my *political resignation* (as says that

poor Hubert), not to the President, who did not ask for it, but to God Himself, whom I know better than most people. I have the right to give it, since it is not for me a question of life or death.

I know that the President spoke of me with much regard, and that that incensed many of his retinue. I know people found fault with his granting my requests; for that reason I know my neck will be wrung if his should be so, which is quite probable. I know they also spread everywhere the rumour of my always calling at the *Élysée*; and the *Reds* welcome the idea of my humbling myself with a complacency of which they alone are capable; in fact, I know that they will murder me at the next crisis. That, I assure you, does not alarm me, so disgusted am I with everybody and everything in this world.

Such are the real facts which will help you to put right any errors, if they should be sincerely made. If they should not be sincere, I do not wish you to take any notice of them. The following is my present opinion regarding the future. That opinion is based upon what I see in Paris:

The Prince President is no longer master, if even he ever were for twenty-four hours. The first time I saw him he appeared to me as the envoy of fatality. In our second interview, though outstepped, he still seemed able to struggle. Now I do not see him, but I hear public opinion, and, from time to time, frequent the Prince's *entourage*. Either I make a great mistake, or the man, not the system, is lost, and to him will succeed a power of reaction all the more furious that the meekness of temperament of the sacrificed man will no longer oppose. But do the people and the *bourgeoisie*, who compete in murmurs and menaces, agree as regards once

more securing the direction of the Republic? Are their aims identical? Are the people bent upon again seizing universal suffrage? Is the *bourgeoisie* willing to grant it to the people? Who will side with or against the army, if it should again murder passers-by in the streets?

Let those who believe in elements of resistance against the existing order of things hope and desire the fall of Napoléon! As for me, I must either be blind, or I rightly perceive that France is the only one guilty in all this, and that, as a chastisement for her vices and crimes, she is doomed to struggle, without result, during a few years, in the midst of dreadful catastrophes.

My opinion is, and always will be, that the President is a luckless individual, the victim of error and of the *sovereignty of the aim*. Circumstances, that is, party ambitions, carried him into the turmoil. He flattered himself that he could control it; but he is already half submerged beneath it, and I doubt whether he is now fully conscious of his actions.

Farewell, friend; that is all for to-day. Do not speak any more of what they say or write against me. Conceal it from me; I am disgusted enough as it is, and do not want to stir up all that mire. This letter conveys to you sufficient information to enable you, if need be, to defend me without consulting me. But do those who attack me deserve that I should defend myself? If my friends suspect me, it is that they never were worthy of being such; that they do not know me. In such case I desire to forget them quickly.

As for you, dear old fellow, stay where you are until the situation brightens; or, if you should intend to come for some little time, let me know, Baraguay d'Hilliers, or some other person, can I believe ask for a safe conduct, in order that you



may come to personally superintend your affairs. But do not let us try anything definitive before the danger of a new upheaval is removed from the minds of the people.

GEORGE SAND.

*To M. ERNEST PÉRIGOIS, Prison of Châteauroux.*

PARIS, 24th February, 1852.

Thanks, my dear friend, for your kind letter. It has caused me great pleasure. It is therefore obvious that neither you nor your companions suspect me. So much the better; I am thankful to you for it, and that justice of my countrymen will impart fresh courage to me. The feelings towards me here are different. There are people who cannot believe in moral courage and disinterestedness of character; and I am being spoken of in disparaging terms in foreign newspaper correspondence. It matters little, does it not?

Were I to see you, I would furnish you with details respecting my personal impressions and the steps I took, and they, no doubt, would be of interest to you; but I can sum them up in a few lines, which will enable you to form an estimate of the true state of affairs.

The name to which resort was had in order to perform that awful reactionary slaughter, is but a symbol, a flag that will be put into the pocket or trampled upon as soon as an opportunity arises. The *instrument* is not destined to eternal docility. Human and just by nature, but imbued with the false and baneful idea that *the end justifies the means*, he allowed himself to be persuaded that we can tolerate much harm in order to secure ultimate good, and personify

might in a man in order to make that man the Providence of a nation.

You see what will happen, what has already happened with that man. The reality of the monstrous deeds which are performed in his name is concealed from him, and he is doomed to misunderstand it, not having understood the truth in the idea. In short, he drinks from the chalice of error presented to his lips after having drunk that presented to his mind, and, with the personal will of the good he has dreamed of, he is doomed to be the instrument, the accomplice, the pretext for all the harm accomplished by all the Absolutist parties. He is doomed to be their dupe and their victim. Shortly, it is my deep and tragical presentiment, he will fall in order to make room for people who will certainly not be as good as he, but who, under hypocritical formulæ of admiration, take care to denounce him as an implacable despot, in order to charge his memory with the responsibility of all the crimes committed by them, unknown to him.

He appears to me to be now trying a temporary dictatorship, the sternness of which he hopes some day to be able to relax. But when he attempts to do so he will be lost, and yet, if he does not soon do so, the nation will arouse against him an insurmountable resistance. The future looks very dark to me, for the idea of fraternity is stifled for a long time to come by the system of infamy, denunciation, and base vengeance now prevailing. The thought of revenge necessarily enters deeply into the heart; what, alas! becomes of the Christian sentiment, the only one that can cause a Republic to endure?

I do not know what will be decided with regard to us poor persecuted ones of Berry. I pleaded our cause from

the point of view of liberty of conscience, and I could do so *with a clear conscience*, seeing that we have not plotted against the person of the President since the events of December. The reply to me was that thoughts, intentions, opinions are not prosecuted, and yet in fact they are, and I still do not see the realisation of the promises that were made to me. Elsewhere I am told that such promises were Jesuitry and falsity.

I feel certain that such is not the case. It is perhaps something worse for us—powerlessness. A hecatomb was given to the reaction; it can no longer be snatched therefrom. Yet, I still hope *for ourselves* from my pleading, and a speedy amnesty *for all* from necessity. It is openly promised. Any *pardon* can be easily obtained by *favour*; but as nobody in our part of the country expects such favours, I only have to play the part of sincere advocate, and, as much as possible, to deny the calumnies of our adversaries.

Farewell, dear friend; burn my letter. I would read it to the President, but a prefect would not do so, and would find in it a pretext for new persecutions. I do not exhort you to courage and patience; I know you are not deficient in either. My family unites with me in kissing you heartily. Let us hope to see each other soon.

G.

*To M. CALAMATTA, Brussels.*

PARIS, 24th February, 1852.

FRIEND,

What you told me he said to you is correct, at least in the terms which you mention; but we must not congratulate ourselves. As for me, I have no right to suspect the

sincerity of the intentions of the *individual*. Methinks it would be highly disloyal to invoke such sentiments in him and denounce them as perfidious, when I am indebted to them for the safety of several people.

But, putting aside all that can be said or thought for or against that individual, it seems to me beyond doubt that he is or will soon be reduced to impotence, for having given way to perfidious counsels, and having believed that good (in the aim) could result from evil (in the means).

His cause, like our own, is lost; what will be the outcome of all this? Misfortune for all! Were there a master in France, we might hope for something; that master might have been universal suffrage, however distorted and divergent from its principle; however blind and anxious the people might have been to secure their material happiness, we might have said: "Here is a man who embodies and represents the popular resistance to the idea of liberty; a man who symbolises the need of temporary authority which the people seem to experience; should those two wills agree they will constitute the dictatorship of the people, a dictatorship devoid of ideal though not of future, since by acquiring the well-being of which they are deprived, the people will of necessity acquire instruction and reflection."

It seemed to me, it still seems to me, although I have not again seen the *individual* since the 5th of February, that the electors and the elected are pretty closely agreed as to the foundation of things; but the former, as the latter, are unacquainted with the means, and fancy that the end justifies all. They fail to see that fatality, as well as the play of the instruments they use, herein show themselves more just and logical than might have been expected. Instruments betray, para-

lyse, corrupt, conspire, and sell. That is what I believe, and I expect anything but the early triumph of the fraternal and Christian idea, without which we shall have no durable Republic. We shall have to submit to other dictatorships; God knows what they may be. When the people have acquired painful experience, they will perceive that they cannot personify themselves in a man, and that God is averse to blessing an error which is no longer in keeping with the age.

Meanwhile it is we, the Republicans, who will still be victims of such storms. We should probably be wise were we to wait (before recalling the people to their true duties), until they have understood their errors, and repented having considered us as a handful of criminals who must be abandoned, given up, and denounced to the fury of the reaction.

Good night, friend; I kiss you and regret that you should be yonder when I am here. My health is still impaired; I fatigued myself much, and have only obtained up to the present a great deal less than had been promised to me. I attribute it to the frightful disorder which reigns in that sinister branch of the administration, as also to the anxiety which the elections are causing the authorities. I believe that the amnesty will come as soon as the former are over. If not, I will renew my efforts, in order to snatch as many victims as I can from suffering and agony; calumnies are my reward, that is quite natural, and I do not wish to heed them.

Next week a new piece of mine will be played, a *gay* and *grotesque* piece,\* which I wrote whilst anguish was devouring

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\* *Les Vacances de Pandolphe.*

my soul, theatrical directors refusing my pieces under the pretext that they make people feel sad. Poor spectators! their hearts are so sensitive, their feelings are so delicate, those kind *bourgeois*. We must take care not to make them ill.

Good night again, dear friend; I send this letter through a safe channel. Kiss your dear Peppina for me. Maurice feels proud of your compliment.

GEORGE.

*To PRINCE LOUIS NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE, President of the Republic.*

PARIS, March, 1852.

PRINCE,

Those unfortunate *déportés*\* from Châteaunroux, fettered like convicts, started for the fort of Bicêtre † amidst the tears of a population which loves you, and which people depict to you as dangerous and ferocious. Nobody understands such rigorous treatment. You are told by some that it produces a *good effect*. You are misled, deceived, and betrayed!

Why are you thus treated? Everybody but yourself feels and conceives why. Ah! if Henry V. sends you into exile or into prison, you will remember some one who still loves you, although your reign rent his heart, and who, instead of wishing, as the interests of his party perhaps require, that

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\* The political offenders who, after the *coup d'état*, were sentenced to transportation.

† A fort near Paris, where the prisoners of the *coup d'état* were detained previous to being transported.

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you should be rendered odious by such measures, is indignant at seeing the false part which some seek to make you play in history, you whose heart and destiny are equally great.

Who feels any satisfaction in these acts of fury, this forgetfulness of human dignity, this political hatred which destroys all notions of what is just and true, this inauguration of the reign of terror in the provinces, the proconsulate of prefects who, in striking us, clear the way for others than yourself? Are not we your natural friends, whom you have confounded when chastising the riotousness of a few? And are not those who do ill in your name your natural enemies? Report says that this system of political barbarity pleases the *bourgeoisie*. That is not so. The *bourgeoisie* is not composed of a few big-wigs in each *chef-lieu*,\* who have their particular grudges to gratify, their future plots to serve. It is composed of obscure persons who dare not say anything, because they are oppressed by the most prominent; but who have feelings, and who cast down their eyes with shame and grief at the sight of those men whom the authorities convert into martyrs, and who, fettered like convicts under the eyes of the prefects, proudly accept their chains.

The sub-prefect of La Châtre has been dismissed, I know not why; but the people say and believe that it is because he ordered the prisoners' chains to be removed, and conveyances provided for them.

The astonished peasants came to town to take a good look at the victims. The commissary of police shouted to the people: "Behold those who violated and disembowelled women!"

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\* The chief town of a Department.

The soldiers muttered: "Don't believe it! Not a single woman was ever violated or disembowelled. These are honest but unfortunate people. They are Socialists; we are not; but we pity and respect them." At Châteauroux, the victims were compelled to resume their fetters. The *gendarmes* who received the prisoners at Paris were astonished at their treatment.

General Canrobert did not see anybody. He was said to have been sent by you to consider the sentences pronounced by the wrath of the prefects and the terror of the *commissions mixtes*,\* to converse with the victims, and to place no reliance upon the statements suggested by local vengeance. Three of your Ministers had said so to me. Happy to justify you, I repeated to everybody what they told me. How did those *missi dominici*, with the exception of one of them, fulfil their missions? They saw only the judges, they only consulted the passions, and, whilst a commission of appeal for pardon (*commission de recours en grâce*) was being instituted and received appeals and claims, your envoys of peace, your ministers of clemency and justice aggravated or confirmed the sentences which that commission might perhaps have nullified.

Think of what I tell you, Prince; it is the truth. Think of it but for five minutes! A testimony of truth, a cry from conscience which is, at the same time, that of a grateful and friendly heart, well deserves to enlist the attention of the head of the State for five minutes.

I ask you to pardon all the *déportés* of the Department of the Indre; on my knees I beseech you to grant me that

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\* Special tribunals dealing with those concerned in the outbreaks following the *coup d'état*.



favour; my kneeling does not humble me. God entrusted you with absolute power; it is He, therefore, whom I entreat, as well as the friend of the past. I know all those convicts: there is not one among them that is not honest, incapable of a bad deed, incapable of plotting against the man who, in spite of the fury and hatred of his party, will in each case have done them justice as a citizen and pardoned them as a victor.

Now, Prince, are not the pardon of a few obscure men, who have become harmless; the discontent of a twenty-two year old prefect, who displays a novice's zeal, and of six big-wigs—at most, poor, wicked, misled and stupid folk, who pretend to represent the population, but which the population does not even know—great sacrifices to make when the question at issue is a deed of kindness, justice, and might?

Prince, Prince, listen to the grey-headed woman who entreats you on her knees; the woman a hundred times calumniated, who always emerges blameless, before God and the witnesses of her conduct, from all the trials of her life; the woman who abjures none of her beliefs, and does not think she perjures herself in believing in you. Her opinion will perhaps leave a trace in the future.

You too will be calumniated! and, whether I outlive you or not, there will be a voice, one single voice perhaps, in the Socialist party which will leave the testament of its last thought respecting you. Enable me, therefore, to justify myself with my own people, for having placed my trust and confidence in your soul. Give me some individual pardons until you deem fit to grant those striking proofs which you caused me to foresee in the future, and which my heart, just and sincere as it is, did not reject as mere guile, as a word of trifling commiseration for its tears.

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To THE SAME.

PARIS, March, 1852.

PRINCE,

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the pardons which you have deigned to grant to my request.

Grant to me, grant to yourself, to your own heart, the pardon of the thirteen *déportés* of the Indre, sentenced by the *Commission mixte* of Châteauroux. They, in vain, appealed to the *Commission of Pardons*. They write to me that General Canrobert—who, contrary to what had been announced to me respecting his mission by three of your Ministers, declined to see anybody but the authorities at Châteauroux—is said to be on the point of seeing them at the fort of Bicêtre, to which they have been transferred.

Is it a moment to appeal to submission, when those unfortunate people have just been fettered like convicts under the eyes of the prefect, and men of honour, incapable of even the thought of a bad deed, have thus been taken through France? Do you not wish that dreadful system (which confounds the *presumption* of a political opinion with the most abject crimes) to cease, as also to dispel the belief that you authorised it, that you knew of it?

Show, Prince, that you possess the delicate sense of French honour. Do not require that your enemies—if, however, those vanquished be such—should become unworthy of having been fought by you. Return them to their families without requiring that they should *repent*; what for? for having been Republicans? That is all their crime. Act so that they may esteem and love you. Their love would

be a safer guarantee for you than oaths obtained through fear.

Trust to the only Socialist mind which remains personally attached to you, in spite of all those blows dealt against its Church. It is I, the only one whom they have not thought of frightening, and who, having only met in you meekness and sensibility, feels no repugnance to beg of you on my knees the pardon of my friends.

*To M. ALPHONSE FLEURY, La Châtre.*

NOHANT, 5th April, 1852.

FRIEND,

May your will be done! I will not insist, and do not feel offended with you, since you obey a conviction. But I deplore it in a sense, and I will tell you what, in order that henceforth we may understand each other.

The culminating point of your argumentation is the following: Great expiations, and great chastisements are necessary. *The true notion of right can only revive through terrible deeds of justice.*

In other words, what you believe legitimate and possible in our hands is a dictatorship, it is severity, chastisement, and vengeance.

I wish to tell you, I must, that I entirely differ from that opinion, which I believe is only made to justify what is to-day going on in France. The Government of all has always been and will always be the ideal and aim of my conscience. In order that all men should be instructed in their own rights and interests, time is necessary, a hundred times more

of it than was foreseen by us when we proclaimed the sovereign principle of universal suffrage. The latter did not work satisfactorily, so much the worse for itself and for us. If, to-morrow, we provoke its free manifestation, it will once more turn against us, that is evident and certain. From that you will conclude, I suppose, that it must be restrained or momentarily destroyed in order to save France. I deny it; I refuse to admit it. I have under my eyes the spectacle of a dictatorship. I have seen that of M. Cavaignac, which, I quite recollect, did not shock you as much as the present one, and which indeed was no better. I have had enough of dictatorships; I do not want any more of them. Any coming revolution, whatsoever it may be, will only impose itself by those means, which have become the fashion and tend to enter into our political customs.

Those means kill the parties which resort to them. They are condemned by Heaven which permits them, as by the masses which are subjected to them. If the Republic again mounts that hobby-horse, she will become a party affair, which will have its own day like others, but leave behind only chaos, hazard, and foreign invasion. Therefore, you who are irritated carry in your bosoms the death of France. May you long wait for the day of remuneration, which you believe will be triumphant, whereas I think it will be fatal! Until then, I hope, the masses will become enlightened, in spite of all, and understand that their sufferings are the result of their faults, of their ignorance and corruption; and that, when able to govern themselves, they will disown leaders who come to them bringing terror in their rear.

Until then we shall suffer; well! we shall be victims, but not executioners. It is time to settle the old question which

Mazzini has again brought to life, whether we should be politicians or Socialists. He is of opinion that we must henceforth be purely *politicians*. I declare in my soul that, for the present, we must be *non-political* Socialists, and the experience of the years which have just elapsed brings me back to my former opinions. We cannot be politicians to-day without trampling human rights, the rights of all, under our feet. That notion of true right cannot become part and parcel of the consciences of men, who can only enforce it by beginning to violate it. However honest and sincere they may be, they cease to be so as soon as they take part in contemporaneous action. They can no longer be so, under penalty of displaying anew the impotence of the provisional Government. The logic of facts compels them to admit the principle of the Jesuits of the Inquisition of '93, of the 18th *Brumaire*, and of the 2nd December. *He wishes the means who wishes the end.* That principle is true in fact, but morally false, and a party that quarrels with morality will never endure in France, despite the apparent immorality of that disturbed and exhausted nation.

Dictatorship is, therefore, illegitimate before God and before men; it is as illegitimate in the hands of a king as in those of a revolutionary party. In the past it possessed a fatal legitimacy, which no longer belongs to it. It lost it the day when France proclaimed universal suffrage. Why? Because any truth, however short-lived, secures its place and its right in history. It must remain therein, in spite of all the gropings, of all the errors with which its first application may have been marred and inevitably impeded; but woe to him who suppresses it, were it even for a single day! Therein is made obvious the great sense of the masses, for they abandon

the man who commits that profanation ; therein lies the secret of the indifference with which the people regarded the violation of their representation on the 2nd of December. Yet, that representation was not the result of limited suffrage ; but it had decreed the death of universal suffrage, and the people allowed themselves to be more easily caught by the bait of a spurious universal suffrage, which at least had preserved its original name, and whose mental restrictions they have not understood.

“ But,” you will perhaps reply, “ I am not one of those who would wish to come back with a dictatorship and the suppression or restriction of universal suffrage.” As far as you are personally concerned, I am convinced of it ; but then I declare to you that you are impotent because illogical. Our nation is not Republican, and, in order that it should become so, we must have freedom of propaganda ; even more than that, for the nation is illiterate and does not like to listen. We must have an official encouragement of propaganda ; the latter should, perhaps, be imposed by the State. Well ! what Government will be strong enough to act thus ? A revolutionary dictatorship ; I can imagine no other. What will bring it about ? A revolution ? Quite so. Who will make the revolution ? We, whom the majority of votes rejects and sacrifices ? It will therefore only take place by means of a conspiracy, a bold stroke, a happy chance, a surprise, by means of an armed outbreak. How long shall we last ? A few months, perhaps, during which, in order to secure the favourable result of the suffrage, we shall strike terror into the rich, and consequently inflict misery upon the poor. And the latter benighted lot will have us ? Nonsense ! A workman said a good thing when he spoke of placing

three months of misery at the service of the *idea*; but has that word been echoed in France? Will not the poor man always be anxious to rid himself, by a vote, of a power which frightens him and cannot give him immediate satisfaction, whatever it may dare and do? No, a hundred times no; we cannot perform a social revolution with the means of actual politics; what was true up to the present has become false, because the aim of that revolution is a truth, the experiment of which has not yet been tried upon the earth, and because it is too pure and grand to be carried out with the means of the past, and by us who are still, in too many respects, the men of the past. We have the proof of this under our eyes. Here is a system which carries in itself a principle of materialistic Socialism which it does not confess, but which is its own destiny, its *fatidical* innateness, its unique means of being, whatever it may do to rid itself thereof, and to caress the aristocratic requirements with which it is eaten up. That system will be lost the day when it allows the scale to be turned by its aristocratic instinct. It must flatter the people or perish. It is quite aware of that, and trembles upon its base which has scarcely a footing in the ground. Why is it impossible to consolidate that power without violence and without weakness? For it displays the spectacle of those two extremes which always and everywhere meet. It is because it is the result of the recollections of the past, powerless to impede or to found the future, and to secure any other result but moral disorder and intellectual chaos. If material order should succeed in prevailing (of which I doubt), what true progress will there be? None, in my estimation, for which the future will be indebted to it. Now that I examine and judge it calmly, I perceive its work and the

part it has to play in history. It is a material necessity of the times which produced it. It is, in a providential sense, a complete gap in human events.

There are days, months, years in the lives of nations as in those of individuals, when fate seems asleep and Providence insensible to our troubles and errors. God seems to abstain from interference, and, though from fatigue and the absence of outward help, we are compelled to abstain from working for our deliverance; under pain of hastening our ruin and death, we are traversing one of those phases. Time becomes the only master, time which, after all, is but the insuperable action of that mysterious Providence hidden from our eyes. I will give a more striking illustration, and compare the people, whom we have endeavoured to enlighten, to a child most difficult to deal with, quite ignorant, rather ungrateful, quite selfish, and, all things considered, innocent of its own faults, because its education has been too much delayed and its instincts too seldom repressed; in short, a regular child: children are all alike, more or less. When every means has been tried, in the narrow limit within which wise parents can struggle against the corrupt society which disputes with and snatches from them the soul of their child, are there not days when we feel that we leave it to itself and expect its cure from its own experience? Is it not obvious that, on such days, our exhortations irritate, fatigue, and keep the child from us? Do you believe that a work of perseverance and persuasion like that of its conversion can be achieved by menace and violence? The child has given way to bad advice, to perfidious friends. Must we, in its presence, crush and annihilate those who misled it? Will that be the means of regaining its confidence? Very far from it! In that case



the child will pity them as the victims of our jealous fury, and forgive them all the harm they have done it, out of the indignation it will feel at what we inflict upon them. Is it not a safer and more simply logical means to let the misled child suffer from the treason of such people and enlighten itself as to their perfidy, when we feel ourselves entirely forestalled by them ?

Moral, brotherly, evangelical sentiments alone can save our nation from decadence. We must not believe ourselves on the eve of decadence ; we are in full decadence, and those who doubt it are labouring under too great an illusion ; but mankind no longer reckons its reverses and its conquests by periods extending over centuries. It goes by steam nowadays, and a few years demoralise it, as a few years also impart fresh life to it. We are entering upon the Byzantine with full sails, but with full sails also we shall leave it. True ideas have, for the greater part, already found expression ; we must leave them the time to incarnate themselves ; they are as yet to be found but in books and programmes. They cannot perish ; they *wish to*, they *must* live ; but let us bide our time, for if we should stir in the fatal circumstances in which we find ourselves, and by our own fault, we should still more paralyse them, and put in their place material interests and violent passions. Away with those words of hatred and vengeance, which assimilate us to our persecutors. Hatred and vengeance are never sanctified by right, they always constitute a state of intoxication, the morbid exercise of brutal and incoherent faculties. They can only generate evil, disorder, blindness, crimes against humanity, and then lassitude, isolation, and impotence.

Will the excesses of our first revolution indeed never open

our eyes? Did not passions play so violent a part therein as to kill its idea, and did not Robespierre, having begun by denouncing capital punishment, come to regard it as a political necessity? He believed that he could annihilate the principle of aristocracy by killing a whole *caste*! A fresh *caste* sprung up the next day, and to-day that *caste* it is which, having given way to that of the *Restauration*, which Robespierre could not prevent from procreating and surviving him, resuscitates the Empire!

'93! that grand undertaking which we are unfit to begin anew, was however thwarted, thanks to passions, and you speak of preserving yours as a duty of conscience. That is insensate and culpable! Do you believe that, on the morrow of the day when you have well avenged yourselves, the people will be better and less ignorant, and that you will be able to make them relish the delights of fraternity? They will be a hundred times worse than to-day. Keep away, therefore, you who can only place wrath at their disposal.

It is better that they should reflect in slavery than act in delirium, since their slavery is voluntary, and since you can only deliver them from it by taking them by the surprise and violence of a *coup de main*. It is better that pretenders should mutually devour one another than that prætorian revolutions should break out. The people are not disposed to meddle with the latter. They will pass over the people's heads and collapse on their own ruins. Then the masses will wake up from their meditation, and, as they will constitute the only surviving power, the only one which cannot be destroyed when it has begun to breathe truly, they will fell to the ground, without fury or vengeance, all those ephemeral phantoms no longer able to conspire against them.

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But this does not meet the calculations of the *men of action* of our time. They are unwilling to abstain, they decline to wait. They want to play a part and to make a noise. If they do not act, they believe France will be lost. Did not most of them fancy that they saved society during the horrible days of June, when abandoning the populace to *African sabres*?\* The populace has not forgotten it; it now rejects all parties and abstains, that is its right. It is diffident, not without a cause. It no longer heeds politics, it submits to the first yoke that offers, and takes care not to be crushed in the struggle, since that seems to be its eternal fate. It is not so egotistical as people believe it to be; with its coarse and heavy common sense, it is shrewder than we in our feverish agitations. It bides its time, and feels that the men of no party whatever are either willing or able to hasten it. It knows that it might have been food for powder in December, to the advantage of Changarnier; that Cavaignac and Company would have joined a large number of the *bourgeoisie*. We were fast drifting towards that military and oligarchical power; I like the present, one just as well. I am as stupid and as wise as the people; I know how to wait.

But let us go to the bottom of the human heart. Why do I know how to wait? Why does the majority of the French people know how to wait? Is my heart harder than that of anybody else? I do not believe so. Have I less dignity than a party man? I hope not. Do the people suffer less than you? I must doubt it. Do we lie upon roses in this country? We scarcely perceive it.

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\* French troops had been recalled from Africa to be employed in suppressing the rebellion following the *coup d'état*.

Why, then, are you in a greater hurry than we? It is that you are mostly ambitious: some among you covet fortune, power, and reputation; others, like yourself, honour, activity, courage, and devotion; a noble ambition, doubtless, is the latter, but it nevertheless proceeds from a personal desire to act at any cost, and to believe in oneself more than it is always wise and legitimate to do. You are full of pride, honest people that you are! You are but poor Christians! You believe that nothing can take place without you, you fret when people forget you, you get disheartened when misunderstood. The vanities which elbow you deceive, excite, and take advantage of you. You led an easy life in that *Assemblée Constituante* which began with murdering Socialism without being aware of it, or rather somewhat wishing to do so, for in those days you did not proclaim yourselves to be Socialists; you afterwards tempered yourselves in the programme of the "Mountain," which is your best deed, your only durable production; but it was too early or too late to produce immediate good; you had already, unawares, divorced yourselves from popular sentiment, which you were anxious to develop, and which was vanishing in mistrust, in order to drift into passion or to allow itself to fall into inertia. And yet you did for the best, according to your strength and enlightenment; but you were prompted by passions as well as by principles, and you all committed more or less, in one sense or the other, inevitable faults: may you be forgiven a thousand times for the latter!

I am not of those who mutually murder one another in the arms of death. But I say that you can no longer do anything with those passions. Your wisdom, and, therefore,

your strength, should consist in appeasing them within yourselves, in order to await the issue of the drama which is to-day taking place between the principle of personal authority and that of general liberty: that deserves to be meditated upon from a loftier point of view than one of indignation against men. Men! weak and blind instruments of the logic of causes!

It would be well to understand and to examine, in order to become better and stronger; instead of that, you wear yourselves out, you weaken yourselves, for the sake of doing so, in ardent emotions and in dreams of chastisement, which Providence, more maternal and mightier than you, will never, I hope, place in your hands.

Farewell, friend! after all the foregoing philosophy, which I wanted to sum up to yourself and to myself, on resuming the repose of country life, you will believe that I am quite satisfied with what is going on, and that I scarcely suffer for others. Alas! I am not satisfied with it, and I witnessed more tears, more despair, more misery, in my little room in Paris, than it has been your lot to see in Belgium. You there saw the men who leave us; I saw the women—mothers, wives, daughters, or sisters—who are left behind. I am exhausted after so much sadness and fatigue, a share in which I was obliged to take, after the great perseverance and patience I had to display in order to secure such meagre alleviations. I did not believe myself capable of doing it; and I thought I should have died through it all. But duty brings its own reward. Calm has again taken place in my soul, and faith has returned to me. I find myself once more owing the people and believing in their future, as on the eve

of that election whose result might have led to doubts about the people, and induced so many wounded hearts to contemn and curse them!

I kiss and love you.

*To JOSEPH MAZZINI, London.*

NOHANT, 23rd May, 1852.

DEAR FRIEND,

I wish I had all my leisure to write to you, but as it is I must either write in haste or resign myself not to write at all; for time is always wanting to me, and I cannot meet with a single day when I am not hurried along, driven to my wits'-end by urgent work, business to attend to, or some service to render. My health and life are giving way. Do not scold me into the bargain.

People are wrong to express irritation in their letters against those they love. It is obvious for me that, in your last, you commit an enormous mistake regarding some reflection of mine, of which I do not sufficiently recollect the tenor to explain your error. But that which you suppose me to have said I did not mean as you understand it, I am sure of it, or else your anger would be fully justified. Truly, dear friend, grief and suffering make you irritable and susceptible, even with hearts which most respect and love you. Who has said to you that to work for your fatherland is a vain glory, and that I accused you of craving after false glory?

I thought I was dreaming when reading the interpretation of a sentence, where I must have said to you, where I believe I said to you, the question is no longer one of knowing to whom initiative is to belong; that to-day there would be vain

glory in attributing to oneself, either as a Frenchman or as an Italian, superior aptitudes for that initiative, and that all revival must be a collective act of faith.

I do not know what I said; but hang me if I could have meant to say anything else, and if there were in that a reproach, a doubt about you. I do not understand why you thus give way to temper with me, seeing that I so rarely have the pleasure of being able to chat with you; that we are seldom lucky enough to communicate without our letters being intercepted; that weeks and months must elapse without my having from you any other keepsake but a letter of reproaches, too vehement and in no wise deserved. I have not received the article you sent me. I believe I read it in its entirety in an extract from a journal sent to me from Belgium some time before while I was at Paris. I am not aware whether the collective reply, about which you complain, has been sent to me. I did not receive anything; a letter written by Louis Blanc, and to which he refers in a new letter free from all political allusions, has apparently been seized by the police: it has not reached me. I looked for the above-mentioned reply, or an extract from it, in the papers which I can consult here. I did not find it. I, therefore, am unacquainted with its contents. You tell me, others tell me, that it is bad, *superlatively bad*. I need not disavow it to you. It is signed, you say, by people whom I love, it is true, though more or less so; some very much, others not at all. Be it as it may, since it misinterprets, outrages, and calumniates you, I condemn it, and regret to have been unacquainted with it when writing to Louis Blanc and to yourself at the same time, through the intermediary of Michele. I would have told him frankly my sentiments in regard to it. But an opportunity will come.

For the present it is not easy, since I cannot procure that wretched publication, and since, besides, correspondence is so unsafe. It is dreadful to think that we cannot wash our dirty linen in private, and that our most intimate effusions may cause our most relentless persecutors to rejoice. Besides, it is too late for me to step into this controversy; I am situated too far from the facts, by my retreat, my isolation, and many more preoccupations, less important no doubt, but so personally obligatory that I cannot shirk them.

Besides, friends, would you listen to me if I came in time to hold back your irritated and scathing pens? Alas! no. For ten years I have been proclaiming in the wilderness that our dissensions will kill us. Now they have killed us, and though bleeding and lying on the battle-field, people still pull one another in pieces! What dreadful times! What dreadful madness!

Be angry with me as much as you please, friend. For the first time I will rebuke you. You did wrong to provoke the *crime* committed against you. You see, I speak the word; it is a *crime*, if they really charge you with cowardice, treason, or even ambition.

I feel convinced and certain that you do not know what personal ambition is, and that your soul is holy in its passions, and as much so in its instincts as in its principles. People cannot, unless they be mad, raise a doubt as to the purity of your character. But is it not a fault, a grave fault, to provoke a fit of madness in our fellow-creatures, whatever they may be? Ought you not to have foreseen that reaction of wounded pride, of wounded patriotism, of a doctrine intolerant, if you like, in men whom a fearful defeat, *the being forsaken by their country*, has just struck in that which con-



stituted their whole being, their whole life? Was the moment opportune to pitilessly probe the wound and say to them: "You ruined France!"

Your reproaches seem to you so well founded that you regard it as a duty to have given them expression, whereas it would have been noble of you not to break off violently, in the midst of a horrible disaster, the community of ideas and interests that bound you to my friends, to have heeded the Christian and brotherly sentiment which ought to dominate everything in the party of the future, and in fine to have acted in accordance with the political proprieties which forbid us to disclose our wounds to the victor, eager to gaze upon and deride them! Well, you are perhaps right in theory; there are, perhaps, times and things which it is so necessary to seize, that there is a sort of fierce egotism in thus treading over the wounded and the dead in order to reach the aim. But, if those reproaches to which you give utterance were not just! if they should be prompted by ardent prejudices, such as at times will enter the souls of saints! Saints may be saints, they never cease to be men, and they often display—we see it in every page of history—baneful violence, merciless intolerance in the zeal which devours them. I do not know which of them it was who called pride the *holy disease*, because it always affects especially powerful souls and superior minds. Ignoble people only have vanity; noble people have pride, that is to say, blind confidence in their own faith.

Well, then, you have been attacked by that *holy disease*; the day when you broke off openly with Socialism you were guilty of the sin of pride. You did not study it sufficiently in its diverse manifestations, it even seems as though you

never knew it. You judged it like a blind man, and, mistaking the faults and the failings of certain men for the results of the doctrines, you took the latter, whatever they may have been, to task with the pride of a Pope who exclaims: "*Outside of my Church, no salvation!*" I had long since noticed the development of your tendency towards certain exclusively practical ideas. I never bored you with vain discussions respecting that. I was not acquainted with Italy. I am not yet sufficiently acquainted with her to dare to say that the scope of those ideas was disproportionate to her aspirations and requirements; looking upon you as being one of the three or four most advanced and most prominent men of that nation, I thought it my duty to tell you, when you were speaking to Italy: "Always say what you believe to be the truth." Yes, I had to speak thus to you, and should do so again were you once more to address Italy in the midst of the struggle. When we are fighting, provided we fight with all our might, any ardent and sincere stimulus contributes to the victory. But ought we not to become more attentive and scrupulous in defeat? Remember that you now speak no longer to a nation, but to a party vanquished in circumstances so different from those of Italy delivered into the hands of the foreigner, that what you were justified in uttering as *Pope* of Roman liberty is devoid of meaning when addressed to French ears, deafened and stunned by the booming of the guns of civil strife.

Listen to me, friend; what I am going to tell you is probably quite different from what my friends, in London or in Belgium, are probably telling you. In point of fact, it indeed sums up these opinions of the majority of my political friends and acquaintances in France.

We are vanquished in deed, but our idea is triumphant.

“France is in the gutter,” you say. That is possible. But she does not remain in the gutter, she struggles on and will extricate herself from it. There are no roads free from mud, as there are none without rocks and precipices. France has conquered the sanction, the true, the only legitimate sanction, of all Powers—popular election, direct representation. “It is the infancy of liberty,” people will say. That is true. Electoral France progresses as in infancy, but she progresses; no other nation has yet made such progress in that new path, popular election! France is probably on the point of voting in favour of a life emperor, as she has just voted in favour of the dictatorship for ten years, and I venture to say she will be delighted to do so; it is so sweet, so flattering for a working man, for a tiller of the soil to say to himself, in his ignorance, in his naïveté, in his stupidity, if you like to call it so: “I, it is now, who make emperors!”

You have been told that the people voted under the pressure of fear of calumny. That is not true. Terror and calumny there were in excess; but without them the people would have voted just as they did. In 1852, that 1852 dreamed of by Republicans as the aim of their wishes and the signal of a terrible revolution, the deception would have been far more dreadful than it is to-day. The people would probably have resisted the law of limited suffrage, they would have voted in spite of all; but in favour of whom?

Of Napoléon, who had taken his precautions beforehand with undeniable address, by requesting the withdrawal of that law for his own advantage, and who, certainly, would not have done so, had he not been sure of what he was about.

The people are ignorant, limited in knowledge, foresight, and political discernment. They are shrewd and obstinate as regards their acquired rights. They had chosen a President by a large majority. They were proud of their deed, . . . they had tested their own strength. They would not have compromised it by wasting votes upon other candidates. They had but one aim, one wish throughout, to group themselves in an immense *fascies*, to form an imposing majority in order to impose their will. A people does not rapidly forsake the object of its infatuation, it does not contradict itself. For the last three years the majority of the people of France has not budged. I do not speak of Paris, which comprises a nation different from the rest of the nation; I speak of five millions of voices at least, which were closely united throughout the land, and quite ready to maintain the principle of delegation in favour of one man. That is the only enlightenment possessed by the masses, but that belongs wholly and irrevocably to them. It is, politically speaking, their *first tooth*. It is but one tooth, but others will follow, and the people who are to-day learning how to *make* emperors will, in like manner, fatally learn how to *un-make* them.

The error of us Socialists and politicians, all of us without exception, has been in believing that we could, at the same time, initiate and put into practice. We have all achieved a great deed, which must console us for everything; we initiated the people into that equality of rights by universal suffrage. That idea, the result of eighteen years of struggles and efforts under the constitutional *régime*, was an idea already discussed during the first revolution, was ripe, so ripe that the people accepted it at once, and it embodied



**GEORGE SAND** at the age of 48.

*From a lithograph by Couture*

itself with their flesh and blood in 1848. We could not have ought not to have hoped for more.

Between the possession of a right and the reasonable and useful exercise of that right, there is an abyss. We should have required ten years of union, of virtue, courage, and patience, in short, ten years of power and strength, in order to fill in that abyss. We lacked the time, because we lacked union and virtue; but that is another question.

Whatever may be the reason, for the last three years the people have done nothing but recede in the knowledge of the exercise of their rights; but then, at the same time they have progressed in the consciousness of the possession of their rights. Ignorant of facts and causes, quite incapable of following and discerning events and men, the masses judged everything *en bloc*. They saw an assembly elected by them angrily committing suicide, rather than allow the principle of universal suffrage to live. A dictator presented himself, his hands full of promises and menaces, shouting to those wavering and troubled masses: "Allow me, I am going to punish the destroyers of your rights; give me all authority and power. I only wish to receive this from you, from all of you, in order to make it more evident that the source of such power and authority is yourselves." And the masses held forth their hands, saying: "Be dictator, be master; use and abuse. We thus reward you for your deference."

That, you see, is in the character of the masses, because it is in the character of every individual forming the masses of that proletariat now in its infancy. Each individual possesses the instincts of the revolted slave, but not the faculties of the free man. He wishes to rid himself of his masters, only to have new ones; should they be worse, he will make the best of his

choice, provided alone that he has chosen them. He believes in their gratitude, because, in fact, he is good.

Such is the truth about the situation. A nation is not to be corrupted or frightened in the twinkling of an eye. Such a thing is not so easy as some people think; it is even impossible. The whole talent of usurpers lies in taking advantage of a situation; they will never have enough talent to create that situation in a single day.

Not by natural lucidity, but by an involuntary and insuperable absence of illusions, I had clearly perceived that disposition of the masses from the time of the outbreak in June, 1848, and the expedition to Rome. You saw me then devoid of hope, afterwards predicting days of expiation; those days have come. It cost me much to pass from immense illusions to that complete disillusion. I have been depressed and downhearted; I have had my days of wrath and bitterness, when my friends—those who were still in the midst of the parliamentary struggles, as also those who were already dreaming of exile—were still sanguine of victory. What can parties do when, in presence of questions of honour and humanity, a nation has abdicated its functions? In such circumstances individuals disappear, they are less than nothing.

Considered in the light of an active and militant nation, France has, therefore, abdicated. But all is not lost; she has preserved, she has saved the consciousness of—if you will, the appetite for—her legislative rights. She wishes to introduce herself into political life in her own way; though we may urge her on, she will not move any the more quickly.

Now, friend, listen to me; listen still, for what I tell you are facts, and passion would vainly deny them. They are as clear as the day. Five or six millions of voters, representing the will of France, in conformity with the principle of

universal suffrage (I say five or six, in order to allow for one or two millions influenced by corruption and intimidation)—five or six millions of voices have sealed the fate of France.

Of that considerable number of citizens, five hundred thousand *at the utmost* are acquainted, in the sense which you indicate, with the writings of Leroux, Cabet, Louis Blanc, Vidal, Proudhon, Fourier, and twenty writers more or less socialistic. Of those five hundred thousand citizens, a hundred thousand at most have read attentively, and somewhat understood, those diverse systems; not one of them, I am sure, ever dreamed of applying the latter to his political conduct. To believe that the people were influenced by Socialist writings—most of which, even the best, are too obscure and too learned—is to harbour the strangest illusion that could possibly be put forward as actual fact.

You will perhaps tell me that those writings led to numerous abstentions; I will ask you whether it is probable, and why it should be so? Wherever and whenever decreed, abstention is always nothing but a political measure, a protest, or an act of prudence on the part of a political party, in order to prevent its numbers from being calculated when they are known by the party itself to be weak. In the last elections, the partisans of politics pure and simple perhaps carried their abstention further than the Socialists. In certain localities people regarded abstention as a duty; in others they did the reverse, without having been anywhere divided, as to the opportuneness of the fact, in the name of Socialism or politics.

The cry, "*Socialists, you have ruined France!*" cast by you in the sight of the world, is therefore, in my opinion, a complete misconception of facts. We will, if you so wish, admit that Socialists are by nature criminals, ambitious,



imbeciles, anything you please. Their impotence has been made so evident by their defeat, that it is unjust and cruel to make them responsible for the common disaster.

But, in the first place, what is Socialism? Which of its twenty or thirty various doctrines do you attack? In your onslaughts against it there reigns complete obscurity; you scarcely explain yourself, you do not name anybody. I appreciate the delicacy of such reserve; but can it be, is it consistent with truth, for you to invoke the principle that we must speak the truth to all people, at all times, and in all places?

Do you not perceive that, in attacking the diverse schools without distinction, you attack them all, and lay down the principle that we must act without knowing to what purpose?

Yet, in your own production, you warmly reject that conclusion. I have just read it attentively, and notice in it a web of unheard-of contradictions, scarcely to be expected from a mind generally so lucid and clear as yours. You give the *pro* and the *con*, you admit all that Socialism preaches, you declare that thought must precede action. Were you not to admit it, it would nevertheless be so; for the action of my will must necessarily precede the action of my arm in taking up a pen or a book, and it is useless to lay down as a principle so elementary a fact of mechanism.

At what, then, are you wondering, at what are you angry? Ought we not to know for whom and for what we are to fight, before going into the fray? You blame people for abstaining from interference when they fear to fight for men in whom they have no confidence? But it is not necessary to be a Socialist in order to grant oneself the right of abstention.

Should we be a thousand times wrong in suspecting, our mistrust is legitimate because involuntary. I assure you that your accusation is an enigma from beginning to end; read it again calmly, and you will perceive that for those who are free from personal interests in the matter at issue, for those for whom your reproaches are not intended, it is impossible to understand why you thus denounce us to the ban of Europe, as being prattlers, vain and stupid poltroons, and materialists. Is that meant as an anathema against France because she gave herself a dictator? It would be justifiable were France Socialist; but, my friend, if you say so, you, unknown to yourself, indulge an atrocious joke respecting us; if you believe it, you are no better acquainted with France than with China. Is it an anathema hurled by you at the materialist doctrine, summed up in the following words of Louis Blanc: "*To everybody according to his wants*"? Wants are of various kinds. Some are intellectual, others material, and Louis Blanc has always placed the former before the latter.

Louis Blanc has asked in every tone that the reward of devotion should always be in the means of proving that devotion, and in this he is perfectly in accord with you who say: "*To every one according to his devotion.*"

Have you not read some excellent works by Vidal, the friend of Louis Blanc, upon the development of the rewards due to devotion? The theme is exactly the same. Man must not be rewarded by either money or privilege. Such things do not recompense, cannot recompense devotion. The pleasure of devotion is the only reward that directly applies to the act of devotion.

Thus, while branding the *full-belly* sectarians (*sectaires du*

*pot-au-feu*), as you call them, you should, at least, have excepted Louis Blanc, Vidal, and Pecqueur, a noble group of Socialist and spiritualist politicians of a very elevated order, the only drawback to whose works is that they cannot be widely diffused amongst the masses.

Let us turn to Leroux. Is he a materialist philosopher? Is not an excess of abstraction the weakest of his weak points? And though, in my opinion, his works contain some divagations, is there not in them an *ensemble* of admirable ideas, of sublime precepts, as thoroughly deduced and proved by the history of philosophy and the essence of religions as is possible?

You ought to have excepted Leroux and his school from your condemnation of materialism:

Cabet, whose intellect I do not admire—that is perhaps a mistake on my part; I do not, however, admire him—is no more materialist than spiritualist in his doctrines. He blends those two elements together to the best of his ability. He does his best to expound them thoroughly. He has never preached anything that was not good and honest. I think his doctrine vulgar and puerile in its contemplated applications. But, in fine, it is so harmless and little diffused, that he too deserved to be excepted.

There remain the doctrines of Fourier, Blanqui, and Proudhon.

Fourier's doctrine is so opposed to that of Leroux, who wrote with a masterly hand a most crushing criticism of it, that it ought not to have been enveloped in a vague anathema hurled against all Socialist doctrines. But Fourier's doctrine itself has not caused all the harm against which Leroux contended so justifiably, but which you are wrong in re-

proaching it with. Leroux is right in disclosing to us that, under that esoteric doctrine, there is loathsome materialism; but, if Leroux had not revealed it, that book, written enigmatically, could have taught that materialism only to a very limited number of adepts, and you are wrong to say that it ruined France, which indeed is unacquainted with and does not understand it.

Proudhon's doctrine has no real existence. It is not a doctrine at all: it is a tissue of dazzling contradictions, brilliant paradoxes, which will never form a school. Proudhon may have admirers, he will never have adepts. He possesses undeniable talent as a polemist in politics; that is why his power and influence are limited to that field alone. In his journal, *Le Peuple*, he rendered most active service to the cause of action; he should, therefore, not be accused of impotence and indifference. He is very militant, impassioned, incisive, eloquent, and useful in the play of political emotions and sentiments; outside of the field of politics, he is a learned and ingenious economist, though rendered powerless by the isolation of his conceptions, and isolated for the very reason that none of his economical systems are based upon any Socialist system. Proudhon is the greatest enemy of Socialism. Why then have you included Proudhon in your anathemas? I cannot conceive it.

As for Blanqui, I do not know him, and I declare I have never read a line of his. I have, therefore, no right to speak of him. I only know him by a few partisans of his principles, who preach a sort of mad Republic, frightful deeds of violence, something a hundred times more dictatorial, arbitrary, and inhuman than that which we are now subjected to. Is that the idea of Blanqui? or is it a false interpretation given

by his followers? Before judging Blanqui, I should like to read his works or to hear him, being acquainted with his views only by *hearsay*. I should never allow myself to traduce him before public opinion, Socialist or non-Socialist. I do not know if you are better informed than I am; but if, as people say, he is a man of action, strife, and conspiracy, whether he be a Socialist or not, you ought not to disown him, you who wish for combatants before anything else.

The more I examine those diverse schools, the less I perceive that any of them especially deserved to be accused at the hands of so just, kind, and impartial a man as you are, of having ruined France by materialism.

Some preached the purest spiritualism. Others only preached in the wilderness. It is not, therefore, Socialist materialism which led to the ruin of France. Either I am an imbecile, unable to read, and never saw, understood, or judged anything in my own country, or Socialism, in general, fought with all its might against the materialism inoculated in the people by the tendencies of the Orleanist *bourgeoisie*.

When, by exception, materialism was preached by so-called Socialists, it produced but little result, and it is no more the fault of Socialism if it served as a pretext for contrary doctrines, than it is its fault if it serves as a pretext to our executioners for transporting us and treating us as refractory convicts. It would be great cowardice on the part of the followers of the *National* to reproach Socialism with our common misfortunes. Would it not be justified in casting the same reproach in the faces of those who gave to our public morals the example of a dictatorship discharging grape-shot in the streets? If it should follow that example, it

would be quite excusable; for it has been provoked in all tones and by all parties for the last ten years with untold animosity.

Socialism is the scape-goat of all disasters, the victim of all struggles, and I cannot imagine you, the saint of Italy, stepping in to hurl the last stone in its face, saying to it: "You are the great guilty one, the accursed one!"

In my opinion, that is not right on your part, my friend. I do not understand it. I fancy I am dreaming when I see that dissidence of means, of which I was fully aware, but which I admitted as we must full liberty of conscience, result in an outburst of wrath, in a rupture, a public accusation, an anathema. You have been cruelly, brutally, unjustly, ignominiously answered! It shows that our generation is bad, and that the best of us are worthless; but, you who are one of the best, are you not culpable too, very culpable, for having aroused those wicked passions and provoked that outburst of bitterness and wounded pride?

Had I been in London or in Brussels when your attack appeared, and had I not been forestalled by a contumelious reply which closes my lips, I should have taken upon myself to answer. Without any consideration for the too flattering exception you make in naming me, I should have openly sided with Socialism against you. I should have done so with meekness, tenderness, and respect; for none of the faults of great and good servants like you should cause us to forget their magnanimous services. But I should have humbly persuaded you to remove that error from your mind; and you are so large-minded that you would have done so, had I succeeded in proving to you that you were mistaken.

As a piece of writing, your article has the merit of your

usual eloquence; but it is weak in argument—contrary to what is usual with you—and because of a fatal necessity of your soul, which cannot and does not know how to make a *skilful* mistake. Your article has to be guessed at, for, in point of fact, it cannot be understood. In principle, it is quite as Socialist as we; but it taunts us with being so in another light, and in that it is unjust or erroneous. It ought to sum up thus: “Republicans of all shades, you divided yourselves; you discussed instead of agreeing together; you seceded instead of remaining united; you allowed yourselves to be surprised instead of displaying foresight; you declined to fight when you should have fought to the bitter end.”

That is true. There were divisions, too much time was given to discussions, wicked passions were at stake. Men became suspicious and unjust. I have noticed that for the last three years I suffered by it. I pointed it out to all who surrounded me. After such divisions it was impossible to fight and to resist.

That argument would be good, excellent, useful, if it applied to all shades of the Republican party. Were you to rate all, yes, all without distinction, you would perform a good deed; if, as you have the right to do, you were to address meek and paternal reproaches to Socialists, to tell them that they sometimes put self at the head of their doctrine, which has indeed been the case with several of them; if you were to call them back to you with open arms, your heart full of grief and fraternity, I should understand your saying to them: “Men should be told the truth at all times.”

But you do the reverse. You accuse, you reject, you draw a line between two camps, which you render irreconcilable for

ever, and you have not one word of blame for a certain shade which you do not point out, and which I seek for in vain ; for no political shade that I know of has been free from injustice, selfishness, personal ambitions, materialistic appetites, hatred, envy ; in fine, from human failing or vices. Are you disposed to contend that the party headed by Ledru-Rollin possesses the latter to a less extent than any other party rallied round any other name ? You must not say so to me in earnest. Men are everywhere alike. Did any one party fight better than another during the last events ? I do not know in whose name the South and the Midland bands rose after the 2nd of December. They have been dubbed Socialists.

If that is so, we must not say that the Socialists everywhere refused to fight. But be this as it may, the said bands soon became demoralised, and the peasants who composed them did not display much faith in the midst of misfortune ; the latter proves that the peasantry are not reliable in an insurrection, and that, whether Socialist or not, the leaders have made the great mistake of depending upon that campaign, which was a source of general disaster, and whose sanction was anxiously invoked by the fury of the reaction.

Would you say that, by their schemes or dreams of equality, by their extreme systems, the Socialists alarmed not only the *bourgeoisie*, but also the population generally ? I will reply first, that for the last two or three years, chiefly since the programme of the *Mountain* appeared, all Republicans in the provinces, in fact the whole people of France, called themselves Socialists, Ledru-Rollin's followers as well as the rest ; even the partisans of Cavaignac dared not say that they were not Socialists. It was the universal password. If persisting in your distinction, do therefore divide the



Socialists into two classes and name them ; otherwise your words will be quite unintelligible in nineteen-twentieths of France, and, if you tell me that Ledru-Rollin's party, which was the only nominal party in the provinces, showed itself more prudent, wiser, less bombastic, less prattling than any other, I will reply to you *in full knowledge of facts*, that that eminently brawling, bombastic, intriguing, lazy, vain, heinous, intolerant party, the majority of whose inferior representatives in the provinces were but comedians, *did positively all the harm*.

I do not blame its nominal leader, because he was but a name, better known than the others, and round which were grafted, on the part of its sub-leaders, some miserable petty ambitions ; on the part of its soldiers, some purely materialistic interests and dreadfully coarse appetites.

I am quite sure that Ledru is quite innocent of these excesses, and had he carried the day I should have to compare him now with Louis Napoléon, who does not even suspect all the harm done in his name. You have not pointed out, the great truth, and I myself will not do so either, because I am not of your opinion that we should always speak our mind and denounce the dead. The great truth is that the Republican party in France, composed of all possible elements, is a party unworthy of its principles, and incapable for a whole generation to make them triumph. If you were acquainted with France, all you know respecting the state of ideas, of schools, of shades of diverse parties in Paris would appear to you less important and not at all conclusive. You would know that, thanks to an exaggerated centralisation, there is there a head which is no longer acquainted with its arms, which no longer feels its feet, which does not know how its stomach digests and what its shoulders carry.

If I were to tell you that, for the last four months and a half, I have made calls, written letters, worked night and day in favour of men whom I would wish to restore to their unfortunate families, for whom I feel pity because they have suffered so much, whom I love as we do martyrs, whoever they may be; but that I am sometimes afraid of what my pity dictates, because I know that the return of those absurd or wicked men is a real evil for the cause, and that their eternal absence, their death even—it is frightful to say so—would be beneficial to the future of our ideas, of which they are the plagues and from which they keep people by their utterances; that their conduct is loathsome or ludicrous, that their idle gossip is as a weight, a taxation upon better men, who work in their place and do not murmur! There are exceptions, I need not say so, but how few among them did not deserve their fate! They are the victims of a dreadful legal injustice, but were an austere republic to enact a law in order to expel all *useless* men, the *exploiteurs* of popularity, you would be terrified to see where they would necessarily be recruited from.

Let us be indulgent, merciful to all. I sustain with my labour the vanquished, whoever they may be, those who looked up to Ledru-Rollin, as the others, without exception; I oppose with all my might their condemnation and their misery. I have not a bitter or reproachful word for any party. They are all equally unfortunate, nearly all equally guilty, but I give you my word of honour, without the slightest prejudice, that the most energetic, the best, and the bravest no more belong to the camp which you joined than to that which you cursed. Were I to refer to my own experience, I might even affirm that those who swore the loudest were

the most cautious; that those who shouted, "Take up arms and make powder!" had no intention to use the latter; in fine, that in that case as in all others, to-day as ever, brawlers are cowards.

Behold a spotless man declaring that here are brave people, elsewhere only slumberers; that there exists in France a party of union, love, courage, future, to the exclusion of all others! Name that party then! An immense burst of laughter will hail your assertion. No, my friend, you do not know France. I am aware that, like all nations, she could be saved by a handful of virtuous, enterprising, convinced men. That handful exists. It is even pretty large. But isolated those men cannot do anything. They must be united. That they cannot be. It is the fault of Peter as well as of Paul; it is the fault of everybody because it is the fault of the time and the idea. See, you, yourself are one of them; you wish to unite them, and when saying, "*Unite yourselves!*" you wound them and make them indignant. You are yourself irritated, you make categories, you reject adhesions, you sow the wind and gather storms.

Farewell; in spite of all, I love and respect you.

*To His HIGHNESS PRINCE JÉRÔME NAPOLÉON, Paris.*

PARIS, 26th November.

DEAR PRINCE,

I am very sorry not to have seen you. I leave Paris, thanking you for your kind visit of yesterday, and still loving you with all my heart.

I send you the petition of a poor old soldier of the Empire,

formerly a model soldier, now a most worthy paterfamilias. He is a peasant of my village, and quite deserving of interest; I should be most happy to be indebted to you for a little kindness in his favour, if possible. His applications, having to pass through the prefecture, which, at La Châtre as elsewhere, pays no attention to petty folk, have not hitherto reached the Minister.

From you alone I will ask in future, convinced as I am that you alone do not grow tired of being obliging.

Yours in heart and hope,

GEORGE SAND.

*To ARMAND BARBÈS, Doullens.*

NOHANT, 18th December, 1852.

DEAR AND EXCELLENT FRIEND,

You wish to hear from me, and ask whether I still love you.

Can you have any doubt as to the latter? The more relentlessly fate contrives to separate us, the more my heart grows respectfully and fondly attached to your sufferings, and the dearer and more precious does your memory appear to me at every instant.

As for my health, it is struggling between fatigue and sadness. You are acquainted with the causes of my grief, and the perpetual labour imposed upon me as a family duty, even when, as a duty of conscience, I am paralysed by exterior causes. But what matters our individuality? Provided we have done our best in all things, and in accordance with our intelligence and strength, we can indeed wait peaceably for the end of our trials.

I hoped that the proclamation of the Empire would be that of a general and complete amnesty. It seemed to me that, even from the point of view of the authorities, that solution was inevitable because of its being logical. It would have been such a great solace to me again to see my friends! In spite of so many deceptions, I still hope that the Empire will not persist in avenging the quarrels of the old monarchy, and of a *bourgeoisie* whose power it has overthrown.

Write to me, friend; let a few lines from you inform me whether you suffer physically, whether you are still subjected to the cruel *régime* of the *chambrée*,\* so unsuited to the meditation of the soul and to the repose of the body. I feel no anxiety as regards your courage, but mine often gives way before the bitter thought of the life you have to endure. I am aware that, for you, that is not the question, but that your horizon extends farther than the narrow circle of that miserable life. But, though we may ourselves submit to anything, it is not easy to regard without grief the sufferings of those we love.

I am still in the country, going but rarely to Paris, and only on business. My son now spends part of the year at work in that city; but he is at this moment with me, and requests me to embrace you tenderly for him. I have a charming little girl (my daughter's), to whom I devote much care and time.

Now you know all that concerns me. But what about yourself? Why have I been so long without news from you? It is that all our friends have been scattered and are absent. I even do not know how and when this will reach you; I do

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\* The term *chambrée* is used to signify the association of prisoners in a single room instead of in separate cells.

not know whether you are permitted to write openly to your friends, and whether their letters reach you.

But, whether I be able to tell it you or not, dear friend, never doubt my friendship, at once unalterable and full of veneration.

GEORGE.

*To M. THÉOPHILE SILVESTRE, Paris.*

NOHANT, *January, 1853.*

SIR,

I seize with pleasure the opportunity you offer me to encourage you regarding a work of which M. Eugène Delacroix is the subject, seeing that you share the admiration and affection with which he inspires those who understand and come in contact with him.

I have known him for the last twenty years, and am happy to say that he ought to be unreservedly praised, because nothing in the man's life is beneath the mission so largely fulfilled by the master.

From what you tell me, your production is not simply a critical study, but a moral appreciation also. Your task will be pleasant and easy, and I have probably nothing to tell you respecting the unflinching nobleness of his character and the honourable fidelity of his affections.

Neither are you unaware that his mind is as brilliant as his colouring, and as frank as his humour. And yet his amiable talk and his jocularities, which are often due to kindness of heart towards those with whom he is intimate, conceal a foundation of philosophical melancholy, the inevitable

result of the ardour of genius struggling with lucidity of judgment.

Nobody ever felt that painful type of Hamlet's like Delacroix. Nobody ever framed in a more poetic light, and placed in a more real attitude, that hero of grief, indignation, doubt, and irony, who, before his fits of ecstasy, was nevertheless *the mirror of fashion and the mould of form*—that is, a perfect gentleman—of his time. When reflecting upon this, you will draw from it just consequences with regard to the want of harmony, which certain disappointed enthusiasts may have noticed with surprise, between the Delacroix who creates and the Delacroix who relates, between the powerful colourist and the delicate critic, between the admirer of Rubens and the worshipper of Raphael. More powerful and happier than those who depreciate one of those glories in order to extol the other, Delacroix, thanks to the multitudinous sides of his intellect, enjoys equally the diverse faces of the beautiful. Delacroix, it may be affirmed, is a complete artist. He relishes and understands music in so superior a manner that, had he not elected to be a great artist, he very probably would have been a great musician. He is as shrewd a judge in literature as in art, and few minds are as adorned and as clear as his. If his arm and sight were to fail him, he could still dictate, in a very beautiful style, pages which are wanted in the history of art, and which would remain as records to be consulted by all the artists of the future.

Fear not to be partial by expressing unreserved admiration for him. Yours, as mine, must have grown with his talent and increased with his power, from year to year, with every one of his productions. The majority of those persons who, at the outset of his career, used to contest his

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glory, are to-day doing full justice to his last monumental paintings; and, of course, the most competent among such people are those who, more cordially and with better grace, proclaim his victory over all obstacles, as illustrated by his *Apollo* on the thunderous car of Allegory.

You request me, sir, to give you some information respecting the pictures of that great master which are in my possession. I certainly possess several illustrations of that rare and fruitful genius.

*A Sainte Anne enseignant la Vierge enfant*,\* executed at my country house and exhibited in the following year (1845 or 1846) at the Musée: an important work, superb in colour, and of a severe and simple composition.

A splendid floral sketch, incomparable as regards hue and relief. That also was made for me and at my house.

*La Confession du Giaour mourant*,† a regular little masterpiece.

An Arab crawling up a mountain in order to surprise a lion.

Cleopatra receiving the asp, concealed among the dazzling fruit handed to her by the dark slave, and laughing with the careless smile attributed to her by Shakespeare. That dramatic contrast with the calm despair of the beautiful queen inspired Delacroix in a striking manner.

The interior of a quarry.

Composition taken from the novel of *Lélia*, magical in its effect.

Pastel production on the same subject.

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\* "Saint Anne teaching the Virgin when a child."

† "The confession of the dying Giaour."



Lastly, several water-colours, sketches in oil, pen-and-ink drawings, and *croquis*, and even some caricatures.

Such is my little gallery, wherein the least stroke of that fruitful hand is preserved by my son and myself with the religion of friendship.

If you should think my reply useful for your work, you are free to make use of it, sir, although it be but a paltry tribute to so cherished a glory.

Please to accept my thanks for the sympathy you display towards me, and the expression of my distinguished regard.

GEORGE SAND.

*To MADAME AUGUSTINE DE BERTHOLDI, Warsaw.*

NOHANT, 23th October, 1853.

MY KIND DARLING,

I am very glad to learn of your safe arrival, and of your being installed with such good friends. Kiss for me my Georgy, who writes such fine letters and travels like a man. Nothing new has occurred here since your departure. Maurice, Lambert, and Manceau are still here; we shall, I think, take our flight towards Paris in a few days. We are waiting to be informed that *Mauprat*\* is on the point of being played.

It seems that the rehearsals are going on nicely, and that the stage properties will be superb. Mademoiselle Fernand will appear as *Edmée*. She will also play the chief part in *Claudie*,† which piece is to be played again at the Odéon, as is also,

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\* † Title of a play by George Sand.

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with a new staff of actors, *Le Champi*.\* The little Bérengère, whom you saw here, played *Mariette* very well. Thiron has gone to Russia with Rachel; he belongs to her *troupe*. You will perhaps see him at Warsaw. Buthiaud has made a very favourable *début* at the Odéon. *Le Pressoir* † is going on all right. Now you are acquainted with all the theatrical news concerning us.

A novel and a preface for Balzac's new edition, such are my productions for this month. I am in good health. I am daily engaged upon my little Trianon; I wheel stones, pull and plant ivy, tire myself out in a doll's garden, and that causes me to eat and sleep as well as possible. We have had dreadful weather; but during the last few days the temperature has been summer-like, and to-day we have been for a walk to Le Magnier.

Madame Fleury has gone with her daughters to join her husband in Brussels. As for poor Planet, he is going off altogether. He still walks about a little, and came to see me yesterday, with his wife and his father-in-law. He fully perceives the real state of his health, and takes leave of all his friends with his usual kindness and effusiveness. I do not think he is as near his end as the doctors pretend; but I certainly believe that he will never rally. That is a real grief for me; for, after Rollinat, he was the best fellow in the Department.

The Emperor and Empress went to see *Le Pressoir*. The Emperor applauded a great deal, the Empress wept freely. At Paris, people are growing quite anxious about war. In

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\* Title of a play by George Sand.

† The "Wine-press," title of a play by George Sand.

the country, as you are aware, people only heed the state of the weather. The vintage amounts to next to nothing. The harvest has been bad. The nuts are frozen. The potatoes are diseased. People fear that the coming winter will be very severe for the poor, hard to bear for everybody else.

As we are alone at home, that is, without visitors, our little theatre has taken the place of the large one, and Maurice and Lambert often give some *marionette* performances. They have achieved further wonders in the way of properties and appointments.

I hope I am giving you a regular journal of all our doings. Reply, telling me about all that interests and amuses you. You had better write to me here; for I do not contemplate staying long in Paris, and, besides, your letters will be forwarded to me.

Good night, beloved darling; I kiss you a thousand times. Maurice joins me with all his heart.

To JOSEPH MAZZINI, London.

NOHANT, 15th December, 1853.

I have not ceased loving and respecting you, my friend. That is all I can tell you; the conviction that all letters are opened and commented upon must necessarily restrain the effusion of affection and family confidences.

You say that I am resigned—that is possible; I have great reasons for being so, and mine are as religious and as philosophical as those which forbid your resignation may appear to you. Why do you suppose they are the result of cowardice

or exhaustion? You wrote some rather harsh things to me on this subject. I have not thought fit to reply to them. Serious affections are full of a great respect which ought to be likened to filial respect. Parents appear sometimes unjust; we keep silent rather than gainsay them, we wait until their eyes are opened.

As for the allusions which you regret not to see in certain productions, you are scarcely acquainted with what is going on in France, if you believe that they could possibly be made. Besides, you perhaps do not consider that when liberty is limited, frank and courageous minds prefer silence to *insinuation*. Moreover, were liberty to be re-established in our midst, it is not certain that I would now touch upon questions which mankind is not yet worthy to solve, and which drove the greatest and best minds of our time to hatred.

You wonder that I can pursue my literary work; as for me, I thank God for preserving that faculty in me, because an honest and pure conscience like mine still finds, outside of all discussions, a task of *moralisation* to perform. What should I do then, were I to give up my humble task? Should I conspire? That is not my vocation, I should not be competent to do so. Should I write pamphlets? I have neither gall nor wit. Theories? We have indulged them too much, and we fell into dispute, which is the grave of all truth and power. I am and have always been an *artiste* before anything else; I am aware that purely political men feel great contempt for *artistes*, because they judge them after a few types of mountebanks who dishonour art. But you, friend, you know full well that the real *artiste* is as useful as the *priest* and the *warrior*, and that, when respecting what is true and good, he follows a path through which God always blesses him. Art

belongs to all times and to all countries; its special benefit is precisely to be still living when everything else seems dying; that is why Providence shields it from too personal or too general passions, and grants it a patient and persevering organisation, durable sensibility, and the contemplative sense in which lies invincible faith.

Now, why and how do you think that the calm of my will is the satisfaction of egotism? To such a reproach, I should have nothing to say, I confess; I could only say this, I do not deserve it. My heart is transparent as my life, and I do not see growing upon it baneful fungi which I ought to extirpate therefrom; if that should ever be the case, I will struggle greatly, I promise you, before allowing myself to be overcome by the disease.

I will reply to Mr. Linton in a few days. It is, in fact, a business matter, and I must think of it; that is, I must consult and peruse my agreements, in order to ascertain whether I am not prevented from arranging with him by some express or tacit clause, which I do not now recollect. As regards material interests, I have remained a perfect idiot; that is why I have engaged the services of a business man, who takes care of all the *positive* affairs of my life. I hope that I may be enabled to satisfy Mr. Linton, and to meet his kind intentions. Farewell, friend; do not believe that I am altered towards you or with respect to anything whatever.

GEORGE.

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To MAURICE SAND, Paris.

NOHANT, 31st January, 1854.

DEAR SON,

Your letter is very short! I hope that you are in good health and enjoying yourself; besides, you know that I prefer three lines to nothing.

As for me, I do not tell you much either, because I do nothing but what you know by heart, and my life is so uniform, so similar each day to the preceding one, that you may, at all times, tell what is going on at Nohant, and what sort of occupation I am engaged in.

My *Trianon* is growing colossal, and *Teverino*\* extends over five acts. I am now making the fair copy and progressing rapidly with it. I am pretty well, except a little nervous excitement, which prevents sound sleep.

We went to La Châtre to see a *bourgeois* comedy, performed for the benefit of the poor. It was wretched. Duvernet and Eugénie are directors of the *troupe*. That is not very creditable to them.

Rain has set in during the last two days; previously the days were fine and warm and the nights cold, constituting a splendid winter. Our gardener has set up a magnificent orchard in a part of the garden. Patureau † has returned, and is dressing his vine, which will be a regular model. As you see, there is emulation here. Nini ‡ talks all the nonsense in the world, and is in perfect health.

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\* Title of a play by George Sand, performed at the Gymnase, in 1854, under the title of *Flaminia*.

† An *ex-déporté*, friend of George Sand.

‡ Pet name of the daughter of Maurice Sand.

We have a *tradition* for you. When people wish to make a good watch-dog, *they have him pounded*. Do you know that? This is the way they proceed :

Auguste, the carpenter, who is a sorcerer and *dog-pounder*, went, on a very dark night, to Millochau's, at the latter's request, in order to *pound* Millochau's dog. The night was so dark that Auguste had to crawl over the bridge on all-fours, in order not to drown himself, so he says; but that perhaps was also part of the conjuration, although he does not confess it. The dog was three or four days old. It is necessary that the dog should not yet have seen the light when subjected to the operation; he is put in a mortar and pounded with a pestle. Auguste says that the dog does not take any harm thereby; but I am rather inclined to believe that he first crushes it, and that, thanks to his art, restores it to life again. While he pounds him, he repeats three times the following formula :

My good dog, I pound thee.  
Thou shalt know neither neighbour nor neighbouress,  
Except myself, who pound thee.

I now resume the story of Millochau's dog. The said dog became so bad, that is so *good*, that it used to devour people and beasts. He knew nobody but Auguste; but, as he used to go and worry the sheep even in the pen, Millochau was obliged to kill him. It appears that Auguste had pounded him a little more than was necessary.

I send you a letter for Dumas.\* Have it handed to him personally, for I am anxious respecting the fifty francs † I

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\* Alexandre Dumas the elder.

† Probably intended as a contribution to the subscription opened by the journal *Le Mousquetaire*.

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forwarded to him. A dreadful disorder reigns, I believe, in his administration.

I notice that the run of *Mauprat* is ending at the moment when your *marionettes* theatre is about to open. We shall, I believe, have reached sixty representations. That is a respectable success, and no more. Tell Vaëz \* to write to me, saying what has become of M. de Plenmartin. † A solicitor of the name of Plenmartin, living in Poitou, has protested against both the play and the novel. I referred him to Vaëz, and have not heard any more about him.

Good night, old boy. I kiss you.

*To M. ARMAND BARBÈS, Belle-Isle-en-Mer.*

NOHANT, 3rd June, 1854.

Being prevented from opening our hearts to one another, to dwell upon life and family topics, we can at least send each other a line from time to time, and this is to tell you that my affection is as unchangeable as my mute solicitude is ceaseless and faithful.

I have heard of you from several quarters. I know that your soul is unshakeable, and your heart always calm and generous. I think of you when I think of God, who loves you; that is to say, that I think of you often.

GEORGE SAND.

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\* Director of the Odéon.

† Namesake of a personage referred to in *Mauprat*.



*To HIS HIGHNESS PRINCE JÉROME NAPOLEÓN, Paris.\**

NOHANT, 16th July, 1854.

MY DEAR PRINCE,

You told me to write to you. I scarcely dare, as you must have so little leisure for reading! But these are a few lines to tell you that I still love you, and think of you more than you can of me. That is easily understood: you act and we look on. You are in the midst of life's fever, we in the meditation of suspense.

I have received a letter from Belle-Isle; you easily guess from whom. Therein, I am accused of Chauvinism, because I express wishes for the entry of our *little* soldiers into Moscow and St. Petersburg, as also for the mission which our dear country is still called upon to fulfil in the world.

There is in that island, in fetters, a hero's soul which prays as I do unaffectedly, and with which I am proud to agree.

But we are truly miserable in being obliged to gather our information solely from newspapers which we cannot trust, and often in waiting so long for contradictory news. Happen what may, I can but hope. I cannot persuade myself that the Russians will ever beat us. Nor you either, I think.

My son tells me every day that, were I not such a *foolish* mother, he would have asked to be allowed to follow you. But he is my only son, so how could I spare him?

You know that we have had a miserable summer, and

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\* Received at the camp of Jéfalik, near Varna, on the 5th August, 1854.

that if the rain does not cease we shall have a famine! Oh, the situation is indeed serious!

The issue depends upon you all yonder. As for the result you wish for—the resurrection of Poland and of all the victims whom nobody seems to care for—that, perhaps, is fated to ensue. God is great, and Mahomet is not His only prophet.

But this is more than two lines. I beg to apologise and to wish you farewell, dear Imperial Highness, always a citizen in spite of all, and now more than ever, seeing you are one of France's soldiers. As such, accept all the respects due to you, which will not lessen the affection I cherish for you personally.

GEORGE SAND.

*To M. ARMAND BARBÈS, Belle-Isle-en-Mer.*

NOHANT, 5th October, 1854.

God be praised for having sent that good and just thought to the dictator, for every thought of that nature has proceeded from the will of God. Your letter—the fragment of your letter quoted in the newspapers—is also a divine thought; for God requires that in spite of errors of appreciation and party hatred, and of all grievances, ill or well founded, we should love the fatherland. How could we fail to love ours which, through all its vicissitudes, represents the most advanced and enlightened ideas of the world? Where *else*, therefore, is an absolute master who would feel that an heroic, unshakeable patriotism, in the bosom of a captive in fetters, is a reason stronger than *State reasons*? It is only

when ruling over Frenchmen that a man can display that glimmer of truth in the midst of the intoxication of power.

Accept the offered pardon, whatever people may say, for there are men, I am sure, who will advise you to refuse. Besides, you will be compelled to accept. The prison does not receive voluntary victims. But are you going to allow yourself to be induced to leave France? No, do nothing of the kind. You are unconditionally free; those are the official words. I do not think there is any back door through which to exile you after those words.

Stay, therefore, in France, if the subordinate authorities do not drive you away. They will not, I hope, dare to do so.

Remain with us; when abroad people lose their moral worth, they do not see things clearly, they grow sour; through nostalgia, they come to curse their ungrateful country, and, as a matter of course, become themselves ungrateful. Come to us, who are thirsting to see you; recollect the sweet though now heartrending dream I was still indulging in, while you were on your trial at Bourges. I was inviting you to Nohant, I wanted to keep you there for some time, to nurse your shattered health, and to request you to infuse into me that moral health which has never failed you. Come, pray do! A week or ten days hence, I shall be in Paris for a fortnight, and I intend to bring you back with me to Nohant. I shall see you in Paris, shall I not? Write a line to me, that I may know where you are. As for me, my address in Paris is 3, *Rue Racine*, near the Odéon.

There may perhaps be wretches who will say that you made people act in order to secure your freedom. Yes, at all times there have been calumniators, cowards who instinctively hate candour and virtue. I hope that you are not going to

heed *mire*! As for me, I stand in the breach, in order to spit on them; I possess a letter, one of your last letters to me, wherein you tell me what there is in the one which the Emperor read. I respectfully kissed that letter which confirmed me in my intimate and deep sentiment of the fatherland! Let us preserve that sentiment intact; let us defend it against the hideous joy of a fraction of our party. Let us remember that those who killed the Republic said: "*Anything!* even the Cossacks, rather than Socialism!" Let us face courageously those who say to-day: "*Anything!* even the Cossacks, rather than the Empire." And, if we should be told that we are betraying our faith, well, let us laugh, there is nothing else to do! But if you cannot laugh, you whose noble heart has bled so much, accept this as another martyrdom. God will some day award you the justice which men refuse.

I am impatiently waiting for a line from you; if you could only have seen how beaming with joy Maurice was this morning upon bringing me the news when I awoke. How delighted were all in the house here, even those who do not know you!

If you should have no time to write, let me know, through a friend, what you are doing.

GEORGE SAND.

TO THE SAME.

PARIS, 28th October, 1854.

MY FRIEND,

You calumniate yourself when saying: "I acted in a moment of surprise, when thinking more of my own interests than of those of the cause."

No, it is not so; you thought of once more sacrificing your life and your rest to the moral interest of the cause. As for me, I should have had, *I had*, a different view of that interest. Your action is none the less pure and noble. But let me tell you what my sentiments are. There are actions which are *beautiful and good*. Charity may impose silence upon honour itself. I do not mean *real* honour, that which we keep intact and serene in the depths of our conscience, but visible and brilliant honour, honour as a work of art and as an historical glory. That kind of honour has taken hold of your existence in like manner as the honour of the heart. You have already become an historical personage, and, in our days, you represent the type of a hero, lost, alas! in our sadly degenerate society.

Let me, however, take up the defence of charity, that virtue which is wholly religious, quite personal, quite secret, perhaps, which history will not speak about, and will perhaps absolutely refuse to acknowledge. Well, in my opinion, charity was saying to you: "Remain with us, keep still! accept that pardon; your chivalrous pride rivets the chains and bolts of dungeons. It dooms to eternal exile the proscribed of December, to mendicity or to poverty, which they, many whole families, suffer without complaining."

Ah! you have lived in your strength and holiness! you have not watched the tears of mothers and children!

In the cruel party we belong to, they blame and stigmatise the heads of families who beg to be allowed to come back to earn their children's bread; that is odious. I saw some of those poor wretches coming back, who preferred to bind themselves never to meddle with politics under the Empire rather than abandon their sons to the shame of mendicity, and their daughters to that of prostitution; for you are aware that the result of extreme poverty is death or infamy.

And those barbarously stern politicians! They required all their brothers to be saints. Had they the right to do so? You alone perhaps had that right; yet can any one ever have it? As for me, I have not felt that I possessed it. I have, to the best of my ability, helped people to *run away* or to *come back*. I have done the latter in favour of those whom exile might have killed, the former for those who by staying might have been immolated. I have not been able to do much; I do not know whether I am reproached with having done too little, whether some rigourists find fault with me for it; ah! it little troubles me! I do not despise men who are neither heroes nor saints. I should have to despise too many people, including myself, whose heart cannot grow hardened by the spectacle of suffering.

Besides, I am not quite sure whether those who sacrificed their activity, their career, their political future, even their reputation, were not in certain circumstances the real saints and martyrs. Intolerance and suspicion, pride and contempt, are gloomy roads towards the temple of Fraternity!

And again, I was telling you, I believe, that all good

thoughts proceed from God. If He send any to our adversaries, ought we to meet them with disdain? If we do so, when will those thoughts of justice and reparation return? We do not wish the yoke to be lightened. We are proud of the strength of our shoulders; we do not heed the weak who succumb.

You will think me too much of a woman; I feel it. But I am a woman, and cannot blush for my being such, chiefly before you, whose heart is so filled with tenderness and pity.

Yet, am I going too far in the love of abnegation, and have you yourself gone too far in that of your own dignity? May God, who knows our intentions to be pure, forgive any of us who make a mistake. We shall see things more clearly and act with greater assurance, in a word, more brilliant and *freer*, like those which Jean Reynaud \* promises. Our aim, in the purgatory which he assigns to us, must be to act in accordance with our aptitudes and beliefs, in order to be always rising.

I am, in that respect, possessed of a serenity of hope which has always sustained or consoled me, and I confidently appoint a meeting with you in a brighter orb, where we will again talk upon those little events of to-day which appear so all-important to us.

Shall we ever meet again in this world? I know not. A thousand reasons say yes, a thousand others no. Had we been able to chat together at Nohant I should have suggested to you the book which you ought to write, and which you will have nevertheless to write when a little calm and rest have

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\* A Socialist writer.

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caused the substance of your own mission to appear in its *ensemble* and in its signification.

I was thinking of that book the day when I heard of your being set at liberty. I fancied I heard you say to me: "I am not a professional writer, I am not a *word-stringer*." There is a more vast and more human point of view than the narrow piety of Silvio Pellico.\* As for ours, it would have related to truths so much superior to every society and to ourselves, that we might have spoken it without being prosecuted or convicted by any Government.

You will, I repeat, write that book. You will construct it on a different basis. I only regret not to bring you the share of inspiration which might have occurred to us in common.

Farewell, friend; I have not the time to say any more to-day. I live at present in the midst of theatrical life. I am longing to go back to my silent Nohant. I shall be there in a few days; that is where you will always be able to write to me. Do not leave me in ignorance of what you are doing.

Yours,

G. SAND.

*To M. CHARLES EDMOND, Paris.*

NOHANT, 7th February, 1855.

I thank you very cordially, sir, both for the relic you send and the good and true words you so well express. I cannot again speak of that grief, it always chokes my utterance, and, were I to speak, I should say too much!

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\* The celebrated author of *Le Mie Frigioni*, a pathetic account of his eight years' confinement.



What is most dreadful is that they have killed, completely killed, my poor child.\* Ah, sir! save your own; do not allow her to leave the infirmary, and, when she is cured, remove her from that boarding-school, which is sordidly dirty. Parents do not let their children die so easily when they have them near themselves. Parents who are true parents do not consider as a fatigue the watching over a long convalescence.

There are some who are foolish, and who believe that a child is a thing that may be neglected and forgotten. My poor daughter would not have let her own child die, and I also would have saved it, I am quite sure! I have not the honour of knowing you, sir, but I am much touched by what you tell me.

A thousand times thanks! I tenderly and sincerely wish for the recovery of your dear little one. My daughter too likewise thanks you.

GEORGE SAND.

*To M. ÉDOUARD CHARTON, Paris.*

NOHANT, 14th February, 1855.

DEAR FRIEND,

I left you poorly. Are you better? Let me hear from you. I have been wishing to write to you for a long time. I contemplated addressing a long letter to you, concerning the beautiful book of which we spoke together. I had read it! † But what misfortunes have befallen me all at once! I first of all lost two of my friends, and, it is terrible to say so, that

\* Jeanne Clésinger, grand-daughter of George Sand.

† *Terre et Ciel*, a work by Jean Reynaud.

was nothing! I suddenly lost that grand-daughter whom I adored, that Jeanne of whom I had spoken to you, and whose absence, you know, was so cruel for me. I was on the point of getting her back; the court had entrusted her to my care. The father resisted out of vanity; but for M. B——, whom a sullen, instinctive hatred, not having, as far as I know, any justification in fact, but deep-seated and of old standing, excited against me the father, left to his own impulse, would have brought the child back to me. He intended, he had previously intended doing so. Family authority and legal opinion were against it. They, therefore, were appealing against the decision of the court, which decision could not there and then be enforced. I, in vain, wrote to that cold and hard-hearted counsel that my poor little dear was ill cared for, sad, and almost scared in that boarding school where he had put her! And, during those negotiations, the father took his daughter out in the middle of January, without perceiving that she was wearing dress only suited to summer. In the evening he brought her back to school ailing, and went himself hunting far from Paris, God knows where! The child had an attack of scarlatina. She, however, soon recovered; but the boarding school doctor was of opinion that she ought to stay in the infirmary; that she required to have at least forty days of extreme care, and to be kept in an equable temperature. No notice was taken of the recommendation. When it was seen that the child was at the point of death, the mother was called in, and only then allowed to nurse it. The child, suffocated by a generally congested condition, died in her arms, smiling and talking, unconscious of being ill, but struck by I know not what divination, and saying quietly: "No, my little mamma, I shall not go to Nohant, I shall not leave this

place!" My poor daughter brought the corpse with her; it is at Nohant! Thank God, she is strong and healthy. As for me, I bore up, I had need to do so; but now that everything is quiet, *arranged*, and that life begins again with that child snatched from my existence, . . . I cannot tell you what my feelings are, and I believe that it is better I should not attempt to do so. What I want to tell you is that the book has done me good, as also has Leibnitz. I knew all it treats of. I could not have uttered it, I could not have proved it; but I was and am still convinced of it. I see future and eternal life before me as a certainty; as a light in the glimmer of which everything is only dimly seen; but that light is there, and that is all I wish for. I know full well that my Jeanne is not dead; I know well that she is better than in this miserable world, where she was the victim of the wicked and the foolish. I know well that I shall meet her again, and that she will recognise me, even though she should not recollect or I either. She was part of my own self, and that fact will always remain. But those beautiful books, which excite our thirst for quitting this life, have their dangerous side. We feel ourselves carried away by them, and it is necessary that we should know how to wait during the time we must remain here. My will is quite resigned to that; my duty is so clearly traced, that for me revolt is impossible; but I feel my soul yearning to depart in spite of myself. It cannot, however, separate itself from my other children or from my friends. It desires to fulfil its task, and to still give happiness to others. But the more it perceives what is beyond the life of this world, the wider grows the breach between itself and the will, which latter becomes insufficient for its task. I say the *soul*, not being able to express other-

wise that which contrives to leave me, for the *will* ought not to be something apart therefrom; yet the will cannot delay the flight of the soul when the moment for its departure is come.

Do not reply to all this, dear friend; if my children, who sometimes perchance read my letters, knew that I am so despondent, they would be too much affected by it. I wish to do all that I can in order to live with them as long as possible. Next month I shall go to the South with my son, so as to get rid of a certain feeling of oppression which has lately increased, though it does not present any serious symptoms.

I shall go to Paris in the middle of March, in order to obtain a passport, and shall spend four or five days there. I do not wish to see any one, except yourself, whom I should much like to communicate to the author of *Ciel et Terre* all that I cannot tell you here, being personally too distracted, and precisely because of the question of life and death dwelt upon therein. That book is one of the finest productions of the human mind.

It caused me extraordinary joy. I wanted to write something in order to praise it as I feel it ought to be. I will do so by-and-by, if I can resume writing. But between ourselves, I am not sure that that phase of life will ever return to me. I am not living at all in myself or by myself, my whole life during the last two years was absorbed by that little child. She carried away with her so much of my being that I do not know what is left to me, and I have not yet felt courage enough to make the examination. I see only her toys, her books, her little garden that we used to work in together, her wheelbarrow, her little waterpot, her

bonnet, her little needlework, her gloves, all that had remained with me, waiting for her.

I look at and handle all these, stupefied, and asking myself whether common sense will return to me on the day when I shall at last understand that she will return no more, and that she it is whom they have just buried under my own eyes!

You see, I always fall back into my state of harrowing grief. That is why I can scarcely write to anybody. There are few hearts which the recital of my griefs would not weary, or inflict too much suffering upon. I speak to you because you are, like myself, half absorbed in contemplation of the future life, and for the present, I hope, enjoying the beneficent placidity which I formerly possessed when not so tired of waiting. But your body was then ailing. Tell me now, before I leave Nohant, that you are better. You have a great resource, that of being able to live as though accustomed to the world of ideas in which I see only as a poet, that is to say, with my sensibility more than with my reason. Your lucidity, methinks, maintains its level in that world. There it is that our eyes should always be directed, free from the preoccupation of the inevitable cares of material life, from duties which sometimes exceed our strength, and from those heartrending griefs which nothing can appease. The foolish tenderness of mothers is surely a providential law; but Providence is very harsh towards both man and woman, but above all towards woman.

Farewell, dear friend; I am yours in mind and heart.

G. SAND.

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To MAURICE SAND, Paris.

NOHANT, 24th February, 1855.

DEAR CHILD,

I begin by telling you that, as you have not caught a cold, I have nothing to complain of. Take care of your little self, as I do of my own self, seeing that we must not look upon ourselves as being simple mortals, but most precious travellers starting on the discovery of the Mediterranean.\*

As for Montigny, I quite perceive that he is intent upon re-writing all my plays. I may, however, venture the remark that all those of my plays which have not been altered—*Le Champi*, *Claudie*, *Victorine*, *Le Démon du Foyer*, *Le Pressoir*—have had a genuine success, whereas the others failed or only secured a short-lived one. I never observed that the ideas of other people brought the public to me, whereas my *hardiesses* have been accepted in spite of all.

And what *hardiesses*? Too much ideal, that is my great vice in the eyes of theatrical directors.

I shall listen without discussion to what Montigny will say to me, I shall listen to his schemes of *amelioration*, and, if I see that the ground-work of the piece has to be changed, I shall take back my play; this time, I have fully made up my mind to it. I am sick of the theatre, and still more so of the hesitations to which I am myself driven. I am that which I am. *Yo soy quien soy*. My manner and my feeling are my own. If the theatre-going public refuse to have them, let them do so, they are the masters; but I also am the mistress

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\* Allusion to a contemplated journey of George Sand to the south coast of France.

of my own tendencies, and at liberty to publish them in a form in which they will be compelled to *swallow* them by their firesides.

Nothing new here. The weather is rather mild; Trianon has been turned into a lake. I am giving orders respecting the garden during our absence, absorbed in kitchen accounts, the sorting of my papers, and proof-correcting. All that is not very interesting, chiefly when not seeing you going to and fro, moving in and out, and casting in the midst of all your profound reflections and your luminous *scientific* views.

Good night, then, dear darling; I am again buried in papers. I kiss you, Captain D'Arpentigny, with all my heart.

Émile *treats himself* to making for his own use a fair copy of *Le Diable aux Champs*.\*

*To MADemoiselle LEROYER DE CHANTEPIE, Angiers.*

NOHANT, 27th February, 1855.

MADemoiselle,

Seeing that you have the goodness to rely upon my profound sympathy for you, I advise and even entreat you to leave the place where you suffer so much, and to go and take up your abode in Paris; there you will meet with the noble distractions required by a mind like yours—music, fine arts, and the relations which your high intellect and generous heart will soon establish for you.

If Catholicism be necessary to you, you will certainly also meet with a spiritual adviser sufficiently enlightened to cure

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\* Title of a play by George Sand

that disease of scrupulousness in you, with which I am indeed well acquainted, and from which, during my youth, I suffered cruelly enough to understand and pity you. No, a soul like yours must not sink under those vain terrors. You must strengthen yourself by means of sound and vigorous reading. I am too ignorant to point out to you what they should be; but write to M. Jean Reynaud, send him my letter, if you deem it advisable. By that, he will know that I am acquainted with you, and that your need of intellectual help is no frivolous anxiety.

Yes, I know you without having ever seen you; but is it not nearly ten years since you first wrote to me those long letters in which, amidst the contradictions and the disturbed state of an ardent thought, I have always found your kindness so unrestrained, so spontaneous, so unaffected, and your judgment so generous and so sound upon all that is essential!

Ask M. Reynaud to point out to you books that will relieve you. Do better even; leave the solitude wherein you consume yourself, where all that surrounds you leaves you and *makes* you feel—I fully see it—still more lonely. I am not sufficiently acquainted with M. Jean Reynaud to introduce you to him, without his being previously acquainted with you. But introduce yourself; his book also did me much good, and I much needed to find, in the elevated knowledge of a mind of the highest order, the reasoned confirmation of all my instinctive impulses; for my courage has been much tried lately!

I have lost an adorable and adored child, my poor daughter's daughter. I am just recovering from an illness which prevented me from replying to you, and now my



health is still so shaken that my son, my dear son, is going to take me with him on a travelling tour. I shall start in a couple of days. Two months hence I shall be back at Nohant, where I hope to receive better news concerning you. Before returning here I shall probably spend a few days in Paris. If you should give way to the temptation you feel to go and live there, let me know about it at my Paris address early in May.

Excuse my short reply; I am still heart-broken, but *I believe*. I am sure to meet with my child in a better world; and you, whose heart is so pure, you also ought to be sure of your future. To feel doubts in the kindness of God is a weakness of our nature. Apply all the forces of your mind to believing in that kindness, and you will feel that it is reflected in yourself.

Do not fear death; it is indeed a safe refuge, and, when we appreciate it, courage consists in not desiring it too much.

Ever yours in heart, poor aggrieved soul!

GEORGE SAND.

*To M. EUGÈNE LAMBERT, Paris.*

FRANCATI, March, 1855.

MY DEAR LAMBEUCHE,\*

Everything is well; Maurice caused us some anxiety, not because of the illness he has had, but because of that which he might have had. He fortunately escaped from it, thanks to a capital doctor and an excellent man into the

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\* A term of endearment for Lambert.

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bargain. We naturally suffered a little from the spleen in Rome. Five or six days spent in an inn are far from cheerful.

Besides, in many respects, Rome is a regular *humbug*; people must be *ingrists* \* to love and admire everything, and not to say, after three days' stay, that what they see there is, as regards aspect, the character, the colour, and the sentiment of things, absolutely similar to what they have already seen elsewhere. Visitors may afterwards enter upon the details of the ruins, the palaces, the museums, etc. At Rome such things are without end, their numbers are infinite; they are so numerous that the life of an amateur might not prove long enough for their inspection. But, those who are but *artistes*, that is, who wish to live their own life, after having allowed themselves to be somewhat impregnated with outward sights, do not derive any profit from their stay in that city of the past, where everything is dead, even that which is supposed to be still alive.

It is curious, beautiful, interesting, wonderful, but too *dead*; and, in order to appreciate it all, you would require to know by heart, not only the famous work respecting Rome in the time of Augustus (*Rome au Siècle d'Auguste*), but also the history of Rome at every period of its existence; you would have to live in the city with your mind always on the strain, and possess a wonderful memory and a deadened imagination.

There was a time, *under the Empire*, when people used to sit upon the *débris of a column*, in order to meditate upon the ruins of Palmyra; it was then the fashion, everybody used to

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\* Belonging to the school of Ingres, the famous French artist.

meditate. They meditated so much that meditation became quite *irksome*, and men now prefer to live. When you have spent several days examining urns, graves, crypts, *columbaria*,\* etc., you feel anxious to leave it all behind and go and admire nature. But at Rome nature manifests itself by torrents of rain, suddenly followed by stifling sultriness and foulness of the atmosphere. The town is dreadfully ugly and filthy! it is La Châtre, increased to a hundred times its size; for it is immense, and adorned with old and new monuments, which stare you in the face at every step without delighting you, because of their being penned in and spoiled by heaps of shapeless and wretched constructions. They say that it must all be seen in the light of the sun; I do not deny it, but it seems to me that the sun cannot make beautiful that which is hideous.

The so much praised country round Rome is, indeed, of singular immensity, but so denuded, so flat, so lonely, so dreary, so melancholy, with whole leagues of pasture-land in all directions, that it is sufficient to induce visitors to blow out what little brains they may have preserved after inspecting the town. But, but, when you have left that flat immensity, when you reach the foot of the mountains, the scenery changes. You enter Paradise, you step into the third heaven. That is where we now are. The day before yesterday we brought Maurice here—not yet thoroughly restored to health, but, although we have not yet had one beam of real sunshine, he is quite strong enough to stand all day on his legs.

The place where we now are is so beautiful, so strange, so

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\* From the Latin *Columbarium* (a dovecot), applied to receptacles for mortuary urns, from the fact of their having niches resembling pigeon-holes.

curious, so sublime, and at the same time so pretty, that it would take me a whole season to describe it to you. You must therefore be delighted at our present good luck, for we are at last repaid, and with interest, for our fatigues and disappointments. You may read my letter to Solange. You will gather from this letter how we are installed, but nothing could convey to you an accurate idea of our walks. We are making discoveries at every step. To-day, for instance, we spent the day in an immense palace, which stands quite deserted, on the top of a hill. I was thinking about you, my little Lambert.

Ah! how happy I should be were I rich, and able to share with all my children the true pleasures I meet with. What subterranean passages, flowers, rivulets, cascades, monstrously large trees, ruins, deserted court-yards, broken rocks, noseless statues, wild grass, mosaics covered with mossy grass and asphodels! It is enough to send one into a dream; and the endless galleries and flights of steps which go from the sky to the bowels of the earth, a lot of inexplicable constructions, the vestiges of unbridled luxury buried under poverty, all of which, towering above a panorama of mountains, of lands, and of seas, are sufficient to turn one's brain. It is really too beautiful.

Now, good night, my Lambert; we contemplate staying here a fortnight, and, when we have decided upon the sequel of our journey, we shall let you hear from us. I kiss you on my own behalf and on that of your little comrades. Good-bye till next May. Think of us.

G. SAND.

To M. JULES NÉRAUD, *La Châtre.*

FRASCATI, 14th April, 1855.

DEAR FRIEND,

We have been staying here during the last fortnight, and intend prolonging our stay for a week. Though rather poorly when we first came here, Maurice is so well now that he only thinks of eating, running about, and sleeping. I myself follow the same *régime*, and am pretty well under it, physically speaking. As for my brain, it is completely *atrophied*. To rise early, to walk five or six leagues day after day, to come back to our quarters famished, to drop asleep after a horrid dinner which appetite causes us to relish, I leave you to judge whether that is an interesting life. I nevertheless, without scarcely perceiving it, collect some notes which will interest me later on, when having the leisure for attentively examining that which now only passes before my eyes.

The country over which we travel is truly admirable, and well deserving of remark, as causing us to become more attached to the opinions we take there with us from elsewhere. Nature here is beautiful, though chiefly pretty; for do not believe a word of what you have heard respecting the grandeur and the sublimity of the scenery of Rome and its environs. For those who have seen anything else it is quite small, but delightfully neat and smart. Let us, however, understand ourselves; it is the *small* in the great, for that Roman country, so perfectly smooth, is immense, like a sea surrounded by mountains. But the details, the ruins, the palaces, the churches, the hills, the lakes, the gardens, all those seem out of proportion with the scenery which subsequently presents itself.

To ramble all day through solitudes and to discover the country for ourselves is, we find, a most recreative way of living. Guides do not know the roads, and are wearisome. We dispense with them. In fine, you who know all there is for us in a walk to Crevant or to the wood at Boulaize, can imagine what our existence is like. We are now collecting plants and catching butterflies on the ruins of Tusculum, round Lake Regillus, and goodness knows where! Names here are more pompous than things, but things themselves are certainly charming.

We have had dreadful weather for Italy, a great deal of rain out of doors and a great deal of cold in-doors; for the external temperature, however deprived of sunshine we may be, is always pretty mild, and life at this season is only bearable in the open air. The apartments here are spacious, vaulted, stuccoed, painted *al fresco*, only suitable for summer residences. Neither doors nor windows are made to shut tight, and what fireplaces there are do not yield any warmth. Only during the last few days have we had beautiful sunshine throughout the day; but we have gone out in all sorts of weather.

Easter-day was also very fine and very warm; we spent it in Rome, where we received the benediction *Urbi et Orbi*. It is a much vaunted ceremony, but, nevertheless, one not carried out with any great artistic display. Here, as elsewhere, everything is deficient in that taste which is so peculiar to the French. Nature herself derides it. She here lavishes with profusion the flowers which we carefully and almost respectfully cultivate at home in our gardens. Here, in the solitude of the wilderness, you meet with mignonette, narcissus, cyclamen, and a thousand other charming flowers, whose

nomenclature I will spare you, who are only acquainted with tulips. Besides, I do not wish to tell you beforehand all that we shall have to talk about even to satiety when back at Nohant; for here everything, from beginning to end, is different to what we find it at home. Men and beasts, customs, ideas, wants, the country itself, the plants, the air, everything is of another world. I do not feel the seductive power of this country as much as I had been led to expect. Too many things are out of harmony with our own way of seeing and feeling. I acknowledge that it is good to have seen it, were it only in order to love the more our dear France with its grey sky, where men, however little manly they may be, are yet more so than anywhere else.

After all this, old fellow, I will say good night. I am dying with sleep. I received, this evening, your letter of April 4th. You are astonished at the time which letters take in arriving! Well, *I*, on the contrary, am astonished at present in seeing how the simplest matters of material life are dealt with. Do not worry yourself about the loss of the eagle.\* I am of course sorry; but when we get news of all our own people, after the misfortunes which have overtaken us in our nest here, we esteem ourselves happy in having no fresh loss but that of a creature of the *ménagerie*. . . .

We depend upon you to express our kind regards to all the household. If you will be good enough to convey news of us to our friends, I shall be still further obliged to you. I intend writing to everybody, but have not yet found a day when I felt equal to it in the midst of the fatigue in which I engage. It is truly excessive, but I believe that I shall find myself the better for it, for I am making astonishing pro-

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\* A tame black eagle which had escaped.

gress in the art of climbing. I ascend every day as much as a league at least, and sometimes a league and a half above the sea-level. That is something for the legs to do. Maurice is collecting lots of insects and making a great many drawings. As for me, I steady my gait, which at present is rather too shaky, by filling my bag with a heap of stones! I would like to pick up all I see; everything is so curious. In whatever deserted spot we find ourselves, we walk over fragments of marble from Asia and Africa, the relics of a past splendour, and the presence of which, in many places, the most learned antiquaries are puzzled to explain.

Good night again, my dear fellow. Write again to Genoa, if you do write; for we shall certainly be there again towards the end of the month. Yours in heart.

*To M. ERNEST PÉRIGOS, La Châtre.*

LA SPEZZIA, 9th May, 1855.

DEAR FRIEND,

I do not know whether you will receive my letter before my embrace, for I have only just received yours and the grievous news which it contains.\* It is certainly a very hard blow that now strikes me after so many others. How unfortunate we have been during the past few years, my poor children! Life generally destroyed in us and around us,† God should have left us at least personal life, that of family and friendship. And yet all leave us at the same time! It

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\* The death of Jules Néraud (the Malagasy).

† A poetic allusion to the massacres of June, 1848, and to those following the *coup d'état*, also to that of Néraud.



is to a better world that they go, I doubt not. I doubt it less than ever ; but how heart-rending all such separation for those who remain !

I was a little while ago on the sea-shore, in a delicious spot, where there were rocks covered with pines and superb flowers growing wild, even in the sand on the beach. Whilst my children were at some distance I occupied my walk, as I usually do, in picking up plants. For the last two months, whenever I saw anything that was new to me, I placed it in a book specially intended for the purpose, saying to myself that my poor friend would teach me its name, and collected two specimens of each plant, so as to be able to give one to him, as I had done in a previous trip. Thus, at every moment, a hundred times a day, for two months, I have been thinking of him and fancying him *botanising*, as formerly, at my side. Ah well ; at that very moment, in that very occupation with which my recollection was associating him, your letter was handed to me, and I learned that I should see him no more !

When leaving Nohant, I had a good turn-out of my papers, and I believe that I told you that I had found and re-read all his letters. They were masterpieces of wit, poetry, clear intelligence, and unaffected sentiment. I said to myself, that when I had two months of leisure, I would publish them, in the sequel to my *Mémoires*.

The reading of them carried me back through ten years of my life, the little events of which he had recorded with his own grace and happy philosophy. That *rapprochement* of our thoughts, after many years of an undisturbed separation, was thus like the presentiment of an impending dissolution of our moral union ; for, of late years, I had scarcely seen any-

thing of him, his habits and his tastes confining him to *his* home as did mine to my own. But I did not heed that; I felt that he was really near me, and I used to say to myself that I could at any time see, write to, or speak to him. He was always for me the wisest and most comforting of friends.

You say truly, he is now happy and in possession of knowledge devoid of mystery, and in the midst of enduring joys; his state is, I am sure, an enviable one, compared with the miserable world in which we spend that ephemeral life which is so confused, so uncertain, and so agitated. But what of ourselves! My heart is broken as much by my poor Angèle's\* grief as by my own. Poor dear child, what repeated heart-rendings! Tell her how much I love her, chiefly since she displayed so much fondness for my poor Nini, and shed so many tears over you. We cannot spare ourselves such mortal griefs. Would that we might do so by offering ourselves in the place of those whom death snatches from us.

Maurice requests me to tell her, as also yourself, how much he feels himself (for our poor friend had been like a father to him during his youth), and how greatly he shares your own grief. The poor boy only received your letter yesterday, and, although I dared not question him, I noticed something sad in his expression. I was a little indisposed, and he only this morning decided to inform me as to the truth; we were then in one of the finest spots on earth, and it seems to me that that fraternal soul came here to speak to me, and endeavoured to console me for its departure! How often he talked to me about death! There was a time when he shared my beliefs in another life, and when, in his hours of spleen—for, at times, he had such in the midst of his ever-flowing gaiety—he used

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\* Madame Angèle Périgois, daughter of Jules Nérand.

to tell me and write to me that, when gone, he would return and speak to me through the perfume of some flower!

You inform me that Fleury came to our part of the country; is he there still? Shall I have the consolation of finding him there? From here, I shall start to-morrow for Genoa; thence going to Marseilles. I hope to be in Paris on the 15th May. I shall only stay in the last-mentioned place long enough to transact my business, and I hope to be back again at home on the 20th.

Good-bye, then, my dearly beloved children. I heartily kiss you.

*To HIS IMPERIAL HIGHNESS PRINCE JÉRÔME NAPOLEON,  
Paris.*

NOHANT, 12th July, 1855.

DEAR IMPERIAL HIGHNESS,

M. Félix Anlard, the mayor of my *commune*, whose good intentions have already enlisted your kind interest, has just been brutally dismissed. He is the most honest man in the world, and has but one fault, that of writing too long letters and of being enthusiastically devoted to a Government which, following the example of so many others, only rewards people who are suspected, neglecting those whose fidelity is beyond question. We might afford to disregard ingratitude, for, whatever the *régime*, it reigns supreme; but the persecution of one's own friends is rather too much of a luxury.

Do your best to obtain the reparation of such injustice and to secure an indemnification for that worthy and excellent man, who spent what little fortune he possessed in helping

the poor of his *commune*. He is capable, most capable, of being an excellent prefect; nobody understands administrative matters better than he; at least make him a sub-prefect. That would be a good action, and calculated to do the authorities a good turn. He tells me that he has written to you. For once, of my own impulse, and without any partiality for him, I recommend him to your consideration, to your sense of justice, and to that kindness with which I am so well acquainted.

Yours in heart—you still allow me so to subscribe myself.

GEORGE SAND.

I am very sorry to hear of the death of Madame de Girardin. It is a great loss for us all, and chiefly for those who were particularly acquainted with her.

To M. PAUL LIMAYRAC, Paris.\*

NOHANT, September, 1855.

If my *collaborator* takes that view of the matter, he will find it easy to extract, from the facts he will be good

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\* A Paris publisher, M. Philippe Collier, had agreed with George Sand that she should write a series of publications for him, under the general title of *Les Amants Illustres*.<sup>a</sup> In order to facilitate the work of the author, who, at that period, used to stay at Nohant nearly the whole year, M. Collier had made arrangements with Paulin Limayrac for making researches and collecting all the notes that were required by George Sand; but Paulin Limayrac having soon relinquished the task, which he considered too heavy, the agreement was cancelled by mutual consent. *Eveonor et Leucippe* (first title of *Les Amours de l'Age d'Or*)<sup>b</sup> was all that was written by George Sand. It was given to the publisher as a compensation.

<sup>a</sup> The Illustrious Lovers.

<sup>b</sup> The Loves of the Golden Age.

enough to submit to me, all the *marrow* which may be spread on my bread. There are numberless ways of being impressed. I have only one way of being so, because, in spite of myself, my mind is a little more absolute than my character. Will that be a drawback in a work of such a nature? I do not think so. Having once agreed upon a brief exposition of very simple but invariable principles, our work should thereby be enlightened and sustained throughout, free from too many defects.

Starting with those ideas, we, that is to say you, have to seek in the story of each illustrious love, first of all the social, intellectual, moral, physical, and other surroundings of our couple. Then the private character of each individual, then the nature and circumstances of that individual's love, then facts, the aim attained or missed, the good or bad result; for we shall not be too ceremonious with them, and shall perhaps relate wicked *liaisons*, if, thanks to the criticism we may deem fit to make respecting them, that is likely to be useful, in however slight a degree, in proving the excellence of our theory. You will have to ransack the libraries, the writings of suitable authors, the letters of Mademoiselle Volland and of Madame Duchâtelet, as also Petrarch's sonnets, though in them all you will only collect those culminating points likely to throw a light upon the application of my theory. For instance: did Voltaire and Madame Duchâtelet love one another in heart, sensually and intellectually? As for my part, my opinion is that they only loved one another intellectually. That is why their love was incomplete. But still it was something to love one another in those sublime and lofty regions, and the union of two superior minds is well worth our taking the trouble of observing and analysing it, and noting its results.

In what way did Agnès Sorel love her royal lover? Did she, like Joan of Arc, begin by patriotism? or else were her senses and her heart (or either one or the other only) so moved and so possessed by the king that enthusiasm was aroused in that woman's soul like a revelation? In that case, all honour to *love*! I am but superficially acquainted with the history of Agnès; as regards history generally I know nothing, absolutely nothing! mine is an unreliable memory, like the linnet's. But if you know that story, or if, not feeling sure about it, you look it up for me, you may be able to tell me, "It was love that revealed patriotism to Agnès;" or else, "It was patriotism that inspired her with love."

I, however, recollect four pretty *Tourangeau*,\* I might as well say *Berrichon* † lines, on the subject of the *Saurette*. That was her name; it comes from *sauret*, a Berrichon word, meaning without ears; in our part of the country they still say, *un chien sauret*, which means a dog whose ears have been clipped. The lines referred to are as follows:

*Gentille Agnès, plus de los tu mérites,  
La cause étant de France recouvrer,  
Que ce que peut dedans un cloître ouvrier  
Close nonain, ou bien dévot ermite.*

Gentle Agnes, your aim being the recovery of France, you deserve more praise than cloistered monk or devout hermit.

But that is a digression. Let us return to our history.

Mary Stuart! Wicked and charming woman, upon whom we shall have to moralise. Besides, in ancient times, what beautiful or curious things to examine or to expose!

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\* Peculiar to Tours.

† Peculiar to Berry.

What your share in this work will be I am still unable to say. I have bound myself in honour to write the whole in draft. You see what stupid folk my publishers are; but they are all alike. However, if I have to trace millions of *pattes de mouche*,\* methinks that you will also have plenty of work to do. I have but few books at home, and no means of procuring any in my province. I cannot come to Paris to settle even temporarily; you will therefore have to read for me, and collect material for each biography, as also extracts from books, letters, or poetry intended for quotation. Do not take any trouble in the way of editing. Provided that your notes be legible I shall easily guess your conclusions. If I should require to read a work in its entirety (that might be the case, for the spirit of passions is sometimes disseminated, and requires to be, as it were, angled for as with a line in a pond), you will have to borrow it from the library and send it to me; provided, however, the work be written in French, for I am but little conversant with any other language! If the sending of the books can be avoided by forwarding a few pages of extracts, you will please engage a copyist at my expense.

The historical plan of the work will be your own business. I am absolutely incapable of it *at first sight*, the more so that I have myself no eyes left to read with. It therefore rests with you, being young and in good health, to record in chronological order the history of love; and to select all that is worth quoting without being scandalous.

As regards those of whom in the night of time we shall

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\* *Pattes de mouche* is a term signifying a certain light, scrawly style of writing. The whole phrase is equivalent to a vast quantity of scribbling.

find but few records, we shall dispose of them in few words, reserving ourselves for more elaborate remarks in proportion as we advance into the light of times nearest to our own, certainly the most interesting: You can work out this little plan at your leisure; for we shall not have to commence for six months at least. I must finish my *Mémoires*. Amongst certain biographies we shall have to point out those which served as intermediaries, and that will enable us to speak of several *liaisons* more widely known than edifying, in order to administer a kick to them (*pour leur donner du pied au derrière*).

You see that you will have to establish a link, and to indicate it to me. You will please keep a good account of your working hours, your cab fares, expenses, and trouble; for, though amusing (I believe it to be so), the work will not be so light as the publishers suppose, and I undertake to look after your interests, since you are good enough to have confidence in me.

*To M. JULES, JANIN, Passy.*

PARIS, 1st October, 1855.

MY DEAR *CONFÈRE*,

I so style you because you are an author, and that I can be a critic upon certain occasions. I am about to scold you. That you should find fault with all that I write for the theatre, and particularly *Maître Favilla*, is your right, and nobody contests it. But that you should search, outside the literary forms of my works, for sentiments which are not in them, is not just, and to that it is my right and my duty to cply.



The charge (*procès de tendance* \*) that you bring against me to-day, and which is a recapitulation of several others, is as follows: George Sand apotheosizes the *artiste* and satirises the *bourgeois*. Her idea is glory to the musician, to the actor, to the poet; fie on the *bourgeois*! shame and malediction upon the *bourgeois*! An *artiste* passes—take off your hats; see, a *bourgeois* appears—let us throw stones at him.

I will answer you by the mouth of that very Favilla who annoys you so much: "No, thank God, hatred is unknown to me." Consequently, I do not hate the *bourgeoisie*, and my works prove it. You hate *artistes*, and your criticism proclaims it.

I so little hate the *bourgeoisie*, that, in *Le Mariage de Victorine*, I have made use of the *data* furnished by Sedaine relative to M. Vanderke, who, being a nobleman, became a merchant, and in that position, by dint of work, liberality, probity, wisdom, modesty, acquired all the humble but true glory of a character, summed up by Sedaine in the expression: "*Philosophe sans le savoir*" (a philosopher without knowing it). In the same play, Vanderke's wife, son, and daughter are very affectionate, sincere, and good creatures.

I have not interfered with the master's typical characters, but I have endeavoured to develop that of Antoine, the business man, the household friend; he a petty *bourgeois*, a model of disinterestedness and fidelity. Lastly, I have created that Fulgence, also a petty *bourgeois*, a simple clerk, neither ridiculous nor hateful; you have yourself said so.

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\* *Procès de tendance*, literally a "charge of tendency," signifying a charge of intent to commit or tendency to commit a certain act. Here employed to signify exception taken to ideas and persons.

*Le Mariage de Victorine* is thus a play, the characters in which all belong to the *bourgeoisie*; it is a modest but frank apotheosis of the virtues peculiar to that class, when it understands and fulfils its true duties.

In *Les Vacances de Pandolphe*, the chief personage is a professor of law, a *bourgeois* pure and simple; a beneficent misanthrope, who loves paternally and is the object of filial love.

In *Le Pressoir*, the characters belong to the working classes. You have thought them too virtuous, too devoted, too intelligent. Yet, with respect to *Flaminio*, the characters in which do not belong to the *bourgeoisie*, you subsequently said: "Well done, *artiste*. Artisan is better. One of the Greek names of Minerva was *Minerva Artisana*."

I have not read what you have written about *Mauprat*. In that there are neither *bourgeoisie* nor *artistes*. I do not know what you have found in it upon which to expend your indignant eloquence.

We have now come to *Favilla*. Now, in fact and for the first time, an *artiste* and an artisan are seen discussing. You were good enough to write an insincere analysis of my play, arming yourself with a first version, which was printed but not published in Belgium. You have, I believe, neither seen nor read the play as published and performed, and you give an account of it; you quote that which was neither performed nor published. That style of criticism is loyal towards neither the author, nor the public, nor yourself, my dear *confrère*; and, but for your having been gravely affected, which fact I regret and deplore without knowing its cause, you would not thus have acted.

It is certain that I was not satisfied with my play of *La*

*Baronnie de Muhldorf*,\* seeing that I almost entirely re-wrote it; there is no doubt that, from an artistic point of view, the character of the *bourgeois* Keller is too pronounced, as I have essentially modified it.

I say *from an artistic point of view*, for, from a moral point of view, the *bourgeoisie* was not more harshly depicted therein than it is in *Maître Favilla*. Had I made a monster of the father of Keller, the son would none the less have been a noble character; in my rough draft the last-mentioned personage was assigned a more active and important part.

None of my own co-religionists (for I belong to the religion of Christian equality, and many are of my way of thinking) would have reproached me with representing a *young bourgeois* as enthusiastic and generous. Why did those who profess the doctrine that power should be in the hands of the wealthy, find fault with me for bringing under their notice a hardened and vicious *bloated bourgeois*? Why do people seek for *hatred* in the teachings of art? Are we in the time of *Tartufe*, when people were not allowed to depict the character of the hypocrite? Yet, even in the days when *Tartufe* first appeared, true Christians saw in that criminal only a shadow favourable to the diffusion of true light. I might almost be driven to believe, my dear *confère*, that you do not credit the existence of any virtues in the *bourgeoisie*, and that you, viewing its faults in a more serious light than myself, will one fine day compel me to take up its defence.

I say then that, from an artistic point of view, my first

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\* The original title of *Maître Favilla*.

sketch of the *bourgeois* Keller had seemed to me too roughly drawn. It was too harsh a figure in a picture whose general effect I wished to make appear soft and sentimental. I work much more conscientiously than your fraternal charity is pleased to suppose. Those who see me at work are aware of it, and, whatever opinion you may profess on the subject, the public themselves deign to notice it; for they bestow sympathetic tears upon that impossible madman of a Favilla, and benevolently smile upon the good impulses of the terrible Keller, who, everything considered, is only ridiculous. Behold, here is the great crime! the supposing that an ex-linen-draper could be incapable of understanding music, loving *artistes*, distinguishing at a glance between an honest woman and a *bohémienne*, eating up his income by alms or princely liberality, and finally of marrying his son without hesitation to a girl whose only fortune is her fine eyes! The foregoing is, indeed, a very cruel, sharp, bitter, and systematic *condemnation of the bourgeoisie!*

The reproach of systematic hatred is precisely, my dear *confrère*, that which I resent; for I fail to see that you can derive any credit from professing such a sentiment against *artistes*. How often, upon other occasions, did you not glorify yourself for belonging to that feeling and inspired race, and why, as regards *Flamínio*, do you display such horror of the actor, you who created and illustrated *Deburau*,\* the illustrious clown? Who then can have hurt you so much, and why do you thus disown your very destiny, which is to observe, understand, and love the drama? By quoting your own words I could certainly show that you contradict yourself a hundred times; but my object in writing to you is not to

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\* The name of a personage in one of M. Jules Janin's works.

dispute your artistic appreciation, it is in order to say to you: "Put aside the spite that animates you, and, as regards the moral aspect of things in general, do not indulge in voluntary injustice." As for me, my morality is the only strength which I claim to possess against thoughtless decisions, and as you do not feel it, it is useful, once for all, that I should let you know it.

That morality is a morality of the heart, which took possession of me chiefly as I advanced in years. It is not a fancy, as you term it, it is a very deep and wholesome sentiment of what men, at all times and everywhere, owe one another, behind the wings of a stage as at a shop-counter, in the light of the sun which illumines the sweet dreams of the poet, as in that of the lamp which illumines the contemplative hours of the *savant*, the philosopher, the speculator, or the critic. Do you not see, my dear *confrère*, that you watched too long by the light of that lamp to understand men; you only understand books, and you give your appreciation of the foundation when you should only give it respecting the form. Truly, as regards the latter, you have often shown yourself to be a master. Nourished with excellent reading, and sparkling with erudition, you have written some exquisite pages when free from passion and prejudice. But you have nothing in you of the philosopher. Yet, in order to become a complete critic, one needs a little philosophy. You write criticisms like an *artiste*, giving way to your emotions, to your impulses, to your fits of poetry or of spleen. When reading your works I do not complain. The talent you display—when you give yourself proper time—disarms judgment, whose true perceptions you sometimes ruffle. People exclaim at every page: "*Artiste, artiste*, but not an artisan! poetic

and theatrical muse, and not *Minerva Artisana*! Whatever he may say or do, he is not at any time a *bourgeois*, for the ideal *bourgeois* is wise, just, and consistent. The heavy hammer of logic belongs to the artisan, the brilliant hobby of fancy to the *artiste*."

When contriving to divide men into distinct classes: *artistes*, artisans, *bourgeoisie*, dreamers, bohemians, wise and foolish, or even rich and poor, you no longer understand them. All such divisions were very well ten years ago, and if we have retained them in our modes of expression, it is only by force of habit. Let us examine the present state of society. In the recent political agitations all its notions, habits, and destinies have become confused, like cards shuffled by the hands of the great gamester, whose name is *progress*.

Yes, progress is, in spite of all, always more rapid in the midst of trouble than in the midst of peace. I know your opinions, and you are acquainted with mine; our views are divergent, but they are not concerned here.

Our manners and ideas have been greatly disturbed. Fanciful dreamer that you are, have you not felt the earth shaking under our feet and the sky trembling over our heads? Do you not see that men and things are altered? Has not blind and passive fortune altered its course like some machine which no human hand can control? Who, in your opinion, are to-day the rich and who the poor? According to you, the rich are the wise and the poor are the fools. Well, that is an erroneous notion, which you would rid yourself of if you were to look outside of your books and your recollections. Work, commerce, economy, calculation, reason were indeed, in Keller's time, almost certain sources of gain, success, and security. Now, chance, fashion, vogue, audacity, *mere luck*

alone decide the chances of rich and poor. The *bourgeois*, whom our memory *embalmed* and whom your imagination is bent upon reviving, no longer exists. The *bourgeois* who, every night, reckons the honest and modest profits of his day's labours, who does not speculate on the Stock Exchange, who does not venture upon the exciting speculations of extensive industrial operations, is no longer a *bourgeois*. He belongs to the masses, and, between him and the artisan—whom you are quite right to esteem and to respect—there is only the difference of a little more or less activity, inventiveness, or ambition. What do I say! there is nowadays but little difference, as regards grievances and desires, between the peasant starving on the land which he does not know how to utilise, or cannot from lack of knowledge and capital, and the petty shopkeeper who with difficulty secures a modest competency, whilst always disturbed by the difficulty of obtaining credit. The tiller of the soil, like the tradesman, like the artist, like all those who have not secured big prizes, Flaminio like Fulgence, Keller like Favilla, all constitute the people.

Henceforth they do not present conflicting contrasts: they are men who seek or work, wait or hope; brothers and equals who may sometimes still quarrel and misunderstand one another, but who are on the eve of agreeing, because with them, whether virtue plays the fiddle or intelligence measures out linen, intelligence and virtue alone constitute the aristocracy.

How and why can you expect a poet to *hate* this or that man, among those workers whose cause is common, whatever may be the proper names inscribed upon their flags, in the past, in the present, or in the future?

What the poet should hate and reprove, if he were devoid of reason or charity, is speculation, that terrible game which makes and mars existences, benefiting some at the expense of others, so much so that, every twenty years (I am speaking of the past, it will now be much more frequent), the soil of France changes hands. Yes, speculation, that queen of vicissitudes, of struggles, of jealousies and passions, that enemy of the ideal and of our dreams, that *realist* above all others, which impels men towards the feverish activity of success and which equally disdains the contemplations of the *artiste*, the erudite labours of the critic, the systems of philosophers, and the religious aspirations of moralists. At first sight, the lovers of the science of speculation would henceforth seem to be the *bourgeois*, the real, the only *bourgeois*, in our present society, which only possesses antiquated and unsuitable expressions for new things. But, if we consider it, that ardent race which is rapidly invading all the moral and physical forces of our time does not constitute a class by itself, it is not even a distinct race. It is like the Church of Positivism, recruiting adepts everywhere, and finding some among poets as among grocers, among the laity as among the clergy, in the highest walks of society as in its most obscure and most servile regions; so much so that, in order to make a fortune or to escape distress, men need no longer perform a patient and daily task, have business talent or the inspirations of art; the question for them is to master the mechanism of banks and the calculations of financial eventualities, to attempt bold strokes, to invest their money safely, to systematise the chances of gain; in short, to know how to *gamble*, since gambling on a large scale has become the soul of modern society.



This would, no doubt, be a fine subject of declamation for those who are unacquainted with what is known now under the name of business; but, if we rise above questions of injury to our own interests in the struggle, if we shake off selfishness in order to consider the progress of the economical torrent and the end towards which, with artists and politicians alike, its waters are rushing, we are struck at perceiving general salvation at the end of that career opened to unbridled individualism.

We see capitals hurled after the marvellous conquests of industry, and forcibly, fatally placing themselves at the service of the genius of invention. We observe the principle of association breaking forth like the sun through the storm-clouds, machines performing the laborious task of man, and new industries offering a compensation to the working classes, freed from the duty of beasts of burden and called upon to perform more intelligent, less severe, and healthier occupations. We, in fine, see Socialism—your Apocalyptic beast, my dear *confrère*—making room for itself and grafting itself upon European society, whatever be the outward forms of equality or authority, of republic, dictatorship, or autocracy which it may please nations to inscribe at the head of their present and future constitutions.

The force of the community of interests is such that nothing can henceforth thwart its wonderful progress, and neither wars nor revolutions succeed in wrecking its conquests. The cataclysms which, in the political as in the physical order of things, are constantly threatening mankind, will without doubt destroy many fortunes yet, existences, and schemes, it seems to me inevitable; but that which is acquired in relation to social science is acquired for ever. Speculators have

become sensible, they have taken advantage of the works of political and social economy which have been hatched during a whole century. They use them to their own advantage, and generally, perhaps wholly, in view of their own advantage; they nevertheless use them, and that is the great point. Civilisation will be benefited by it when enlightenment is more widely diffused and the aim more obvious.

Meanwhile there are, doubtless, many sufferings and disasters. I should not agree with you were I to formulate the complaints that most touch and grieve me in the maleficent influences of that social transformation. Besides, we are not free to investigate that question deeply. But, to confine myself to the subject of my letter, art and *artistes*—art, that is our mutual profession; *artistes*, to whose ranks we both belong, my dear *confrère*—I am of opinion that our mandate should be to fight against the excess of *prosaicism* that is inevitably invading the world, and, while not impeding the rush of those troubled waters which, sooner or later, must become clearer, to save some few pearls, or at least some flowers carried away by the storm.

What are your mind and heart about, you who, like myself, have been *art-making* and have led an *artiste's* life during nearly the last quarter of a century, that you should utter all those imprecations against poets, artists, musicians, actors, all the lovers of the ideal?

To MADAME ARNOULD-PLESSY, Paris.

NOHANT, 21st November, 1855.

MY HANDSOME DARLING,

I have been and still am quite poorly; but you must not say so, because that would bring upon me thirty letters from friends more frightened than there is need for them to be. It was but a cold; but colds are with me of a nasty nervous character. They literally choke me. I am a little better now; but it has delayed me. My play\* was finished, and in the copyist's hands; I took it back in order to touch it up. After repeated corrections I obtained a better result, and the copyist (Émile) has again the opportunity of displaying his fine handwriting. Only last night did my mind rest from that meditation, whose progress the cold from which I was suffering had retarded, if not obstructed; and I now write to you at once before going to bed. My letter will, I hope, find you in the midst of a new success. I have already forgotten whose *Joconde* † this is. Is it Leonardo da Vinci's? You are at least as handsome as she was, and I am sure that people adore you as much in that character as they do in all others.

I am thinking of going to Paris with my *burly* manuscript at the end of this month. That will be soon enough, will it not? If it should be too early for me to be of any use, let me know, and I will send you the play if need be. Ought I to write to M. Doucet to let him know what progress I have made? Does he rely upon me? After I have submitted my

\* *L'Irrésohl*, performed at the Gymnase, under the title of *Françoise*.

† The title of a play in which Madame Arnould-Plessy was acting.

production to you and to Madame Allan (for you must guide me absolutely in the distribution of the parts), am I to hand him my manuscript?

Have you found a reader for me? I am unacquainted with any.

Regnier's part in the said piece is very good; would he consent to undertake the reading? \* I will ask him; I fancy he must be a good reader, but I do not know.

Do not expect a brilliant part, my darling. Yours is one expressing kindness, tenderness, and sincerity. Like yourself when not acting, it both laughs and weeps. But I fear that those who like champagne will think it but clear water!

The piece is a long one; your part is not, although it is the very life and soul of the play. I do not know whether Bressant will care for his part; it is rather a long-drawn one and the object of the lesson taught in the play, and he, always accustomed to please and to come out victorious, may consider himself rather too much sacrificed to the moral of the piece. The other male character will perhaps be better liked by the public; Bressant might like to take it, but his qualities would not show to such advantage therein as in the part I propose for him, which, everything considered, is the most important in the play. Madame Allan will, I believe, be satisfied, as her desire is to appear stupid, poor dear woman. She will furnish at once the framework and the gaiety of the piece. The part of Provost is not an extensive one, but I

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\* It is the custom in the leading Paris theatres for plays, when submitted by their authors for approval, to be read by one of the actors before the directors.—The chances of the authors are naturally much affected by the way in which their productions are read upon such occasions.

think it is nicely sketched: will he undertake it? Finally, I shall require two more comedians, whose standing need not be so high as those mentioned above, but the selection of whom will be rather a delicate matter, in order that nothing may be compromised.

Now, in your opinion, is the play worth anything? You will tell me, for I do not know, I have studied it so much that I am quite bewildered. Will it be accepted? that is not certain. They perhaps have made up their minds beforehand to reject it.

Ah! I was forgetting: Mademoiselle Dubois is talented, is she not? her part is all-important.

I have received the prize (*prime*).<sup>\*</sup> I thank you for having shown yourself such a clever *business man*. After all this, my kind and beautiful child, I kiss and love you. Love me also like *my good daughter*, as you are.

GEORGE SAND.

*To M. ALEXANDRE DUMAS, Jun., Paris.*

NOBANT, 26th November, 1855.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I am quite pleased to receive news of you. I only ask to be allowed to serve you, and I have already assigned one of my characters to Mademoiselle Dubois, whom you recommended to me last year. I do not know M. Bache;† I have never seen him. If you have not recommended him merely

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\* Probable allusion to some prize such as those given to newspaper subscribers.

† The comedian.

as a matter of courtesy and are really interested in him, you must let me have a reply to this; for I wish you to inform me as follows: Is he tall, short, stout, young, old, lively, or serious? Would he, for example, make up well as a wealthy nobleman, oblique in morals as in vision, or as a thieving valet? Would he expect a leading part, or would he accept a subordinate one? Finally, has he really any *go* and originality in him?

You compliment me upon *Favilla*; I myself have not seen you since the production of *Le Demi-monde*. That is a masterpiece of cleverness, wit, and observation. It indeed marks a progress in the science of the drama and in that of life, and yet I liked *Diane* and *Marguerite* better, because I like plays which cause me to weep. I like drama better than comedy, and, like a good woman, I want to feel enthusiastic over one of the characters. I was sorry that the young girl of the *Demi-monde* should have been made so little of after having been so well conceived, and that that rascally woman, who is so true to life and so well played, should have been the absorbing character in the piece. I of course know that, after having made the *Dame aux Camélias* interesting, you felt it necessary to present the reverse side of the medal. Art requires those impartial studies and contrasts which belong to life. This, however, is not a criticism that I am writing. I always regard you as the first of the new school of dramatic authors, according to the style to-day, as your father is the first in that of yesterday. I myself belong to the style of the day before yesterday or the day after to-morrow. I know not and it matters little. I amuse myself with what I do, but am still better amused with what you do, and your plays are for

Will you make me weep the next time? If you are in that vein, I promise you not to restrain myself. How is it that I do not see you when I come to Paris? Because you have no time to learn that I am there, and I have not time to ascertain whether you are there. It is here, at Nohant, that you should come to see me. You would have time here for working, and we should have hours of recreation when we could chat. Make up your mind then to do so one of these days, if you love me a little, who love you so much. I also send you Maurice's kind regards, and beg you to convey my tender regards to your father. Why do we get nothing from him? We are in want of something. The heroic drama has ended only because the masters have left it. If you reply, and you have *fresh* news from Montigny, let me have it. And that poor Villars too, we have killed him by not giving him the leading parts. But is that your fault?

GEORGE SAND.

*To M. PAUL DE SAINT VICTOR, Paris.*

PARIS, 1856.

I have just thanked Théophile Gautier for his capital article, and I also thank you for yours,\* my dear sir. In doing so I disregard a scruple of conscience, which always prevented me from expressing thanks for the *critique*. But, as you understand the motive for that scruple, you will also understand why it vanishes as regards yourself.

There is a sort of stupid pride, of which we are accused by

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\* An article reviewing *Françoise*.

those who do not possess any other; there is also a sort of true pride, which lofty characters do not misunderstand. That is why I confidently tell you that I feel encouraged by your sympathy, and grateful for it.

If you should feel any interest in the general rehearsal of *Comme il vous plaira*,\* I shall be delighted to see you when it takes place.

Yours,

GEORGE SAND.

*To MADAME AUGUSTINE DE BERTHOLDI, Brinon-les-Allemands, viâ Clamecy.*

PARIS, 13th April, 1856.

DEAR DAUGHTER,

I think you forgetful! but for Eugénie, I should only have heard about once since your return to Brinon. Because I do not reply to you (you are sufficiently acquainted with the life I lead here), you are not justified in leaving to other people the duty of letting me know how you are. You have more than enough time to write to me; you write to everybody else. You even find time for match-making; as for me, you neglect me entirely. You are therefore, dear little daughter, scolded by me, in order to cure you of grumbling as you do.

As for the match of which you speak, I believe it is a desirable and will prove a happy one. I heard of it with much pleasure, and am delighted at it for the sake of both families.

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\* An adaptation of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, by George Sand.



I do not know whether you have again seen the Girerds since they were here; if so, they will have told you, goose that you are, that I do not forget you, and that we talked a good deal about you.

I am writing to you on my return from the Théâtre Français, where my *Comme il vous plaira*, adapted and imitated from Shakespeare, has just been performed.

The piece was very unsatisfactorily played by most of the actors. The scenery and costumes were splendid, the public very hostile, being composed of all those who were unfavourably disposed, whether connected with the house or out of doors. Success was nevertheless secured, nobody being able to display his ill-will, and Shakespeare was more triumphant than I expected. As for me, I thought the public cold and stupid, but everybody says they were very warm, like the public usually at a first representation at the Théâtre Français, and all my friends are delighted.

*Françoise* is going on splendidly, and its success increases daily.

Good night, dear daughter; it is late, and I am going to bed, in order to rest from the fatigues involved by the three plays whose performance I have secured during the last four months.

I kiss you fondly, also Bertholdi and Georget;\* I shall start for Nohant towards the end of next week. Write to me there.

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\* Term of endearment for George.

To M. CHARLES DUVERNET, La Châtre.

NOHANT, November, 1856.

The impression is not clear enough, or the seal itself is too much worn to permit of its being described with certainty. The following is what I believe I see in it:

Two shields *argent*, *interlaced*, under an earl's coronet.

The *dexter* shield is as follows:

*Argent*, *lion-léopardé* (that is, in the act of walking), bearing a small escutcheon, in whose *field* appears a lamb *passant* (that is, in the act of walking) across a plain or *champagne*. The shield is *d'enquerre*, that is, metal upon metal, a rather uncommon occurrence in heraldry. The *champagne* is a *charge* somewhat rare in blazonry. The position of the small escutcheon and its shape are also very unusual. The arms may perhaps not belong to heraldry at all, and be but fancy ones.

The sinister shield bears charges quite in accordance with well-known and logical facts. Its description is as follows:

*Chevron gules* (that is, red), on field *argent*, *charged* with three roses *stalked* and *in foliage*, and surmounted *in chief* by an *ordinary* which seems to be a sun, termed the *sun in splendour* or *midday-sun*, because of its occupying the central spot in the uppermost portion of the escutcheon.

The earl's coronet does not signify anything. It appears that, in the eighteenth century, everybody used to assume it; for my grandfather Dupin, who possessed no title, displayed it over his three shells *argent* on field *azure*.

But the *chevron* is the sign of very ancient nobility. It

ranks among the *ordinaries* known in heraldry as *les pièces honorables* (*honourable charges*). It refers either to a *stirrup* or to a *bar of tournament* (*barrière de tournoi*); opinions differ on that important point, but it is undoubtedly a sign of knighthood.

If what I term the small escutcheon of the dexter shield were a large *bezant*, which may possibly be the case, it would be a sort of souvenir of the crusades. The *bezants* (a corruption of the word *byzantine*), were coins in use at Byzantium. They are often met with in armouries, though of a much smaller size than on your small escutcheon. If that escutcheon were a *bezant*, we should have to say: *bezant charged over the whole, and lamb passant in pretence over all*.

There is erudition and science for you! It does not cost much, and is, thank God, forgotten as quickly as it is learned.\*

A thousand fond kisses to Eugénie. Good-bye, I hope to see you soon.

*To M. CALAMATTA, Brussels.*

NOHANT, 6th April, 1857.

You do not know what you are talking about with your Colosseum, your form, your great people, and your cry for vengeance, which you say ought to be shouted on the housetops. I forgive you your artist's taste, you have a right to it, and I do not quarrel with those whose power (a real one) is derived from their point of view. I should be very sorry to

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\* Heraldry has been described as "the science of fools with long memories."

shake their opinion if I could, and, seeing that I cannot do so, my own notions and instincts constitute the right of my thesis, without either danger or damage to those who feel strongly in favour of the contrary thesis.

I am quite willing to *give you the stick*; but you are a dreadful humbug and never come for it.

As for what I was to say respecting the martyrs of the cause, I have said it; but what I have written must remain in my desk until a new state of things. Do you then believe that we are free to say anything? You are a nice fellow, you, with both your hands in your pockets, perambulating the streets of Brussels! In the last chapter of my novel,\* I endeavoured to shadow forth something of my thoughts, yet it is not certain that the work will pass the censorship.

Three lines referring to Lamennais were cut out because of their allusion to the Capuchin friars with whom he had lived, yet the *Presse* † does its best to assist the author. *How disgusting!* we are kept as mute as though we were dead.

As we cannot, therefore, speak of what in Rome is mute, paralysed, and invisible, we must soundly denounce that which we see of Rome, that which is reared there: squalidness, laziness, and infamy. We must not show mercy even to the monuments which console the stupid tourists, spurious *artistes*, devoid of feeling, of reflection, of heart, who tell us: "What matters that there are priests and beggars? they have a *character* of their own, they are in harmony with the ruins; we are very happy here, we admire stones and forget men."

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\* *La Daniella*.

† The title of a newspaper in which George Sand used to write.

No, I will not admire, love, or tolerate anything in Satan's kingdom, that old haunt of brigands! I feel that I could spit upon the people who kneel before cardinals. Seeing that they are the only people we are allowed to speak of, let us do so! those we do not speak of are not under consideration. If, thanks to me, anybody should feel horror and disgust for Rome, such as it is to-day, I shall have done something useful. I might say as much of ourselves, if I were allowed, but our hands are tied, and I never require other writers to jeopardise themselves in place of me.

Besides, we French people never act so ugly as a devout and lazy nation. We make mistakes, we easily become excited and infuriated. But could they ever do with us what they have done with Rome? *Chi lo sa?*\* Perhaps! However, we have not yet come to that.

It is, therefore, good to point out what becomes of *priest-ridden* people, and I was right in doing so at any cost. What I say may perhaps incense Italians; yet, if they reflect, they must agree with me.

*To M. CHARLES EDMOND, Paris.*

NOHANT, 13th June, 1857.

Dear friend, it is not an *historical novel*, † it is a novel in the style of the period of Louis XIII. In an historical novel we expect to find serious incidents, important personages, the relation of great deeds. That is not what I am engaged in, and the description of my novel as advertised in

\* Who knows?

† *Les Beaux Messieurs de Bois-Doré.*

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the *Presse*, might lead one to expect some more serious adventures than those I relate. As it would be rather difficult without a long periphrase to convey to the reader the distinction which I here point out to you, pray strike out the word *historical* from the advertisement. It is better to give more than we promise than to promise more than we give. I have treated the whole matter from my own point of view, and have made numerous researches in order to be *historically faithful* to the most insignificant details of customs, ideas, and manners of the times included within the scope of my work. I have not associated my story with a single point that is not historical. Yet all this cannot make a novel like Walter Scott's. We have to-day no novelist who can write as he wrote.

What has become of you? And the little girl?

Will you soon come to see us? Is my friend of the Rue des Saints-Pères melancholy or ill? \* I have not heard from her for some time now, and when she is silent I scarcely dare to question her.

Good night, dear; yours in heart.

G. SAND.

*To M. CHARLES PONCY, Toulon.*

NOHANT, 15th August, 1857.

DEAR CHILD,

Never part with the letters of defunct persons, though people may ask you for them. There is always some idea of self-interest hidden under such requests. Letters which are

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\* Madame Arnould-Plessy, an actress.

honest (like those of Lamennais, rather religiously collected by *Old Nick*\*) lead to no result, except that in parting with them you run the risk of being deprived of your autographs, which get mislaid. Attempts in such a case are fruitless, because the relations, heirs, or executors of the dead person claim the monopoly of such publications. It is their right. They avail themselves of it sometimes through cupidity, sometimes also out of genuine respect for the memory of their departed relation or friend. Should, in fact, the latter come back to this world, he would not always be very satisfied to see letters, not intended by him for the popular gaze, published in their entirety. The letters must, therefore, be curtailed. And then! that is not an easy task. The editors, under the pretext that they are responsible for their authenticity, require, from those who part with the letters, the cession of the autographs. From that moment you are at their mercy. Whom will you hold responsible, if they should publish what you yourself would not? In short, if you comply, you expose yourself to a great annoyance and disagreeable judicial bickerings.

So far as I recollect, Bédanger's letters to you display a feeling of mingled friendliness and sourness towards me. Those he wrote to me concerning yourself are ill-disposed towards you. He was unkind both in heart and tongue, although his personal life was irreproachable. He was an expert in giving advice, though himself reluctant to receive any. In his position that was a great art; but he was very flattering and perfidious whenever he did not run any risk, and he

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\* An allusion either to M. M. E. Forgues or to M. M. A. Blaize, nephew of Lamennais, both of whom published collections of Lamennais' letters.—Probably a *nom de plume*.

often took a mean advantage of the religious respect which was felt for his genius, age, and probity. Poor Eugène Sue, who died so young, had a much warmer heart!

Your lines on Saint Solange are truly fine and charming. But having to earn bread for your family, you work under difficulty. I quite see it. But no; I also perceive that you are courageous, and feel the consolation derived from the fulfilment of duty. It cannot be helped! Such is life! Béranger had no family to support. He enjoyed a calm repose. We cannot hope for the same.

Good night, dear child; yours in heart.

*TO HER MAJESTY THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE.*

NOHANT, 6th October, 1857.

MADAM,

The fruitful and gracious protection which Your Majesty deigns to bestow upon *artistes* encourages me to address you in that quality, in order to enlist your kindness in behalf of a family well worthy of it.

The great dramatic name of Marie Dorval protects that family and intercedes in its favour. M. Luguet, himself a talented and honest *artiste*, married the daughter of that celebrated *artiste*. Recently, when at Plombières, His Majesty the Emperor deigned to encourage him. M. Luguet has five children, and no other resource except his daily work.

But what will most touch the feeling heart of Your Majesty is a recital of the numerous deeds of charity performed by Marie Dorval, who died in needy circumstances after a life of glory and fatigue.



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In addition to more than 100,000 francs\* secured to the various hospitals † through her great successes, Madame Dorval (who patronised several charitable institutions in Toulouse) founded several beds in the hospitals at Lyons, Bordeaux, Montpellier, as also a day nursery (*crèche*) in the Faubourg Saint Antoine. ‡ Several of the beds there are under the patronage of Saint-George, in memory of a grandson, upon whom the poor woman had set her whole affection, and whose death she did not survive.

Your Majesty needs only to speak, and Jacques Luguet, the second grandson of Madame Dorval, will receive in a *lycée* the development of his fine intellect and happy disposition. That will be one more beneficent deed in the precious life of Your Majesty, and, I dare vouch, one of those that will inspire its recipient with the deepest gratitude and produce the best results.

It is to a mother that mothers dare to appeal. That sacred title, which heaven has blessed in Your Majesty, still adds hope and faith to the profound respect with which we invoke you, and with which I have the honour to be,

Your Majesty's most humble, obedient servant,

GEORGE SAND.

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\* About £4,000 sterling.

† Throughout France a tax is levied on theatrical proprietors. It is known as *le droit des pauvres* (poor's tax), and represents a certain percentage of the gross receipts of the theatres. The tax is devoted to the support of hospitals and other charitable institutions.

‡ One of the districts of Paris inhabited chiefly by the working classes.

*To THE SAME.*

NOHANT, 30th October, 1857.

MADAM,

The reply which Your Majesty deigned to make to an appeal worthy of enlisting your interest is such as we expected from Your Majesty's exquisitely kind and feeling heart. We told you that the great *artiste* who left this world for a better one is now praying for the maternal felicity of the august and kind protectress of her children.

We dare not take the liberty of thanking Your Majesty; for you do good for its own sake, and without heeding whether the gratitude you deserve will be in any way adequate; but we dare tell you that you have made an addition to the number of your happy subjects, because we believe that to be the only reward sought for by Your Majesty.

With those profound and respectful sentiments, and in the name of the Luguët family and in my own,

I have the honour to be,

Madam,

Your Majesty's most humble, grateful servant,

GEORGE SAND.

*To M. CHARLES EDMOND, Paris.*

NOHANT, 29th November, 1857.

DEAR FRIEND,

Before speaking about business, I wish to tell you that, a few days ago, I began to read your account of the great voyage, and that, compliment and friendly prejudices apart, I have been delighted by it. I was afraid to open your big

book and have to leave it unread. That is why I only opened it when certain that I should no longer have to write a three-act comedy every week for our Nohant theatre. I am at ease now, and following you through the icebergs: it is written with a masterly hand, I assure you. It is lively and at once amusing and awe-inspiring; it is charmingly *French* as regards both style and tone. The little nest, lined with silk and velvet, where the passengers meet to smoke and listen to Schubert's melodies, despite the possibility of meeting with floating ice likely to crush the ship, is a detail well described, as thrilling as one of Cooper's stories, but more artistic. I am going to follow you to Sweden, precisely where I have laid the scene of my new novel. Before reading it carefully, I perused rapidly that part of the book. I perceive that you have not been to Dalecarlia, where I pitched my tent in imagination. Tell me whether you possess a French, Italian, or English (I am not acquainted with any other language) work on that part of Sweden, and a few particulars respecting its history in the eighteenth century, under Frederic Adolphus, the husband of Ulrica of Prussia. You would greatly oblige me by lending it to me. If you cannot, then let me know of a book which I could read treating of Sweden at that time; or else, if the matter is still fresh in your memory, write a concise *précis* of it for me, extending only over a few pages.

I do not know why you have moments when you feel disheartened; you really possess very solid and fine talent, and, besides, a marvellous facility, for your work is voluminous and treats of everything, a wonderful memory for all you have seen, and a special aptitude in having been able to see it in order to feel it, while *seeing it in order to remember it*. I

certainly should be unable to do as much. I lull myself to sleep by watching flies, and allow a crowd of interesting facts to pass unnoticed. You may be assured that your book is well written, and that I am quite competent enough to be able to tell you so. Thus, if you possess really excellent faculties, you ought never to lose heart. You will have as many cares and troubles as a blockhead, and will feel them more keenly; but, whilst more hurt by the buffets of life than vulgar thick-skinned people, you will have this enormous compensation which they have not—intelligent work, *attractive* work, as the Fourierists would say.

Let us talk of business; it won't take long. You will take whatever time you require for the new publication; and merely give me a little money if I should want it, in exchange for the manuscript.

Subject to your opinion, here is the title: *Christian Waldo*. You will say that Waldo is not a Swedish name; that may be, but it is strictly historical. The name is a source of surprise even to him who bears it. Announce, if you like, that the novel treats of events in the eighteenth century, so as to prevent its being supposed that it refers to some relation of Pierre Waldo, the chief of the Vaudois. Or again, you may, if you think it more attractive, give the work the title of *Le Château des Etoiles*. That is, we fancy, *Ställeborg*, which some personage built for himself in Dalecarlia, in imitation of that at Uraniemborg in the Island of Haven. In this castle some strange things occur. Let us hope that they will prove amusing; I believe upon further consideration that the latter title will take best. Decide yourself. Do not announce it as a picture either of Sweden or of the eighteenth century; for the actual facts will be less adhered to than in *Bois-Doré*.

shall do my best with it; but this time I am only writing a romantic novel.

You say that Alexandre loves me a good deal; he has reason to do so. As for me, I love him as though I were his mother. I adore a just, tranquil, serene, and strong nature whose intellect is in perfect harmony with its organisation. That is a very rare type; it is even a new one in literary humanity, which, up to the present time, probably owing to the fault of the social surroundings, has not been able to display itself. *The jealous artiste*, that is to say, the wicked and unfortunate artiste, is nearly synonymous with artiste. Dumas the elder is essentially good, but too often intoxicated with his own ability. His son has more good sense, which is a rare thing in this century of intellectual orgies. He will make his mark, and in this, the second half of the century, the end of which I shall not live to see, but which I am sure will be better than the first.

Be calm then, dear friend, I have no magnetic effluence; but henceforth, I *believe*, without illusion, and there is the whole secret of what little strength I have. You may have much greater strength and you will have it, in feeling that this world is moving as it should, and that you also are helping it onward.

My children send their love.

G. SAND.

## To THE SAME.

NOHANT, 8th December, 1857.

My presentiments, it appears then, were only too well founded. I do not know whether that is a misfortune for the *Presse*. I do not believe it is.\* But what troubles me is your position, which you seem to regard as compromised in the scrimmage. I cannot even indulge in suppositions, not knowing what share of influence your Bellevue friend † has in the affair. If it be not indiscreet on my part to ask you, let me know; but, in replying or not on this point, do not leave me ignorant of what interests you personally, and in what, by chance from the depths of my Thebaïd, I could be useful to you. I should be delighted to find an opportunity, so as to lay hold of it, and should not fear pulling too hard that beautiful hair, ‡ which often passes us unawares, like the tails of comets.

For my part, I also feel a little grieved; for, in the past, I contributed to the fatal sum of *warnings*. The punishment of *La Daniella* falls at present on the back of *Bois-Doré*, which must be shattered by this tremendous blow. The public quickly forget, and scarcely ever again care for a work that has once been broken off.

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\* The publication in the *Presse* of *La Daniella* led to that journal's receiving two successive warnings at the beginning of 1857. A third and last having been given to it in consequence of an article by M. Alphonse Peyrat in December of the same year, the journal became liable to suspension without legal proceedings.

† Prince Jérôme Napoléon.

‡ An allusion to the fact that *Opportunity* was represented by the Romans under the figure of a woman, having hair only on the fore part of the head.

But all that does not prevent Peyrat's article from being well written, and I regard the severity displayed anything but clever, all things considered. Was not his conclusion in favour of the oath of allegiance, and is not the *Presse* going to find subscribers again instead of losing them?

You are indeed the personification of all that is obliging to have thought of my old books, in spite of weariness, uneasiness, and headache. Send me some of the works you mention, whichever you may think useful to me in connection with the subject. *I want a local sketch of Dalecarlia in the eighteenth century, and an historical sketch of the court, the town, and the country during the two reigns preceding that of Gustavus III.* I might easily write these if I had the facts, but I have no details whatever, and all the authorities I am able to consult here are either quite silent or nearly so, as regards matters of hats and bonnets.

I have Marmier's works, published during the first twenty-five years of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*; but what I am in search of is not there. If his *Histoire de la Scandinavie* only deals with ancient times, it will not help me out of the difficulty. Decide and act as if the matter were your own. Above all be quick about it, provided that you be not ill, and retain what I shall owe you out of what I am about to ask for from M. Rouy;\* for a considerable sum is still due to me in connection with *Bois-Doré*, and I am passing through a little financial crisis which is not without example in my annual budget. I do not think that my request will be thought to arise from mistrust; I am incapable of that. It is owing to stress of circumstances in my personal affairs.

Just another word now! If you are no longer obliged to

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\* Cashier at the office of the *Presse*.

stick close to work, and can consider the time of suspension as a holiday, come and spend it with us; you can work, you can read to me what you have written, and your time will not be lost.

Yet one word more. I have sent you the article on Madame Allart. As the question is to be useful to her, we must not, you will agree with me, wait for the reappearance of the *Presse*. If you have an opportunity of so doing, place the articles *elsewhere* as soon as possible.

*To HER MAJESTY THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE.*

NOHANT, 9th December, 1857.

MADAM,

Your Majesty, I know—everybody knows—will always kindly welcome the idea of putting balm into human and social wounds. An act of legal severity has just seriously affected the *Presse* newspaper, by decreeing its suspension for two months. The moneyed men who carry on these vast undertakings may have the means of meeting such difficulties; but must literary men, who are not responsible for the editorial tone of the newspaper, and above all the *thousand workmen* employed in the mechanical part of the work, and whom the suspension of their daily labour throws out into the street in mid-winter, be considered culpable and be punished?

However, they are punished for an article in which a large number of the readers had seen nothing but advice to the deputies to swear allegiance to the Emperor. But whatever may be the fatality of the eternal misunderstanding which



presides over the things of this world, it is not a plea for political journalism that I come to place at the feet of Your Majesty.

It is not a request in the name of the writer, the real cause of the trouble; it is still less a personal claim as regards my personal literary connection with the paper: I would never dare to trouble Your Majesty with the recital of interests so trifling as mine.

But the chastisement falls upon workers who were in no way parties to the incriminating act, and perhaps, for the greater part, most devoted to the power that strikes them. I therefore venture to say to Your Majesty that the law having been applied and authority satisfied, the part of mildness and the benevolence of clemency might now begin.

In granting a pardon, Your Majesties would not nullify the legal and political effect produced by the decision of the executive power. They would generously remove its disastrous consequences from those who really suffer by them, the employés and workmen connected with the journal, all of them beyond doubt innocent.

May Your Majesty deign to further accept, with the expression of my lively gratitude for your touching goodness, that of the respectful sentiments with which I have the honour to be, Madam,

Your Majesty's very humble and very obedient servant,  
GEORGE SAND.

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To HIS HIGHNESS PRINCE JÉRÔME NAPOLÉON, Paris.

NOHANT, 17th December, 1857.

You, sir, are right, and, as is always the case, take a lofty view of things. It is not so much a question of succeeding as of doing what we ought to do, and we are never mortified by failure when we have only thought of risking ourselves for others. You have been kind, as you always are; may God take upon Himself what yet remains to be done!

What rendered you sad, dear Prince, is the hardship of repressed genius. Without seeking to know with whom lies the fault, or what will be the issue, I ask myself what can occupy the present of a youthful being in possession of his full strength, to whom circumstances have not permitted the true employment of that strength. I imagine it must be scientific studies and, particularly, scientific philosophy, in which you interest yourself, which *you understand*, without making any show of it, and which might be indebted to you for vast progress. The members of your family who devoted themselves to science were not the least useful, and, in the judgment of the future, will not be the least illustrious. They also, perhaps, were not the most unfortunate.

I observe you, and I envy you the possession of three treasures—aptitude, leisure, and youth; to say nothing of the money necessary for making researches and explorations, a material means which is wanting to so many generous minds. I know that you work hard, and that you are always learning; but why should you not associate your name with works that you could carry out under your own eyes, and the

soul of which you would be, because you would take the initiative in research, and furnish the originating thought of the philosophy of *the thing*? I do not speak of particular systems, that would be to engage too much in criticism; in your situation you cannot do that, but in all sciences there are well-recognised points of view which every intelligent eye and every strong hand can enlarge, to the great advantage of human knowledge. That which is commonly termed research (*les travaux*) possesses, I believe, such vast interest, that it causes the cares of real life to be forgotten.

For, in fact, the question for you, who are not lucky enough to be frivolous and vain, is to breathe freely a congenial air, and to place yourself, in spite of destiny and of man, in a sphere that develops the intelligence instead of stifling it. There are, I believe, three points necessary to the complete development of life: they are the loving at least equally some one, some thing, and oneself, in view of that thing and of that person. I have remarked and have experienced that, when that equilibrium is disturbed, it produces an excess or a deficiency of self-love. What must be wanting to you, by reason of the position in which destiny has placed you, is the *something*, the satisfied passion of an intellectual object, and that something is humanity, since it is for humanity that we labour.

I have so much respect and enthusiasm for natural science, of which I do not even know the rudiments, but which causes my heart to beat and my eyes to be dazzled when, by chance, I seize a few notions of it within my powers of understanding, that I could certainly not speak of it as a last resource (*pis aller*) for the application of your natural activity.

One day, perhaps, events which nobody can foresee will

open another path for you. And, perhaps, while surprising you there, those events will cause you but regret and vexation; for our appreciation of life changes with the situations which it presents to us, and many things happen that we had believed it a duty to desire, and which, when they occur, we would yet like to be able to prevent, because we judge them more correctly and are better acquainted with them. If I take the liberty of writing all that to you, it is because, in reading your journey in the North, I set myself thinking of you rather than of the North; respecting which, however, my imagination was greatly excited (*allumée*).

I pictured you, bold and stubborn, in the midst of the dangers and sufferings of that exploration, and I asked myself: "What the deuce did he want with that island of Jean-Mayen, that he wished to reclaim from the stupid and impassible icebergs?" Edmond has related the adventure in a charming manner. We feel as if we were there with you, and amidst the gaiety displayed in his narration and the good taste displayed in his reserve, we feel that you are there, and can see you struggling against matter with considerable nerve and *French impetuosity* (*furia francese*).

But, yet let me ask again, what did you want there? You knew, sir, that the eternal winter of the polar regions takes no cognisance of princes, and is not willing to range its floating battalions so as to open a passage for them.

At that time, therefore, you passionately loved the object you had in view, not the island of Jean-Mayen, which does not strike me as being a terrestrial paradise, but the scientific fact which you sought to possess yourself of. Well now, if you have such aptitude of will, why must it be developed only in exceptional situations, such as those afforded by extensive

voyages and great perils? I say nothing against travels and dangers, they are the poetical side of things; but why are not those many explorations in the world of science, that might be made at the fireside, regulated by you in such a manner as to furnish you, *at all times*, with the lively emotions of discovery and the serious joys of conquest, at the same time that you cause all the world to profit by them?

Behold, dear Imperial Highness, what your humble friend of the desert submits to you, anxious to see you appreciated by everybody as by herself, and, before all, desirous of seeing you discover in yourself the strength and the satisfaction which others have sought in gambling, in tossing heads or tails for their souls.

Thanks for your kind letters, and believe me earnestly and sincerely yours in heart.

GEORGE SAND.

*To M. CHARLES EDMOND, Paris.*

NOHANT, 9th January, 1858.

I cannot say with you that I personally much regret Rachel. I saw her so rarely that her death is hardly felt by me; but I say with everybody, that it is one more blow dealt to art; that is to say, to the sense of the beautiful, and to the ideal which, under all forms, is as necessary as goodness and kindness.

We all run the risk of declining, if somebody does not rise to tell us that life is on the heights, and not in the cesspools. Rachel had risen higher than any other dramatic *artiste* of her time. What does it matter now that, in private life, she

looked too much for reality? That may have been a cause of grief when closely seeing her, but all individualities have their own point of view. Behind the footlights she was a priestess and a goddess. In the wings she divested herself of her dignity, but that did not prevent her being often good as a woman; you have had the proof of it, and you do right to keep a good remembrance of her.

I promise you *Le Château des Étoiles*\* (it amuses me much to scribble it; is that a good sign?), if it can be of any use to you. I promise it to you, not to anybody else. If you leave, I shall not stay. But you know that I shall be obliged to ask you for some money, all the money perhaps, when delivering the manuscript to you, however early it may be ready. See if that is possible; as for me, the reverse of that possibility would be an impossibility.

I have been living from hand to mouth during the last twenty-five years, and *it cannot be otherwise*, and *it is not my fault*; so much so that I have been unable to buy a cloak and a winter dress this year, because the mishap to the *Presse* upset my *order*, which latter is very real, although misers call it my *disorder*. I can deprive myself of anything and of everything, even of the necessaries of life; but I will not have any of my people feel or perceive it.

That is between ourselves. Do your best, in order that the agreement be kept; it was broken respecting *Bois-Doré*, and I had to wait for a balance of account, which might have enabled me to dress myself in accordance with the temperature, and above all to clothe other people who, unlike myself, have not the resource of buying a woollen blanket instead of wadding and silk.

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\* Title originally given to *L'Homme de Neige*.

Thanks, therefore, to my woollen blanket, I shall start to-morrow morning on a twelve leagues' journey in the open air. I am going to visit the banks of the beautiful Creuse and its little icy cascades. It is your fault if I am freezing. I am so absorbed by the reading of *Greenland*\* that I now am enamoured with glaciers, polar nights, storms, and icebergs.

Good night.

GEORGE SAND.

*To M. MAURICE SAND, Paris.*

NOHANT, 15th January, 1858.

I forgot yesterday to tell you of the *finest* incidents of our journey. Would you had been with us in order to sketch the scene, for placing in our records of droll incidents. It is not droll to relate, but it was so funny to see, that I cannot help laughing when thinking of it. Fancy, on leaving Cluis, Sylvain tried to lash a big pig that was on the road with his whip, the lash of the whip got entangled and knotted round the pig's tail; the representative of the porcine race, grunting furiously, took to its heels! Sylvain pulled, and so did the pig!

For a moment the pig, suspended with its posterior upwards, seemed to be following our gig, when suddenly, having proved stronger than Sylvain, the latter was obliged to let go. The pig, bewildered, ran away, carrying the whip still fastened round its tail. We were obliged to hunt it up; It took shelter in its sty. The woman to whom it belonged

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\* The title of a book written by M. Charles Edmond.

ran after her quadruped, apologising to and thanking us, we know not why. The whip was so tightly fastened that the good woman, not wishing to break it, was pulling with all her might and *unscrewing* the tail of her pig, saying all the while and quite in earnest: "What a *marvellous* thing!" Sylvain on his box, quite mortified and vexed, I believe, because of my uncontrollable hilarity, was uttering all the *oaths* and *curses* at his commands. By the roadside a tall, thin peasant, pale, grave, and I believe ailing, was saying, with the attitude of a meditating philosopher: "This is a thing not often seen!"

And the women, on their doorsteps, were repeating in chorus and with an air of the deepest surprise: "Is it not *marvellous*, that *there* thing? It has never been seen! I expect it never will be again!" I also wish to tell you that with the great coach and the two horses as far as Cluis, where Henri, dispatched the day before, was waiting for us with the gig and the *flat-nosed* mare, the distance can be quickly covered without the cold being too much felt. We had instructed Sylvain to come and meet us at Cluis on our return. Do not, therefore, in spite of my pranks, believe that I am neglecting myself. It is quite a feat to have ascended the Pointe du Capucin (Peak of the Capuchin) on the 12th January. We shall have to visit it again at the time of the waterfalls; it must also be very fine then. I much missed you. What we saw through the mist was really superb; it cannot be explained, one must witness it personally in order to form an adequate opinion. It was odd also to see children, dogs, and goats crossing the Creuse, frozen over the deepest parts which even resist the thaw, whilst a few yards off its waters rush foaming over the locks before being driven under



the ice. As some of the water splashes over the ice, all objects are clearly reflected in the little sheet of water spread over the frozen parts, so much so that everything seems to be moving really on the water. The crossing of the river by children and cattle in the midst of the thaw is nevertheless dangerous, and rather alarming to witness. The dogs do not heed it. The little urchins stamp on the ice with their clogs by way of bravado when you look at them. The goats, having reached the mid-stream, become frightened and refuse either to proceed or retrace their steps. The least sound in the midst of the ravine and over the frozen Creuse possesses incredible sonority; a word, or the lashing of a whip, is distinctly heard at a distance of half a league.

*To M. CHARLES EDMOND, Paris.*

NOHANT, 30th January, 1853.

I am pleased and delighted to hear that you have resumed your *feuilleton*. The horizon, which seemed to you so very dark, has become clearer, and all your friends are pleased, I above all.

As for the *Château des Étoiles*, it cannot be arranged as suggested by you. How can I live a whole summer with only 2,000 francs? Think of Nohant; I have many people depending upon me there, and that means heavy expenses! In order to be satisfied with the budget which you offer me, I should have to go and live at Gargilasse; a not very disagreeable prospect, but only possible in the short intervals when I lead a *bachelor's life*. Therefore, dear friend, find another solution, or tell me to find another title for adver-

tising in the *Presse*. I shall have ample time to write a novel by the time you may want it, and hope a fortnight hence to be able to tell you my suggested title.

Such is, regarding the *Château* in question, the *ultimatum*, not of my will but of my cash-box. You shall have the manuscript in a month or six weeks' time, and will pay me on delivery the whole sum (or thereabout, excepting a small difference which we will mutually account for). The work to be published in September or in October at the latest. That arrangement is still onerous to me; it delays the sale to the bookseller during the whole time that will elapse before publication in the newspaper. What is the extent of the sacrifice I am prepared to make to the very great and real pleasure of dealing with you alone?

While acquainting you with my conditions, I am quite aware that they may appear excessive to the *Presse*. I therefore insist only in order to tell you that I wish I could do otherwise, but cannot. Answer then without delay this time; for people make me offers to which I cannot decently postpone my reply beyond a few days.

Good night, dear friend. The *crime*\* grieves me much; its natural consequence will be an increase of rigorous measures against people who are no more connected with it than you or I. Human history thus follows its course ever through the same errors and the same fatalities.

Yours in heart. You have received the proofs. Have you not?

GEORGE SAND.

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\* Orsini's attempt upon the life of the Emperor.

To M. PAUL DE SAINT VICTOR, Paris.

. NOHANT, 3rd March, 1858.

Has anybody else told you, dear sir, what I am about to tell you? Perhaps not. The Parisians are so *blasé* with their riches; they are, besides, so distracted by such a number of non-literary events and have so little time to live, that they enjoy their pleasure without thinking of proclaiming it. In my solitude, I am not indeed free from care and preoccupation; but, at any rate, I have time enough to appreciate what I read, and also for communicating on a slip of paper my impressions to those whom I have not the pleasure of seeing around me.

I therefore wish to tell you that your *feuilletons* appear to me more and more like masterpieces, both as regards style and depth. They are not simple *feuilletons*, but serious writings worth meditating upon; productions, every line of which is pregnant with ideas; and the style, having been freed from the redundancy of epithets which formerly impeded it, becomes incisive, clear, and striking, without ceasing to be bright enough to dazzle. The last article, upon *La Fille d'un Millionnaire*,\* seemed to me worth a whole volume. I who do not speculate on the Exchange, and who do not write plays,† felt as interested in your demonstration as though I were the author or the millionaire.

With reference to Ponsard's *La Bourse*, you had already given expression to very luminous ideas; you see that I am

\* *The Millionaire's Daughter*.

† (?) This is a singular assertion, considering she was an eminent playwright.

*following* you. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the mechanism of money transactions to know whether your thesis is indisputable; but, such as it is, it possesses a lucidity and a vigour well deserving the examination of the most serious minds, and ought to leave an important page in economical history.

Besides, whenever you dwell upon history, you sketch and depict it with a masterly hand. Your productions are faithfully drawn and powerfully coloured. I am always hoping that you will write a comprehensive historical work; you must do so! We no longer possess any of those historians who were models of style, and at the same time great poets and useful chroniclers. We have now some very talented men; among those who are young, Louis Blanc has the best style. But eminence can be achieved otherwise, and you possess such admirable characteristics that it is a duty to point them out to you. We never thoroughly know our own powers; perhaps you yourself do not know the value of the *pearls* that you lay before your readers.

Do not reply to me; it is always boring and embarrassing to reply to praise. Mine calls for no thanks; it is too sincere for that. Fancy that you met me in a garden path, and that we have been chatting for five minutes.

Yours faithfully,

GEORGE SAND.

*To HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE JÉRÔME NAPOLEON.*

NOHANT, 12th March, 1858.

DEAR IMPERIAL HIGHNESS,

I gave your messenger an amicable reception. I had no knowledge of the circumstances; I would not have wished my poor friend to apply to you who have so much to do, and who do more than can reasonably be expected of you. However, as the good soul, without knowing your circumstances, had confidence in your goodness of heart, you were unwilling that he should be disappointed, and showed yourself beyond all question an angel of kindness. You, moreover, showed confidence in a truly worthy man, and saved him from a situation to which he had been brought by his endless charity, of which so many had taken advantage. He is quite carried away with joy and gratitude, and I myself feel deeply affected; for, although you told him that the matter was but a trifling one, I know well enough that money matters are not at all trifling just now, in whatever way they may concern us. I say again, you are as worthy of love as of esteem, and your way of doing things is sublime in its simplicity, since you insist upon regarding it simply as a matter of course.

As for myself, I thank you on my own account; you have removed one of the greatest anxieties that my poverty ever caused me, for I wanted to redeem my poor old neighbour's few things for him, and have not been able to do so!

May you be blessed for what you have done; believe also that I love you even more than ever, if that be possible.

GEORGE SAND.

To THE SAME.

NOHANT, 25th March, 1858.

DEAR IMPERIAL HIGHNESS,

I am more concerned at the general result than with my own personal troubles. But whilst following your maxim, "Let us do as we ought to do, without minding the trouble it causes us and without being vexed when sustaining a check," I felt beforehand that we must not hope, and that there were too many bad influences surrounding him whose position exposes him to the wiles of deceit. I wrote to you again yesterday; I have only this morning received your letter and the Emperor's.

There is, therefore, nothing else to do. You have done all that was possible. God will reward you! He is already doing so; He restores you your excellent father, your best friend. That is the thought that at once occurred to me when following in the papers the bulletins of his health. I said to myself that, in those days of anxiety, you thought of such as suffered, and that brought good luck to you.

Our friends had to start to-day. How? With what consideration or sternness? I do not know yet. I could not go and shake hands with them; people would look upon my conduct as being a *manifestation*. I believe our friends to be resigned and courageous. I am at least sure of this: they beseech God to keep them, in spite of all, in that religion of meekness and humanity which, for the last ten years, we have been preaching to one another. I have been unable personally to tell them what you have dared and confronted for them; but they divined it, and, in their exile, their hearts

will recall it. They are innocent of the subversive projects and of the treason of which they are accused, that is their consolation.

Every day and all day long I have been talking about you with my faithful friends. We considered how unforeseen are the eventualities of this world, and suffering, constrained, grieved as you are, we do not wish you to have the ungrateful task of some day ruling over society, in whatever part of the world it may be.

It is quite a natural fit of misanthropy to lose confidence in times so full of informers, calumniators, and persecutors. We are seeking here below for a corner where we may freely enjoy the right of being honest, and, like Alceste,\* are induced to look for it in the depth of the woods.

Cheer up, nevertheless, you who are young, and will perhaps witness the rise of a better generation. The fact that all those who are still of some worth will understand and love you ought to comfort you, if anything can do so.

Yours cordially and affectionately,

GEORGE SAND.

*To MADemoiselle LEROYER DE CHANTEPIE, Angiers.*

NOHANT, 5th June, 1838.

No soul is, I believe, more generous and purer than yours, and that soul not be saved! Catholic dogma is killing you; still, if I tell you to disregard it, you will perhaps no longer feel friendship for or confidence in me. Yet my

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\* The chief personage in Molière's *Misanthrope*.

conviction is, the doctrine of hell is a monstrosity, imposture, and barbarity. God, who laid down for us the law of progress, and urges us thereto in spite of ourselves, forbids us now to believe in eternal damnation; it is an impiety to entertain doubts as to His infinite compassion, and to believe that He does not *always* forgive, even the most guilty.

I formerly thought you were happy in the Catholic faith, and gentle and calm beliefs in admirable souls seem to me so sacred, that I used to tell you: "Go to such a priest, or to such a Christian philosopher, or such a friend, whom you may consider likely to restore the former serenity which gave birth and strength to your noble sentiments."

But doubt has now entered your mind, and the voice of the priest causes you a kind of dizziness. Leave the priest and go to God, who calls you, and who apparently deems your soul sufficiently enlightened to dispense with an erring medium.

Or else, if habit, propriety, and the need of consecrated formulæ bind you to the practice of worship, then display therein the spirit of confidence, of liberty, and true faith which is in you. Preserve yourself from that fixed idea which devours you and keeps you from God. God will not have us doubt ourselves, for that is doubting Him. Your poor Agatha was very affecting, and you were her guardian angel. For that alone, you deserved that God should love you especially and should free you from your doubts; but we must help in the work of grace, and that is precisely what you do not do when allowing those phantasms of annihilation and perdition to overcome you. You are guilty in that, not in the actions of your life, or in the impulses of your heart.

Some years ago I said to you, "*Go to Paris!*" but Paris has



become an abyss of luxury and faction ; and you have allowed time to slip away. At our time of life, every year makes a change of life and habit more irksome. However, you ought to go to Paris from time to time, if only for a few days. You are fond of art, music ; all that would do you good, and would dissipate the melancholy which a monotonous life so fatally engenders. What you stand in need of is distraction and self-oblivion.

Be assured, mademoiselle, that I feel grateful for and honoured by your friendship, and am sincerely and faithfully devoted to you.

GEORGE SAND.

*To M. ÉDOUARD CHARTON, Paris.*

NOBANT, 20th November, 1858.

Dear, excellent, and friendly heart, I see that you take to heart that which concerns me ; a thousand thanks ! I am unacquainted with the Breuillard \* pamphlet. Maurice and my friends told me that I ought to bring an action, and I shared their opinion upon hearing from them that the pamphlet contained a personal libel and calumnies concerning my private life.

But I only wished for the reparation necessary to any individual who is attacked, whose silence might be looked upon as an admission of the vices ascribed to him. Others among my friends thought that I ought to make more noise

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\* Breuillard was an obscure person who had published a libellous writing against George Sand.

about it, engage the services of some well-known counsel, and have his pleading produced in the newspapers, etc. I declined to do so; first, because *in such cases* the reproduction of the pleading being, as I was told, prohibited, the matter would thus not have had the desired publicity; then because, even though limited to the locality, its noise would have been greater than was required. I requested my friends to talk it over amongst themselves. They did so, decided I was right, and suggested to me what counsel and solicitor to employ. The latter have undertaken the case; and now, if I were wrong, it is too late to revive the matter.

What can I tell you about myself in connection with the theatres? I know not. To-day it is yes, and to-morrow no. Have I any talent as a playwright? I do not think so. I thought that I should acquire some; I still sometimes say to myself that some may come to me, despite my grey hair. But people have said so decidedly that I am deficient in talent, that I really know not whether I possess any, and were I even to be gifted with any it would prove of no avail. If, as you say, others are rare and bad, that is perhaps the fault of the public, who want bad productions, or do not know what they want. Montigny recently wrote to me: "What is to be done in order to satisfy the public? If you give it high-class literary productions, it says how wearisome; if you give it what is merely amusing, it says that is not high-class writing." Of late years, that seems to me to have been the case. People have been complaining that they always saw the same piece; yet every novel idea has been rejected. What are we to do? We must not think of it, and must write only when feeling so disposed. That is what I shall do in spite of all.

My poor Maurice has just been very poorly, and so have I myself, as a consequence. We are well again, he physically and I morally.

I am reading the *Letters of Lamennais*. What do you think of the first volume? As for me, I need to make an effort in order to perceive the honest and generous man under the impassioned Ultramontane. Yet why so? he certainly is the same man whom we have known, but in a different light.

Good night, dear friend; ever yours in heart.

G. S.

*To M. OCTAVE FEUILLET, Paris.*

NOHANT, 18th February, 1859.

I have long intended, sir, to tell you that I have quite a special regard for your talent. Knowing you to be proud and modest, I was afraid of startling you with my protestation of it. Now that your great successes must have at last taught you what you are, methinks you will better understand the desire I feel to convey my approbation to you. Living away from Paris, I have been unable to see *Le Roman d'un jeune Homme pauvre*; \* but I procured the play, and read it to one who is an old friend of yours, and has been mine for the last ten years. We afterwards spent the day in talking about your play and of yourself, and I also desired to read several delightful proverbs which had escaped me. We thus spent two or three charming days in your company! It is so

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\* *The Romance of a Poor Young Man.*

pleasant to read in the country during the winter, in the old residence full of recollections, in the midst of, and the heart still full of all those things, of those feelings which you depict with so much charm and tender delicacy of touch! After that, it is only natural that we should wish to say so to yourself, and to thank you for the exquisite productions we owe to you. It would be ungrateful not to do it, would it not? Besides, I am old enough to be a grandmother, and my compliment may indeed resemble a blessing. That is, therefore, embarrassing neither for you nor for myself. I do not want you to be indebted to me for it, but I beg you to believe in it as being a sincere word, likely, amongst a thousand others, to bring luck to you.

GEORGE SAND.

*To THE SAME.*

NOHANT, 27th February, 1859.

You think that I have replied to you already? No. I wish to thank you for so kind, so true, and so affectionate a letter. I cannot tell you all the good it did me. I have it here beside me, like a talisman and a lucky token. Notwithstanding the fireside and the society of our old friends, we have our fits of depression.

Without quitting the latter, we would wish to lead an *artiste* life, that is to say, to feel that the religion of art, which is but the love of the true and the good, still possesses adherents, but they are indeed few! Some arrive at scepticism through experience, others apparently from want of heart.

We daily see people deserting and disowning their own mothers. In our own little house, all alone with our own little household, we feel ourselves to be like Noah in the ark, sailing through the darkness, and sometimes wondering whether the sun is extinguished. It is so comforting then to witness the arrival of the bird with the green branch; and that little bird of my garden, as you term it, is the bird of life, and a true son of a relighted and rekindled heaven.

When, from time to time, I tread the ground deluged for the last ten years by a torrent of events, besides all the evils previously existing I now find a new one, an anxiety for I know not what, but always suggestive of something mean and selfish; something jealous, false, and base, which formerly dissembled, but to-day openly proclaims itself. And I, who have passed my time in solitude and in trying to rise above that, seem to be still more alone in the midst of that anxious and suffering crowd, to which I find nothing to say that could console or tranquillise, since it appears no longer able to understand.

But in my heart I again become an *artiste*. I again find faith and hope when seeing a good action or a good work once more stirring the heart-strings of humanity, and the ideal struggling gloriously and successfully with the darkness that appears at every point of the horizon. I have suffered on my own account, yes, greatly suffered, but having reached the age of *impersonality*, I should have felt happy had I seen a better generation springing up around me. No matter, my heart warms to all moral and intellectual expansion and development. In you I have already noticed both, and you tell me that you are no longer youthful; so much the better, since you have reached the ripeness of age without having been

blighted by the worm.\* Sound fruit is a thing so rare ! But it bears within itself the seed of the moral and intellectual life that is destined to contend with the present evil times.

This poor century of ours, so grand in certain aspects, so miserable in others, will reckon you as amongst its virtuous ones and its comforters ; those who bear a torch, and can preserve it from being extinguished. Your letter clearly demonstrates to me that with you talent resides in the heart, that is to say, where it ought to be, in order at all times to comfort and enlighten.

For those who have emerged from the same temple mutual love is a duty ; let us then, who are not stupid and wicked, love one another. Let us believe, in spite of the jeers of cold-hearted cynics, that life may be enjoyed in common, and that we may together rejoice in a glory, a happiness, and a strength which are made apparent in the beneficent light of God's own sun. Does it not seem, when we see or read of a good action, that we have done it ourselves, and that it is not the act of him, or of thee, or of me, but of all those who imbibe its spirit and derive fresh vigour from it ?

This is indeed the true happiness of the *artiste* ; it resides in appreciating that life in common, so fruitful of good results, and which departs from him the moment that he declines to associate in it. And yet there exist some who are

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\* This metaphor, though somewhat strange to English ears, is not altogether without example in English literature, as witness the poet Byron :

My days are in the yellow leaf,  
The flowers and fruits of love are gone,  
The *worm*, the canker, and the grief  
Are mine alone !

saddened and discouraged by the work of others, and would destroy it. Miserable creatures! they know not that in so doing they would consummate their own destruction. They would dry up the spring of the stream, even though they died by its side.

I shall go to Paris at the end of March, I believe; will you be there, and come to see me? Yes, you will? certainly you will come to see me in my Thebaïd, which is only a ten hours' journey from Paris. Let me hope so, for at Paris we only see one another hurriedly; and, meanwhile, I most cordially shake your hand.

G. SAND.

*To M. LUDRE-GABILLAUD, Solicitor, La Châtre.*

NOHANT, 29th February, 1859.

Thanks, my dear Ludre, for the advice. I shall keep your book for a few days yet, and study the article when I have a few moments' leisure. I perceive that it mentions what you speak of, but I also note the *spirit* of the different decisions, upon which it comments. It may be allowable to publish when the publication is neither mercenary nor for the purposes of defamation or vengeance, or when the letters can only do honour to the writer of them; in fact, when they are expurgated of everything likely to compromise or cause pain to anybody, which is here the case. It appears also that, in exceptional cases, publication may be necessary as a means of self-defence. I observe that the law, which has not laid down anything absolutely, is very wise, and that the decisions are dictated by sentiments of morality and decency, *according to the circumstances of the case*. I should not, therefore, fear

to publish the letters even now, if my personal convenience urged me to do so. Proceedings might certainly be taken against me; but I should be certain to meet them successfully. The only point to look to would be to boldly publish before being prevented from doing so. The publication once effected, with the reservation, the announcement even in a preface, that if the heirs of the writer of the letters, *whose name would not be mentioned, recognised the style and wished to see the original*, the profits of publication would be readily conceded to them, I doubt whether they would be able to stop the sale. I believe that the thing might be done by me during my lifetime, or after, by testamentary disposition. If I should do it during my lifetime, I would not mention any names, and the public would understand all the better. If the publication were made after my death, names could be given.

What do you think of my idea? I shall consult M. Delangle \* and others, and let you know their opinion.

I will go and see your youngster with pleasure.

Cordially yours,

G. SAND.

*To His HIGHNESS PRINCE JÉRÔME NAPOLEÓN, Paris.*

NORANT, 25th August, 1859.

DEAR IMPERIAL HIGHNESS,

I heartily thank you; you oblige people so quickly and so well, that they feel doubly affected and grateful.

Yes, I can divine all that you do not tell me, and I have

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\* An eminent French professor of jurisprudence.



felt for you. But in time everything is brought to light, and justice will eventually be done.

However, I should have been very happy to see you, and would like an opportunity of talking with you, so as to renew my courage and hope with regard to poor Italy. I am dreadfully afraid of diplomatic conferences and of those famous *Powers*, which think they have the right to settle questions of life and death to a people whom they quietly see dying, and whom they have in no way helped to revive—quite the contrary!

You have one consolation; your mission to Tuscany brought good fruit; the admirable unity of wishes, so nobly as well as so ably expressed by you, has, I am sure, received through your medium strong impulse and judicious advice. We are also probably indebted to you for the favour of the amnesty.

Although people affect not to heed you, my opinion is that what you find it advisable to say in certain cases is not without effect.

If my idea be right, your part is the finest of all, seeing that you do good without hope of praise or personal interest.

Thanks for what you tell me respecting the prefect of Châteauroux, and especially for the kind friendship that you are good enough to preserve towards me. Believe in a heart that is really faithful.

GEORGE SAND.

## TO THE SAME.

NOHANT, 9th December, 1860.

DEAR IMPERIAL HIGHNESS,

Herewith is the copy of the work by my son, of which you have been good enough to undertake to request the gracious acceptance by *Il Re galantuomo*. Maurice is still nursing me a little, and that is the reason why he does not bring it himself. I also send you the letter which he has written to that hero, for whom he feels justifiable enthusiasm. Hang the hero I say! for he has been the cause of my renouncing the idea of an Italian Republic! In presence of so much patriotism, valour, loyalty, and simplicity (the characteristics of true greatness) theories are found to be wrong, for the heart is captivated, and it is the heart that governs the world; although some people may say that men are worthless, it is *feelingness* that performs the real miracles of history.

My son had written that letter, and already given it to me some time ago; but the binder has been behind in his work, and, besides, you had received a blow \* which I keenly felt, for your sake as well as for my own. I did not then wish to trouble you by forwarding the book. And then came my illness and the helplessness of convalescence. Besides, Victor Emanuel had plenty of other *fish to fry* (*chats à fouetter*), without reading a book about art pure and simple. But the work is a homage rendered to Italian genius, and among the least of its claims is that of being placed at the feet of the

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\* An allusion to the then recent death of Jérôme, fourth brother of Napoléon Bonaparte, and King of Westphalia from the 1st of December, 1807, to the 26th of October, 1813.

liberator of Italy. A word from you will explain and excuse this rather bold act of ours. I have not altered the date of Maurice's letter, a date which testifies to a readiness hitherto unaided by circumstances.

Although cured, the doctor would not allow me to come to Paris, where I never fail to be troubled with quinsy. I must thus spend February and March in the South. I am dreaming of the cistus\* and the blooming heath of Piedmont and of the French frontier; for botany is my hobby just now. If you should come that way to seek the solitude which flies from princes, you will be sure of meeting me in the most rural and retired spot.

Ever loving you with an affectionately devoted and sincere heart.

GEORGE SAND.

*To M. and MADAME ERNEST PÉRIGOS, Nice.*

NOBLE, 20th January, 1861.

DEAR CHILDREN,

I have not yet started, although still quite bent upon going, and would much like to hear from you. I earnestly hope that the weather yonder, which, whatever it may be, is doubtless milder than here, will have agreed with you both; but I should, nevertheless, be pleased to know.

Whatever misgivings you may have concerning the climate, accommodation and pleasures in the South, be assured that you have done well to go there. Here we are getting six inches of ice on stagnant waters, and, during the last twenty

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\* Popularly known as rock-rose.

days at least, there has been a hard dry frost enough to nip a stone. Maurice has not yet felt courage enough to quit his nest to go and encounter the weather at Paris. For his sake as well as for my own, I am now longing for a short spell of milder weather, so as to enable us to traverse the centre and the *lower centre* (*bas centre*) of France without being frozen by the way. Our destination is still unsettled. We shall devote a few days to consult and question our fancies, and to look about, in the hope of hitting upon some place less expensive than Nice, for the figures you give me far exceed my resources.

I have nothing to tell you *of the country about here*, which you, without doubt, know through correspondence much better than I. We are living, shrivelled up in our houses, like hibernating marmots. I am reading the *Cosmos* again throughout, and think much more of it than when reading it the first time. Are you reading Michelet's *La Mer*? It is very fine; it displays the fault which you know him to possess, of being incapable of touching upon woman without exhibiting her nakedness; but in that work merit predominates. The early part of it denotes in its author the possession of a broad and majestic conception of grandeur and reality.

I would willingly give you some news of Consul Crescens, but I am too ignorant ever to have heard him mentioned.

You have a longing to witness the splendour of the Papacy? You will see three ill-dressed knaves and a company of frightful-looking Germans, who are supposed to be Swiss, and whose disguise is going all to rags, and the smell of whose feet pervades St. Peter's. Abominable! I would not give a penny-piece to see the poor masquerade

again. But the monuments, the Italian people, the paintings, that is another thing! only you will require a year to see it all comfortably; for, during the first few weeks, you are sure to feel dazed and giddy.

Write a few lines to me, my dear children! All here join in embracing and loving you.

G. SAND.

*To MADAME PAULINE VILLOT, Paris.*

TAMARIS, 11th May, 1861.

DEAR COUSIN,

You are as good as an angel to concern yourself so kindly about me, and to trouble yourself so much with a matter that troubles me so little.\* Lucien must have told you what many excellent and logical reasons I had for wishing my name not to be brought on the *tapis*. I had no desire to disavow the friends who had proposed me, the more particularly as I had and have still the conviction that they must fail.

I have too unsparingly attacked hypocrisy for the *officially* religious world to forgive me. And, besides, I do not wish to be forgiven. I much prefer to be consigned to *hell*, where all honest people are sent to.

But, talking of this matter at the Academy, there is another that I wish to speak to you about. Buloz, whose style is not always quite clear, writes to me saying that somebody has been to him, to tell him *to sound me* as to

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\* Several members of the *Académie Française* had proposed her as a candidate for the Gobert prize.

whether I would accept from the Emperor some compensation, offered in an honourable way and as an equivalent to the Academy's prize, in case the latter should not be accorded to me.

I replied that I desired absolutely nothing, but I impressed it strongly upon Buloz to tender my refusal in a very hearty and grateful tone; still, as such a reply, however explicit and frank, may, in being repeated by one to another, be quite altered, I beg of you to see the Prince, who is himself plain-speaking and reliable, and to tell him: "I would not from any foolish pride, any party spirit, any shadow of ingratitude, refuse a kindness from the Emperor. If I were ill, infirm, or in poverty, I should perhaps ask for myself, as I have often asked of the Empress and Ministers on behalf of the unfortunate. But my health is good, I can work, and am not in want. I should not think it *honest* to accept a charity to which others in worse circumstances have real claims. Should the Academy accord me the prize, I would accept it, *not without regret*, but so as not to *pose* defiantly and to allow of the morality of my works (which are said to be immoral) being openly declared. In this way the generous intentions of the Emperor with respect to myself will be fulfilled. If, as I feel quite sure, I am set aside, I shall not consider myself as wronged in regard to a sum of money which in fact I had not wished for, and for which I am quite compensated by the interest which the Emperor deigns to display towards me." That is all!

At present, I say all this in case of . . . for I know not whether Buloz has quite understood what has been said to him, and whether it is true that the Emperor has moved at all in this little matter. Buloz told me, without any further

explanation, that the Princess Mathilde was taking every thing upon herself. If the Princess Mathilde is alone in question, the Prince will know it, and will tell her *all the afore said*, as the attorneys so *eloquently* say. If he advises me to do so, I shall write to that excellent Princess to thank her, and to the Emperor also, if there should be any occasion for it. To the Prince himself, you must add that I love him with all my heart, that to-morrow I shall go and see his boat in the bay at Toulon; for I quite see that he will not come here so soon, and he is right not to dream of the sea, which is almost continuously raging and awful. I went yesterday, despite a very big sea, to see the *Aigle*, His Majesty's yacht (*galère capitane de Sa Majesté*). It is most charming. Lucien ought to have given you a description of it, for he saw it before I did.

I myself am worried because Maurice wishes to make a tour in Africa. He is quite right, and I should be glad for him to visit that country; but I fear that he will not wait until these storms are over, and that will upset me dreadfully. But I don't say much to him about it; for we ought not to make our children pusillanimous by imparting our fears to them, or spoil their pleasures by disclosing our anxieties.

So Lucien, it seems, has taken up with botany. Lucky rascal, with nothing else to do, and *with such a father* to guide him, and resolve the abominable difficulties of *specification!* That, however, is not the foundation, the philosophy of the science; but it is the way by which to reach it, and a long way too, especially with the complications which have been and are still being introduced into botany by the various authors.

Tell the dear boy that he must have been born lucky to

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have all facilities in his hands, and that, if he does not study, I will not give him the specimens of fine plants which I put in duplicate for him in my bundle. Tell him also that I have returned to the *Revest*, and have found there some loves of flowers. Tell him, finally, that Marie is always losing her hat, that Matheron is always saying *une-t-auberge*,\* and that I embrace him with all my heart.

Thank Augier and Ponsard if you see them, and, above all, the Prince, who interests himself in me with the kindness we know him to possess.

Good night, kind and dear cousin ; all my kindest regards to your husband and the dear children.

G. SAND.

You yourself also understand botany ! Why, you know everything then ! Insist upon Lucien's being well drilled in *technology* ; it is wearying, but indispensable, and not difficult to those who know Latin.

To M. ARMAND BARBÈS, *The Hague*.

NOHANT, 14th July, 1861.

MY FRIEND,

I learn from London, through Pichon, that you have recently been very seriously indisposed. It is believed that the climate at the Hague does not suit you. Can you hesitate to seek a more clement sky ? Do you not know what your friends would lose in losing you, and do you think that you

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\* The introduction of the euphonic *t*, here incorrect, and often wrongly employed by illiterate people in several French provinces.



owe nothing to us all who love you so much? Circumstances have delayed or interrupted our relations; but you are not one to doubt, and you know that my heart is always wholly yours. I am sending to Paris, to Pichon's, who will be there in a few days, the first volume of the *Histoire de ma Vie*, which he had returned to me in order that I might write your name in it. This work, in which I have devoted several pages to you, has been a long time at his place, awaiting an opportunity to be sent on to you.

Maurice is travelling. He must be on the way to the United States. But I none the less tell you that he also loves you, for I know it. How often have we talked of you!

I dare no longer beg of you to come back again to France, as I fear to wound you in relation to a settled resolution, which, however, the state of your health ought indeed to induce you to abandon, now that the doctors are presumably recommending your native air. At least, do your best to let me hear from you, and believe in my unalterable affection.

GEORGE SAND.

*To MAURICE SAND, on board the " Jérôme Napoléon."\**

NOBART, 1st September, 1861.

From your letters I perceive that, whilst doing justice to the Americans, you experience in their midst a feeling of surprise mingled with uneasiness, and that the great question of individual liberty, which formerly had not perhaps much enlisted your thoughts, presents itself to you pregnant with

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\* A steamship of the French imperial navy.

troubles in that land of individualism. I know not what may be your conclusions upon your return ; but I may tell what my own are, in my little corner here, whilst laying aside a very fine book which, in my opinion, sums up the whole heart and intelligence of America. It is the work of the American Unitarian minister Channing.

You will perhaps pass too hurriedly through the country of that remarkable man to hear about him or, at least, to judge of his influence upon the minds of his fellow-countrymen. I will, therefore, give you here a brief *résumé* of his ideas :

1st. *Reason*, the first and chief guide of man.

2nd. *Individual liberty*, the first duty and first right of man.

This *résumé*, thus presented, appears rather dry, and, when reading that philosopher, you will be surprised to find in him extraordinary enthusiasm for charity and heartfelt eloquence, in fine, all the qualities of a true apostle.

But you will do as I did, you will form a conclusion, and, by so doing, you will perceive that sincere man to be a sterile apostle, and that heart of gold to be not always right.

The doctrine preached by Channing is the gospel pure and simple. Thence proceeds his admirable tolerance. Though Protestant, he nevertheless welcomes into his communion all dissenters, even the Catholics. He throws open the Unitarian temple of faith and eternal salvation to every man, whatever his creed, who is willing to enter by repeating this short formula : "I love God and my fellow-creatures in the spirit of Christ."

He does not require us to believe in the divinity of Jesus, if our reason be opposed to such belief, but he does not admit of our railing at those whose reason accepts that divinity. He

wishes those who believe least and whose faith is greatest to love one another, whilst loving God, to abstain from damning and vexing one another, and this without being interfered with by anybody. If that be possible, nothing could be better; but has Channing found the true path leading to that temple of reason and liberty which is sustained by faith?

He, undoubtedly, says all the finest, best, and noblest things that could be said to bring men to that temple; but he extends his tolerance to all the acts of civil and political life. The form, name, or origin of government is of little matter to him. Laws are no obstacle to him, everything seems to him possible, provided men have the spirit of charity and inquiry. He is right; but if they have it not it would indeed be necessary to imbue them with it; and, since the beginning of the world, institutions have always been conceived or applied as the means of developing individuals and of elevating the moral sense of societies; ever since human society has existed, the general level has always been much beneath the conceptions of the great minds who moved the masses and inspired them with enthusiasm. To begin with, the crucifixion of Christ may be taken as an instance.

Besides, what is the use of institutions? If logical, Channing ought not to have said: "Whatever institutions." He should have come direct to facts, and said: "No institution whatever."

But you will see that such is precisely what he does say.

"The individual is above the State. He is not made to devote and sacrifice himself to the State; it is the State that ought to devote itself to and protect him. The State is instituted only in order to guarantee and secure respect for the rights of individuals."

That is the law and the prophets; it is the essence of Unitarianism, and, in that sense, unity in religion no longer means the *be all in one* of Jesus Christ; still less the political and national *unity* pursued by Italy, and dreamed of by the other enslaved nations of Europe. It simply means: "Every man for himself, and God for us all!" Well, I defy God Himself, who is logic itself, to be in favour of two contrary parties, and, still more, to be in favour of the millions of contrary parties which divide mankind, split up into millions of individuals. Happily, God watches us from on high. He knows how to wait, He takes no part in our quarrels, and is for us all in this world, only in the sense that He is for all who seek His light.

As for the State, which is not God, it must nevertheless endeavour to imitate God in His logic, patience, universal protection, meekness, and all-fruitful providence. That the State ought to allow the fullest liberty to the individual, and to consider that as one of its chief duties, nothing could be more correct. But it cannot become God; whether it be called a republic, a king, or a pope, it cannot act as God Himself acts, who awaits us in eternity, and for the whole of eternity. The State cannot abandon individuals to the apparent impunity to which God seems to leave them, and since it acts only during the limits of time, it has not discovered, it will not discover the means of leaving us all absolutely free, unless we should all be perfect.

"Be so," Channing would reply. "Love one another."

A hundred times yes! but that would be beginning at the end of the fine romance of our future. Other Protestants in the past, the *taborite* Hussites, said: "A time will

come when there will be neither laws nor authorities in the holy city."

I also believe that such a time will come. We have scarcely reached the first stage of our intellectual and moral existence. The gospel of St. John will some day be to us as clear as the sun, and we shall love one another because we shall all be good and reasonable. We shall no longer need either kings, popes, or even republics. Nobody will preach the law, for it will then be in every heart; nobody will then comment on the Bible in order to discover in it the rule of his conduct. We shall all be angels in the *holy city*.

But where is it? in another planet, or in this? Why not in another? Our soul is free, it is therefore immortal and can migrate to all worlds. But why not in this planet? We possess the notion of perfectibility, and can transform and almost *divinise* this world of ours, where generations succeed generations, bequeathing to one another their works and their conquests.

But we are far from our aim, and, if Channing's ideal is fine and grand, if it is realisable—I feel convinced that it is so—it is not so through the doctrine of individualism. I deny with all my conscience, my heart, and faith, the possibility of our ever attaining our aim through that doctrine.

Channing made a mistake, and many Europeans, fascinated by the boldness of his optimistic, enthusiastic, and buoyant spirit, welcome that religious tolerance which was the outcome of French influence in the eighteenth century.

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TO HIS IMPERIAL HIGHNESS PRINCE JÉRÔME NAPOLEON,  
Paris.

NOHANT, 25th February, 1862.

Yes, you alone are frank and courageous in this *factory* of hypocrisy. Do not allow yourself to be frightened by all that clamour; march on, dear Prince, and rest assured that France is with you. She will feel grateful to you for the fury that you arouse, and your place is already marked in the history of progress like a ray of truth piercing the darkness. Our hearts are watching you and mine blesses you.

GEORGE SAND.

TO THE SAME.

NOHANT, 26th February, 1862.

Thanks for the number of the *Moniteur* which you were good enough to send me. When writing to you last night, I had only read short extracts from your speech in the newspapers, and I now perceive that you spoke still better than I thought. Your speech is as fine as it is generous, and, coming from your lips, the words it contains are bound to secure great and durable fame. You are inaugurating a great and new departure.

Will the *main object of the reign* (as people used to say in Louis Philippe's time) follow you therein? What timid and rather cowardly reserve, what puerile *moderantism* in the oratorical talent of the Government speakers!

Everybody admires the prudence displayed by the Emperor; but perhaps he believes more of it to be necessary

than is really required, and I notice with considerable anxiety the dreadful development of the clerical spirit. He does not know, he cannot know to what extent the priests have everywhere extended their influence, and what hypocrisy too has penetrated into all the classes of society caught in the meshes of the Papist propaganda. He, therefore, does not feel that that ardent and tenacious faction is undermining the ground beneath him, and that the people no longer know what they ought to wish for and protect, when hearing their priests proclaiming aloud and preaching in almost every village that the Church is the only temporal power of the century? Is it not high time to show that the priests can be braved and the game be won? Believe what I tell you, the people are now convinced that the Emperor is the weaker, and does not dare to do anything against the men of former times! Well! you know the sad discouragement of the masses, when they believe that they notice any weakness in the authorities whoever they may be.

The Emperor has been afraid of Socialism—well and good; from his point of view, he felt obliged to fear it; but, by striking it too hard and too hastily, he was the means of raising on the ruins of that party another party, much more skilful and much more to be feared, a party united by the spirit of caste and *esprit de corps*, the nobles and the priests; and, unfortunately, I no longer see a counterpoise in the *bourgeoisie*.

With all its faults the latter, as a counterpoise, had a useful side.

Sceptical or Voltairean, it also possessed its *esprit de corps*, its *partenn* vanity. It resisted the priests, it snubbed the nobles, of whom it was jealous. To-day it flatters them.

Titles of nobility have again been acknowledged, and the Legitimists have been made the objects of some regard, and have even received official appointments; you can judge then whether they have been put down! The *bourgeois* have been anxious to be on good terms with the nobles, whose influence has been raised; the priests have performed the duty of conciliators. People affect piety in order to gain admittance to the drawing-rooms of the Legitimists. The official world set the example; smiles and greetings have been exchanged at mass, and the wives of the *tiers*\* became ardent Legitimists; for women never leave anything half done.

Within the last year, all this has made enormous and frightful progress in the provinces. Priests make marriages, they secure dowries to husbands in exchange for their confessions. Secret and harmless societies have been prosecuted because their members did not agree. The *Société de Saint Vincent de Paul* is closely united, it acts as one man; it is the queen of secret societies. It has a footing everywhere, even in our schools; and the hisses of half the students who hissed About were not meant so much for the pretended friend of the Emperor as for the avowed enemy of Cardinal Antonelli. *I have good reasons* for what I say.

I believe there is yet time, but next year it may be too late. France needs to believe in the strength of those who lead her. Thanks to that *prestige*, she has been made to accept the most unexpected events. When her rulers hesitate, when they pause, she at once exclaims that they are retracing their steps; she believes it, and they are lost.

It is rather odd that *I*, a Republican, should tell you all

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\* An abbreviation of *tiers état*.



that, dear Prince; perhaps the men of my party, or at least perhaps some among them, think that, bad as things are, it is *all the better* for the furtherance of their own views. Well then, they make a mistake; they cannot restore the Republic, and are unconsciously approaching a *Restoration*. Then we should go back for a century; Italy would be lost, France debased, and we should once more have to conform to the *charming* treaties of 1815!

If that should ever be the case I would rather, notwithstanding that but little strength might still be left to me, go and live with your friends the Hurons than inhale the perfumes of the sacristy.

Dear Prince, you are right, the Empire will be lost if Italy is abandoned; for the whole question of the future is in the success of Italian unity. You said so sincerely, ably, and earnestly. May your words be heeded! You possess the true moral courage which always raises the storm; it is a glory of which I feel proud for your sake.

GEORGE SAND.

To THE SAME, Paris.

NOHANT, 5th March, 1862.

DEAR PRINCE,

You speak with great ability. I do not wonder at it myself, for I know that your eloquence proceeds from the heart. But how enraged against you are all those hypocrites (*cafards*)!\* Will they carry the day? do they represent France in the eyes of the Emperor? You did well to pro-

\* A term of contempt applied in France to the clerical party.

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test beforehand against the hypocritical diplomacy of the ministerial mouthpiece. That leaves us a little hope.

In my heart, however, I am furious; you open to the main object of the reign (*pensée du règne*) a path which may save everything and even wipe out everything in history, and they seem to purposely close their eyes!

But I can swear to you that the Empire is lost if it continues to slumber or to tremble, whilst the old monarchies are shaking off their torpor and the priests are plotting. Salvation resides in you, in you alone. If France should prove as blind as the authorities, we shall have a dreadful repetition of the events of 1815 and what followed them.

Are not all those old devout generals bought beforehand?

Do, nevertheless, go on, dear Prince; everybody is not ungrateful. The intelligent portion of the people is not yet corrupted. France cannot commit suicide. May God watch over us and always be with you!

G. SAND.

The *Débats* says, with much reason, that you speak as nobody else does. I should think so! You alone say what you believe.

To M. ALEXANDRE DUMAS, Jun., Paris.

NOHANT, 10th March, 1862.

You are a good son to love your *mamma* and those who love you. It certainly causes me much pleasure to learn that people speak well of me to you, and that they also think well of me, when such people are good-hearted and talented, like those you mention. Is not that M. Rodrigues the brother of Olinde Rodrigues,\* with whom I used to be closely acquainted, and who was among the good *advanced* Israelites and tolerably conversant with Progressist philosophy?

I do not know whether you have observed that with Jews there exists no medium; when they are bent upon being kind and generous, they are so more than any of the Christians who believe in the New Testament. I am much pleased to hear of the marriage of E. H——. That is what I call doing good usefully. When again meeting with those good readers of George Sand, you will tell them that such readers as they console me for a great many others.

As for me, I have also tried, during the last few days, to become a reader of that *poor novelist*. Every ten or fifteen years I resume the reading of his works as a sincere study, and as disinterestedly as though they belonged to some other author; seeing that I have forgotten even the names of the personages, and only remember the subjects, having lost the recollection of the means of execution. I have not been

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\* Friend of Claude Henri Count of Saint-Simon, the founder of Saint-Simonism, whose writings he published and whose views, in collaboration with *Enfantin*, *Bazard*, *Auguste Comte*, *Armand Carrel*, *Leroux*, *Blanqui*, *Jean Reynaud*, and others, he assisted in diffusing.

satisfied with everything; far from it. I read once again *L'Homme de Neige* and *Le Château des Désertés*. What I think of them is not of much interest to relate; but the phenomenon which I sought in them, and which I found, is rather curious, and may be of some use to you.

For a month previously I had been exclusively engaged, with Maurice, in the study of natural philosophy, and my brain was filled with names more or less barbarous; in my dreams I saw nothing but rhomboidal prisms, varying chromatic effects of a dull or resinous appearance when broken; we spent whole hours mutually inquiring, "Have you found the orthosis?" "Have you got the albite?" and referring to other distinctions which, in a thousand and one mineralogical cases, are never obvious to the senses.

So much so that, Maurice having gone, that study for which I felt, in his company, a sort of enthusiasm, has once more become a matter that no longer excites my interest. Besides, I had lost much time, and it was necessary to resume my calling. But, then, please your honour, nobody remained. George Sand was as absent from *himself* as though he were fossilised. At first not a single idea came, then, when ideas occurred, it was found impossible to write a single word. It reminded me of your despair last summer. Ah! but with me it was a great deal worse. You never came to the point of feeling unable to write three lines in any language whatever; you never walked about a garden, the victim of an uncontrollable monomania which urged you to pick up all the white pebbles in order to compare them with one another. Then it was that I took up one or two novels of mine, in order to remind myself that formerly—even as late as six weeks ago—I used to write novels. At first I could not understand any-

thing. Gradually everything became clearer. I recognised myself in my good qualities and in my defects, and retook possession of my literary *self*. Now, all is over, and a long time will elapse before I again read my works, and act like a flowing stream unaware of what it might reflect by pausing in its course.

If ever you should again fall into one of those crises, peruse *Le Régent Mustel*, *La Dame aux Perles*, or any other play of yours, and you will recover yourself; for we spend our lives in losing ourselves in the changing prism of life, and what little ray we may possess of our own is easily absorbed therein. But there is no harm in that, believe me. To often read one's own works, to constantly examine one's own productions, and to be always staring at oneself would constitute a regular torture, and prove a cause of sterility.

Rest assured that the abundance of your father's faculties was due to the application which he made of them. As for me, my tastes are innocent, that is why my productions are as simple as A B C. But do you not think that similar tastes to mine might not have extinguished his talent, he who bears within himself a whole world of events, heroes, traitors, magicians, and adventures, he who is the personification of drama? He needed a superabundance of life in order to ceaselessly renew an enormous focus of life. You will not indeed alter him, and will have to carry the weight of that double glory—his and your own. Yours with all its fruits; his with all its thorns. What would you have? He gave birth to all your great faculties, and believes himself quit towards you. You made a more logical use of your talent than he of his; in this your *self* asserted itself, and carried you into another path where he cannot follow you.

It is rather difficult to be sometimes compelled to become

the father of one's own father. For that one needs such courage, reason, and nobleness of heart as you possess. Do not deny that you are possessed of a noble heart; it pervades all you say and all you do. It rules you, though you may perhaps be unaware of it, and although it creates for you duties which few people heed, it will fully repay you by true power and the peace of your conscience.

Proceed gaily, go on, and you will see by-and-by! Everything passes away—youth, passions, illusions, and the craving for life; one single thing remains—righteousness of heart. That never grows old, but, on the contrary, if unimpeded, the heart is younger and stouter at sixty than at thirty years of age.

I did not thank you, it is true, for the offer of your lovely apartments; I will not thank you, I will accept, in case I should no longer have any home in Paris. Where could I be better than with my *child*? But, for a good long time yet, I shall keep my little *hay-loft* in the Rue Racine, and my Latin Quarter habits.

I kiss you with all my heart, and request you to convey my kind remembrance to the *châtelaines*.\*

G. SAND.

To M. ARMAND BARBÈS, *The Hague*.

NOHANT, 3rd May, 1862.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

I have now been a long time without news from you. If the labour of writing still fatigues you, can you not manage for me to hear through somebody? Can I hope that you are better, as announced in your last letter!

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\* An allusion to the mother and wife of Alexandre Dumas, jun.

I, on my part, wish to let you know of the approaching marriage of my son with the daughter of my old and dear friend Calamatta. She is a charming girl, and very warm-hearted. This union fulfils one of my heart's desires.

You, who live but for your friends, without a care for yourself, will share my joy. But, if possible, speak to me a little about yourself; if not, think of me, and wish for the happiness of my dear son. Heaven, that loves you, will hear your prayer!

GEORGE SAND.

*To HIS HIGHNESS PRINCE JÉRÔME NAPOLEÓN, Paris.*

NOHANT, 11th May, 1862.

DEAR PRINCE,

Are you still at Paris? I hasten to thank you with all my soul on behalf of my sister, who, thanks to you, is about to be made happy.

At present my heart is altogether free from family trouble, and I am absorbed in the happiness of my children, who are to be married in a few days. Ah! if you were not going away this week, it would be so easy to come *incognito* and spend twenty-four hours with us! Oh but—you would perhaps be rather compromised by our liberty of conscience!—we shall have no religious ceremony!

We are excommunicated, like all who, in deed or in thought, have wished for the unity of Italy and the triumph of Victor Emanuel; we look upon ourselves as expelled from the Church. But do not tell the Princess Clotilde! We must not cause the angels to weep. She believes—we others do not

believe—in the Catholic Church. We should be hypocrites to practise its rites.

Thanks once more ; and please, sir, try to save Rome. Calamatta here tells us that you will meet in Italy with unbounded affection and gratitude. The journey gives us great hope ; for we are all truly Italian in heart, and we love you all the more because of our being so.

But you will not stay long ? Are you not about to become a father ? What joy there will be amongst us when we know that you have that happiness.

GEORGE SAND.

*To THE SAME.*

NOHANT, 26th July, 1862.

MY DEAR PRINCE,

I have just come from the banks of the Creuse, and heard of the happy event. I am delighted at it ; you don't need me to tell you so.

The Princess is a good mother to suckle her child ! You must make a man, a real man, of that little one. You will, I am sure, be a kind father, because you have been a good son ; but see to his education *yourself*, and it will then be what it ought to be for a man of the future and not of the past.

Your friends are counting on that and rejoicing. I cannot tell you how much I think of you and dream of your son ; is not the event a happy one for you ? Tell me yes, and kiss the child for me in the name of God, the King of Kings, with whom I am not on the worst of terms.



We have no such happiness here. I am waiting impatiently for the *hope* of it. My children are with my husband at Nérac. He has been seriously ill; he is now out of danger, and my children are coming back to me.

I love you ever with all my heart,

GEORGE SAND.

*To THE SAME.*

NOHANT, 14th December, 1862.

Thanks, dear Prince, for the pamphlet that you have been good enough to send me. I have been rather poorly these last few days. It is only to-night that I have been able to read it; all the documents it contains are very startling and of the greatest utility. Let us hope that they will add their weight to the sum of reflections which the public and the Government ought to make a little shorter, displaying a little less *indifference* respecting the salvation of Italy and France.

In presence of the encroachments of clerical influence, it seems to me that France is still more threatened than Italy. Is it a scheme of the Emperor's for allowing the constitution of a Gallican Church at home, whilst that of Rome is falling to pieces? Such a game would be clever, but perilous. Priests, whether Gallican or not, can play a deep game as well as anybody, and I cannot see that French honour has anything to gain by victories of that kind.

So you have been enjoying yourself, sir! This year, you have been journeying by land and sea, always braving danger, and meeting with rough weather and all sorts of adventures.

You are fond of that kind of thing, well and good, and I am told that the Princess Clotilde is as brave as yourself. I hear that your son grows to be a superb child. Those are indeed elements of domestic happiness.

But do you feel reassured in regard to public affairs? It seems to me that life, by reason of its inactivity, becomes extinct, alike in the people as in princes.

All my little household send the warmest expressions of their affection and devotion. Maurice is touched by your kind thoughtfulness in regard to the pamphlet. He intends going to spend a few days in the South at his father's; after which he will visit Paris with his dear and *perfect* little wife. I myself know not when I shall lay down my pen in order to breathe a little more freely; what I know is, that I love you always with all my heart and am longing to see you again.

GEORGE SAND.

*To M. \* \* \**

NOHANT, 26th February, 1863.

Christianity is an abstract truth. In order to be a concrete truth, a real truth, it would require to take into account the ideas which you hold, and which I need not point out to you. Christianity is not false; it is an incomplete truth. A weapon of progress in former times, it has now become an instrument of destruction. It is the grave in which mankind buries what little conscience and light it still possesses. This is not the fault of the poor crucified teacher; it is that of those who deified his memory. You will say more correctly than I that which you know you

ought to say, and that which I believe I know you will say. Your production is very fine, lofty, and profound; it is that of a superior mind, at once poetic and logical. May God assist you to explore the depths of things, without losing yourself in the vast abyss into which we no longer penetrate save on the wings of hypothesis!

That task requires much power of expression, and all branches of knowledge should concur in forming the science of sciences.

I, who know nothing, am waiting, and yet I allow my conscience to judge of what takes place. That, no doubt, is very bold on my part; but every mind, however incomplete it may be, feels the need of asserting itself.

The finest of hypotheses, one which would be entitled to mark a new religious phase in the conquests of the future, is that which should succeed in establishing harmony between the requirements of intellect and of heart and the results of experience. Lofty writings have already discussed the question in that light, and I feel convinced that your inquiries will secure a reply from you to your own self that will throw still further light on the path newly opened.

GEORGE SAND.

*To HIS HIGHNESS PRINCE JÉRÔME NAPOLÉON, Paris.*

NOHANT, 22<sup>d</sup> March, 1863.

MY AUGUST FRIEND,

You alone are young and generous, and brave! You alone love truth for its own sake. Amongst the men of genius of to-day, you are the sole one whose genius proceeds

from the heart, the only genius that is truly great and reliable. Dear noble heart, shining light in the midst of that seam of coal called the Senate—not coal, however, for it cannot be lighted—I esteem and love you always more and more. Ah! that Senate is a world of ice and darkness! It votes the destruction of peoples as the simplest and wisest thing; for its members themselves are moribund. Take pride in not being liked by such fellows. All in France that still possesses life will be grateful to you for it.

I am waiting for my copy, do not forget me; for I have nothing but newspaper extracts, and that is not sufficient.

My children are happy to have seen you. My dear little daughter, who is an affectionate girl, fondly cherishes you. She, however, was unwell whilst staying with you; her *interesting* condition exposes her to troubles, which are only trifling, but yet compel her to withdraw, without taking leave, from any society in which she may be; and Maurice, alarmed by the frequency of her fainting attacks, quickly brought her back to me. She is now quite well again. They both request me to express their regards for you, and I beg you to convey, on behalf of us all, our respects to the Princess. According to what they say, your son is handsome, very handsome. Lina looked him full in the face, with *emulation*. Pray, sir, do not let him be brought up by the priests!

Accept for all our good wishes and affection.

G. SAND.

To M. EDMOND ABOUT, Paris.

NOHANT, March, 1863.

What talent you have! ten times greater, beyond doubt, than people recognise in you, although they acknowledge that you have a great deal. Why do you not soar as high as genius, which you reach, but allow to slip through your fingers? It is that your soul is sad, perhaps afflicted. For the last thirty years, people have ridiculed our fits of despair. You laugh, you other folks, but much more sadly than we used to cry. You see the world of to-day such as it is, without asking whether you might not diminish its weakness by making yourselves stronger than it. I feel persuaded that you are of neither more nor less worth than we, setting aside the improvement in art, which is constantly progressing and obvious in all authors, old and young alike; but why should you not wish to surpass us? Thanks to you, the silly fits of despair from which we suffered have been followed by a reaction of life which grasps reality, and should cause you to step right over our heads.

Will not one of you do it, and why should you not be that one? We were depicting man suffering, wounded in the struggle of life. As for you, your idea is to depict, or rather you instinctively depict man as an ardent being who rebels against suffering, and who, instead of rejecting the cup, fills it to the brim and drinks it off. But that cup of strength and life kills you; the proof of it is that in *Madelon* all the personages are dead, shamefully dead, at the end of the drama, save *her*, the personification of vice, always young and triumphant.

What then? Does that imply that in vice alone there is strength, none in honour and virtue? Not one of your personages resists, and the only truly honest man, M. Honoré, ends by committing suicide, just like the heroes of our *Byronian* times.

Why so? Speak! Do you believe that no man is strong enough to brave, undergo, and overcome all troubles? not a single one? not even you who, with outstretched arms, delineate that picture of a great artist, that worthy, wonderful mental production, that marvel of truth, force, colour, composition, and design, which you entitle *Madelon*? You dare not yourself be that man, or suggest in a grand work, that such a man exists and speaks through your pen, that he acts through your will, and triumphs through your conviction? Why so, good God? Must we, in order to spread the ideal, turn bigots and invoke all the falsehoods of Catholicism, when it is so well proved that man is old enough to stand alone as soon as he chooses to do so?

You really must take care! All those attractive young people whom the reader would wish to resemble are but wretches. All those virtuous women are silly, and so powerless to avert evil that their presence is not required on this earth. They are only useful as an excuse for faithless husbands, owing to the weariness they cause them. *Madelon* alone is logical. If human nature is thus represented around her, she is right to despise it, and to blush no longer at anything.

Horrible conclusion of a wholly admirable recital, and before which all the literary faculties we possess bow without reserve, but before which also all the honest feelings of our hearts rise in painful revolt.

Do not think that I do not at all understand what you

intended to do, and that I do not perceive the sound side of that violent study. I know that to show up and unveil the wicked and cowardly is more instructive than predication, and the perusal of the *Lives of Saints*. I will agree with you that Feuillet and myself write, each from his own point of view, legends rather than *romans de mœurs*. I only ask you to do that which we cannot do; and, seeing that you are so well acquainted with the sores and plagues of society, to arouse the sense of good by borrowing it from the circle which you depict with such truth, and have so skilfully observed and *dissected*.

Now that you have just written a masterpiece concerning the victory of evil, I request and beseech you to write the masterpiece of the revival of good. Let us see a true-hearted man crushing that vermin called vice, braving that luxury, scorning with easy and simple logic the silly vanity which induces men to appear strong in absurdity and powerful in the abuse of life; you have just proved that such vanity is always punished by nature, which vindicates its rights.

Have the courage to incarnate in an individual the triumph of virtue. Let the wicked triumph in public opinion if you will. It is useless to gild society, which is so silly and so corrupt, but let Job on his dunghill be the noblest and happiest of all, so noble that the youthful reader would prefer to be Job rather than any of the other personages. Ah, would that I could! would that I had your age and strength! would that I knew all you know!

Why did the *Demi-monde*, which disclosed in their nakedness Madelon and her dupes and her accomplices, captivate the most recalcitrant with that sort of picture, and myself to begin with? It is because two men are triumphant by her

side—the one who unmasks her and the other who repudiates her, though there is no revenge.

Why is the author of the *Demi-monde* entitled to say and show everything? It is because we feel that there is in him a noble instinct of revolt against the torrent which might have overwhelmed him. With the magnificent powers you possess, you cannot be allowed not to do good. You must effect some. You must thus avenge yourself for all the harm people have done you through being unable to understand you. She has understood you who now dares and feels it a duty to say all this to you, from the depths of a heart a thousand times broken and still happy in spite of all.

GEORGE SAND.

To M. \* \* \*

NOHANT, *April*, 1863.

Yes, sir, I undoubtedly remember, and am reading your book. Your mind is noble, vast, and generous. My son shares your ideas, for he and his wife have become Protestants, and intend bringing up their children in the advanced creed of the Reformation, of which you are one of the most eminent and most fervent apostles. But I, though loving and admiring you with the best of my soul, shall become gradually less Christian; I feel it, and I also daily perceive the breaking forth of another light beyond the horizon of life, towards which I am marching with growing tranquillity of mind.

Jesus is not and could not have been the last word of truth granted to mankind. You ingeniously admit that He sowed a progressive truth, which we must develop. But did Jesus



believe that? I do not think so. He was the man of His time, although the most idealistic man of His time.

Besides, is He the only one we should venerate in that period of moral and intellectual revival called Christianity, and which has been the work of several of the *élite* and of several centuries of discussion? Either, as believed by M. Renan, Jesus was unacquainted with the doctrines that surrounded Him, and, original to a supreme degree, He was a deep and powerful incarnation of the thought which hovered around His century; or, as you believe, sir, and as I myself feel rather inclined to believe with you, He was *taught*, and was but a disciple, though purer and better gifted than His masters. There is a third version which does not please me, but which nevertheless has a value of its own: it is that Jesus as an individual never really existed, and that His life is but a poem and a legend, which embodies several more or less interesting existences, just like His gospel, which, according to that version, is but the collection of more or less authentic versions of the one doctrine, subject to a thousand modes of interpretation. I believe that you admit the possibility of all the foregoing; we must indeed admit it when not possessed of certainty and of incontestable historical proof.

But you will say within yourself: "What matters that after all, if, from all those wrecks of the historical reality, we have saved a philosophical truth, an admirable doctrine?" Very good, I think as you do; but I do not care to call by the name of Christianity a doctrine which is perhaps not at all that of the individual known as Jesus, who perhaps never was actually crucified; and I still less care to grow enthusiastic about a mythical personage who does not possess the reality of Plato, Pythagoras, Aristotle, and all the great minds of whose

existence we are sure, and whom we know to have thought, spoken, written, or suffered in person.

You will observe that this apocryphal, or at least doubtful situation of the founder of Christianity opens the door to mutually contradictory beliefs, and that this very beautiful doctrine has caused as much evil in the world as it has done good, for the very reason that it proceeds from a kind of myth. It is a bright beam proceeding from a sun hidden beneath the clouds. Plato, Pythagoras, and the other real founders of well-defined doctrines or methods always did good only. Jesus brought hypocrisy and persecution into human and social life, and this has endured for more than eighteen hundred years; even now we are more than ever persecuted in His name, deprived of liberty, and persecuted by His priests, even in the most private concerns of life. Away, then, with the God Jesus! Let us as philosophers love that charming personage of Oriental romance; but let us abstain from endeavouring to make people believe in His divinity or in His quasi-divinity, any more than in His human reality. Of Him we know really nothing and are only left in presence of the collective work of the apostles, which in many respects provokes criticism. We are free to select the version which pleases us best, and to build again, according to the wants of our hearts, of our consciences, of our reason, or of our idealism, the temple of the new Jerusalem. But let us no longer call that a religion; for it never was one. It never was even a philosophy; for some it is a romantic ideal, for others a gross superstition. In it there is no room for reason, and its practice is as elastic and as vague as its text. Catholicism itself is something real and strong. But, as it appears as an odious institution, I will not have it any more than the other branches of Christianity.

We must not insult Jesus. He possibly was, indeed He must have been, great and good. But that alone is not sufficient to induce serious minds to seek in Christianity all light and all truth.

Truth was never the sole property of any one man, and no God ever deigned to formulate it for us. It resides in us all. In some few more than in the masses; but all may seek and find the sum of wisdom, of truth, and of virtue, which is the expression of the times they live in. Man is always anxious to define, to classify, and to give a name to everything; that is why he is anxious to have Messiahs and gospels, but those personifications and those dogmas have always done him as much harm as good.

It is high time that we had lights that are not incendiary torches.

*To M. LEBLOIS, Protestant Minister, Strasbourg.*

NOHANT, 3rd August, 1863.

SIR,

Your excellent discourses have much struck my son, my daughter-in-law, and myself, and I will at once, and without preamble, reply to your kind letter by disclosing my heart to you.

My son contracted a civil marriage last year. With the approval of his wife, his wife's father, and myself, he did not secure a religious consecration of his marriage. The Catholic Church, in which we were born, professes dogmas which it corroborates by anti-social and anti-human doctrines which we find it impossible to admit. A dear little boy was born of that union a fortnight ago. Since his mother conceived

him and bore him in her bosom, we have all three discussed the question whether he shall be brought up in the vague religious aspirations which may be sufficient for the age of reason (under condition of seeking for truth in better defined conceptions), or whether, in view of preparing him to become a complete man, we should endeavour to bind him to some idealistic, sentimental, and rational faith. But where is the faith sufficiently formulated to-day to be placed within the reach of a child?

We turned our views to Protestantism solely because it is a protest against the Romish yoke; but that creed was far from meeting our views. Two dogmas, the one odious, the other inadmissible—the divinity of Jesus Christ, and the belief in the devil and in hell—made us recoil from a religious progress which had not yet had the frankness and the courage to reject those beliefs.

Your discourses free us from that scruple, and my son wishing his marriage and the birth of his son to be religiously celebrated, I have no longer any objection to offer to two sacraments, which would associate his marriage and his paternity with your communion.

But, before entirely submitting myself, I have recourse to your loyalty with absolute confidence, and I put a question to you. Do you still belong to the intellectual communion of the Reformation? Persecuted and probably disowned by Anglicanism, by Methodism, and by the greater part of the various churches, can you say that you belong to a notable part of the enlightened mind of Protestantism? If, almost alone, you raised the standard of revolt, would not the child that we should place under the ægis of your ideas be disowned and rejected by Protestants, in spite of

its baptism amongst them? One may risk oneself in the struggles of the philosophical and religious world; but, when entrusted with the future of a child, of a being born with the sacred right of liberty, which, as soon as its reason begins to expand, stands in need of counsel and guidance, we must not only seek for the best method to offer to it, but also prepare for it in life a moral surrounding, some sort of solidarity (*solidarité*), a focus of fraternity, and something more—a religious rationality, if I may be allowed to employ the expression, a flag commanding some authority in this world. We must not, it seems to me, so act that the youth may turn some day and say to his Catholic father, “You bound me to a death-yoke!” or to his Protestant father, “You isolated me in the midst of freedom of inquiry, you confined me in a petty church without help, and behold I am already engaged in the struggle, when I scarcely know the reason for my joining the fray!”

In both cases, the youth might add: “It would have been better not to bind me in any way, but to have brought me up according to your own inspiration in the absolute freedom in which you yourself lived.”

My son and his wife will, at all events, do as they please, without any cloud arising from a dissidence which as yet is not even formulated; but having, some day or other, to give or reserve my opinion, I ask of you, sir, such a reply to my doubt as your conscience may dictate to you.

I am unacquainted with the Protestant world. I hear of the existence of an entirely new sect, having a future before it, and making numerous proselytes, chiefly in Italy. From what I am told, I perceive that that sect is founded on your principles, and that a blast of religious freedom i

sweeping over the world and uniting a certain number of serious minds. I should like to know if our child will have in life a true family, with which he perhaps may never feel the desire or have the opportunity of identifying himself—for we must foresee an age when he may feel disinclined to observe any rite, and with that the authority of his natural family will not be able to interfere—but of which he might proudly say that he was the pupil and the citizen. Our petty churches, offshoots of Catholicism, like the one of Abbé Châtel for instance, always possessed a puny or powerless character. The church which you proclaim belongs to a larger conception of Christianity; and does not present those petty aspects. But where is that church? Is it anathematised by Protestant intolerance? Is it denied its religious title? Does it belong to sects which help it to constitute itself as an important community, offering an *ensemble* of views, aspirations, and efforts?

Excuse my scrawl, I can never manage to re-write what I have written, and prefer sending you my first impression, though illegible and shapeless. You will understand with your heart, which can decipher all things.

I request you not to betray the secret of this letter until the questions to which it refers have been decided between us; and pray, sir, believe that, whatever the issue, my feelings for you are those of true and profound fraternity.

GEORGE SAND.

*To HIS HIGHNESS PRINCE JÉRÔME NAPOLEON, Paris.*

NOHANT, 19th November, 1863.

MY DEAR PRINCE,

You must think that I am dead; but you have been travelling so much that, had I written, you would not have found time to read my letter. You have worked much for the furtherance of art, industry, and progress. As for me, I have written a comedy; that is less useful and less interesting. What that was really instructive could I have taught you, who are acquainted with everything? I am told that you would like to know what I think of the *Life of Jesus*.\*

M. Renan causes his hero, when viewed from a certain standpoint, to fall a little; though, from another, he raises Him in my estimation. I used to delight in persuading myself that Jesus had never believed Himself to be God, had never proclaimed Himself specially the Son of God, and that His belief in a vindictive God was but an apocryphal addition to the gospel. Such were, at least, the interpretations which I had always accepted and even sought; but now M. Renan steps forth with deeper, more competent, and stronger studies and inquiry. We do not need to be as learned as he, to feel in his work the existence of an *ensemble* of indisputable facts and opinions. Were it only because of the colour and life, when reading it, we feel that he casts a clearer light on the time, the man, and His surroundings.

I, therefore, believe that his appreciation of Jesus is better than the conception we had formed of Him before the appearance of the work, and I accept Jesus as presented to us by

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\* M. E. Renan's *Vie de Jésus*.

M. Renan. He no longer appears as a philosopher, a *savant*, a sage, a genius, reflecting in Himself the best essence of the systems of philosophy and the sciences of His age. He appears as a dreamer, an enthusiast, a poet, as one inspired, a fanatic, and a simpleton. Granted! Yet I love Him still; but how small the place He now seems to me to occupy in the history of ideas! how diminished the importance of His personal work appears! How much more henceforth does His religion appear as the result of the hazard of human events, than as that of one of those great historical necessities which we are agreed upon, and sometimes feel under the obligation of calling providential!

Let us accept truth, even when it surprises us and alters our views. Jesus is now quite demolished! so much the worse for Him! so much the better for us. His religion had succeeded in doing at least as much harm as it had done good; and, as—whether that be or be not the opinion of M. Renan—I to-day feel persuaded that it can now do nothing but harm, I believe that M. Renan has produced the most useful book that could be written at this moment.

I could say much as to the niceties of expression displayed by M. Renan. One needs courage in order to complain of so admirably fine a style. But it becomes too seductive and not sufficiently explicit, when the author strives to leave the reader in uncertainty as to what degree or character of divinity is to be attributed to Jesus. The work contains some brilliant flashes of light which prevent the attentive reader from being misled. But it also shows, on the part of the author, too many charming yet puerile efforts to lull the vigilance of prejudiced minds, and to preserve with one hand that which he destroys with the other. That proceeds, not at



all, as has been freely said, from the influence of the seminary education, from which that virile talent had been unable to free itself—I do not believe that it does—but from the infatuation of the *artiste* for his subject. There is danger, perhaps inconvenience, in being an erudite and poetic philosopher. It, no doubt, presents a fine *ensemble*, rather seldom met with in a human being; but, when dealing with such matters, enthusiasm jeopardises the logic, or at least the clearness of the assertions.

Have you read five or six pages which M. Renan published last month in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*?\* I prefer them to anything he has written hitherto. It is marvellously grand! I, it is true, still find fault with some questions of detail; but it is so grand that I object little and admire much. I should be delighted to know what you think of it. You know how to sum up your views on any subject; let me hear your opinion with your marvellous concision.

I shall go to Paris this winter. I know not when. My family is well. My grandson is lovely, and quite a good child. They tell me that your son is superb; I am longing to see him. The inmates of my *nest* send you and the Princess their best homage.

Is it true that we shall have war?

What is certain, dear Prince, is that I still love you with all my heart.

GEORGE SAND.

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\* *Les Sciences de la Nature et Les Sciences Historiques*, a Letter to M. Berthelot (*Dialogues et Fragments Philosophiques*; Calmann Lévy, 1876).

TO THE SAME.

NOHANT, 24th November, 1863.

DEAR PRINCE,

I willingly consent to your giving a copy of my letter to M. Renan; but it is only a letter, and I am unable to sum up my thoughts like you. My judgment is very superficial and incomplete, and does not penetrate the depth of things. I am now engaged in reading Strauss, Salvador, and the beautiful preface of M. Littré to the first of those two books. Had I been earlier acquainted with that preface, I should have been better able to read M. Renan.

Your judgment is better than mine; I always told you that you possess a great mind, which, however, you do not turn to full account. You do not believe me when I say that you could do anything you liked; but you are lazy and a prince too; what a pity!

I do not think you are a dreamer, far from it; you are nearer the *real truth* than M. Renan, M. Littré, and M. Sainte-Beuve. They fell in the German *rut*. That is their weakness. They have more talent and genius than all modern Germans together, and, besides, they are French; that is to say, they possess spirit and are *artistes*. That notion of doing away with the immortality of the soul, the real and progressive persistence of *self*, is a sin against French philosophy. In order to preserve all that is pure and sublime in faith, French talent, heart, and mind are needed. The Germans are too stupid to believe in anything but materialism; I regret to notice their influence over those fine and grand minds of whom France might still be prouder, if they were warmer and bolder.

Ah! were I a man, had I your ability, your time, your books, your freedom of action, I would start a fine *campaign*, not *against* those great minds we speak of—I love and admire them too much for that—but *by their side*, deriving from them the chief part of my strength, and from myself, from my sentiment of the *imperishable*, the conclusion which would be in keeping with my heart.

No, the conclusion of MM. Renan and Littré is not sufficient. Resurrection in posterity through glory is not so disinterested an idea as they declare it to be. Their device is fine enough: "To work without the hope of a reward; the reward being the very good which we do."

Yes, under the condition that we shall always be able to do it and to eternally recommence it; to do good during half a century is to be content with too little, with a duty too quickly performed. Besides, the spectacle and sense of what is true and beautiful is too extensive for a single life to be sufficient for contemplating and enjoying them. That deficiency of proportion would be for us an inadmissible want of equilibrium.

I shall go to Paris only for a few days. But, *between us*, I am now organising my life so as to be a little freer. I am entering upon my sixtieth year. It is a pretty round figure, and I rather feel the want of locomotion for my tardy Saint Martin's summer!

I should be very happy to see you at shorter intervals. We—that is, you and I—remain nevertheless, that is to say, despite my reproaches against the materialistic *tendency* of M. Renan, fully agreed as to the excellence and usefulness of his *Life of Jesus*. If he knew what kind of letter you

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have written to me he would find it just what he likes, the glutton!

I and my children, dear Prince, are yours in heart.

G. SAND.

I am to-day in painful anxiety. Among the names of those who have been hanged at Warsaw, I notice that of Piotrowski, and I do not know whether it is that of the man who miraculously effected his escape from Siberia. I knew the latter, he was a hero. Do you know whether they are really one and the same?

*To M. CHARLES PONCY, Venice.*

NOHANT, 28th December, 1863.

DEAR CHILD,

Thanks for your kind, long, and interesting letter, as also for your New Year wishes, which I return to you with all my heart, as to your dear Solange.

So all is over with Venice? Poor Venice! But nothing dies here below, and a day will come when all that lost luxuriant beauty will be revived and grow younger. We are living in the century of the hammer that breaks down, and of the trowel that builds again. It is impossible to relate better all you have seen. That wandering (though healthful to body and mind) life must have done good to Solange, and I advise you not to get tired of it too quickly.

Seeing that the poor nest is still desolate,\* let grass and

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\* An allusion to the death of Madame Poncey.

branches grow around it. When you come back to remove them, painful recollections will have given place to that grave serenity which death leaves in hearts that conscience has nothing to reproach with.

But it is useless to wish to hasten that moment. Nature has a right to tears. They are at the same time a relief that it requires and a noble tribute that it pays. Thereby your dear daughter is receiving a solemn baptism. She will later on appreciate its salutary and strengthening effect.

I have received all your letters ; I shared and felt all your emotions. I am now, for a few days, out of a great crisis of work. As a means of distraction, I am reading *Emerson*, with whose works I am unacquainted. He is an American philosopher, and at the same time a critic, a *savant*, a poet, and a metaphysician ; he possesses a vast brain, perhaps a little confused, owing to the diversity of his knowledge, but it must be admitted sublime.

Our child is superb and remarkably loving and charming. It displays uncommon precociousness, which at times arouses my anxiety ; there is a something in its look that does not belong to its age. But I will not dwell upon that. Its health, freshness and plumpness, and muscular strength are quite reassuring. The little mother is a kind nurse, and absolutely devoted to her little one (*petiot*). Maurice is, therefore, quite happy, and everybody kisses you tenderly.

*To M. AUGUSTE VACQUERIE, Paris.*

NOHANT, 4th January, 1864.

I have not thanked you for the pleasure which *Jean Baudry* has given me. I hoped to see it played, but, my journey to Paris being delayed, I decided to read it, not I confess without some little fear. In the majority of cases, successful pieces lose so much when read. Ah, well! I have had a charming surprise. Your piece is one of those which may be read with emotion and true satisfaction.

The subject is new, bold, and beautiful. I find one fault only in the way in which you have unrolled and unravelled; it is that the good honest *Andrée* does not set herself at once to love *Jean* in the end, and that she does not reply to his last word: "Yes, bring him back again, for I no longer love him, and your wife will adopt him!" or, "Cure him, correct him, and return without him."

You wished the sacrifice on the part of *Jean* to be complete. It was so, it seems to me, without this last chastisement of unrecompensed parting.

You will say: "Woman is not capable of such things." I say: "Why not?" And I do not recoil before a good big morality: a sublime sentiment is always fruitful; *Jean* is sublime. See the little *Andrée*, who loves him but in friendship, setting herself to love him with enthusiasm, because the sublime has caused an unknown force to vibrate in her. You wish to touch this chord in the public; why not show them the magnetic and divine operation on the stage? That would be still more affecting; people would not go away saying: "Virtue only serves to make us unhappy."

That is my criticism. It belongs to the domain of philosophy, and takes away nothing from the sympathy and compliments due to the feeling of the *artiste*. You have made a sublime man speak and act. It is a great and good thing as times go. I am delighted with your success.\*

\* M. AUGUSTE VACQUERIE'S REPLY:—

How proud I am that you should have written me such a friendly and sincere letter; but how humiliated that we should not be of the same opinion with regard to the *dénouements*!

You regret that *Andrée* does not reward the virtue of Jean Baudry; but is virtue ever rewarded elsewhere than at the Academy? I have tried to make a *bourgeois* Prometheus; was not the reward of Prometheus the vulture? And I know not who would gain were it otherwise.

It would not always be Prometheus. What would you think of seeing him reconciled to Jupiter and in favour at court? of *Jean of Arc* finishing her career as lady of honour to the queen, and *Jesus* as the minister of *Tiberius*!

That would no longer be virtue. You say that virtue is more contagious when it is rewarded; I believe the contrary, and that there is no grander propaganda than martyrdom. Take away the cross, and you do away with Christianity.

To return to my play, it seems to me that Jean Baudry would be considerably diminished, and with him the teaching which he personifies, if he had been loved by *Andrée* in the end. I doubt whether *Romeo* and *Juliet* would have been affecting even to posterity had they quietly settled down and had a family of children. I do not absolutely reject happy *dénouements*, but I believe them to be in the first place less true, and in the second less efficacious. I confess that *Tartuffe* almost ceases to be odious to me from the moment of his arrest.

Morality is not in the fact, but in the impression of the fact. Since you regret that Jean Baudry is not made happy, the final impression is in favour of virtue.

My opinion is that *Andrée* would render a bad service to virtue and to Jean Baudry himself in preferring him to *Olivier*, who would then relapse into the state from which he has been rescued by Jean Baudry. She believes, like Jean Baudry, that *Olivier* is passing through the last crisis of evil; she has the same sort of tenderness for him as Jean Baudry, she loves him in order to perfect him; she wishes to be the

To M. ÉDOUARD RODRIGUES, Paris.

NOHANT, 12th January, 1864.

. . . . I have, it seems to me, the right to despise my money. I despise it in this sense that I say to it: "You represent comfort, security, independence, the rest necessary to my old age. You thus represent my personal interest, the sanctuary of my egotism. But, whilst I place you safely and cause you to increase, all around me will suffer, and shall I not be uneasy about it? You wish to tempt me? Away with you! I disdain your seduction. Thus I despise you!" With such prodigality I have passed my life, never satisfying myself; writing when I should have liked to dream, remaining stationary when I wished to move about, effecting sordid economies in certain entirely personal wants, certain luxurious dressing-gowns and certain questions of slippers about which I should have been sensitive; not flattering the gluttony of

mother of his soul, as Jean is the father. She espouses Jean Baudry better by not marrying him and in assisting in his work, than by rendering fruitless his labour of eleven years. It was not then from incredulity in the greatness of womankind, my dear noble woman! that I wished Andrée to prefer the imperfect to the perfect heart; she shows great goodness and great courage in choosing him who has the greatest want of her, not only in order to be happy, a secondary thing, but in order to be good, a thing essential.

And now will you forgive me for not having made my *dévouement* appear as the award of a Montyon prize, and Andrée a learned ass that holds out its paw to the most honest person in society?

Will you forgive me for wearying you so long with my defence? But, if I plead before you, it is because I recognise your jurisdiction. I do not reply to everybody, I bother only you; that is for yourself one of the penalties of genius. But, forgive me or not, I thank you.

AUGUSTE VACQUERIE.

PARIS, 7th January, 1864.



my guests, not visiting theatres and concerts—the outward expressions of art—but making an anchorite of myself, I who love the activity of life and the free air of travel. I have not suffered by this self-denial; I have felt within me a higher joy, that of satisfying my conscience and assuring each day the repose of my heart. In compromising and sacrificing the comforts of the future? in despising my money that would have tempted me? Yes, just so, and you, I would wager, will not think me wrong.

Have I been a *prodigal* in that? No, since I have not, like the greater part of my *confrères*, alienated my property for the pleasure of eating up 100,000 francs a year. I felt that if I had done as they I should have *swallowed* nothing, but have given away all, for I have certainly given in small amounts 500,000 francs, without reckoning the children's marriage portions. I have resisted the voice of mistaken Socialism, which cried out that I was making reservations. There are some which it is necessary to make, and my purpose has remained unshaken. A theory cannot be applied without reserve in a society which does not accept it. I have made many ungrateful; that is all one to me. I have made some happy, and saved a few honest folk. I have not been successful in starting people in life; I do not know how to go about it. I am more mistrustful of begging impostors than I used to be.

For the moment, I have absolutely on my shoulders but one family of dying persons to nourish: father, mother, children, every one is ill; the father and mother are doomed, the children at least will not die of hunger. But to those, partially saved, will succeed another distressed household. And then, at the end of the year, I had to pay the yearly bills

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of both doctor and chemist. That always means a considerable sum, between 1,500 and 2,000 francs. The peasant here is not in the last stage of misery; he has a house, a small plot of land, and his daily wages, but should he fall ill he is lost. Wages ceasing, his plot, if he have children, is not sufficient; as for medicine and medical assistance, it is impossible for him to pay for them, and if I were not there he would have to go without. He uses quack remedies, cattle medicines, and dies. The woman without a husband is lost. She cannot cultivate his plot of land; a hired labourer is necessary. In our country places there is no industry whatever. The communal funds devoted to medicine and medical assistance are distributed to the really indigent alone, and they are but few. Thus all the so-called comfortable would be well-nigh paupers did I not step in, and several very respectable persons only ask and receive in secret. Our country tradesmen are not bad; they render services, sometimes give attendance. But to open the purse is a great trial in Berry; and when people have given a few pence they sigh for a long time afterwards. The country parts in the *Centre* are really abandoned. It is the land of sleep and death. This is to show you what one is obliged to do when seeing the richer classes doing little, and those less rich nothing at all. At Châteauroux a manufactory of tobacco has been established, which relieves many workmen and employs many women; but these benefits do not reach our part of the country.

## To THE SAME.

NOHANT, 8th February, 1864.

MY HONEST AND BRAVE FRIEND,

I have finished my big task, and, before I commence another, I wish to talk with you. What was it we were saying? Whether liberty of right and liberty of fact could exist simultaneously? Alas! all that is beautiful and good can exist when we wish it to do so; but it is necessary at the outset that all should understand it, and the best of Governments, by whatever name it may call itself, will be that which shall teach men to enfranchise themselves in wishing to enfranchise others in the same degree.

You wished to put some questions to me; put them so that I may ask you to assist me to reply, for I do not believe that I know more than you; and all that I have tried to know is how to put order into my ideas, and consequently harmony into my beliefs. If you talk philosophy and religion to me, which for me are one and the same thing, I shall be able to tell you what I believe; as for *politics*, that is another thing. It is a from day to day science, which has neither harmony nor unity but so long as it is directed by principles more elevated than the current of things and manners of the moment. This science, in its application, thus consists in feeling the pulse of society every day, and in knowing what dose of amelioration its malady is capable of supporting without a too violent and too perilous crisis. In order to be this good physician, more than the knowledge of principles is required; a practical knowledge is necessary, such as is found in capable heads or in free assemblies inspired by a large and sterling faith. I, living amongst ideas more than amongst men, cannot have

this knowledge ; and if I tell you my ideal you will not therefore possess the practical means ; you will not truly judge those means but by trials passing before your eyes, and which will enable you to weigh the force or feebleness of humanity at any given moment. To be a wise politician it would, I believe, be necessary to be imbued, before and above all, with faith in progress, and not to be embarrassed by backward steps which do not impede the forward step of the morrow. But this faith rarely ever enlightens monarchies, and that is why I prefer republics, where the greatest faults have a reparatory principle—the need, the necessity of advancing or falling. They fall heavily, you will say ; yes, they fall more quickly than monarchies, and always for the same cause—they wish to stop, and the human spirit that stops is crushed. Look into yourself, observe that which sustains you, that which makes you live strongly, that will cause you to live long ; it is your incessant activity. Societies do not differ from individuals.

However, you are prudent, and you know that if your activity exceeds the measure of your strength it will kill you ; there is the same danger in social renovations, and it is impossible, I believe, to preserve the march of humanity from these *too many* and *too few* alternations which unceasingly threaten and try it. What is to be done ? you will ask. To believe that, in spite of all, there is a good path to seek, and that humanity will find it ; and never to say, “*There is none, there never will be any.*”

I believe that humanity is as capable of growing in knowledge, in reason, in virtue, as the few individuals who, as regards these, are in advance of it. I notice ; I know it to be very corrupt, frightfully diseased ; I, however, do not lose hope in it. I feel at variance with it every morning, every evening

I get reconciled to it. I have, indeed, no rancour towards its faults, and my anger will not prevent me from being day and night at its service. Let us pass the sponge over the miseries, the errors, the faults of these or those, whatever may be or have been their opinion, if they have in their hearts ardent and sincere principles of progress. As to hypocrites and *exploiteurs*, what can we say about them? Nothing; they are the scourge from which we must preserve ourselves; but that which they do under one banner or another cannot be attributed to the cause which they proclaim and which they pretend to serve.

Then, whilst chatting together and arranging our *catechism*, it will be necessary to begin with the beginning, and, before asking ourselves what are the rights of man in society, to inquire what are man's duties on earth; and that, you perceive, will carry us higher than republic or monarchy. We should have to go back to God Himself, without a knowledge of whom nothing can be explained or solved. Take care; we have now embarked on a very rough ocean! but I shall not turn back if your heart remains firm.

Farewell for this evening, dear friend.

Yours truly and affectionately,

G. SAND.

*To MAURICE SAND, Nohant.*

PARIS, 21st February, 1864.

DEAR CHILDREN,

I fully believed that I had replied to your question. Do I intend to be the godmother of my *Cocoton*?\* Certainly.

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\* The pet name of Maurice Sand's newly born child.

If it were as a Catholic, I should say: "No: that brings ill-luck." But in the Free Church it is a different thing, and you ought not, for a moment, to have felt any doubt regarding my consent.

They have now begun work in earnest at the Odéon. But so much time has been wasted that we shall not be ready before the end of the month, and perhaps not until the 2nd or the 3rd of March. They fully perceive that now. But I do not wish to bother you with my troubles; they are not trifling, and you would be astonished at the stock of patience I lay in every morning for use during the day.

I went to see the Prince yesterday morning. I asked to see his son; \* he sent word to the nurse to bring him. The child came in with a person in a plaid dress, whom I had scarcely noticed, when I suddenly perceived that it was the Princess herself who, quite unattended and most gracefully, was bringing her little man to me. He is a fine child and very pretty, but rather shy and melancholy-looking.

He will be more like his mother than his father. He is a perfect darling, and as meek as a girl.

I am very well, though still without appetite, to which the air of Paris is not favourable.

The Delacroix sale produced nearly 200,000 francs in two days. The smallest sketches sell for 200, 300, and even 400 francs. Prices at which the poor man used to sell his paintings!

Good night, my dear children; I embrace you tenderly.

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\* Prince Victor.

## To THE SAME.

PARIS, Tuesday, 1st March, 1864, 2 a.m.

MY CHILDREN,

I have just returned, escorted by the students to the cries of "George Sand for ever! *Mademoiselle la Quintinie* for ever! Down with the clerical party!" It is a furious demonstration and, at the same time, so they say at the theatre, a theatrical success not often witnessed.

At ten o'clock in the morning, the students assembled in the Place de l'Odéon, and, throughout the piece, a compact mass which had not been able to gain admittance filled the neighbouring streets and the Rue Racine as far as my own door.

Marie received an ovation, as did also Madame Fromentin, the crowd in the street having mistaken the latter for me. I believe that all Paris was there to-night. The workmen and the students, furious at having been mistaken for clericals on the occasion of About's *Gaetana*, were quite ready to come to blows. Inside the theatre, each scene was received throughout with shouts and stamping of feet, in spite of the presence of the whole imperial family. In fact everybody applauded, the Emperor like the rest, he being so affected as to actually shed tears. The Princess Mathilde came to the *foyer* to shake hands with me. I was in the manager's box with the Prince, the Princess, Ferri, and Madame d'Abrantès. The Prince applauded like thirty *claqueurs*,\* stretching far out of his box, and shouting at the top of his voice. Flaubert was with us, and cried like a woman.

\* A term applied in France to those who are hired to applaud.

The company played well, and were recalled after every act.

In the *foyer*, more than two hundred persons, some known, some unknown to me, came and completely smothered me with kisses. Not a shadow of opposition, although a large number of unfriendly persons were present. But even those who innocently blew their noses were silenced.

In fact, the event has kept the Latin Quarter in a perfect uproar all day; all day long, I received batches of students, who came with their school cards in their hats to ask me for orders, and to protest against the clerical party by giving me their names. I do not know whether we shall have as much excitement to-morrow. People say we shall, and, as three or four thousand persons were refused admittance, we may expect the audience, on the next occasion, to be still numerous and enthusiastic. We shall see whether the opposition will put in an appearance. This morning, the Prince received several anonymous letters, warning him of what might happen at the Odéon. Nothing happened except the silencing of the Emperor's *claqueurs*; the cry being raised, as he entered, of "*Down with the claque!*" The Emperor heard it very plainly, but showed no emotion.

That is all I can say to-night; quiet is now restored, the traffic is resumed, and I am going to bed.



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TO THE SAME.

PARIS, 2nd March, 1864.

MY CHILDREN,

The second night of *Villemer* was even more enthusiastic than the first. It was an unheard-of success, a regular storm of applause from beginning to end, at every word, and so spontaneous, so general, that every *tirade* was repeatedly interrupted. When the group of *claqueurs* tried to direct special attention to the striking points, they had no more effect than a baby's rattle. The audience paid no heed to them, but applauded whenever they thought fit. The applause was deafening. I have never heard anything like it. The house was crammed to suffocation. The speech of Ribes, in the second act, brought the house down. Between the acts the students sang ironical songs to hymn tunes, crying, "The Jesuits are done for! Black-coated gentlemen, where do you hail from? *La Quintinie* for ever! George Sand for ever! *Villemer* for ever!" The actors were recalled after every act. It was hardly possible for them to go through the piece. The applause fairly intoxicated them; Berton, who is almost a total abstainer, was this morning still under its influence. This evening, he followed me into the wings, saying that he was indebted to me for the greatest success of his life, and the finest part he had ever played.

Thuillier and Ramelli were raving. I must say that they played splendidly. Ribes is not so effective; he is ill-looking, ungainly, and does not study stage effect; but, at times, he is so sympathetic and nervous, that he electrifies the audience, and obtains *en bloc* the applause which others

receive only by instalments. I tell you all this as I know it will amuse you. If you could see how calm I was in the midst of all this, you would have laughed, for I was no more moved by either pleasure or fear than if the matter had not at all concerned me personally, and yet I cannot say why. I was prepared for the worst, and that is perhaps the reason why a success so sudden and, as far as I am concerned, so unexpected rather astounded me. You should have seen all the Odéon people flocking round me. They made a regular god of me. I ought to do them the justice to say that, throughout the rehearsals, they were as nice to me as on the day of victory; that on the night preceding the first performance they did not give way to the ordinary panic, which leads to the spoiling of a play by actors from a fear that it may not succeed. They are, I hope, going to make money by it. They ought to be taking 4,000 francs a night, but they are anxious to give free admission to students, workmen, free-thinking *bourgeois*, in fact, to all their natural friends and to those who promote success from sheer conviction. In doing so, the theatrical authorities are right, they are worthy people.

To-night there was again a bit of a row in front of the theatre. They wanted to repeat last night's proceedings, for yesterday, when writing to you, I was not aware of all that had taken place. A crowd of 6,000 persons at least, led by the students, assembled outside the Catholic Club and the Jesuits' establishment, singing out of tune, "*Esprit Saint, descendez en nous*" (Come, Holy Ghost, etc.), and other canticles, in mockery of the clerical party. There was nothing very serious in that; but as all those youngsters were over-excited by their own shouting and by having

waited twelve hours at the doors of the theatre, it was feared that they might go too far; so the police dispersed them. Several were hustled, severely handled, and even taken to the police-station. No blows were, however, exchanged, and nobody was hurt. Fears were entertained of a riot, and two cavalry regiments were held in readiness in case of emergency. The students had resolved to take the horses out of my carriage, and to drag it to my place in the Rue Racine. Thank God, all was prevented and calm restored. They rather annoyed the Empress by singing *Le Sire de Framboisy*.\* But the Emperor displayed much good sense. He applauded the piece, and walked to his carriage, which could not approach on account of the crowd. He did not wish the police to interfere. The people appreciated this and applauded him.

It would not be a bad thing if he were to dispense with the *posse* of secret police who cheer him as he enters, and upon whom the students yesterday imposed silence. I am sure that, were the Emperor to dispense with his police attendants, the whole house would applaud him spontaneously.

To-day's newspapers give a thousand different versions of what occurred yesterday; but what disconnected information I give you is, believe me, quite correct. To-night there was a fair sprinkling of Catholics at the theatre, who affected a contemptuous air and pretended to be *bored*. But they were hardly allowed to wink, and the least word from them would have aroused a storm. Certainly nobody likes them, and they will not dare to stir. They will avenge themselves in their newspapers. Let them!

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\* A popular satirical song directed against the Emperor and Empress.

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I have still a day or two to give to *Villemer*, and then I must see M. Harmant; after which there is Dumas' piece, which is to be produced on Saturday, and some questions of detail to settle; the proofs of my manuscript of *Villemer* to deliver, that is, the correction of the manuscript in accordance with the arrangement of the play. I hope that all that will be finished next week, and that I shall be able to come and see you and my *Cocotón*, the dear little pet! who, I hope, is growing whilst I myself am toiling. I kiss you a thousand times. Write to me about yourself and him.

To THE SAME.

PARIS, 8th March, 1864.

*Villemer* still goes splendidly. The principal journals, without exception, are even louder in their praise than their humbler contemporaries. Those gentlemen who had declared me incapable of dramatic authorship are now extolling me. The Odéon is taking 4,000 francs for seats booked in advance, and from 500 to 600 at the door every night. There is a string of carriages all day long, bringing people who come to book places, and another at night, besides a crowd at the doors.

The theatre is illuminated every evening. La Rounat\* will go mad about it. The players are always recalled after each act. It is a splendid success, and, as it is supported only by the paying public, it is so unanimous and so hearty that the actors say they have never seen anything like it.

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\* The lessee of the Odéon.

Ribes keeps up well; success gives him an artificial life, and perhaps will cure him. At times he is interrupted again and again by frenzied applause, as on the first night. Travellers who arrive in Paris, and who pass during the evening in front of the Odéon, pull up in a fright and ask if there is a revolution, if the Republic is proclaimed.

Alexandre's piece was better received to-night;\* but it excites opposition and will not be a success. It is, nevertheless, amusing and full of talent; but there is a touch of scandal about it.

Nadar's proofs of my photograph have not yet been very successful. I am going there again to-morrow. M. Harmant is coming on Wednesday for certain. He has sent me a box for that day; for it is only natural that I should be acquainted with his theatre. I should also like to see *Villemer*, which as yet I have scarcely seen at all. I asked yesterday for three seats; but everything was taken up to Saturday.

*To M. GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, Paris.*

PARIS, 16th March, 1864.

DEAR FLAUBERT,

I don't know whether you intended to give or to lend me M. Taine's excellent work. Being in doubt, I return it to you; I have only had time to read part of it here, and at Nohant all my time will be taken up in writing for Buloz; but upon my return, two months hence, I will ask you again for those excellent volumes, the scope of which is so lofty and noble.

\* *L'Ami des Femmes*, by Alexandre Dumas, Jun.

I regret that I was unable to wish you good-bye; but, as I shall soon return, I hope that you will not have forgotten me, and that you will also give me the opportunity of reading some of your own productions.

You displayed so much kindness and sympathy upon the occasion of the first performance of *Villemer*, that I now not only admire your wonderful talent, but love you with all my heart.

GEORGE SAND.

*To MADemoiselle LEROYER DE CHANTEPIE, Angiers.*

PALAISEAU, 31st December, 1864.

MADemoiselle,

The story which you relate has deeply affected me. What I chiefly perceive in it is your unbounded kindness, the devotion of your life to making people happy or *less unhappy*. How, with a soul full of tender recollections, and a consciousness of having done so much good, can you feel sad and disheartened? it is really doubting divine justice. And yet you do not believe in eternal punishment! What then can be your fear of God? Can His appreciation of our faults be judged by us, and measured according to our ideas?

I have often thought, when obliged to find fault with others, to scold a child, or even to chain up an animal: 'Certainly God is not *just*, according to our idea of justice. If He knew the necessity of chastising, restraining, and punishing, He would feel unhappy; His heart would be constantly grieved; the tears and cries of His creatures would cause distress to Him. God cannot feel unhappy; our errors do not therefore appear to Him in the light of

evils. He does not even interfere with the most odious criminals; He does not even punish monsters. Thus, after death, an eternal life entirely unknown will open before us. Whatever our religion, it should consist in implicitly trusting to that future; for God has implanted hope in our breasts, and in so doing, has made us a promise. He is perfection itself; none of the good instincts and noble faculties which He has placed in us can deceive."

You know all that as well as I, and you quite understand the unhealthy state of your mind that gives birth to your doubts and terrors. I believe, mademoiselle, that it is your duty to struggle against them, and to pay serious attention to your diseased moral condition; that is a religious duty to which you must submit yourself. You have no more right to allow your intelligence to be impaired than your health. Proceeding from the hands of God, we must keep ourselves free from chimeras and morbid ideas. Leave Angiers, then, seeing that staying there has a baneful effect upon you. Go no matter where, provided that you can meet there with dramatic and musical entertainments, since you derive so much good from them. Do that out of friendship for those who feel friendship for you; do it also as a matter of conscience, which forbids you to despair.

Believe in my devoted affection,

GEORGE SAND.

*To M. A. M. LADISLAS MICKIEWICZ, Paris.*

PARIS, 11th January, 1865.

SIR,

I have received M. Zaleski's fine work, and beg you to express to him the gratitude and satisfaction it has caused me. I have also received the works that you have published, and that you were so kind as to send me. I am touched by your remembrance of me, and need not say that I fully appreciate your talent as a writer, and the ardour of your patriotism. I regret not having, in this all-exciting question, any light to which I can entirely dare to trust myself. In it I see a terrible conflict between men who have all fought for their country and whom misfortune has smitten, and who reproach one another with their common disaster. Such is the history of all disasters! In France, defeat has also thus divided us; and what strength, what wisdom must we not have on such occasions, in order to refrain from cursing and recrimination! To give an opinion, it would be necessary to be at once made acquainted with all the conclusions which history alone will be able to draw from the various facts of the case. I do not feel justified in heart and mind in giving a verdict regarding those great political contentions, so many details connected with which have to be verified, and so many accusations established. It would require a life devoted exclusively to the immense inquiry, which the future alone will be able to place before us. You are very young for this work of exploration. Are you not afraid of making mistakes? Is there not in appeals to public indignation against this or that historical personage the danger of injuriously affecting the common



aim? They rather disturb my conscience, I must confess and I dare not tell you that you are right in thus so unreservedly exposing the grievances of Poland.

Neither dare I tell you you are wrong; for you are urged on by true sincerity, and seeing that all that happens is intended to further that which must happen, it may be necessary that you should accomplish the heavy task that you have taken upon yourself. To be made evident, truth must be sought for; for of itself it is slow to appear, and between ourselves and God the obstacles are so many!

Accept, sir, the expression of my solicitude *even though and because (quand même, et parce que)*.

GEORGE SAND.

*To M. ARMAND BARBÈS, The Hague.*

PALAISEAU, 15th January, 1865.

DEAR FRIEND,

How touched I am by all you tell me! Your sufferings, your indomitable courage, and your affection for me, are indeed subjects for both grief and joy. You have clung to exile, and, in spite of our entreaties and the grief caused by your absence, we could not refrain from admiring you.

But if, as Nadar told me, you have enjoyed a moment's good health, why not have taken advantage of it to seek, even if but temporarily, a more suitable climate? You speak so little of yourself, you treat your own ailments so lightly, that it is hard to say what could alleviate them.

For my part, I believe that there are no incurable maladies. Advanced medical opinion begins to take that view; as for me, I have always believed it, and I consider that to wish to be cured is a duty towards the future and towards humanity. Four years ago, I had an attack of typhoid fever; it left me with an affection of the stomach which lasted for three years, and was thought to be *chronic*. Now I am cured of it, but then I earnestly desired to be so.

And yet you may be assured that I could say like you: "*My life has been sad!*" It has been, it always will be full of dreadful mental anguish, and my fund of natural gaiety does not always preserve me from complete dejection. Last summer I lost my little Marc, the child of Maurice and of his graceful companion, the daughter of Calamatta. The poor little fellow was a year old, he was born on the 14th July; on his first birthday his sufferings commenced. He was very pretty, and already showed signs of great intelligence. What grief! We have not yet recovered from it; and still I am asking for, indeed, I *am ordering*, another child; for we must love, suffer, weep, hope, procreate, exist; we must, in fact, have a will in every sense, divine and natural. Tears are the only response I receive from my dear children; they loved their first child to excess, they fear that they will not love the second; which, alas! proves that they will also love it too much! But can we say that we will limit the impulses of our heart and of our feelings?

You tell me, friend, that you, sometimes compare me with France; I feel, at least, that I am a Frenchwoman, seeing that I hold the supreme conviction that we must not mind our failures, our wounds, our vain hopes, the cruel repression of our thoughts; but must always rise again, pick up and collect

the fragments of our hearts, torn by all the thorns about our path, and go to God with that bleeding trophy.

I have wandered rather far from my sermon on health; however, I now come back to it. Your life is precious, however shattered or crushed it may be. Do, then, your very best to preserve it for us.

Adieu, friend; I love you, and so does Maurice.

GEORGE SAND.

*To HIS HIGHNESS PRINCE JÉRÔME NAPOLEON, Paris.*

PALAIS-ROYAL, 7th February, 1865.

All the papers, my august friend, announce your victory. This foggy February morning is as bright for you as the sun of Ansterlitz. Your victory will not lead to the sounding of so many trumpets, but its anniversary will be celebrated for a longer time. It belongs to you alone, and people will remember it. I shall not forget that, after that fine struggle, you spent the evening with us in our little nook and, while listening to you, I could have forgotten the hours. I fear that we took advantage of your goodness; we who cannot employ our time more profitably than in listening to you, whereas you have so many great and good things to accomplish.

Happiness is an abstraction as well as a reality, whatever philosophers may say. Durable and certain when in its *idea* state for those who grasp its true and lofty nature, it is *transient* and powerful when in a state of reality, provided facts serve the ideal. Thus, having in yourself the true notion of happiness, which is to diffuse and to bestow it, you sometimes relish its sensation, when facts obey your ardent and generous will.

*Letters of George Sand.*

Be happy, then, since happiness is a conquest, and since you have just gained a great battle. Days of disgust and fatigue will return. Happiness in the sense of complete reality does not permanently exist for man; but it will remain to you in the ideal sense, augmented by the recollection of your victories; and the moral of this is, that you must always struggle so as to increase your stock of strength and faith. That recognition by mankind which is called glory is but a consequence, perhaps only an accessory! you will secure it. But your aim is higher. It is not in vain that you belong to the race which craves for what is good, and is struggling in the present century against that which craves for lucre. You have great powers, the possession of which is in itself happiness.

I have duly received your invitations; thanks for your kind remembrance. But here I am by the fireside, suffering from an attack of quinsy, and I shall for a few days have to struggle, though without much effort, against my feverish condition.

That will not be serious. I shall be thinking of you and talking about you, having near me one who does not ask for anything else.

While going home from the Panthéon all alone, on foot, with your hands in your pockets, by the bright moonlight, did it not occur to you that, in a hundred years from now, France, and consequently the whole world, would, thanks to you, be living another life?

From the height of the Panthéon something must have spoken, and said to you: "Onward!"

Always and still more yours in heart,

G. SAND.

To THE SAME.

PALAISEAU, 9th March, 1864.

DEAR PRINCE,

You rightly told me that nothing was done, seeing that something still remains to be done. The disavowal of M. Duruy and of your generous inspiration does not perhaps surprise you, but it must vex you. Neither am I satisfied about it, dear! no. But the game is only deferred, I hope, and you will carry the citadel by assault at the first opportunity. That constitutes a noble cause to plead before the country. And you will plead it, will you not?

I do not know whether, as directed by me, they have sent you the proof of my article on the *Life of Cæsar (Vie de César)*.\* I have not had to consider whether it would please the illustrious author or not.

Whilst rendering homage to the real and considerable talent displayed in its exposition, I cannot accept the thesis, and I was almost on the point of saying that, to compare the work of Cæsar, that *purchaser of consciences*, with the work—blameable perhaps in certain respects but full of *integrity* and truly glorious—of Napoléon I. appeared to me a real blasphemy. I should have said so had I not feared to trespass on the domain of politics, the discussion of which is forbidden to the small newspaper in which I inserted this article, at the request of my publisher.

You gave me the hope that I should see you one of these days, my august friend. I have such a fear of missing you that I shall not stir this week.

I love you with all my heart.

G. SAND.

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\* The celebrated work by the Emperor Napoléon III.

To THE SAME.

PALAISEAU, 1st June, 1865.

DEAR AND AUGUST FRIEND,

Maurice sends you, through me, a friendly word which I transmit.

If you were an ambitious man, I should tell you that what has happened is very fortunate for you and places you very high! But you love progress for its own sake, and suffer when its onward march is arrested, even when that delay is to your advantage. And then you are loyal and your soul grieves at being misunderstood. I feel all that, and I am indignant at seeing the blighting breath of the spirit of the past passing over all true ideas.

What a sad situation is that of a man who dreams of absolute power, and believes he can attain to it by stifling truth! All that, do you not see, is the fault of *Cæsar*. A man is now dreaming of monopolising providential wisdom, forgetting the fact that men to-day have all received from *Providence*, that is to say, from the law which presides over their emancipation, a portion of wisdom which it is necessary to know and to consult before daring to say: "There is but one master—myself!" How old that doctrine of the authority of one single ruler is, and how empty in these days! What are not the conscious or unconscious protests of mankind against this chimera! It is the fatal path that leads eternally to disaster.

Sleep calmly, your conscience is at rest. You may laugh at those who say: "He says that he desires good, he must therefore be animated by evil designs."

Pity those who think thus, and rest assured that France is

not with them and that she does you justice. What fine and noble talents are yours! You can never be prevented from displaying them. If they cause umbrage to some persons, it is not clever on the part of such to show it publicly.

G. SAND.

To M. \* \* \*

PALISEAU, 9th June, 1865.

DEAR SIR,

I have read your book. It is most learned, ingenious, clear, and interesting. It, however, leaves me at the point to which it has taken me. I was fully aware that Jesus believed in the resurrection of the body, and am all the more convinced that His doctrine was the continuation of human life or personal reappearance in human life, seeing that you establish beyond dispute the source of this belief, its history, its *raison d'être*, its connection with the past, in short all that constitutes the historical fact, the details of which have been hitherto but little known. But I cannot accept your conclusion. In believing in the immortality of the body, Jesus and His predecessors believed in the immortality of the soul, for the reason that the existence of the body implies that of the soul. He was therefore a spiritualist, though not exclusively so. As for you, you are exclusively a spiritualist. I cannot understand that doctrine, because it seems to me impossible to affirm the existence of souls without bodies.

You are a thousand times right in considering God and the form of our immortality as belonging to the region of the impenetrable. But to speak of immortality is to speak of life. Life is a law known to us; it does not manifest itself in the separation of the soul from the body, in our

thoughts without organs for their manifestation. We cannot therefore have any conception of a purely spiritual life; and I cannot tell you that I believe in a thing of which I have not the faintest idea.

Jesus there is no doubt was wrong respecting the conditions of the resurrection; but it seems to me that, as regards the principle of life, he understood that well, or at least as well as it is given to man to understand it. Whether it be a body of flesh or of fluid, the soul requires some such medium through which to manifest itself, otherwise it could not be a soul, it could not even exist. We know that there are planets which, relatively to our own, are as light as cork, wood, etc. They are nevertheless worlds, and their existence is quite as material as our own.

Socrates is not so clear as you consider him to be. I think that he fully believed that his soul would transmigrate into another body, although he often seems to say the contrary through the mouth of *divus Plato*. In some of his works, Plato regards the soul as working out its own destiny, obeying the dictates of its passions, and in that he agrees with Pythagoras. If souls are possessed of passions, good or bad, they must also be possessed of organs—otherwise?

In fact, you will still find much to tell us on that subject; for your hypothesis involves the gravest philosophical omission. Forgive my objections, dear sir. You are so sympathetic and seem to be so good, that you have the right to expect people to tell you frankly what they really think.

G. SAND.



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To M. LOUIS ULBACH, Paris.

PALAISEAU, 27th June, 1865.

DEAR SIR,

How happy I feel at having to thank you! When your strong and loyal hand signs a certificate of talent, the apprentice becomes a master and assumes his position. You at once detected that which could not possibly have escaped an eye like yours, but which it was indispensable for my son to make the ordinary public understand, viz., that he possesses a character unquestionably his own, and such as could never have been imparted to him. My part was confined to leaving him in possession of that character and to understanding its real value. That has been the object of the efforts of my whole life, and I am rewarded for those efforts now that you, in whom I believe, prove to me that I was not giving way to maternal illusions as regards my appreciation of that talent.

Your judgment, which is at the same time so frankly and so delicately expressed, is a cause of real joy to me, and I thank you from the depths of my heart for having read the book with such conscientiousness and in such a spirit of generous patronage. I am sending the article to Maurice, who is at Nohant with his wife. They will both be very pleased and very grateful for it.

What about your own book, the one you were telling me of at the Odéon? Is it published? I hear nothing of what is going on. Here I am, a sorrowful nurse, tending my sick ones, and suffering into the bargain from a severe fall. When your work appears, do not forget to send me a copy of it. I heartily shake your hand, dear *confère*, and am affectionately yours.

To M. SAINTE BEUVE, Paris.

PALAISEAU, 1865.

Have you read a singular little volume, which was published some time ago by Dentu, under the very poor title of *Un Amour du Midi*, and which appeared anonymously? Is it from lack of courage, or from some difficulty in regard to position, that the author's name is suppressed? No matter. The work is odd; the style in which it is written is not uniform; the language is often scarcely correct, sometimes too full of *naïveté*, sometimes too declamatory (as indeed the author himself remarks); at times quite vague and at others amounting to downright nonsense; and, finally, frequently very obscure, like the speech of a fanatic who does not always know what he is talking about.

These are faults enough. Ah well! those faults might conceal much ability. But we do not believe that it is so; we prefer to think that the author is young, not painstaking, and inexperienced, as well as entirely destitute of that which we are agreed upon calling talent.

It is nevertheless a fact that this anonymous essay is greatly deserving of remark. It is not a novel, properly speaking, or an analysis; it is a passionate cry. But that cry is full of reality and power. It does not in any way resemble what is written for the sake of writing. It displays youth, true passion, simplicity, copiousness—all that we vainly seek in a well-written book—boundless emotion, entirely freed from the control of reason.

It displays also, in spite of its awkward repetition of particular expressions and metaphors, a distinctness and an originality of sentiment that are very affecting. It displays

faith, belief in God, in love, in liberty, and even in *the newspapers*, as well as in glory and in itself. It is a creature of generosity; perhaps a stranger fallen from some planet where people still live in accordance with the dictates of the heart, and where they speak their minds freely, without caring whether they cause M. Proudhon to indulge in a smile.

In fact, it is something that has caused Maurice and me to say spontaneously: "It is very poor!" and "It is very fine." What would you have? Everybody has talent; we are not indifferent to talent, we cherish it. But everybody does not display passion, and the latter is precisely what, whether it be well or ill expressed, will always prevail over art, as the scent of the rose excels all the essences in a perfumer's shop.

Criticism might say: "Write well, or not at all." Criticism would be right. But the public might also say: "Be moved yourselves, or do not hope to move us." Would it be wrong?

GEORGE SAND.

*To HIS HIGHNESS PRINCE JÉRÔME NAPOLEON, Paris.*

NOHANT, 20th January, 1866.

DEAR PRINCE,

I wish, personally, to give you some news of ourselves. For the last ten days I have constantly been doing duty either as midwife, nurse, nurserymaid, or sick attendant, and have not had a moment's rest. My daughter-in-law, after a prompt and easy delivery, was seriously ill several times. She is better, although not altogether well, and, as her weak state of health may continue for some time and fatigue her too much

to enable her to suckle, we have engaged a buxom peasant lass to act as wet nurse to *Mademoiselle Aurore*.

In the midst of all this, while running to assist at a fire, Maurice was nearly killed, and I saw him come home covered with blood; a sight which, you will admit, could scarcely have been agreeable to a mother but very little of a Spartan. Fortunately, he has not taken much harm, and he will soon be left with nothing more serious than a slight scar, which will rather be a credit to him. We are thus, if not altogether out of the wood, at least able to breathe a little more freely; but I cannot yet leave my little brood, and let us hope that you will not start upon some new journey before I see you again! It is centuries since I saw you, and I cannot resign myself to your absence.

All these emotions have retarded my work and my theatrical projects for this winter. An *artiste*, they say, should have no family. I, myself, do not think so, for a thousand reasons, which you understand better than I do.

Whether joyous, sad, anxious, or at ease, I love you, dear Prince, and regard you as one of the dearest objects of my affection.

My sick and wounded thank you for your kind letter, and ask me not to fail to remember them to you. Calamatta tenders his respectful regards to Your Highness.

G. SAND.

*To COUNTESS SOPHIE PODLIPSKA, Prague.*

PALAISEAU, 12th February, 1866.

I am deeply touched, madame, by your kindness in sending me the parcel,\* which I received only a few days ago, together with the excellent letter that accompanied it. It is an honour for me to be translated by you, and sweet indeed to be the object of such delicate and generous affection.

M. Léger has taken the trouble to send me the translation in French of your interesting preface. It carried me back to the time, already distant, when I was dreaming of the adventures of *Consuelo*, and when, being much in want of information, I was trying to introduce myself, by interpretation and divination, to the genius of Bohemia, to the beauty of its situation and the deep meaning hidden under the symbol of the cup (*coupe*). I was neither free nor rich enough to make a journey to Bohemia, and I used to say that if I committed a few errors Bohemia would forgive me, for the sake of my earnest intentions and fervent sympathy. It still remains my conviction, that a nation possessing so dramatic and enthusiastic a past is and always will be great.

Accept, madame, together with my thanks, the expression of my affectionate and devoted sentiments.

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\* The translation of *Consuelo* in the Czech language.

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