The George Sand-Gustave Flaubert Letters

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Translated by A.L. McKenzie (1921)

Introduction by Stuart Sherman

PREFATORY NOTE

This translation of the correspondence between George Sand and Gustave Flaubert was undertaken in consequence of a suggestion by Professor Stuart P. Sherman. The translator desires to acknowledge valuable criticism given by Professor Sherman, Ruth M. Sherman, and Professor Kenneth McKenzie, all of whom have generously assisted in revising the manuscript.

A. L. McKenzie

INTRODUCTION

The correspondence of George Sand and Gustave Flaubert, if approached merely as a chapter in the biographies of these heroes of nineteenth century letters, is sufficiently rewarding. In a relationship extending over twelve years, including the trying period of the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune, these extraordinary personalities disclose the aspects of their diverse natures which are best worth the remembrance of posterity. However her passionate and erratic youth may have captivated our grandfathers, George Sand in the mellow autumn of her life is for us at her most attractive phase. The storms and anguish and hazardous adventures that attended the defiant unfolding of her spirit are over. In her final retreat at Nohant, surrounded by her affectionate children and grandchildren, diligently writing, botanizing, bathing in her little river, visited by her friends and undistracted by the fiery lovers of the old time, she shows an unguessed wealth of maternal virtue, swift, comprehending sympathy, fortitude, sunny resignation, and a goodness of heart that has ripened into wisdom. For Flaubert, too, though he was seventeen years her junior, the flamboyance of youth was long since past; in 1862, when the correspondence begins, he was firmly settled, a shy, proud, grumpy toiling hermit of forty, in his family seat at Croisset, beginning his seven years' labor at L'Education Sentimentale, master of his art, hardening in his convictions, and conscious of increasing estrangement from the spirit of his age. He, with his craving for sympathy, and she, with her inexhaustible supply of it, meet; he pours out his bitterness, she her consolation; and so with equal candor of self-revelation they beautifully draw out and strengthen each the other's characteristics, and help one another grow old.

But there is more in these letters than a satisfaction for the biographical appetite, which, indeed, finds ITS account rather in

the earlier chapters of the correspondents' history. What impresses us here is the banquet spread for the reflective and critical faculties in this intercourse of natural antagonists. As M. Faguet observes in a striking paragraph of his study of Flaubert:

"It is a curious thing, which does honor to them both, that Flaubert and George Sand should have become loving friends towards the end of their lives. At the beginning, Flaubert might have been looked upon by George Sand as a furious enemy. Emma [Madame Bovary] is George Sand's heroine with all the poetry turned into ridicule. Flaubert seems to say in every page of his work: 'Do you want to know what is the real Valentine, the real Indiana, the real Lelia? Here she is, it is Emma Roualt.' 'And do you want to know what becomes of a woman whose education has consisted in George Sand's books? Here she is, Emma Roualt.' So that the terrible mocker of the bourgeois has written a book which is directly inspired by the spirit of the 1840 bourgeois. Their recriminations against romanticism 'which rehabilitates and poetises the courtesan,' against George Sand, the Muse of Adultery, are to be found in acts and facts in Madame Bovary."

Now, the largest interest of this correspondence depends precisely upon the continuance, beneath an affectionate personal relationship, of a fundamental antagonism of interests and beliefs, resolutely maintained on both sides. George Sand, with her lifelong passion for propaganda and reformation, labors earnestly to bring Flaubert to her point of view, to remould him nearer to her heart's desire. He, with a playful deference to the sex and years of his friend, addresses her in his letters as "Dear Master." Yet in the essentials of the conflict, though she never gives over her effort, he never budges a jot; he has taken his ground, and in his last unfinished work, Bouvard and Pecuchet, he dies stubbornly fortifying his position. To the last she speaks from a temperament lyrical, sanguine, imaginative, optimistic and sympathetic; he from a temperament dramatic, melancholy, observing, cynical, and satirical. She insists upon natural goodness; he, upon innate depravity. She urges her faith in social regeneration; he vents his splenetic contempt for the mob. Through all the successive shocks of disillusioning experience, she expects the renovation of humanity by some religious, some semi-mystical, amelioration of its heart; he grimly concedes the greater part of humanity to the devil, and can see no escape for the remnant save in science and aristocratic organization. For her, finally, the literary art is an instrument of social salvation--it is her means of touching the world with her ideals, her love, her aspiration; for him the literary art is the avenue of escape from the meaningless chaos of existence--it is his subtly critical condemnation of the world.

The origins of these unreconciled antipathies lie deep beneath the personal relationship of George Sand and Gustave Flaubert; lie deep beneath their successors, who with more or less of amenity in their manners are still debating the same questions today. The main currents of the nineteenth century, with fluent and refluent tides, clash beneath the controversy; and as soon as one hears its "long withdrawing roar," and thinks it is dying away, and is become a part of ancient history, it begins again, and will be heard, no doubt, by the last man as a solemn accompaniment to his final contention with his last adversary.

George Sand was, on the whole, a natural and filial daughter of the French Revolution. The royal blood which she received from her father's line mingled in her veins with that of the Parisian milliner, her mother, and predestined her for a leveller by preparing in her an instinctive ground of revolt against all those inherited prejudices which divided the families of her parents. As a young girl wildly romping with the peasant children at Nohant she discovered a joy in untrammeled rural life which was only to increase with years. At the proper age for beginning to fashion a conventional young lady, the hoyden was put in a convent, where she underwent some exalting religious experiences; and in 1822 she was assigned to her place in the "established social order" by her marriage at seventeen to M. Dudevant. After a few years of rather humdrum domestic life in the country, she became aware that this gentleman, her husband, was behaving as we used to be taught that all French husbands ultimately behave; he was, in fact, turning from her to her maids. The young couple had never been strongly united--the impetuous dreamy girl and her coarse hunting mate; and they had grown wide apart. She should, of course, have adjusted herself quietly to the altered situation and have kept up appearances. But this young wife had gradually become an "intellectual"; she had been reading philosophy and poetry; she was saturated with the writings of Rousseau, of Chateaubriand, of Byron. None of the spiritual masters of her generation counselled acquiescence in servitude or silence in misery. Every eloquent tongue of the time-spirit urged self-expression and revolt. And she, obedient to the deepest impulses of her blood and her time, revolted.

At the period when Madame Dudevant withdrew her neck from the conjugal yoke and plunged into her literary career in Paris, the doctrine that men are created for freedom, equality and fraternity was already somewhat hackneyed. She, with an impetus from her own private fortunes, was to give the doctrine a recrudescence of interest by resolutely applying it to the status of women. We cannot follow her in detail from the point where she abandons the domestic sewing-basket to reappear smoking black cigars in the Latin Quarter. We find her, at about 1831, entering into competition with the brilliant literary generation of Balzac, Hugo, Alfred de Musset, Merimee, Stendhal, and Sainte-Beuve. To signalize her equality with her brothers in talent, she adopts male attire: "I had a sentry-box coat made, of rough grey cloth, with trousers and waist-coat to match. With a grey hat and a huge cravat of woolen material, I looked exactly like a first-year student." In the freedom of this rather unalluring garb she entered into relations Platonic, fraternal, or tempestuously passionate with perhaps the most distinguished series of friends and lovers that ever fluttered about one flame. There was Aurelien de Seze; Jules Sandeau, her first collaborator, who "reconciled her to life" and gave her a nom de guerre; the inscrutable Merimee, who made no one happy; Musset--an encounter from which both tiger-moths escaped with singed wings; the odd transitional figure of Pagello; Michel Euraed; Liszt; Chopin, whom she loved and nursed for eight years; her master Lamennais; her master Pierre Leroux; her father-confessor Sainte-Beuve; and Gustave Flaubert, the querulous friend of her last decade.

As we have compressed the long and complex story of her personal relationships, so we must compress the intimately related history of her works and her ideas. When under the inspiration of Rousseau, the emancipated George Sand began to write, her purposes were but

vaguely defined. She conceived of life as primarily an opportunity for unlimited self-expansion, and of literature as an opportunity for unrestricted self-expression. "Nevertheless," she declares, "my instincts have formed, without my privity, the theory I am about to set down,--a theory which I have generally followed unconsciously. ... According to this theory, the novel is as much a work of poetry as of analysis. It demands true situations, and characters not only true but real, grouped about a type intended to epitomize the sentiment or the main conceptions of the book. This type generally represents the passion of love, since almost all novels are love-stories. According to this theory (and it is here that it begins) the writer must idealize this love, and consequently this type,--and must not fear to attribute to it all the powers to which he inwardly aspires, or all the sorrows whose pangs he has observed or felt. This type must in no wise, however, become degraded by the vicissitude of events; it must either die or triumph."

In 1831, when her pen began its fluent course through the lyrical works of her first period--Indiana, Valentine, Lelia, Jacques, and the rest--we conceive George Sand's culture, temper, and point of view to have been fairly comparable with those of the young Shelley when, fifteen years earlier, he with Mary Godwin joined Byron and Jane Clairmont in Switzerland--young revoltes, all of them, nourished on eighteenth century revolutionary philosophy and Gothic novels. Both these eighteenth century currents meet in the work of the new romantic group in England and in France. The innermost origin of the early long poems of Shelley and the early works of George Sand is in personal passion, in the commotion of a romantic spirit beating its wings against the cage of custom and circumstance and institutions. The external form of the plot, whatever is fantastic and wilful in its setting and its adventures, is due to the school of Ann Radcliffe. But the quality in Shelley and in George Sand which bewitched even the austere Matthew Arnold in his green and salad days is the poetising of that liberative eighteenth century philosophy into "beautiful idealisms" of a love emancipated from human limitations, a love exalted to the height of its gamut by the influences of nature, triumphantly seeking its own or shattered in magnificent despair. In her novels of the first period, George Sand takes her Byronic revenge upon M. Dudevant. In Indiana and its immediate successors, consciously or unconsciously, she declares to the world what a beautiful soul M. Dudevant condemned to sewing on buttons; in Jacques she paints the man who might fitly have matched her spirit; and by the entire series, which now impresses us as fantastic in sentiment no less than in plot, she won her early reputation as the apologist for free love, the adversary of marriage.

In her middle period--say from 1838 to 1848--of which The Miller of Aginbault, Consuelo, and The Countess of Rudolstadt are representative works, there is a marked subsidence of her personal emotion, and, in compensation, a rising tide of humanitarian enthusiasm. Gradually satiated with erotic passion, gradually convinced that it is rather a mischief-maker than a reconstructive force in a decrepit society, she is groping, indeed, between her successive liaisons for an elusive felicity, for a larger mission than inspiring Musset's Alexandrines or Chopin's nocturnes. It is somewhat amusing, and at the same time indicative of her vague but deep-seated moral yearnings, to find her writing rebukingly to Sainte-Beuve, as early as 1834, apropos of his epicurean Volupte:

"Let the rest do as they like; but you, dear friend, you must produce a book which will change and better mankind, do you see? You can, and therefore should. Oh, if poor I could do it! I should lift my head again and my heart would no longer be broken; but in vain I seek a religion: Shall it be God, shall it be love, friendship, the public welfare? Alas, it seems to me that my soul is framed to receive all these impressions, without one effacing another ... Who shall paint justice as it should, as it may, be in our modern society?"

To Sainte-Beuve, himself an unscathed intellectual Odysseus, she declares herself greatly indebted intellectually; but on the whole his influence seems to have been tranquillizing. The material for the radical program, economic, political, and religious, which, like a spiritual ancestor of H. G. Wells, she eagerly sought to popularize by the novels of her middle years, was supplied mainly by Saint-Simon, Lamennais, and Leroux. Her new "religion of humanity," a kind of theosophical socialism, is too fantastically garbed to charm the sober spirits of our age. And yet from the ruins of that time and from the emotional extravagance of books grown tedious, which she has left behind her, George Sand emerges for us with one radiant perception which must be included in whatever religion animates a democratic society: "Everyone must be happy, so that the happiness of a few may not be criminal and cursed by God."

One of George Sand's French critics, M. Caro, a member of the Academy, who deals somewhat austerely with her religiose enthusiasms and with her Utopian projects for social reformation, remarks gravely and not without tenderness:

"The one thing needful to this soul, so strong, so rich in enthusiasm, is a humble moral quality that she disdains, and when she has occasion to speak of it, even slanders,--namely resignation. This is not, as she seems to think, the sluggish virtue of base souls, who, in their superstitious servitude to force, hasten to crouch beneath every yoke. That is a false and degrading resignation; genuine resignation grows out of the conception of the universal order, weighed against which individual sufferings, without ceasing to be a ground of merit, cease to constitute a right of revolt. ... Resignation, in the true, the philosophical, the Christian sense, is a manly acceptance of moral law and also of the laws essential to the social order; it is a free adherence to order, a sacrifice approved by reason of a part of one's private good and of one's personal freedom, not to might nor to the tyranny of a human caprice, but to the exigencies of the common weal, which subsists only by the concord of individual liberty with obedient passions."

Well, resigned in the sense of defeated, George Sand never became; nor did she, perhaps, ever wholly acquiesce in that scheme of things which M. Caro impressively designates as "the universal order." Yet with age, the abandonment of many distractions, the retreat to Nohant, the consolations of nature, and her occupation with tales of pastoral life, beginning with La Mare au Diable, there develops within her, there diffuses itself around her, there appears in her work a charm like that which falls upon green fields from the level rays of the evening sun after a day of storms. It is not the charm, precisely, of resignation; it is the charm of serenity--the serenity of an old revolutionist who no longer expects victory in the morning

yet is secure in her confidence of a final triumph, and still more secure in the goodness of her cause. "A hundred times in life," she declares, "the good that one does seems to serve no immediate purpose; yet it maintains in one way and another the tradition of well wishing and well doing, without which all would perish." At the outset of her career we compared her with Shelley. In her last phase, she reminds us rather of the authors of Far from the Madding Crowd and The Mill on the Floss, and of Wordsworth, once, too, a torch of revolution, turning to his Michaels and his leech-gatherers and his Peter Bells. Her exquisite pictures of pastoral life are idealizations of it; her representations of the peasant are not corroborated by Zola's; to the last she approaches the shield of human nature from the golden side. But for herself at least she has found a real secret of happiness in country life, tranquil work, and a right direction given to her own heart and conscience.

It is at about this point in her spiritual development that she turns towards Gustave Flaubert--perhaps a little suspiciously at first, yet resolved from the first, according to her natural instinct and her now fixed principles, to stimulate by believing in his admirable qualities. Writing from Nohant in 1866 to him at Croisset, she epitomises her distinction as a woman and as an author in this playful sally: "Sainte-Beuve, who loves you nevertheless, pretends that you are dreadfully vicious. But perhaps he sees with eyes a bit dirty, like that learned botanist who pretends that the germander is of a DIRTY yellow. The observation was so false that I could not help writing on the margin of his book: 'IT IS YOU, WHOSE EYES ARE DIRTY.'"

We have spoken of George Sand as a faithful daughter of the French Revolution; and by way of contrast we may speak of Flaubert as a disgruntled son of the Second Empire. Between his literary advent and hers there is an interval of a generation, during which the proud expansive spirit and the grandiose aspirations imparted to the nation by the first Napoleon dwindled to a spirit of mediocrity and bourgeois smugness under a Napoleon who had inherited nothing great of his predecessor but his name. This change in the time-spirit may help to explain the most significant difference between Flaubert and George Sand. He inherited the tastes and imagination of the great romantic generation; but he inherited none of its social and political enthusiasm. He was disciplined by the romantic writers; yet his reaction to the literary culture of his youth is not ethical but aesthetic; he finds his inspiration less in Rousseau than in Chateaubriand. He is bred to an admiration of eloquence, the poetic phrase, the splendid picture, life in the grand style; with increasing disgust he finds himself entering a society which, he feels, neither understands nor values any of these things, and which threatens their destruction. Consequently, we find him actuated as a writer by two complementary passions--the love of splendor and the hatred of mediocrity--two passions, of which the second sometimes alternates with the first, sometimes inseparably fuses with it, and ultimately almost extinguishes it.

The son of an eminent surgeon of Rouen, Gustave Flaubert may have acquired from his father something of that scientific precision of observation and that cutting accuracy of expression, by which he gained his place at the head of modern French realism and won the discipleship of the Goncourts, Daudet, Zola, and Maupassant and the applause of such connoisseurs of technique as Walter Pater and Henry

James. From his mother's Norman ancestry he inherited the physique of a giant, tainted with epilepsy; a Viking countenance, strong-featured with leonine moustaches; and a barbaric temper, habitually somewhat lethargic but irritable, and, when roused, violent and intolerant of opposition. He had a private education at Rouen, with wide desultory reading; went to Paris, which he hated, to study law, which he also hated; frequented the theatres and studios; travelled in Corsica, the Pyrenees, and the East, which he adored, seeing Egypt, Palestine, Constantinople, and Greece; and he had one, and only one, important love-affair, extending from 1846 to 1854--that with Mme. Louise Colet, a woman of letters, whose difficult relations with Flaubert are sympathetically touched upon in Pater's celebrated essay on "Style." When by the death of his father, in 1845, he succeeded to the family-seat at Croisset, near Rouen, he settled himself in a studious solitude to the pursuit of letters, which he followed for thirty-four years with anguish of spirit and dogged persistence.

Flaubert probably loved glory as much as any man; but he desired to receive it only on his own terms. He profoundly appeals to writers endowed with "the artistic conscience" as "the martyr of literary style." In morals something of a libertine, in matters of art he exhibited the intolerance of weakness in others and the remorseless self-examination and self-torment commonly attributed to the Puritan. His friend Maxime Du Camp, who tried to bring him out and teach him the arts of popularity, he rebuffed with deliberate insult. He developed an aversion to any interruption of his work, and such tension and excitability of nerves that he shunned a day's outing or a chat with an old companion, lest it distract him for a month afterward. His mistress he seems to have estranged by an ill-concealed preference to her of his exacting Muse. To illustrate his "monkish" consecration to his craft we cannot do better than reproduce a passage, quoted by Pater, from his letters to Madame Colet:

"I must scold you for one thing, which shocks, scandalises me, the small concern, namely, you show for art just now. As regards glory be it so--there I approve. But for art!--the one thing in life that is good and real--can you compare with it an earthly love?--prefer the adoration of a relative beauty to the cultus of the true beauty? Well! I tell you the truth. That is the one thing good in me: the one thing I have, to me estimable. For yourself, you blend with the beautiful a heap of alien things, the useful, the agreeable, what not?

"The only way not to be unhappy is to shut yourself up in art, and count everything else as nothing. Pride takes the place of all beside when it is established on a large basis. Work! God wills it. That, it seems to me, is clear.

"I am reading over again the Aeneid, certain verses of which I repeat to myself to satiety. There are phrases there which stay in one's head, by which I find myself beset, as with those musical airs which are forever returning, and cause you pain, you love them so much. I observe that I no longer laugh much, and am no longer depressed. I am ripe, you talk of my serenity, and envy me. It may well surprise you. Sick, irritated, the prey a thousand times a day of cruel pain, I continue my labour like a true working-man, who, with sleeves turned up, in the sweat of his brow, beats away at his

anvil, never troubling himself whether it rains or blows, for hail or thunder. I was not like that formerly."

The half-dozen works which Flaubert beat out on his "anvil," with an average expenditure of half-a-dozen years to each, were composed on a theory of which the prime distinguishing feature was the great doctrine of "impersonality." George Sand's fluent improvisations ordinarily originated, as we have noted, in an impulse of her lyrical idealism; she began with an aspiration of her heart, to execute which she invented characters and plot so that she is always on the inside of her story. According to Flaubert's theory, the novel should originate in a desire to present a certain segment of observed life. The author is to take and rigorously maintain a position outside his work. The organ with which he collects his materials is not his heart but his eyes, supplemented by the other senses. Life, so far as the scientific observer can be sure of it, and so far as the artist can control it for representation, is a picture or series of pictures, a dramatic scene or a concatenation of dramatic scenes. Let the novelist first, therefore, with scrupulous fidelity and with minute regard for the possible significance of every observable detail, fill his notebooks, amass his materials, master his subject. After Flaubert, a first-rate sociological investigator is three-fourths of a novelist. The rest of the task is to arrange and set forth these facts so that they shall tell the truth about life impressively, in scene and dramatic spectacle, the meaning of which shall be implicit in the plot and shall reach the reader's consciousness through his senses.

Critics have spent much time in discussing the conflict of "romantic" and "realistic" tendencies in Flaubert's works. And it is obviously easy, so far as subject-matter is concerned, to group his books in two divisions: on the one hand, The Temptation of St. Anthony, Salammbo, and two of the Trois Contes; on the other hand, Madame Bovary, L'Education Sentimentale, and the incomplete Bouvard and Pecuchet. We may call the tales in the first group romantic, because the subject-matter is remote in time and place, and because in them Flaubert indulges his passion for splendor--for oriental scenery, for barbaric characters, the pomp of savage war and more savage religion, events strange, terrible, atrocious. We may call the stories in the other group realistic, because the subject-matter is contemporary life in Paris and the provinces, and because in them Flaubert indulges his hatred for mediocrity--for the humdrum existence of the country doctor, the apothecary, the insipid clerk, the vapid sentimental woman, and the charlatans of science. But as a matter of fact, ALL his books are essentially constructed on the same theory: all are just as "realistic" as Flaubert could make them.

Henry James called Madame Bovary a brilliantly successful application of Flaubert's theory; he pronounced L'Education Sentimentale "elaborately and massively dreary"; and he briefly dismissed Salammbo as an accomplished work of erudition. Salammbo is indeed a work of erudition; years were spent in getting up its archaeological details. But Madame Bovary is also a work of erudition, and Bouvard and Pecuchet is a work of enormous erudition; a thousand volumes were read for the notes of the first volume and Flaubert is said to have killed himself by the labor of his unfinished investigations. There is no important distinction to be made between the method or the thoroughness with which he collected

his facts in the one case or the other; and the story of the war of the mercenaries against the Carthaginians is evolved with the same alternation of picture and dramatic spectacle and the same hard merciless externality that distinguish the evolution of Emma Bovary's history.

We may go still farther than that towards wiping out the distinction between Flaubert's "romantic" and his "realistic" works; and by the same stroke what is illusory in the pretensions of the realists, namely, their aspiration to an "impersonal art."

If we were seeking to prove that an author can put NOTHING BUT HIMSELF into his art, we should ask for no more impressive illustions than precisely, Madame Bovary and Salammbo. These two masterpieces disclose to reflection, no less patently than the works of George Sand, their purpose and their meaning. And that purpose and meaning are not a whit less personal to Flaubert than the purpose and meaning of Indiana, let us say, are personal to George Sand. The "meaning" of Madame Bovary and Salammbo is, broadly speaking, Flaubert's sense of the significance--or, rather, of the insignificance--of human life; and the "purpose" of the books is to express it. The most lyrical of idealists can do no more to reveal herself.

The demonstration afforded by a comparison of Salammbo and Madame Bovary is particularly striking because the subject-matters are superficially so unlike. But take any characteristic series of pictures or incidents from Salammbo: take the passing of the children through the fire to Moloch, or the description of the leprous Hanno, or the physical surrender of the priestess to her country's enemy, or the following picture of the crucified lion:

"They were marching through a wide defile, hedged in by two chains of reddish hillocks, when a nauseous odor struck their nostrils, and they believed that they saw something extraordinary at the top of a carob tree; a lion's head stood up above the foliage.

"Running towards it, they found a lion attached to a cross by its four limbs, like a criminal; his enormous muzzle hung to his breast, and his forepaws, half concealed beneath the abundance of his mane, were widely spread apart, like a bird's wings in flight; under the tightly drawn skin, his ribs severally protruded and his hind legs were nailed together, but were slightly drawn up; black blood had trickled through the hairs, and collected in stalactites at the end of his tail, which hung straight down the length of the cross. The soldiers crowded around the beast, diverting themselves by calling him 'Consul!' and 'Citizen of Rome!' and threw pebbles into his eyes to scatter the swarming gnats."

And now take any characteristic series of pictures or incidents from Madame Bovary: take Bovary's bungling and gruesome operations on the club-footed ostler's leg, with the entire village clustering agape; take the picture of the eyeless, idiotic beggar on the road to Rouen; or the scene in which Emma offers herself for three thousand francs to Rodolphe; or the following bit, only a bit, from the detailed account of the heroine's last hours, after the arsenical poisoning:

"Emma's head was turned towards her right shoulder, the corner of

her mouth, which was open, seemed like a black hole at the lower part of her face; her two thumbs were bent into the palms of her hands; a kind of white dust besprinkled her lashes, and her eyes were beginning to disappear in that viscous pallor that looks like a thin web, as if spiders had spun it over. The sheet sunk in from her breast to her knees, and then rose at the tips of her toes, and it seemed to Charles that infinite masses, an enormous load, were weighing upon her.

"The church clock struck two. They could hear the loud murmur of the river flowing in the darkness at the foot of the terrace. Monsieur Bournisien from time to time blew his nose noisily and Homais' pen was scratching over the paper."

In these two detached pictures--the one from a so-called "romantic," the other from a so-called "realistic" book--one readily observes the likeness in the subjects, which are of a ghastly repulsiveness; the same minuteness of observation--e.g., the lion's hind legs "slightly drawn up," the woman's thumbs "bent into the palms of her hands"; the same careful notation of effect on the several senses; the same rhetorical heightening--e.g., the "stalactites at the end of his tail," the web in the woman's eyes "as if spiders had spun it over"; and finally, that celebrated detachment, that air as of a medical examiner, recording the results of an autopsy. What can we know of such an author? All, or nearly all, that he knew of himself, provided we will searchingly ask ourselves what sort of mind is steadily attracted to the painting of such pictures, to the representation of such incidents, and what sort of mind expresses a lifetime of brooding on the significance of life in two such books as Madame Bovary and Salammbo.

At its first appearance, Madame Bovary was prosecuted, though unsuccessfully, as offensive to public morals. In derision of this famous prosecution, Henry James with studious jauntiness, asserts that in the heat of his first admiration he thought what an excellent moral tract it would make. "It may be very seriously maintained," he continues, "that M. Flaubert's masterpiece is the pearl of 'Sunday reading.'" As a work of fiction and recreation the book lacks, in his opinion, one quite indispensable quality: it lacks charm. Well, there are momentary flashes of beauty and grace, dazzling bits of color, haunting melancholy cadences in every chapter of Flaubert; but a charming book he never wrote. A total impression of charm he never gave--he never could give; because his total impression of life was not charming but atrocious. It is perhaps an accident, as has been suggested, that one can so readily employ Madame Bovary to illustrate that text on the "wages of sin." Emma, to be sure, goes down the easy and alluring path to disgrace and ruin. But that is only an incident in the wider meaning of Flaubert's fiction, a meaning more amply expressed in Salammbo, where not one foolish woman alone but thousands on thousands of men, women, and children, mingled with charging elephants and vipers, flounder and fight in indescribable welters of blood and filth, and go down to rot in a common pit. If I read Flaubert's meaning right, all human history is there; you may show it by painting on broad canvas a Carthaginian battle-scene or by photographing the details of a modern bedroom: a brief brightness, night and the odor of carrion, a crucified lion, a dying woman, the jeering of ribald mercenaries, the cackle of M. Homais. It is all one. If Flaubert deserved prosecution, it was not for making vice attractive, but for

expressing with invasive energy that personal and desperately pessimistic conception of life by which he was almost overwhelmed.

That a bad physical regimen, bad habits of work in excessive quantities, and the solitude of his existence were contributory to Flaubert's melancholy, his exacerbated egotism, and his pessimism is sufficiently obvious in the letters. This Norman giant with his aching head buried all day long in his arms, groping in anguish for a phrase, has naturally a kindly disposition towards various individuals of his species--is even capable of great generosity; but as he admits with a truth and pathos, deeply appealing to the maternal sympathies of his correspondent, he has no talent for living. He has never been able, like richer and more resourceful souls, to reconcile being a man with being an author. He has made his choice; he has renounced the cheerful sanities of the world:

"I pass entire weeks without exchanging a word with a human being; and at the end of the week it is not possible for me to recall a single day nor any event whatsoever. I see my mother and my niece on Sundays, and that is all. My only company consists of a band of rats in the garret, which make an infernal racket above my head, when the water does not roar or the wind blow. The nights are black as ink, and a silence surrounds me comparable to that of the desert. Sensitiveness is increased immeasurably in such a setting. I have palpitations of the heart for nothing.

"All that results from our charming profession. That is what it means to torment the soul and the body. But perhaps this torment is our proper lot here below."

To George Sand, who wrote as naturally as she breathed and almost as easily, seclusion and torment were by no means the necessary conditions of literary activity. Enormously productive, with a hundred books to his half-a-dozen, she has never dedicated and consecrated herself to her profession but has lived heartily and a bit recklessly from day to day, spending herself in many directions freely, gaily, extravagantly. Now that she has definitely said farewell to her youth, she finds that she is twenty years younger; and now that she is, in a sense, dissipating her personality and living in the lives of others, she finds that she is happier than ever before. "It can't be imperative to work so painfully"--such is the burden of her earlier counsels to Flaubert; "spare yourself a little, take some exercise, relax the tendons of your mind, indulge a little the physical man. Live a little as I do; and you will take your fatigues and illnesses and occasional dolours and dumps as incidents of the day's work and not magnify them into the mountainous overshadowing calamities from which you deduce your philosophy of universal misery." No advice could have been more wholesome or more timely. And with what pictures of her own busy felicity she reenforces her advice! I shall produce three of them here in order to emphasize that precious thing which George Sand loved to impart, and which she had the gift of imparting, namely, joy, the spontaneous joyousness of her own nature. The first passage is from a letter of June 14, 1867:

"I am a little remorseful to take whole days from your work, I who am never bored with loafing, and whom you could leave for whole hours under a tree, or before two lighted logs, with the assurance that I should find there something interesting. I know so well how

to live OUTSIDE OF MYSELF. It hasn't always been like that. I also was young and subject to indignations. It is over! Since I have dipped into real nature, I have found there an order, a system, a calmness of cycles which is lacking in mankind, but which man can, up to a certain point, assimilate when he is not too directly at odds with the difficulties of his own life. When these difficulties return, he must endeavor to avoid them; but if he has drunk the cup of the eternally true, he does not get too excited for or against the ephemeral and relative truth."

The second passage is of June 21:

"I love everything that makes up a milieu, the rolling of the carriages and the noise of the workmen in Paris, the cries of a thousand birds in the country, the movement of the ships on the waters. I love also absolute, profound silence, and, in short, I love everything that is around me, no matter where I am."

The last passage gives a glimpse of the seventeenth of January, 1869, a typical day in Nohant:

"The individual named George Sand is well: he is enjoying the marvellous winter which reigns in Berry, gathering flowers, noting interesting botanical anomalies, making dresses and mantles for his daughter-in-law, costumes for the marionettes, cutting out scenery, dressing dolls, reading music, but above all spending hours with the little Aurore, who is a marvellous child. There is not a more tranquil or a happier individual in his domestic life than this old troubadour retired from business, who sings from time to time his little song to the moon, without caring much whether he sings well or ill, provided he sings the motif that runs in his head, and who, the rest of the time, idles deliciously.... This pale character has the great pleasure of loving you with all his heart, and of not passing a day without thinking of the other old troubadour, confined in his solitude of a frenzied artist, disdainful of all the pleasures of the world."

Flaubert did "exercise" a little--once or twice--in compliance with the injunctions of his "dear master"; but he rather resented the implication that his pessimism was personal, that it had any particular connection with his peculiar temperament or habits. He wished to think of himself as a stoic, quite indifferent about his "carcase." His briefer black moods he might acknowledge had transitory causes. But his general and abiding conceptions of humanity were the result of dispassionate reflections. "You think," he cries in half-sportive pique, "that because I pass my life trying to make harmonious phrases, in avoiding assonances, that I too have not my little judgments on the things of this world? Alas! Yes! and moreover I shall burst, enraged at not expressing them." And later: "Yes, I am susceptible to disinterested angers, and I love you all the more for loving me for that. Stupidity and injustice make me roar,--and I howl in my corner against a lot of things 'that do not concern me.'" "On the day that I am no longer in a rage, I shall fall flat as the marionette from which one withdraws the support of the stick."

So far as Flaubert's pessimism has an intellectual basis, it rests upon his researches in human history. For Salammbo and The Temptation of St. Anthony he ransacked ancient literature, devoured

religions and mythologies, and saturated himself in the works of the Church Fathers. In order to get up the background of his Education Sentimentale he studied the Revolution of 1848 and its roots in the Revolution of 1789. He found, shall we say? what he was looking for--inexhaustible proofs of the cruelty and stupidity of men. After "gulping" down the six volumes of Buchez and Roux, he declares: "The clearest thing I got out of them is an immense disgust for the French.... Not a liberal idea which has not been unpopular, not a just thing that has not caused scandal, not a great man who has not been mobbed or knifed. 'The history of the human mind is the history of human folly,' as says M. Voltaire. ... Neo-Catholicism on the one hand, and Socialism on the other, have stultified France." In another letter of the same Period and similar provocation: "However much you fatten human cattle, giving them straw as high as their bellies, and even gilding their stable, they will remain brutes, no matter what one says. All the advance that one can hope for, is to make the brute a little less wicked. But as for elevating the ideas of the mass, giving it a larger and therefore a less human conception of God, I have my doubts."

In addition to the charges of violence and cruelty, which he brought against all antiquity as well as against modern times, much in the fashion of Swift or the older Mark Twain, Flaubert nursed four grave causes of indignation, made four major charges of folly against modern "Christian" civilization. In religion, we have substituted for Justice the doctrine of Grace. In our sociological considerations we act no longer with discrimination but upon a principle of universal sympathy. In the field of art and literature we have abandoned criticism and research for the Beautiful in favor of universal puffery. In politics we have nullified intelligence and renounced leadership to embrace universal suffrage, which is the last disgrace of the human spirit.

It must be acknowledged that Flaubert's arraignment of modern society possesses the characteristics commended by the late Barett Wendell: it is marked in a high degree by "unity, mass, and coherence." It must be admitted also that George Sand possessed in a high degree the Pauline virtue of being "not easily provoked," or she never could have endured so patiently, so sweetly, Flaubert's reiterated and increasingly ferocious assaults upon her own master passion, her ruling principle. George Sand was one whose entire life signally attested the power of a "saving grace," resident in the creative and recuperative energies of nature, resident in the magical, the miracle-working, powers of the human heart, the powers of love and sympathy. She was a modern spiritual adventurer who had escaped unscathed from all the anathemas of the old theology; and she abounded, like St. Francis, in her sense of the new dispensation and in her benedictive exuberance towards all the creatures of God, including not merely sun, moon, and stars and her sister the lamb but also her brother the wolf. On this principle she loves Flaubert!--and archly asserts her arch-heresy in his teeth. He complains that her fundamental defect is that she doesn't know how to "hate." She replies, with a point that seems never really to have pierced his thick casing of masculine egotism:

"Artists are spoiled children and the best are great egotists. You say that I love them too well; I like them as I like the woods and the fields, everything, everyone that I know a little and that I study continually. I make my life in the midst of all that, and as I

like my life, I like all that nourishes it and renews it. They do me a lot of ill turns which I see, but which I no longer feel. I know that there are thorns in the hedges, but that does not prevent me from putting out my hands and finding flowers there. If all are not beautiful, all are interesting. The day you took me to the Abbey of Saint-Georges I found the scrofularia borealis, a very rare plant in France. I was enchanted; there was much----in the neighborhood where I gathered it. Such is life!

"And if one does not take life like that, one cannot take it in any way, and then how can one endure it? I find it amusing and interesting, and since I accept EVERYTHING, I am so much happier and more enthusiastic when I meet the beautiful and the good. If I did not have a great knowledge of the species, I should not have quickly understood you, or known you or loved you."

Two years later the principles and tempers of both these philosophers were put to their severest trial. In 1870, George Sand had opportunity to apply her doctrine of universal acceptance to the Prussians in Paris. Flaubert had opportunity to welcome scientific organization in the Prussian occupation of his own home at Croisset. The first reaction of both was a quite simple consternation and rage, in which Flaubert cries, "The hopeless barbarism of humanity fills me with a black melancholy," and George Sand, for the moment assenting, rejoins: "Men are ferocious and conceited brutes." As the war thickens around him and the wakened militancy of his compatriots presses him hard, Flaubert becomes more and more depressed; he forebodes a general collapse of civilization--before the century

passes, a conflict of races, "in which several millions of men kill one another in one engagement." With the curiously vengeful satisfaction which mortals take in their own misery when it offers occasion to cry "I told you so," he exclaims: "Behold then, the NATURAL MAN. Make theories now! Boast the progress, the enlightenment and the good sense of the masses, and the gentleness of the French people! I assure you that anyone here who ventured to preach peace would get himself murdered."

George Sand in her fields at Nohant--not "above" but a little aside from the conflict--turns instinctively to her peasant doggedly, placidly, sticking at his plow; turns to her peasant with a kind of intuition that he is a symbol of faith, that he holds the keys to a consolation, which the rest of us blindly grope for: "He is imbecile, people say; no, he is a child in prosperity, a man in disaster, more of a man than we who complain; he says nothing, and while people are killing, he is sowing, repairing continually on one side what they are destroying on the other." Flaubert, who thinks that he has no "illusions" about peasants or the "average man," brings forward his own specific of a quite different nature: "Do you think that if France, instead of being governed on the whole by the crowd, were in the power of the mandarins, we should be where we are now? If, instead of having wished to enlighten the lower classes, we had busied ourselves with instructing the higher, we should not have seen M. de Keratry proposing the pillage of the duchy of Baden."

In the great war of our own time with the same foes, our professional advocates of "preparedness," our cheerful chemists, our scientific "intellectuals"--all our materialistic thinkers hard-shell and soft-shell,--took the position of Flaubert, just

presented; reproached us bitterly for our slack, sentimental pacificism; and urged us with all speed to emulate the scientific spirit of our enemy. There is nothing more instructive in this correspondence than to observe how this last fond illusion falls away from Flaubert under the impact of an experience which demonstrated to his tortured senses the truth of the old Rabelaisian utterance, that "science without conscience is the ruin of the soul."

"What use, pray," he cries in the last disillusion, "is science, since this people abounding in scholars commits abominations worthy of the Huns and worse than theirs, because they are systematic, cold-blooded, voluntary, and have for an excuse, neither passion nor hunger?" And a few months later, he is still in mad anguish of desolation:

"I had some illusions! What barbarity! What a slump! I am wrathful at my contemporaries for having given me the feelings of a brute of the twelfth century! I'm stifling in gall! These officers who break mirrors with white gloves on, who know Sanskrit, and who fling themselves on the champagne; who steal your watch and then send you their visiting card, this war for money, these civilized savages give me more horror than cannibals. And all the world is going to imitate them, is going to be a soldier! Russia has now four millions of them. All Europe will wear a uniform. If we take our revenge, it will be ferocious in the last degree; and, mark my word, we are going to think only of that, of avenging ourselves on Germany."

Under the imminence of the siege of Paris, Flaubert had drilled men, with an out-flashing of the savage fighting spirit of his ancestors, of which he was more than half ashamed. But at heart he is more dismayed, more demoralized, more thoroughly prostrated than George Sand. He has not fortitude actually to face the degree of depravity which he has always imputed to the human race, the baseness with which his imagination has long been easily and cynically familiar. As if his pessimism had been only a literary pigment, a resource of the studio, he shudders to find Paris painted in his own ebony colors, and his own purely "artistic" hatred of the bourgeois, translated into a principle of action, expressing itself in the horrors of the Commune, with half the population trying to strangle the other half. Hatred, after all, contempt and hatred, are not quite the most felicitous watchwords for the use of human society. Like one whose cruel jest has been taken more seriously than he had intended and has been turned upon his own head, Flaubert considers flight: "I cherish the following dream: of going to live in the sun in a tranquil country." As a substitute for a physical retreat, he buries himself in a study of Buddhism, and so gradually returns to the pride of his intellectual isolation. As the tumult in his senses subsides, he even ventures to offer to George Sand the anodyne of his old philosophical despair: "Why are you so sad? Humanity offers nothing new. Its irremediable misery has filled me with sadness ever since my youth. And in addition I now have no disillusions. I believe that the crowd, the common herd will always be hateful. The only important thing is a little group of minds always the same--which passes the torch from one to another."

There we must leave Flaubert, the thinker. He never passes beyond that point in his vision of reconstruction: a "legitimate aristocracy" established in contempt of the average man--with the

Academy of Sciences displacing the Pope.

George Sand, amid these devastating external events, is beginning to feel the insidious siege of years. She can no longer rally her spiritual forces with the "bright speed" that she had in the old days. The fountain of her faith, which has never yet failed of renewal, fills more slowly. For weeks she broods in silence, fearing to augment her friend's dismay with more of her own, fearing to resume a debate in which her cause may be better than her arguments and in which depression of her physical energy may diminish her power to put up a spirited defence before the really indomitable "last ditch" of her position. When Flaubert himself makes a momentary gesture towards the white flag, and talks of retreat, she seizes the opportunity for a short scornful sally. "Go to live in the sun in a tranquil country! Where? What country is going to be tranquil in this struggle of barbarity against civilization, a struggle which is going to be universal?" A month later she gives him fair warning that she has no intention of acknowledging final defeat: "For me, the ignoble experiment that Paris is attempting or is undergoing, proves nothing against the laws of the eternal progression of men and things, and, if I have gained any principles in my mind, good or bad, they are neither shattered nor changed by it. For a long time I have accepted patience as one accepts the sort of weather there is, the length of winter, old age, lack of success in all its forms." But Flaubert, thinking that he has detected in her public utterances a decisive change of front, privately urges her in a finely figurative passage of a letter which denounces modern republicanism, universal suffrage, compulsory education, and the press--Flaubert urges her to come out openly in renunciation of her faith in humanity and her popular progressivistic doctrines. I must quote a few lines of his attempt at seduction:

"Ah, dear good master, if you could only hate! That is what you lack, hate. In spite of your great Sphinx eyes, you have seen the world through a golden colour. That comes from the sun in your heart; but so many shadows have risen that now you are not recognizing things any more. Come now! Cry out! Thunder! Take your great lyre and touch the brazen string: the monsters will flee. Bedew us with drops of the blood of wounded Themis."

That summons roused the citadel, but not to surrender, not to betrayal. The eloquent daughter of the people caught up her great lyre--in the public Reponse a un ami of October 3, 1871. But her fingers passed lightly over the "brazen string" to pluck again with old power the resonant golden notes. Her reply, with its direct retorts to Flaubert, is not perhaps a very closely reasoned argument. In making the extract I have altered somewhat the order of the sentences:

"And what, you want me to stop loving? You want me to say that I have been mistaken all my life, that humanity is contemptible, hateful, that it always has been and always will be so? ... What, then, do you want me to do, so as to isolate myself from my kind, from my compatriots, from the great family in whose bosom my own family is only one ear of corn in the terrestrial field? ... But it is impossible, and your steady reason puts up with the most unreasonable of Utopias. In what Eden, in what fantastic Eldorado will you hide your family, your little group of friends, your intimate happiness, so that the lacerations of the social state and

the disasters of the country shall not reach them? ... In vain you are prudent and withdraw, your refuge will be invaded in its turn, and in perishing with human civilization you will be no greater a philosopher for not having loved, than those who threw themselves into the flood to save some debris of humanity. ... The people, you say! The people is yourself and myself. It would be useless to deny it. There are not two races. ... No, no, people do not isolate themselves, the ties of blood are not broken, people do not curse or scorn their kind. Humanity is not a vain word. Our life is composed of love, and not to love is to cease to live."

This is, if you please, an effusion of sentiment, a chant of faith. In a world more and more given to judging trees by their fruits, we should err if we dismissed this sentiment, this faith, too lightly. Flaubert may have been a better disputant; he had a talent for writing. George Sand may have chosen her side with a truer instinct; she had a genius for living. This faith of hers sustained well the shocks of many long years, and this sentiment made life sweet.

STUART P. SHERMAN

I. TO GEORGE SAND
1863

Dear Madam,

I am not grateful to you for having performed what you call a duty. The goodness of your heart has touched me and your sympathy has made me proud. That is the whole of it.

Your letter which I have just received gives added value to your article [Footnote: Letter about Salammbo, January, 1863, Questions d'art et de litterature.] and goes on still further, and I do not know what to say to you unless it be that _I_ QUITE FRANKLY LIKE YOU.

It was certainly not I who sent you in September, a little flower in an envelope. But, strange to say, at the same time, I received in the same manner, a leaf of a tree.

As for your very cordial invitation, I am not answering yes or no, in true Norman fashion. Perhaps some day this summer I shall surprise you. For I have a great desire to see you and to talk with you.

It would be very delightful to have your portrait to hang on the wall in my study in the country where I often spend long months entirely alone. Is the request indiscreet? If not, a thousand thanks in advance. Take them with the others which I reiterate.

II. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Paris, 15 March, 1864

Dear Flaubert,

I don't know whether you lent me or gave me M. Taine's beautiful book. In the uncertainty I am returning it to you. Here I have had only the time to read a part of it, and at Nohant, I shall have only the time to scribble for Buloz; but when I return, in two months, I shall ask you again for this admirable work of which the scope is so lofty, so noble.

I am sorry not to have said adieu to you; but as I return soon, I hope that you will not have forgotten me and that you will let me read something of your own also.

You were so good and so sympathetic to me at the first performance of Villemer that I no longer admire only your admirable talent, I love you with all my heart.

George Sand

III. TO GEORGE SAND
Paris, 1866

Why of course I am counting on your visit at my own house. As for the hindrances which the fair sex can oppose to it, you will not notice them (be sure of it) any more than did the others. My little stories of the heart or of the senses are not displayed on the counter. But as it is far from my quarter to yours and as you might make a useless trip, when you arrive in Paris, give me a rendezvous. And at that we shall make another to dine informally tete-a-tete.

I sent your affectionate little greeting to Bouilhet.

At the present time I am disheartened by the populace which rushes by under my windows in pursuit of the fatted calf. And they say that intelligence is to be found in the street!

IV. To M. Flobert (Justave) M.
of Letters Boulevard du Temple, 42, Paris Paris, 10 May, 1866

[The postage stamp bears the mark Palaiseau 9 May, '66.]

M. Flobaire, You must be a truly dirty oaf to have taken my name and written a letter with it to a lady who had some favors for me which you doubtless received in my place and inherited my hat in place of which I have received yours which you left there. It is the lowness of that lady's conduct and of yours that make me think that she lacks education entirely and all those sentiments which she ought to understand. If you are content to have written Fanie and Salkenpeau I am content not to have read them. You mustn't get excited about that, I saw in the papers that there were outrages against the Religion in whose bosom I have entered again after the troubles I had with that lady when she made me come to my senses and repent of my sins with her and, in consequence if I meet you with her whom I care for no longer you shall have my sword at your throat. That will be the Reparation of my sins and the punishment of your infamy at

the same time. That is what I tell you and I salute you.

Coulard

At Palaiseau with the Monks

They told me that I was well punished for associating with the girls from the theatre and with aristocrats.

V. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
1866

Sir,

After the most scrupulous combined searches I found at last the body of my beloved brother. You are in belles-lettres and you would have been struck by the splendor of that scene. The corpse which was a Brother extended nonchalantly on the edge of a foul ditch. I forgot my sorrow a moment to contemplate he was good this young man whom the matches killed, but the real guilty one was that woman whom passions have separated in this disordered current in which our unhappy country is at the moment when it is more to be pitied than blamed for there are still men who have a heart. You who express yourself so well tell that siren that she has destroyed a great citizen. I don't need to tell you that we count on you to dig his noble tomb. Tell Silvanit also that she can come notwithstanding for education obliges me to offer her a glass of wine. I have the honor to salute you.

I also have the honor to salute Silvanit for whom I am a brother much to be pitied.

Goulard the elder

Have the goodness to transmit to Silvanit the last wishes of my poor Theodore. [Footnote: Letter written by Eugene Lambert.]

VI. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Palaiseau 14 May, 1866

This is not a letter from Goulard. He is dead! The false Goulard killed him by surpassing him in the real and the comic. But this false Goulard also does not deny himself anything, the rascal!

Dear friend, I must tell you that I want to dedicate to you my novel which is just coming out. But as every one has his own ideas on the subject--as Goulard would say--I would like to know if you permit me to put at the head of my title page simply: to my friend Gustave Flaubert. I have formed the habit of putting my novels under the patronage of a beloved name. I dedicated the last to Fromentin.

I am waiting until it is good weather to ask you to come to dine at Palaiseau with Goulard's Sirenne, and some other Goulards of your kind and of mine. Up to now it has been frightfully cold and it is not worth the trouble to come to the country to catch a cold.

I have finished my novel, and you?

I kiss the two great diamonds which adorn your face.

Jorje Sens

The elder Goulard is my little Lambert, it seems to me that he is quite literary in that way.

VII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Palaiseau, Wednesday, 16 May, 1866

Well, my dear friend, since you are going away, and as in a fortnight, I am going to Berry for two or three months, do try to find time to come tomorrow Thursday. You will dine with dear and interesting Marguerite Thuillier who is also going away.

Do come to see my hermitage and Sylvester's. By leaving Paris, gare de Sceaux, at I o'clock, you will be at my house at 2 o'clock, or by leaving at 5, you will be there at 6, and in the evening you could leave with my strolling players at 9 or 10. Bring the copy. [Footnote: This refers to Monsieur Sylveitre, which had just appeared.] Put in it all the criticisms which occur to you. That will be very good for me. People ought to do that for each other as Balzac and I used to do. That doesn't make one person alter the other; quite the contrary, for in general, one gets more determined in one's moi, one completes it, explains it better, entirely develops it, and that is why friendship is good, even in literature, where the first condition of any worth is to be one's self.

If you can not come--I shall have a thousand regrets, but then I am depending upon you Monday before dinner. Au revoir and thank you for the fraternal permission of dedication.

G. Sand

VIII. TO GEORGE SAND
Paris, 17 or 18 May, 1866

Don't expect me at your house on Monday. I am obliged to go to Versailles on that day. But I shall be at Magny's.

A thousand fond greetings from your

G. Flaubert

IX. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Nohant, 31 July, 1866

My good dear comrade,

Will you really be in Paris these next few days as you led me to

hope? I leave here the 2nd. What good luck if I found you at dinner on the following Monday. And besides, they are putting on a play [Footnote: Les Don Juan de village.] by my son and me, on the 10th. Could I possibly get along without you on that day? I shall feel some EMOTION this time because of my dear collaborator. Be a good friend and try to come! I embrace you with all my heart in that hope.

The late Goulard,
G. Sand.

X. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Paris, 4 Aug., 1866

Dear friend, as I'm always out, I don't want you to come and find the door shut and me far away. Come at six o'clock and dine with me and my children whom I expect tomorrow. We dine at Magny's always at 6 o'clock promptly. You will give us 'a sensible pleasure' as used to say, as would have said, alas, the unhappy Goulard. You are an exceedingly kind brother to promise to be at Don Juan. For that I kiss you twice more.

G. Sand

Saturday evening.

XI. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

It is next THURSDAY,

I wrote you last night, and our letters must have crossed.

Yours from the heart,

G. Sand

Sunday, 5 August, 1866.

XII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Paris, Wednesday evening, 22 August, 1866

My good comrade and friend, I am going to see Alexandre at Saint-Valery Saturday evening. I shall stay there Sunday and Monday, I shall return Tuesday to Rouen and go to see you. Tell me how that strikes you. I shall spend the day with you if you like, returning to spend the night in Rouen, if I inconvenience you as you are situated, and I shall leave Wednesday morning or evening for Paris. A word in response at once, by telegraph if you think that your answer would not reach me by post before Saturday at 4 o'clock.

I think that I shall be all right but I have a horrid cold. If it grows too bad, I shall telegraph that I can not stir; but I have hopes, I am already better.

I embrace you.

G. Sand

XIII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Saint-Valery, 26 August, 1866 Monday, 1 A.M.

Dear friend, I shall be in Rouen on Tuesday at 1 o'clock, I shall plan accordingly. Let me explore Rouen which I don't know, or show it to me if you have the time. I embrace you. Tell your mother how much I appreciate and am touched, by the kind little line which she wrote to me.

G. Sand

XIV. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croissset
Paris, 31 August, 1866

First of all, embrace your good mother and your charming niece for me. I am really touched by the kind welcome I received in your clerical setting, where a stray animal of my species is an anomaly that one might find constraining. Instead of that, they received me as if I were one of the family and I saw that all that great politeness came from the heart. Remember me to all the very kind friends. I was truly exceedingly happy with you. And then, you, you are a dear kind boy, big man that you are, and I love you with all my heart. My head is full of Rouen, of monuments and queer houses. All of that seen with you strikes me doubly. But your house, your garden, your CITADEL, it is like a dream and it seems to me that I am still there.

I found Paris very small yesterday, when crossing the bridges.

I want to start back again. I did not see you enough, you and your surroundings; but I must rush off to the children, who are calling and threatening me. I embrace you and I bless you all.

G. Sand

Paris, Friday.

On going home yesterday, I found Couture to whom I said on your behalf that HIS portrait of me was, according to you, the best that anyone had made. He was not a little flattered. I am going to hunt up an especially good copy to send you.

I forgot to get three leaves from the tulip tree, you must send them to me in a letter, it is for something cabalistic.

XV. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Paris, 2 September, 1866

Send me back the lace shawl. My faithful porter will forward it to me wherever I am. I don't know yet. If my children want to go with me into Brittany, I shall go to fetch them, if not I shall go on alone wherever chance leads me. In travelling, I fear only distractions. But I take a good deal on myself and I shall end by improving myself. You write me a good dear letter which I kiss. Don't forget the three leaves from the tulip tree. They are asking me at the Odeon to let them perform a fairy play: la Nuit de Noel from the Theatre de Nohant, I don't want to, it's too small a thing. But since they have that idea, why wouldn't they try your fairy play? Do you want me to ask them? I have a notion that this would be the right theatre for a thing of that type. The management, Chilly and Duquesnel, wants to have scenery and MACHINERY and yet keep it literary. Let us discuss this when I return here.

You still have the time to write to me. I shall not leave for three days yet. Love to your family.

G. S.

Sunday evening

I forgot! Levy promises to send you my complete works, they are endless. You must stick them on a shelf in a corner and dig into them when your heart prompts you.

XVI. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croissset
Nohant, 21 September, 1866

I have just returned from a twelve days trip with my children, and on getting home I find your two letters. That fact, added to the joy of seeing Mademoiselle Aurore again, fresh and pretty, makes me quite happy. And you my Benedictine, you are quite alone in your ravishing monastery, working and never going out? That is what it means TO HAVE ALREADY gone out too much. Monsieur craves Syrias, deserts, dead seas, dangers and fatigues! But nevertheless he can make Bovarys in which every little cranny of life is studied and painted with mastery. What an odd person who can also compose the fight between the Sphinx and the Chimaera! You are a being quite apart, very mysterious, gentle as a lamb with it all. I have had a great desire to question you, but a too great respect for you has prevented me; for I know how to make light only of my own calamities, while those which a great mind has had to undergo so as to be in a condition to produce, seem to me like sacred things which should not be touched roughly nor thoughtlessly.

Sainte-Beuve, who loves you all the same, claims that you are horribly vicious. But perhaps he may see with somewhat unclean eyes, like this learned botanist who asserts that the germander is of DIRTY yellow color. The observation was so false, that I could not refrain from writing on the margin of his book: IT IS BECAUSE YOU HAVE DIRTY EYES.

I suppose that a man of intelligence may have great curiosity. I have not had it, lacking the courage. I have preferred to leave my mind incomplete, that is my affair, and every one is free to embark either on a great ship in full sail, or on a fisherman's vessel. The

artist is an explorer whom nothing ought to stop, and who does neither good nor ill when turning to the right or to the left. His end justifies all.

It is for him to know after a little experience, what are the conditions of his soul's health. As for me, I think that yours is in a good condition of grace, since you love to work and to be alone in spite of the rain.

Do you know that, while there has been a deluge everywhere, we have had, except a few downpours, fine sunshine in Brittany? A horrible wind on the shore, but how beautiful the high surf! and since the botany of the coast carried me away, and Maurice and his wife have a passion for shellfish, we endured it all gaily. But on the whole, Brittany is a famous see-saw.

However, we are a little fed up with dolmens and menhirs and we have fallen on fetes and have seen costumes which they said had been suppressed but which the old people still wear. Well! These men of the past are ugly with their home-spun trousers, their long hair, their jackets with pockets under the arms, their sottish air, half drunkard, half saint. And the Celtic relics, uncontestably curious for the archaeologist, have naught for the artist, they are badly set, badly composed, Carnac and Erdeven have no physiognomy. In short, Brittany shall not have my bones! I prefer a thousand times your rich Normandy, or, in the days when one has dramas in his HEAD, a real country of horror and despair. There is nothing in a country where priests rule and where Catholic vandalism has passed, razing monuments of the ancient world and sowing the plagues of the future.

You say US a propos of the fairy play. I don't know with whom you have written it, but I still fancy that it ought to succeed at the Odeon under its present management. If I was acquainted with it, I should know how to accomplish for you what one never knows how to do for one's self, namely, to interest the directors. Anything of yours is bound to be too original to be understood by that coarse Dumaine. Do have a copy at your house, and next month I shall spend a day with you in order to have you read it to me. Le Croisset is so near to Palaiseau!--and I am in a phase of tranquil activity, in which I should love to see your great river flow, and to keep dreaming in your orchard, tranquil itself, quite on top of the cliff. But I am joking, and you are working. You must forgive the abnormal intemperance of one who has just been seeing only stones and has not perceived even a pen for twelve days.

You are my first visit to the living on coming out from the complete entombment of my poor Moi. Live! There is my oremus and my benediction and I embrace you with all my heart.

G. Sand

XVII. TO GEORGE SAND
Croisset, 1866

I a mysterious being, dear master, nonsense! I think that I am sickeningly platitudinous, and I am sometimes exceedingly bored with the bourgeois which I have under my skin. Sainte-Beuve, between

ourselves, does not know me at all, no matter what he says. I even swear to you (by the smile of your grandchild) that I know few men less vicious than I am. I have dreamed much and have done very little. What deceives the superficial observer is the lack of harmony between my sentiments and my ideas. If you want my confession, I shall make it freely to you. The sense of the grotesque has restrained me from an inclination towards a disorderly life. I maintain that cynicism borders on chastity. We shall have much to say about it to each other (if your heart prompts you) the first time we see each other.

Here is the program that I propose to you. My house will be full and uncomfortable for a month. But towards the end of October or the beginning of November (after Bouilhet's play) nothing will prevent you, I hope, from returning here with me, not for a day, as you say, but for a week at least. You shall have "your little table and everything necessary for writing." Is it agreed?

As for the fairy play, thanks for your kind offers of service. I shall get hold of the thing for you (it was done in collaboration with Bouilhet). But I think it is a trifle weak and I am torn between the desire of gaining a few piasters and the shame of showing such a piece of folly.

I think that you are a little severe towards Brittany, not towards the Bretons who seem to me repulsive animals. A propos of Celtic archaeology, I published in L'Artiste in 1858, a rather good hoax on the shaking stones, but I have not the number here and I don't remember the month.

I read, straight through, the 10 volumes of Histoire de ma vie, of which I knew about two thirds but only fragmentarily. What struck me most was the life in the convent. I have a quantity of observations to make to you which occurred to me.

XVIII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Nohant, 28 September, 1866

It is agreed, dear comrade and good friend. I shall do my best to be in Paris for the performance of your friend's play, and I shall do my fraternal duty there as usual; after which we shall go to your house and I shall stay there a week, but on condition that you will not put yourself out of your room. To be an inconvenience distresses me and I don't need so much bother in order to sleep. I sleep everywhere, in the ashes, or under a kitchen bench, like a stable dog. Everything shines with spotlessness at your house, so one is comfortable everywhere. I shall pick a quarrel with your mother and we shall laugh and joke, you and I, much and more yet. If it's good weather, I shall make you go out walking, if it rains continually, we shall roast our bones before the fire while telling our heart pangs. The great river will run black or grey under the window saying always, QUICK! QUICK! and carrying away our thoughts, and our days, and our nights, without stopping to notice such small things.

I have packed and sent by EXPRESS a good proof of Couture's picture, signed by the engraver, my poor friend, Manceau. It is the best that I have and I have only just found it. I have sent with it a

photograph of a drawing by Marchal which was also like me; but one changes from year to year. Age gives unceasingly another character to the face of people who think and study, that is why their portraits do not look like one another nor like them for long. I dream so much and I live so little, that sometimes I am only three years old. But, the next day I am three hundred, if the dream has been sombre. Isn't it the same with you? Doesn't it seem at moments, that you are beginning life without even knowing what it is, and at other times don't you feel over you the weight of several thousand centuries, of which you have a vague remembrance and a sorrowful impression? Whence do we come and whither do we go? All is possible since all is unknown.

Embrace your beautiful, good mother for me. I shall give myself a treat, being with you two. Now try to find that hoax on the Celtic stones; that would interest me very much. When you saw them, had they opened the galgal of Lockmariaker and cleared away the ground near Plouharnel?

Those people used to write, because there are stones covered with hieroglyphics, and they used to work in gold very well, because very beautifully made torques [Footnote: Gallic necklaces.] have been found.

My children, who are, like myself, great admirers of you, send you their compliments, and I kiss your forehead, since Sainte-Beuve lied.

G. Sand

Have you any sun today? Here it is stifling. The country is lovely. When will you come here?

XIX. TO GEORGE SAND

Croisset, Saturday evening, ... 1866

Good, I have it, that beautiful, dear and famous face! I am going to have a large frame made and hang it on my wall, being able to say, as did M. de Talleyrand to Louis Philippe: "It is the greatest honor that my house has received"; a poor phrase, for we two are worth more than those two amiable men.

Of the two portraits, I like that of Couture's the better. As for Marchal's he saw in you only "the good woman," but I who am an old Romantic, find in the other, "the head of the author" who made me dream so much in my youth.

XX. TO GEORGE SAND

Croisset, Saturday evening, 1866

Your sending the package of the two portraits made me think that you were in Paris, dear master, and I wrote you a letter which is waiting for you at rue des Feuillantines.

I have not found my article on the dolmens. But I have my manuscript

(entire) of my trip in Brittany among my "unpublished works." We shall have to gabble when you are here. Have courage.

I don't experience, as you do, this feeling of a life which is beginning, the stupefaction of a newly commenced existence. It seems to me, on the contrary, that I have always lived! And I possess memories which go back to the Pharaohs. I see myself very clearly at different ages of history, practising different professions and in many sorts of fortune. My present personality is the result of my lost personalities. I have been a boatman on the Nile, a leno in Rome at the time of the Punic wars, then a Greek rhetorician in Subura where I was devoured by insects. I died during the Crusade from having eaten too many grapes on the Syrian shores, I have been a pirate, monk, mountebank and coachman. Perhaps also even emperor of the East?

Many things would be explained if we could know our real genealogy. For, since the elements which make a man are limited, should not the same combinations reproduce themselves? Thus heredity is a just principle which has been badly applied.

There is something in that word as in many others. Each one takes it by one end and no one understands the other. The science of psychology will remain where it lies, that is to say in shadows and folly, as long as it has no exact nomenclature, so long as it is allowed to use the same expression to signify the most diverse ideas. When they confuse categories, adieu, morale!

Don't you really think that since '89 they wander from the point? Instead of continuing along the highroad which was broad and beautiful, like a triumphal way, they stray off by little sidepaths and flounder in mud holes. Perhaps it would be wise for a little while to return to Holbach. Before admiring Proudhon, supposing one knew Turgot? But le Chic, that modern religion, what would become of it!

Opinions chic (or chiques): namely being pro-Catholicism (without believing a word of it) being pro-Slavery, being pro-the House of Austria, wearing mourning for Queen Amelie, admiring Orphee aux Enfers, being occupied with Agricultural Fairs, talking Sport, acting indifferent, being a fool up to the point of regretting the treaties of 1815. That is all that is the very newest.

Oh! You think that because I pass my life trying to make harmonious phrases, in avoiding assonances, that I too have not my little judgments on the things of this world? Alas! Yes! and moreover I shall burst, enraged at not expressing them.

But a truce to joking, I should finally bore you.

The Bouilhet play will open the first part of November. Then in a month we shall see each other.

I embrace you very warmly, dear master.

XXI. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croisset
Nohant, Monday evening, 1 October, 1866

Dear friend,

Your letter was forwarded to me from Paris. It isn't lost. I think too much of them to let any be lost. You don't speak to me of the floods, therefore I think that the Seine did not commit any follies at your place and that the tulip tree did not get its roots wet. I feared lest you were anxious and wondered if your bank was high enough to protect you. Here we have nothing of that sort to be afraid of; our streams are very wicked, but we are far from them.

You are happy in having such clear memories of other existences. Much imagination and learning--those are your memories; but if one does not recall anything distinct, one has a very lively feeling of one's own renewal in eternity. I have a very amusing brother who often used to say "at the time when I was a dog. ..." He thought that he had become man very recently. I think that I was vegetable or mineral. I am not always very sure of completely existing, and sometimes I think I feel a great fatigue accumulated from having lived too much. Anyhow, I do not know, and I could not, like you, say, "I possess the past."

But then you believe that one does not really die, since one LIVES AGAIN? If you dare to say that to the Smart Set, you have courage and that is good. I have the courage which makes me pass for an imbecile, but I don't risk anything; I am imbecile under so many other counts.

I shall be enchanted to have your written impression of Brittany, I did not see enough to talk about. But I sought a general impression and that has served me for reconstructing one or two pictures which I need. I shall read you that also, but it is still an unformed mass.

Why did your trip remain unpublished? You are very coy. You don't find what you do worth being described. That is a mistake. All that issues from a master is instructive, and one should not fear to show one's sketches and drawings. They are still far above the reader, and so many things are brought down to his level that the poor devil remains common. One ought to love common people more than oneself, are they not the real unfortunates of the world? Isn't it the people without taste and without ideals who get bored, don't enjoy anything and are useless? One has to allow oneself to be abused, laughed at, and misunderstood by them, that is inevitable. But don't abandon them, and always throw them good bread, whether or not they prefer filth; when they are sated with dirt they will eat the bread; but if there is none, they will eat filth in secula seculorum.

I have heard you say, "I write for ten or twelve people only." One says in conversation, many things which are the result of the impression of the moment; but you are not alone in saying that. It was the opinion of the Lundi or the thesis of that day. I protested inwardly. The twelve persons for whom you write, who appreciate you, are as good as you are or surpass you. You never had any need of reading the eleven others to be yourself. But, one writes for all the world, for all who need to be initiated; when one is not understood, one is resigned and recommences. When one is understood, one rejoices and continues. There lies the whole secret of our persevering labors and of our love of art. What is art without the

hearts and minds on which one pours it? A sun which would not project rays and would give life to no one.

After reflecting on it, isn't that your opinion? If you are convinced of that, you will never know disgust and lassitude, and if the present is sterile and ungrateful, if one loses all influence, all hold on the public, even in serving it to the best of one's ability, there yet remains recourse to the future, which supports courage and effaces all the wounds of pride. A hundred times in life, the good that one does seems not to serve any immediate use; but it keeps up just the same the tradition of wishing well and doing well, without which all would perish.

Is it only since '89 that people have been floundering? Didn't they have to flounder in order to arrive at '48 when they floundered much more, but so as to arrive at what should be? You must tell me how you mean that and I will read Turgot to please you. I don't promise to go as far as Holbach, ALTHOUGH HE HAS SOME GOOD POINTS, THE RUFFIAN!

Summon me at the time of Bouilhet's play. I shall be here, working hard, but ready to run, and loving you with all my heart. Now that I am no longer a woman, if the good God was just, I should become a man; I should have the physical strength and would say to you: "Come let's go to Carthage or elsewhere." But there, one who has neither sex nor strength, progresses towards childhood, and it is quite otherwhere that one is renewed; WHERE? I shall know that before you do, and, if I can, I shall come back in a dream to tell you.

XXII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Nohant, 19 October

Dear friend, they write me from the Odeon that Bouilhet's play is on the 27th. I must be in Paris the 26th. Business calls me in any event. I shall dine at Magny's on that day, and the next, and the day after that. Now you know where to find me, for I think that you will come for the first performance. Yours always, with a full heart,

G. Sand

XXIII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Nohant, 23 October, 1866

Dear friend, since the play is on the 29th I shall give two more days to my children and I leave here the 28th. You have not told me if you will dine with me and your friend on the 29th informally, at Magny's at whatever hour you wish. Let me find a line at 97 rue des Feuillantines, on the 28th.

Then we shall go to your house, the day you wish. My chief talk with you will be to listen to you and to love you with all my heart. I shall bring what I have "ON THE STOCKS." That will GIVE ME COURAGE, as they say here, to read to you my EMBRYO. If I could only carry the sun from Nohant. It is glorious.

I embrace and bless you.

G. Sand

XXIV. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Paris, 10 November, 1866

On reaching Paris I learn sad news. Last evening, while we were talking--and I think that we spoke of him day before yesterday--my friend Charles Duveyrier died, a most tender heart and a most naive spirit. He is to be buried tomorrow. He was one year older than I am. My generation is passing bit by bit. Shall I survive it? I don't ardently desire to, above all on these days of mourning and farewell. It is as God wills, provided He lets me always love in this world and in the next.

I keep a lively affection for the dead. But one loves the living differently. I give you the part of my heart that he had. That joined to what you have already, makes a large share. It seems to me that it consoles me to make that gift to you. From a literary point of view he was not a man of the first rank, one loved him for his goodness and spontaneity. Less occupied with affairs and philosophy, he would have had a charming talent. He left a pretty play, Michel Perrin.

I travelled half the way alone, thinking of you and your mother at Croisset and looking at the Seine, which thanks to you has become a friendly GODDESS. After that I had the society of an individual with two women, as ordinary, all of them, as the music at the pantomime the other day. Example: "I looked, the sun left an impression like two points in my eyes." HUSBAND: "That is called luminous points," and so on for an hour without stopping.

I shall do all sorts of errands for the house, for I belong to it, do I not? I am going to sleep, quite worn out; I wept unrestrainedly all the evening, and I embrace you so much the more, dear friend. Love me MORE than before, because I am sad.

G. Sand

Have you a friend among the Rouen magistrates? If you have, write him a line to watch for the NAME Amedee Despruneaux. It is a civil case which will come up at Rouen in a few days. Tell him that this Despruneaux is the most honest man in the world; you can answer for him as for me. In doing this, if the thing is feasible, you will do me a personal favor. I will do the same for any friend of yours.

XXV. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
11 November, 1866

I send you my friend Despruneaux in person. If you know a judge or two,--or if your brother could give him a word of support, do arrange it, I kiss you three times on each eye.

G. Sand

Five minutes' interview and that's all the inconvenience. Paris, Sunday

XXVI. TO GEORGE SAND
Monday night

You are sad, poor friend and dear master; it was you of whom I thought on learning of Duveyrier's death. Since you loved him, I am sorry for you. That loss is added to others. How we keep these dead souls in our hearts. Each one of us carries within himself his necropolis.

I am entirely UNDONE since your departure; it seems to me as if I had not seen you for ten years. My one subject of conversation with my mother is you, everyone here loves you. Under what star were you born, pray, to unite in your person such diverse qualities, so numerous and so rare?

I don't know what sort of feeling I have for you, but I have a particular tenderness for you, and one I have never felt for anyone, up to now. We understood each other, didn't we, that was good.

I especially missed you last evening at ten o'clock. There was a fire at my wood-seller's. The sky was rose color and the Seine the color of gooseberry sirup. I worked at the engine for three hours and I came home as worn out as the Turk with the giraffe.

A newspaper in Rouen, le Nouvelliste, told of your visit to Rouen, so that Saturday after leaving you I met several bourgeois indignant at me for not exhibiting you. The best thing was said to me by a former sub-prefect: "Ah! if we had known that she was here ... we would have ... we would have ..." he hunted five minutes for the word; "we would have smiled for her." That would have been very little, would it not?

To "love you more" is hard for me--but I embrace you tenderly. Your letter of this morning, so melancholy, reached the BOTTOM of my heart. We separated at the moment when many things were on the point of coming to our lips. All the doors between us two are not yet open. You inspire me with a great respect and I do not dare to question you.

XXVII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croisset
Paris, 13 November, 1866 Night from Tuesday to Wednesday

I have not yet read my play. I have still something to do over. Nothing pressing. Bouilhet's play goes admirably well, and they told me that my little friend Cadol's [Footnote: Edward Cadol, a dramatic author and a friend of Maurice Sand.] play would come next. And, for nothing in the world, do I want to step on the body of that child. That puts me quite a distance off and does not annoy me--NOR INJURE ME AT ALL. What style! Luckily I am not writing for Buloz.

I saw your friend last evening in the foyer at the Odeon. I shook hands with him. He had a happy look. And then I talked with Duquesnel about the fairy play. He wants very much to know it. You have only to present yourself when ever you wish to busy yourself with it. You will be received with open arms.

Mario Proth will give me tomorrow or next day the exact date on the transformation of the journal. Tomorrow I shall go out and buy your dear mother's shoes. Next week I am going to Palaiseau and I shall hunt up my book on faience. If I forget anything, remind me of it.

I have been ill for two days. I am cured. Your letter does my heart good. I shall answer all the questions quite nicely, as you have answered mine. One is happy, don't you think so, to be able to relate one's whole life? It is much less complicated than the bourgeois think, and the mysteries that one can reveal to a friend are always the contrary of what indifferent ones suppose.

I was very happy that week with you: no care, a good nesting-place a lovely country, affectionate hearts and your beautiful and frank face which has a somewhat paternal air. Age has nothing to do with it. One feels in you the protection of infinite goodness, and one evening when you called your mother "MY DAUGHTER," two tears came in my eyes. It was hard to go away, but I hindered your work, and then,--and then,--a malady of my old age is, not being able to keep still. I am afraid of getting too attached and of wearying others. The old ought to be extremely discreet. From a distance I can tell you how much I love you without the fear of repetition. You are one of the RARE BEINGS remaining impressionable, sincere, loving art, not corrupted by ambition, not drunk with success. In short you will always be twenty-five years of age because of all sorts of ideas which have become old-fashioned according to the senile young men of today. With them, I think it is decidedly a pose, but it is so stupid! If it is a weakness, it is still worse. They are MEN OF LETTERS and not MEN. Good luck to the novel! It is exquisite; but oddly enough there is one entire side of you which does not betray itself in what you do, something that you probably are ignorant of. That will come later, I am sure of it.

I embrace you tenderly, and your mother too, and the charming niece! [Footnote: Madame Caroline Commanville.] Ah! I forgot, I saw Couture this evening; he told me that in order to be nice to you, he would make your portrait in crayon like mine for whatever price you wish to arrange. You see I am a good commissioner, use me.

XXVIII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
16 November, 1866

Thanks, dear friend of my heart, for all the trouble that I gave you with my Berrichon Despruneaux. They are friends from the old country, a whole adorable family of fine people, fathers, children, wives, nephews, all in the close circle at Nohant. He must have been MOVED at seeing you. He looked forward to it, all personal interest aside. And I who am not practical, forgot to tell you that the judgment would not be given for a fortnight. That in consequence any preceding within the next two weeks would be extremely useful. If he gains his suit relative to the constructions at Yport, he will

settle there and I shall realize the plan formed long since of going every year to his house; he has a delicious wife and they have loved me a long time. You then are threatened with seeing me often scratching at your gate in passing, giving you a kiss on the forehead, crying courage for your labor and running on. I am still awaiting our information on the journal. It seems that it is a little difficult to be exact for '42. I have asked for the most scrupulous exactitude.

For two days I have been taking out to walk my Cascaret, [Footnote: Francis Laur.] the little engineer of whom I told you. He has become very good looking, the ladies lift their lorgnons at him, and it depends only on him to attain the dignity of a negro "giraffier," but he loves, he is engaged, he has four years to wait, to work to make himself a position, and he has made a vow. You would tell him that he is stupid, I preach to him, on the contrary, my old troubadour doctrine.

Morality aside, I don't think that the children of this day have sufficient force to manage at the same time, science and dissipation, cocottes and engagements. The proof is that nothing comes from young Bohemia any longer. Good night, friend, work well, sleep well. Walk a little for the love of God and of me. Tell your judges who promised me a smile, to smile on my Berrichon.

XXIX. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
16 November, 1866

Don't take any further steps. Contrary to all anticipations, Despruneaux has gained his suit during the session.

Whether you have done it or not, he is none the less grateful about it and charges me to thank you with all his good and honest heart.

Bouilhet goes from better to better. I have just seen the directors who are delighted.

I love you and embrace you.

Think sometimes of your old troubadour. Friday

G. Sand

XXX. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
18 November (?), 1866

I think that I shall give you pleasure and joy when I tell you that La Conjuration d'Ambroise, thus says my porter, is announced as a real money-maker. There was a line this evening as at Villemer, and Magny which is also a barometer, shows fair weather.

So be content, if that keeps up, Bouilhet is a success. Sunday

G. S.

XXXI. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Palaiseau, 22 November, 1866

I think that it will bring me luck to say good evening to my dear comrade before starting to work.

I am QUITE ALONE in my little house. The gardener and his family live in the pavilion in the garden and we are the last house at the end of the village, quite isolated in the country, which is a ravishing oasis. Fields, woods, appletrees as in Normandy; not a great river with its steam whistles and infernal chain; a little stream which runs silently under the willows; a silence ... ah! it seems to me that I am in the depths of the virgin forest: nothing speaks except the little jet of the spring which ceaselessly piles up diamonds in the moonlight. The flies sleeping in the corners of my room, awaken at the warmth of my fire. They had installed themselves there to die, they come near the lamp, they are seized with a mad gaiety, they buzz, they jump, they laugh, they even have faint inclinations towards love, but it is the hour of death and paf! in the midst of the dance, they fall stiff. It is over, farewell to dancing!

I am sad here just the same. This absolute solitude, which has always been vacation and recreation for me, is shared now by a dead soul [Footnote: Alexandre Manceau, the engraver, a friend of Maurice Sand.] who has ended here, like a lamp which is going out, yet which is here still. I do not consider him unhappy in the region where he is dwelling; but the image that he has left near me, which is nothing more than a reflection, seems to complain because of being unable to speak to me any more.

Never mind! Sadness is not unhealthy. It prevents us from drying up. And you dear friend, what are you doing at this hour? Grubbing also, alone also; for your mother must be in Rouen. Tonight must be beautiful down there too. Do you sometimes think of the "old troubadour of the Inn clock, who still sings and will continue to sing perfect love?" Well! yes, to be sure! You do not believe in chastity, sir, that's your affair. But as for me, I say that SHE HAS SOME GOOD POINTS, THE JADE!

And with this, I embrace you with all my heart, and I am going to, if I can, make people talk who love each other in the old way.

You don't have to write to me when you don't feel like it. No real friendship without ABSOLUTE liberty.

In Paris next week, and then again to Palaiseau, and after that to Nohant. I saw Bouilhet at the Monday performance. I am CRAZY about it. But some of us will applaud at Magny's. I had a cold sweat there, I who am so steady, and I saw everything quite blue.

XXXII. TO GEORGE SAND
Croisset, Tuesday

You are alone and sad down there, I am the same here.

Whence come these attacks of melancholy that overwhelm one at times? They rise like a tide, one feels drowned, one has to flee. I lie prostrate. I do nothing and the tide passes.

My novel is going very badly for the moment. That fact added to the deaths of which I have heard; of Cormenin (a friend of twenty-five years' standing), of Gavarni, and then all the rest, but that will pass. You don't know what it is to stay a whole day with your head in your hands trying to squeeze your unfortunate brain so as to find a word. Ideas come very easily with you, incessantly, like a stream. With me it is a tiny thread of water. Hard labor at art is necessary for me before obtaining a waterfall. Ah! I certainly know THE AGONIES OF STYLE.

In short I pass my life in wearing away my heart and brain, that is the real TRUTH about your friend.

You ask him if he sometimes thinks of his "old troubadour of the clock," most certainly! and he mourns for him. Our nocturnal talks were very precious (there were moments when I restrained myself in order not to KISS you like a big child).

Your ears ought to have burned last night. I dined at my brother's with all his family. There was hardly any conversation except about you, and every one sang your praises, unless perhaps myself, I slandered you as much as possible, dearly beloved master.

I have reread, a propos of your last letter (and by a very natural connection of ideas), that chapter of father Montaigne's entitled "some lines from Virgil." What he said of chastity is precisely what I believe. It is the effort that is fine and not the abstinence in itself. Otherwise shouldn't one curse the flesh like the Catholics? God knows whither that would lead. Now at the risk of repetition and of being a Prudhomme, I insist that your young man is wrong. [Footnote: Refers to Francis Laur.] If he is temperate at twenty years old, he will be a cowardly roue at fifty. Everything has its compensations. The great natures which are good, are above everything generous and don't begrudge the giving of themselves. One must laugh and weep, love, work, enjoy and suffer, in short vibrate as much as possible in all his being.

That is, I think, the real human existence.

XXXIII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croisset

Palaiseau, 29 November, 1866

One need not be spiritualist nor materialist, you say, but one should be a naturalist. That is a great question.

My Cascaret, that is what I call the little engineer, will decide it as he thinks best. He is not stupid and he will have many ideas, deductions and emotions before realizing the prophecy that you make. I do not catechise him without reserve, for he is stronger than I am on many points, and it is not Catholic spiritualism that stifles him. But the question by itself is very serious, and hovers above our art, above us troubadours, more or less clock-bearing or

clockshaped.

Treat it in an entirely impersonal way; for what is good for one might be quite the reverse for another. Let us ask ourselves in making an abstract of our tendencies or of our experiences, if the human being can receive and seek its own full physical development without intellectual suffering. Yes, in an ideal and rational society that would be so. But, in that in which we live and with which we must be content, do not enjoyment and excess go hand in hand, and can one separate them or limit them, unless one is a sage of the first class? And if one is a sage, farewell temptation which is the father of real joys.

The question for us artists, is to know if abstinence strengthens us or if it exalts us too much, which state would degenerate into weakness,--You will say, "There is time for everything and power enough for every dissipation of strength." Then you make a distinction and you place limits, there is no way of doing otherwise. Nature, you think, places them herself and prevents us from abusing her. Ah! but no, she is not wiser than we who are also nature.

Our excesses of work, as our excesses of pleasure, kill us certainly, and the more we are great natures, the more we pass beyond bounds and extend the limits of our powers.

No, I have no theories. I spend my life in asking questions and in hearing them answered in one way or another without any victoriously conclusive reply ever being given me. I await the brilliance of a new state of my intellect and of my organs in a new life; for, in this one, whosoever reflects, embraces up to their last consequences, the limits of pro and con. It is Monsieur Plato, I think, who asked for and thought he held the bond. He had it no more than we. However, this bond exists, since the universe subsists without the pro and con, which constitute it, reciprocally destroying each other. What shall one call it in material nature? EQUILIBRIUM, that will do, and for spiritual nature? MODERATION, relative chastity, abstinence from excess, whatever you want, but that is translated by EQUILIBRIUM; am I wrong, my master?

Consider it, for in our novels, what our characters do or do not do, rests only on that. Will they or will they not possess the object of their ardent desires? Whether it is love or glory, fortune or pleasure, ever since they existed, they have aspired to one end. If we have a philosophy in us, they walk right according to us; if we have not, they walk by chance, and are too much dominated by the events which we put in the way of their legs. Imbued by our own ideas and ruled by fatality, they do not always appear logical. Should we put much or little of ourselves in them? Shouldn't we put what society puts in each one of us?

For my part, I follow my old inclination, I put myself in the skin of my good people. People scold me for it, that makes no difference. You, I don't really know if by method or by instinct, take another course. What you do, you succeed in; that is why I ask you if we differ on the question of internal struggles, if the hero ought to have any or if he ought not to know them.

You always astonish me with your painstaking work; is it a coquetry?

It does not seem labored. What I find difficult is to choose out of the thousand combinations of scenic action which can vary infinitely, the clear and striking situation which is not brutal nor forced. As for style, I attach less importance to it than you do.

The wind plays my old harp as it lists. It has its HIGH NOTES, its LOW NOTES, its heavy notes--and its faltering notes, in the end it is all the same to me provided the emotion comes, but I can find nothing in myself. It is THE OTHER who sings as he likes, well or ill, and when I try to think about it, I am afraid and tell myself that I am nothing, nothing at all. But a great wisdom saves us; we know how to say to ourselves, "Well, even if we are absolutely nothing but instruments, it is still a charming state and like no other, this feeling oneself vibrate."

Now, let the wind blow a little over your strings. I think that you take more trouble than you need, and that you ought to let THE OTHER do it oftener. That would go just as well and with less fatigue.

The instrument might sound weak at certain moments, but the breeze in continuing would increase its strength. You would do afterwards what I don't do, what I should do. You would raise the tone of the whole picture and would cut out what is too uniformly in the light.

Vale et me ama.

XXXIV. TO GEORGE SAND

Saturday morning

Don't bother yourself about the information relative to the journals. That will occupy little space in my book and I have time to wait. But when you have nothing else to do, jot down on paper whatever you can recall of '48. Then you can develop it in talking. I don't ask you for copy of course, but to collect a little of your personal memories.

Do you know an actress at the Odeon who plays Macduff in Macbeth? Dugueret? She would like to have the role of Nathalie in Mont-reveche. She will be recommended to you by Girardin, Dumas and me. I saw her yesterday in Faustine, in which she showed talent. My opinion is that she has intelligence and that one could profit by her.

If your little engineer has made a VOW, and if that vow does not cost him anything, he is right to keep it; if not, it is pure folly, between you and me. Where should liberty exist if not in passion?

Well! no, IN MY DAY we didn't take such vows and we loved! and swaggeringly. But all participated in a great eclecticism and when one strayed FROM LADIES it was from pride, in defiance of one's self, and for effect. In short, we were Red Romantics, perfectly ridiculous to be sure, but in full bloom. The little good which remains to me comes from that epoch.

XXXV. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

Palaiseau, 30 November, 1866

There would be a good deal to say on all that, my comrade. My Cascaret, that is to say, the fiance in question, keeps himself for his fiancee. She said to him, "Let us wait till you have accomplished certain definite work," and he works. She said to him, "Let us keep ourselves pure for each other," and he keeps himself pure. It is not that he is choked by Catholic spiritualism; but he has a high ideal of love, and why counsel him to go and lose it when his conscience and his honor depend on keeping it?

There is an equilibrium which Nature, our ruler, herself puts in our instincts, and she sets the limit to our appetites. Great natures are not the most robust. We are not developed in all our senses by a very logical education. We are compressed in every way, and we thrust out our roots and branches when and how we can. Great artists are often weak also, and many are impotent. Some too strong in desire are quickly exhausted. In general I think that we have too intense joys and sorrows, we who work with our brains. The laborer who works his land and his wife hard by day and night is not a forceful nature. His brain is very feeble. You say to develop one's self in every direction? Come, not all at the same time, not without rest.

Those who brag of that, are bluffing a bit, or IF THEY DO everything, do everything ill. If love for them is a little bread-and-butter and art a little pot-boiler, all right; but if their pleasure is great, verging on the infinite, and their work eager, verging on enthusiasm, they do not alternate these as in sleeping and waking.

As for me, I don't believe in these Don Juans who are Byrons at the same time. Don Juan did not make poems and Byron made, so they say, very poor love. He must have had sometimes--one can count such emotions in one's life--a complete ecstasy of heart, mind and senses. He knew enough about them to be one of the poets of love. Nothing else is necessary for the instrument of our vibration. The continual wind of little appetites breaks them.

Try some day to write a novel in which the artist (the real artist) is the hero, you will see what great, but delicate and restrained, vigor is in it, how he will see everything with an attentive eye, curious and tranquil, and how his infatuations with the things he examines and delves into, will be rare and serious. You will see also how he fears himself, how he knows that he can not surrender himself without exhaustion, and how a profound modesty in regard to the treasures of his soul prevents him from scattering and wasting them.

The artist is such a fine type to do, that I have never dared really to do him. I do not consider myself worthy to touch that beautiful and very complicated figure; that is aiming too high for a mere woman. But if it could certainly tempt you some day, it would be worth while.

Where is the model? I don't know, I have never REALLY known any one who did not show some spot in the sunlight, I mean some side where the artist verged on the Philistine. Perhaps you have not that spot; you ought to paint yourself. As for me I have it. I love

classifications, I verge on the pedagogue. I love to sew and to care for children, I verge on the servant. I am easily distracted and verge on the idiot. And then I should not like perfection; I feel it but I shouldn't know how to show it.

But one could give him some faults in his nature. What ones? We shall hunt for them some day. That is not really what you are working on now and I ought not to distract you from it.

Be less cruel to yourself. Go ahead and when the afflatus shall have produced everything you must elevate the general tone and cut out what ought not to come down front stage. Can't that be done? It seems to me that it can. What you do appears so easy, so abundant! It is a perpetual overflow, I do not understand your anguish. Good night, dear brother, my love to all yours. I have returned to my solitude at Palaiseau, I love it. I leave it for Paris, Monday. I embrace you warmly. Good luck to your work.

G. Sand

XXXVI. Monsieur Gustave Flobert at Croisset,
Rouen [The postage stamp bears the mark, Paris, 4, December, 1866]

Sir the noise that you make in literature by your distinguished talent I also made in my day in the manner that my means permitted me I began in 1804 under the auspices of the celebrated Madame Saqui and bore off palms and left memories in the annals of the tight-rope and coregrafie balancer in all countries where I have been there appreciated by generals and other officers of the Empire by whom I have been solicited up to an advanced age so that wives of prefects and ministers could not have been complimented about it I have read your distinguished works notably Madame Bovarie of which I think I am capable of being a model to you when she breaks the chains of her feet to go where her heart calls her. I am well preserved for my advanced age and if you have a repugnance for an artist in misfortune, I should be content with your ideal sentiments. You can then count on my heart not being able to dispose of my person being married to a man of light character who squandered my wax cabinet wherein were all figures of celebrities, kings, emperors, ancient and modern and celebrated crimes, which if I had had your permission about it you would have been placed in the number I had then a place in the railroad substation to have charge of the cabinets which the jealousy of my rival made me lose, it is in these sentiments that I write you if you deign to write the history of my unhappy life you alone would be worthy of it and would see in it things of which you would be worthy of appreciating I shall present myself at your house in Rouen whose address I had from M. Bouilhet who knows me well having come to see me in his youth he will tell you that I have the phthisic still agreeably and always faithful to all who knew me whether in the civil or in the military and in these sentiments for life your affectionate

Victoire Potelet

called Marengo Lirondelle widow Dodin
Rue Lanion, 47, Belleville.

XXXVII. TO GEORGE SAND
Wednesday night, 5th December, 1866

Oh! how lovely the letter of Marengo the Swallow is! Seriously, I think it a masterpiece, not a word which is not a word of genius. I have laughed aloud many times. I thank you very dear master, you are as good as can be.

You never tell me what you are doing. How far has the play gone?

I am not at all surprised that you don't understand my literary agonies. I don't understand them myself. But they exist nevertheless, and violent ones.

I don't in the least know how to set to work to write, and I begin by expressing only the hundredth part of my ideas after infinite gropings. Not one who seizes the first impulse, your friend, no! not at all! Thus for entire days I have polished and re-polished a paragraph without accomplishing anything. I feel like weeping at times. You ought to pity me!

As for our subject under discussion (a propos of your young man), what you write me in your last letter is so my way of thinking, that I have not only practised it but preached it. Ask Theo. However, let us understand one another. Artists (who are priests) risk nothing in being chaste; on the contrary. But the bourgeois, what is the use in it for them? Of course there must be certain ones among humanity who stick to chastity. Happy indeed those who don't depart from it.

I don't agree with you that there is anything worth while to be done with the character of the IDEAL ARTIST; he would be a monster. Art is not made to paint the exceptions, and I feel an unconquerable repugnance to putting on paper something from out of my heart. I even think that a novelist HASN'T THE RIGHT TO EXPRESS HIS OPINION on any subject whatsoever. Has the good God ever uttered it, his opinion? That is why there are not a few things that choke me which I should like to spit out, but which I swallow. Why say them, in fact! The first comer is more interesting than Monsieur Gustave Flaubert, because he is more GENERAL and therefore more typical.

Nevertheless, there are days when I consider myself below imbecility. I have still a globe of goldfish and that amuses me. They keep me company while I dine. Is it stupid to be interested in such simple things? Adieu, it is late, I have an aching head.

I embrace you.

XXXVIII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT,
at Paris December, 1866

"Not put one's heart into what one writes?" I don't understand at all, oh! not at all! As for me, I think that one can not put anything else into it. Can one separate one's mind from one's heart? Is it something different? Can sensation itself limit itself? Can existence divide itself? In short, not to give oneself entirely to

one's work, seems to me as impossible as to weep with something else than one's eyes, and to think with something else than one's brain.

What was it you meant? You must tell me when you have the time.

XXXIX. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Paris, 8 December, 1866

You ask me what I am doing? Your old troubadour is content this evening. He has passed the night in re-doing a second act which did not go properly and which has turned out well, so well that my directors are delighted, and I have good hopes of making the end effective--it does not please me yet, but one must pull it through. In short, I have nothing to tell you about myself which is very interesting. When one has the patience of an ox and the wrist broken from crushing stones well or badly, one has scarcely any unexpected events or emotions to recount. My poor Manceau called me the ROAD-MENDER, and there is nothing less poetic than those beings.

And you, dear friend, are you experiencing the anguish and labors of childbirth? That is splendid and youthful. Those who want them don't always get them!

When my daughter-in-law brings into the world dear little children, I abandon myself to such labor in holding her in my arms that it reacts on me, and when the infant arrives, I am sicker than she is, and even seriously so. I think that your pains now react on me, and I have a headache on account of them. But alas! I cannot assist at any birth and I almost regret the time when one believed it hastened deliverances to burn candles before an image.

I see that that rascal Bouilhet has betrayed me; he promised me to copy the Marengo letter in a feigned hand to see if you would be taken in by it. People have written to me seriously things like that. How good and kind your great friend is. He is adored at the Odeon, and this evening they told me that his play was going better and better. I went to hear it again two or three days ago and I was even more delighted with it than the first time.

Well, well, let's keep up our heart, whatever happens, and when you go to rest remember that someone loves you. Affectionate regards to your mother, brother and niece.

G. Sand

XL. TO GEORGE SAND
Croisset, Saturday night

I have seen Citizen Bouilhet, who had a real ovation in his own country. His compatriots who had absolutely ignored him up to then, from the moment that Paris applauded him, screamed with enthusiasm.--He will return here Saturday next, for a banquet that they are giving him,--80 covers, at least.

As for Marengo the Swallow, he kept your secret so well, that he

read the letter in question with an astonishment which duped me.

Poor Marengo! she is a figure! and one that you ought to put in a book. I wonder what her memoirs would be, written in that style?--Mine (my style) continues to give me no small annoyance. I hope, however, in a month, to have crossed the most barren tract. But at the moment I am lost in a desert; well, by the grace of God, so much the worse for me! How gladly I shall abandon this sort of thing, never to return to it to my dying day! Depicting the modern French bourgeois is a stench in my nostrils! And then won't it be time perhaps to enjoy oneself a bit in life, and to choose subjects pleasant to the author?

I expressed myself badly when I said to you that "one should not write from the heart." I meant to say: not put one's personality into the picture. I think that great art is scientific and impersonal. One should, by an effort of mind, put oneself into one's characters and not create them after oneself. That is the method at least; a method which amounts to this: try to have a great deal of talent and even of genius if you can. How vain are all the poetic theories and criticisms!--and the nerve of the gentlemen who compose them sickens me. Oh! nothing restrains them, those boneheads!

Have you noticed that there is sometimes in the air a current of common ideas? For instance, I have just read my friend Du Camp's new novel: Forces Perdues. It is very like what I am doing, in many ways. His book is very naive and gives an accurate idea of the men of our generation having become real fossils to the young men of today. The reaction of '48 opened a deep chasm between the two Frances.

Bouilhet told me that you had been seriously ill at one of the recent Magny's, although you do pretend to be a "woman of wood." Oh! no you are not of wood, dear good great heart! "Beloved old troubadour," would it not perhaps be opportune to rehabilitate him at the Theatre Almanzor? I can see him with his toque and his guitar and his apricot tunic howling at the black-gowned students from the top of a rock. The talk would be fine. Now, good night; I kiss you on both cheeks tenderly.

XLI. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Paris, 7 December, 1866

Something like a week ago someone came to my house in the morning to ask me the address of the bootmaker, my maid did not want to awaken me, and it was not until noon that I read the letter; the bearer said he came from the Hotel Helder on the rue Helder. I answered at once that Simonin lived at 15 rue Richelieu, I wrote to your mother thinking that it was she who wrote to me. I see that she did not receive my note and I don't understand about it, but it is not my fault.

Your old Troubadour is sick as a dog again today, but it will not prevent him from going to Magny's this evening. He could not die in better company; although he would prefer the edge of a ditch in the spring.

Everything else goes well and I leave for Nohant on Saturday. I am trying hard to push the entomological work which Maurice is publishing. It is very fine.

I am doing for him what I have never done for myself. I am writing to the newspaper men.

I shall recommend Mademoiselle Bosquet to whom I can, but that appeals to another public, and I don't stand in as well with the literary men as I do with the scholars. But certainly Marengo the Swallow MUST BE DONE and the apricot troubadour also. All that was of the Cadios of the revolution who began to be or who wanted to be something, no matter what. I am of the last comers and you others born of us, you are between the illusions of my time and the crude deception of the new times. It is quite natural that Du Camp should go parallel with you in a series of observations and ideas, that does not mean anything. There will be no resemblance.

Oh no! I have not found a title for you, it is too serious, and then I should need to know everything. In any case I am no good today to do anything except to draw up my epitaph. Et in Arcadia ego, you know, I love you, dear friend brother, and bless you with all my heart.

G. Sand
Monday.

XLII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croissset
Paris, 9 January, 1867

Dear comrade,

Your old troubadour has been tempted to bite the dust. He is still in Paris. He should have left the 25th of December; his trunk was strapped; your first letter was awaiting him every day at Nohant. At last he is all ready to leave and he goes tomorrow with his son Alexandre [Footnote: Alexandre Dumas fils.] who is anxious to accompany him.

It is stupid to be laid on one's back and to lose consciousness for three days and to get up as enfeebled as if one had done something painful and useful. It was nothing after all, except temporary impossibility of digesting anything whatever. Cold, or weakness, or work, I don't know. I don't think of it any longer. Sainte-Beuve is much more disquieting, somebody have written you about it. He is better also, but there will be serious trouble, and on account of that, accidents to look out for. I am very saddened and anxious about it.

I have not worked for two weeks; so my task has not progressed very much, and as I don't know if I am going to be in shape very soon, I have given the Odeon A VACATION. They will take me when I am ready. I think of going a little to the south when I have seen my children. The plants of the coast are running through my head. I am prodigiously uninterested in anything which is not my little ideal of peaceful work, country life, and of tender and pure friendship. I really think that I am not going to live a long time, although I am

quite cured and well. I get this warning from the great calm, CONTINUALLY CALMER, which exists in my formerly agitated soul. My brain only works from synthesis to analysis, and formerly it was the contrary. Now, what presents itself to my eyes when I awaken is the planet; I have considerable trouble in finding again there the MOI which interested me formerly, and which I begin to' call YOU in the plural. It is charming, the planet, very interesting, very curious but rather backward, and as yet somewhat unpractical; I hope to pass into an oasis with better highways and possible to all. One needs so much money and resources in order to travel here! and the time lost in order to procure. these necessaries is lost to study and to contemplation. It seems to me that there is due me something less complicated, less civilized, more naturally luxurious, and more easily good than this feverish halting-place. Will you come into the land, of my dreams, if I succeed in finding the road? Ah! who can know?

And the novel, is it getting on? Your courage has not declined? Solitude does not weigh on you? I really think that it is not absolute, and that somewhere there is a sweetheart who comes and goes, or who lives near there. But there is something of the anchorite in your life just the same, and if envy your situation. As for me, I am too alone at Palaiseau, with a dead soul; not alone enough at Nohant, with the children whom I love too much to belong to myself,--and at Paris, one does not know what one is, one forgets oneself entirely for a thousand things which are not worth any more than oneself. I embrace you with all my heart, dear friend; remember me to your mother, to your dear family, and write me at Nohant, that will do me good.

The cheeses? I don't know at all, it seems to me that they spoke to me of them, but I don't remember at all. I will tell you that from down there.

XLIII. TO GEORGE SAND

Croisset, Saturday night

No, dear master, you are not near your end. So much the worse for you perhaps. But you will live to be old, very old, as giants live, since you are of that race: only you MUST rest. One thing astonishes me and that is that you have not died twenty times over, having thought so much, written so much and suffered so much. Do go then, since you have the desire, to the Mediterranean. Its azure sky quiets and invigorates. There are the Countries of Youth, such as the Bay of Naples. Do they make one sadder sometimes? I do not know.

Life is not easy! What a complicated and extravagant affair! I know something about that. One must have money for everything! So that with a modest revenue and an unproductive profession one has to make up one's mind to have but little. So I do! The habit is formed, but the days that work does not go well are not amusing. Yes indeed! I would love to follow you into another planet. And a propos of money, it is that which will make our planet uninhabitable in the near future, for it will be impossible to live here, even for the rich, without looking after one's property; one will have to spend several hours a day fussing over one's INCOME. Charming! I continue to fuss over my novel, and I shall go to Paris when I reach the end of my

chapter, towards the middle of next month.

And whatever you suspect, no "lovely lady" comes to see me. Lovely ladies have occupied my mind a good deal, but have taken up very little of my time. Applying the term anchorite to me is perhaps a juster comparison than you think.

I pass entire weeks without exchanging a word with a human being, and at the end of the week it is not possible for me to recall a single day nor any event whatsoever. I see my mother and my niece on Sundays, and that is all. My only company consists of a band of rats in the garret, which make an infernal racket above my head, when the water does not roar or the wind blow. The nights are black as ink, and a silence surrounds me comparable to that of the desert. Sensitiveness is increased immeasurably in such a setting. I have palpitations of the heart for nothing.

All that results from our charming profession. That is what it means to torment the soul and the body. But perhaps this torment is our proper lot here below?

I told you, didn't I, that I had reread Consuelo and the Comtesse de Rudolstadt; it took me four days. We must discuss them at length, when you are willing. Why am I in love with Siverain? Perhaps because I am of both sexes.

XLIV. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT at Croissset

Nohant, 15 January, 1867

Here I am at home, fairly strong except for several hours during the evening. Yet, THAT WILL PASS. THE EVIL OR HE WHO ENDURES IT, my old cure used to say, CAN NOT LAST. I received your letter this morning, dear friend of my heart. Why do I love you more than most of the others, even more than old and well-tried friends? I am asking, for my condition at this hour, is that of being

THOU WHO GOEST SEEKING,
AT SUNSET,
FORTUNE! ...

Yes, intellectual fortune, LIGHT! Oh well, here it is: one gets, being old, at the sunset of life,--which is the most beautiful hour of tones and reflections,--a new idea of everything and of affection above all.

In the age of power and of personality, one tests one's friends as one tests the earth, from the point of view of reciprocity. One feels oneself solid, one wants to find that which bears one or leads one, solid. But, when one feels the intensity of the moi fleeing, one loves persons and things for what they are in themselves, for what they represent in the eyes of one's soul, and not at all for what they add further to one's destiny. It is like the picture or the statue which one would like to own, when one dreams at the same time of a beautiful house of one's own in which to put it.

But one has passed through green Bohemia without gathering anything there; one has remained poor, sentimental and troubadourish. One

knows very well that it will always be the same, and that one will die without a hearth or a home. Then one thinks of the statue, of the picture which one would not know what to do with and which one would not know where to place with due honor, if one owned it. One is content to know that they are in some temple not profaned by cold analysis, a little far from the eye, and one loves them so much the more. One says: I will go again to the country where they are. I shall see again and I shall love always that which has made me love and understand them. The contact of my personality will not have changed them, it will not be myself that I shall love in them.

And it is thus, truly, that the ideal which one does not dream of grasping, fixes itself in one because it remains ITSELF. That is all the secret of the beautiful, of the only truth, of love, friendship, of art, of enthusiasm, and of faith. Consider it, you will see.

That solitude in which you live would be delicious to me in fine weather. In winter I find it stoical, and am forced to recall to myself that you have not the moral need of locomotion AS A HABIT. I used to think that was another expenditure of strength during this season of being shut in;--well, it is very fine, but it must not continue indefinitely; if the novel has to last longer, you must interrupt it, or vary it with distractions. Really, my dear friend, think of the life of the body, which gets upset and nervous when you subdue it too much. When I was ill in Paris, I saw a physician, very mad, but very intelligent, who said very true things on that subject. He said that I SPIRITUALIZED myself in a disquieting manner, and when I told him, exactly, a propos of you, that one could abstract oneself from everything except work, and have more rather than less strength, he answered that the danger was as great in accumulating as in losing, and a propos of this, many excellent things which I wish I could repeat to you.

Besides, you know them, but you never pay any attention to them. Then this work which you abuse so in words, is a passion, and a great one! Now, I shall tell you what you tell me. For our sake and for the sake of your old troubadour, do SPARE yourself a little.

Consuelo, La Comtesse de Rudolstadt, what are they? Are they mine? I don't recall a single word in them. You are reading that, you? Are you really amused? Then I shall read them one of these days and I shall love myself if you love me.

What is being hysterical? I have perhaps been that also, I am perhaps; but I don't know anything about it, never having profoundly studied the thing, and having heard of it without having studied it. Isn't it an uneasiness, an anguish caused by the desire of an impossible SOMETHING OR OTHER? In that case, we are all attacked by it, by this strange illness, when we have imagination; and why should such a malady have a sex?

And still further, there is this for those strong in anatomy: THERE IS ONLY ONE SEX. A man and a woman are so entirely the same thing, that one hardly understands the mass of distinctions and of subtle reasons with which society is nourished concerning this subject. I have observed the infancy and the development of my son and my daughter. My son was myself, therefore much more woman, than my daughter, who was an imperfect man.

I embrace you. Maurice and Lina who have tasted your cheese, send you their regards, and Mademoiselle Aurore cries to you, WAIT, WAIT, WAIT! That is all that she knows how to say while laughing like a crazy person; for, at heart she is serious, attentive, clever with her hands as a monkey and amusing herself better with games she invents, than with those one suggests to her. I think that she will have a mind of her own.

If I do not get cured here, I shall go to Cannes, where some friends are urging me to come. But I can not yet mention it to my children. When I am with them it is not easy to move. There is passion and jealousy. And all my life has been like that, never my own! Pity yourself then, you who belong to yourself!

XLV. TO GEORGE SAND

Wednesday evening

I have followed your counsel, dear master, I have EXERCISED!!! Am I not splendid; eh?

Sunday night, at eleven o'clock, there was such lovely moonlight along the river and on the snow that I was taken with an itch for movement, and I walked for two hours and a half imagining all sorts of things, pretending that I was travelling in Russia or in Norway. When the tide came in and cracked the cakes of ice in the Seine and the thin ice which covered the stream, it was, without any exaggeration, superb. Then I thought of you and I missed you.

I don't like to eat alone. I have to associate the idea with someone with the things that please me. But this someone is rare. I too wonder why I love you. Is it because you are a great man or a charming being? I don't know. What is certain is that I experience a PARTICULAR sentiment for you and I cannot define it.

And a propos of this, do you think (you who are a master of psychology), that one can love two people in the same way and that one can experience two identical sensations about them? I don't think so, since our individuality changes at every moment of its existence.

You write me lovely things about "disinterested affection." That is true, so is the opposite! We make God always in our own image. At the bottom of all our loves and all our admirations we find ourselves again: ourselves or something approaching us. What is the difference if the OURSELVES is good!

My moi bores me for the moment. How this fool weighs on my shoulders at times! He writes too slowly and is not bluffing at all when he complains of his work. What a task! and what a devil of an idea to have sought such a subject! You should give me a recipe for going faster: and you complain of seeking a fortune! You! I have received a little note from Saint-Beuve which reassures about his health, but it is sad. He seemed to me depressed at not being able to haunt the dells of Cyprus. He is within the truth, or at least within his own truth, which amounts to the same thing. I shall be like him perhaps, when I am his age. However, I think not. Not having had the same youth, my old age will be different.

That reminds me that I once dreamed a book on Saint Perrine. Champfleury treated that subject badly. For I don't see that he is comic: I should have made him atrocious and lamentable. I think that the heart does not grow old; there are even people whose hearts grow bigger with age. I was much drier and more bitter twenty years ago than now. I am feminized and softened by wear, as others get harder, and that makes me INDIGNANT. I feel that I am becoming a COW, it takes nothing to move me; everything troubles and agitates me, everything is to me as the north wind is to the reed.

A word from you, which I remembered, has made me reread now the Fair Maid of Perth. It is a good story, whatever one says about it. That fellow decidedly had an imagination.

Well, adieu. Think of me. I send you my best love.

XLVI. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croissset
Nohant, 1867

Bah! zut! troulala! Well! well! I am not sick any more, or at least I am only half sick. The air of the country restores me, or patience, or THE OTHER person, the one who wants to work again and to produce. What is my illness? Nothing. Everything is all right, but I have something that they call anemia, an effect without a tangible cause, a breakdown which has been threatening for several years, and which became noticeable at Palaiseau, after my return from Croisset. An emaciation that is too rapid to be within reason, a pulse too slow, too feeble, an indolent or capricious stomach, with a sensation of stifling and a fondness for inertia. I was not able to keep a glass of water on my poor stomach for several days, and that brought me so low that I thought I was hardly curable; but, all is getting on, and I have even been working since yesterday.

You, dear, you go walking in the night, in the snow. That is something which for an exceptional excursion, is rather foolish and might indeed make you ill also. Good Heavens! It is not the moon, it is the sun that I advise; we are not owls, OBVIOUSLY! We have just had three spring days. I wager that you have not climbed up to my dear orchard which is so pretty and which I love so much. If it was only in remembrance of me, you ought to climb up every fine day at noon. Your work would flow more abundantly afterward and you would regain the time you lost and more too.

Then you are worrying about money? I don't know what that is, since I have not a sou in the world. I live by my day, work as does the proletarian; when I can no longer do my day's work, I shall be packed up for the other world, and then I shall have no more need of anything. But you must live. How can you live by your pen if you always let yourself be duped and shorn? It is not I who can teach you how to protect yourself But haven't you a friend who knows how to act for you? Alas, yes, the world is going to the devil in that respect; and I was talking of you, the other day, to a very dear friend, while I was showing him the artist, a personage become so rare, and cursing the necessity of thinking of the material side of life. I send you the last page of his letter; you will see that you have in him a friend whom you did not suspect, and whose name will

surprise you.

No, I shall not go to Cannes, in spite of a strong temptation! Imagine, I received a little box filled with flowers gathered out-doors, five or six days ago; for the package followed me to Paris and to Palaiseau. Those flowers are adorably fresh, they smell sweetly, they are as pretty as anything.--Ah! to go, go at once to the country of the sun. But I have no money, and besides I have no time. My illness has delayed me and put me off. Let us stay here. Am I not well? If I can't go to Paris next month, won't you come to see me here? Certainly, it is an eight hours' journey. You can not see this ancient nook. You owe me a week, or I shall believe that I love a big ingrate who does not pay me back.

Poor Sainte-Beuve! More unhappy than we, he who has never had any great disappointments and who has no longer any material worries. He bewails what is the least regrettable and the least serious in life understood as he understood it! And then very proud, having been a Jansenist, his heart has cooled in that direction. Perhaps the intelligence was developed, but that does not suffice to make us live, and does not teach us how to die. Barbes, who has expected for a long time that a stroke would carry him off, is gentle and smiling. It does not seem to him, and it does not seem to his friends, that death will separate him from us. He who quite goes away, is he who believes he ends and does not extend a hand so that anyone can follow him or rejoin him.

And good-night, dear friend of my heart. They are ringing for the performance. Maurice regales us this evening with marionettes. They are very amusing, and the theatre is so pretty! A real artist's jewel. Why aren't you here? It is horrid not to live next door to those one loves.

XLVII. TO GEORGE SAND

Wednesday

I received yesterday your son's book. I shall start it when I have gotten rid of less amusing readings, probably. Meanwhile, don't thank him any the less, dear master.

First, let's talk of you; "arsenic." I am sure of it! You must drink iron, walk, and sleep, and go to the south, no matter what it costs, there! Otherwise the WOODEN WOMAN will break down. As for money, we shall find it; and as for the time, take it. You won't do anything that I advise, of course. Oh! well, you are wrong, and you hurt me.

No, I have not what you call worries about money; my revenues are very small, but they are sure. Only, as it is your friend's habit to anticipate them he finds himself short at times, and he grumbles "in the silence of his closet," but not elsewhere. Unless I have extraordinary reverses, I shall have enough to feed me and warm me until the end of my days. My heirs are or will be rich (for it is I who am the poor one of the family). Then, zut!

As for gaining money by my pen, that is an aspiration that I have never had, recognizing that I was radically incapable of it.

I have to live as a small retired countryman, which is not very amusing. But so many others who are worth more than I am not having the land, it would be unfair for me to complain. Accusing Providence is, moreover a mania so common, that one ought to refrain from it through simple good taste.

Another word about money and one that shall be quite between ourselves. I can, without being inconvenienced at all, as soon as I am in Paris, that is to say from the 20th to the 23rd of the present month, lend you a thousand francs, if you need them in order to go to Cannes. I make you this proposition bluntly, as I would to Bouilhet, or any other intimate friend. Come, don't stand on ceremony!

Between people in society, that would not be correct, I know that, but between troubadours many things are allowable.

You are very kind with your invitation to go to Nohant. I shall go, for I want very much to see your house. I am annoyed not to know it when I think of you. But I shall have to put off that pleasure till next summer. Now I have to stay some time in Paris. Three months are not too long for all I want to do there.

I send you back the page from the letter of your friend Barbes, whose real biography I know very imperfectly. All I know of him is that he is honest and heroic. Give him a hand-shake for me, to thank him for his sympathy. Is he, BETWEEN OURSELVES, as intelligent as he is good?

I feel the importance now, of getting men of that class to be rather frank with me. For I am going to start studying the Revolution of '48. You have promised me to hunt in your library at Nohant for (1) an article of yours on faience; (2) a novel by father X---, a Jesuit, on the Holy Virgin.

But what sternness for the father Beuve who is neither Jesuit nor virgin! He regrets, you say, "what is the least regrettable, understood as he understood it." Why so? Everything depends upon the intensity that one puts on the thing.

Men always find that the most serious thing of their existence is enjoyment.

Woman for us all is the highest point of the infinite. That is not noble, but that is the real depth of the male. They exaggerate that unmercifully, God be thanked, for literature and for individual happiness also.

Oh! I have missed you so much. The tides are superb, the wind groans, the river foams and overflows. It blows from the ocean, which benefits one.

XLVIII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Paris

Nohant, 8 February, 1867

No, I am not Catholic, but I reject monstrosities. I say that the hideous old man who buys young girls does not make love and that

there is in it neither death nor birth, nor infinity, nor male nor female. It is a thing against nature; for it is not desire that drives the young girl into the arms of the ugly old man, and where there is not liberty nor reciprocity there is an attack against holy nature. Therefore that which he regrets is not regrettable, unless he thinks that his little cocottes will regret his person, and I ask you if they will regret anything else than their dirty wages? That was the gangrene in this great and admirable mind, so lucid and so wise on all other subjects. One pardons everything in those one loves, when one is obliged to defend them from their enemies. But what we say between ourselves is buried, and I can tell you that vice has quite spoiled my old friend.

We must believe that we love one another a great deal, dear comrade, for we both had the same thought at the same time. You offer me a thousand francs with which to go to Cannes; you who are as hard up as I am, and, when you wrote to me that you WERE BOTHERED about money matters, I opened my letter again, to offer you half of what I have, which still amounts to about two thousand francs; it is my reserve. And then I did not dare. Why? It is quite stupid; you were better than I, you came straight to the point. Well, I thank you for that kind thought and I do not accept. But I would accept, be sure of it, if I did not have other resources. Only I tell you that if anyone ought to lend to me, it is Buloz who has bought chateaux and lands with my novels. He would not refuse me, I know. He even offers it to me. I shall take from him then, if I have to. But I am not in a condition to leave, I have had a relapse these last few days. I slept thirty-six hours together, exhausted. Now I am on my feet again, but weak. I confess to you that I have not the energy TO WISH TO LIVE. I don't care about it; moving from where I am comfortable, to seek new fatigues, working like a dog to renew a dog's life, it is a little stupid, I think, when it would be so sweet to pass away like that, still loving, still loved, at strife with no one, not discontent with oneself and dreaming of the wonders of other worlds--this assumes that the imagination is still fresh. But I don't know why I talk to you of things considered sad, I have too much the habit of looking at them pleasantly. I forget that they appear afflicting to those who seem in the fulness of life. Don't let's talk about them any longer and let spring do the work, spring which perhaps will breathe into me the desire to take up my work again. I shall be as docile to the interior voice that tells me to walk as to that telling me to sit down.

It is not I who promised you a novel on the Holy Virgin. At least I don't think so. I can not find my article on faience. Do look and see if it was printed at the end of one of my volumes to complete the last sheet. It was entitled Giovanni Freppa ou les Maioliques.

Oh! what luck! While writing to you it has come back to me that there is a corner where I have not looked. I hasten there, I find it! I find something better than my article, and I send you three works which will make you as learned as I am. That of Passeri is charming.

Barbes has intelligence, certainly! but he is a sugar loaf. Brain on a lofty scale, head of an Indian, with gentle instincts, almost impossible to find; all for metaphysical thought which becomes an instinct and a passion that dominates everything. Add to that a character that one can only compare to Garibaldi. A creature of

incredible sanctity and perfection. Immense worth without immediate application in France. The setting of another age or another country is what this hero needs. And now good-night,--O God, what a CALF I am! I leave you the title of COW, which you give yourself in your days of weariness. Never mind, tell me when you are to be in Paris. It is probable that I shall have to go there for a few days for one thing or another. We must embrace each other and then you shall come to Nohant this summer. It is agreed, it must be!

My affectionate regards to your mother and to your lovely niece.

Please acknowledge the receipt of the three pamphlets; they would be a loss.

XLIX. TO GEORGE SAND

Dear master,

You really ought to go to see the sun somewhere; it is foolish to be always suffering; do travel; rest; resignation is the worst of the virtues.

I have need of it in order to endure all the stupidities that I hear! You can not imagine to what a degree they have reached. France which has been sometimes taken with St. Vitus dance (as under Charles VI), seems to me now to have a paralysis of the brain. They are mad with fear. Fear of the Prussians, fear of the strikes, fear of the Exposition which does not go well, fear of everything. We have to go back to 1849 to find such a degree of imbecility.

There was at the last Magny such inane conversation that I swore to myself never to put foot inside the place again. The only subjects under discussion all the time were Bismarck and the Luxembourg. I was stuffed with it! For the rest I don't find it easy to live. Far from becoming blunted my sensibilities are sharper; a lot of insignificant things make me suffer. Pardon this weakness, you who are so strong and tolerant.

The novel does not go at all well. I am deep in reading the newspapers of '48. I have had to make several (and have not yet finished) journeys to Sevres, to Creil, etc.

Father Sainte-Beuve is preparing a discourse on free thought which he will read at the Senate a propos of the press law. He has been very shrewd, you know.

You tell your son Maurice that I love him very much, first because he is your son and secundo because he is he. I find him good, clever, cultivated, not a poseur, in short charming, and "with talent."

L. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Nohant, 4 March, 1867

Dear good friend, the friend of my heart, the old troubadour is as

well as ten thousand men--who are well, and he is gay as a finch, because the sun shines again and copy is progressing.

He will probably go to Paris soon for the play by his son Dumas, let us try to be there together.

Maurice is very proud to be declared COCK by an eagle. At this moment he is having a spree with veal and wine in honor of his firemen.

The AMERICAN [Footnote: Henry Harrisse.] in question is charming. He has, literally speaking, a passion for you, and he writes me that after seeing you he loves you more, that does not surprise me.

Poor Bouilhet! Give him this little note enclosed here. I share his sorrow, I knew her.

Are you amused in Paris? Are you as sedentary there as at Croisset?

In that case I shall hardly see you unless I go to see you.

Tell me the hours when you do not receive the fair sex, and when sexagenarian troubadours do not incommode you.

Cadio is entirely redone and rewritten up to the part I read to you, it is less offensive.

I am not doing Montreveche. I will tell you about that. It is quite a story. I love you and I embrace you with all my heart.

Your old George Sand

Did you receive my pamphlets on the faience? You have not acknowledged them. They were sent to Croisset the day after I got your last letter.

LI. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
14 March, 1867

Your old troubadour is again prostrate. Every moment his guitar threatens to be broken. And then he sleeps forty-eight hours and is cured--but feeble, and he can not be in Paris on the 16th as he had intended. Maurice went alone a little while ago, I shall go to join him in five or six days.

Little Aurore consoles me for this mischance. She twitters like a bird along with the birds who are twittering already as in full spring time.

The anemone Sylvia which I brought from the woods into the garden and which I had a great deal of trouble in acclimating is finally growing thousands of white and pink stars among the blue periwinkle. It is warm and damp. One can not break one's guitar in weather like this. Good-bye, dear good friend.

G. Sand

LII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Friday, 22 March, 1867

Your old troubadour is here, not so badly off. He will go to dine on Monday at Magny's, we shall agree on a day for both of us to dine with Maurice. He is at home at five o'clock but not before Monday.

He is running around!

He embraces you.

LIII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
1867 (?)

Then Wednesday, if you wish, my dear old fellow. Whom do you want to have with us? Certainly, the dear Beuve if that is possible, and no one if you like.

We embrace you.

G. S. Maurice Saturday evening.

LIV. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Nohant, 11 April, 1867

Here I am back again in my nest, and almost cured from a bad fever which attacked me in Paris, the day before my departure.

Really your old troubadour has had ridiculous health for six months. March and April have been such stupid months for him. It makes no difference, however, for he is recovering again, and is seeing once more the trees and the grass grow, it is always the same thing and that is why it is beautiful and good. Maurice has been touched by the friendship that you have shown him; you have seduced and ravished him, and he is not demonstrative.

He and his wife,--who is not at all an ordinary woman,--desire absolutely that you come to our house this year, I am charged to tell you so very seriously and persistently if need be And is that hateful grip gone? Maurice wanted to go to get news of you; but on seeing me so prostrated by the fever, he thought of nothing except packing me up and bringing me here like a parcel. I did nothing except sleep from Paris to Nohant and I was revived on receiving the kisses of Aurore who knows now how to give great kisses, laughing wildly all the while; she finds that very funny.

And the novel? Does it go on its way the same in Paris as in Croisset? It seems to me that everywhere you lead the same hermitlike existence. When you have the time to think of friends, remember your old comrade and send him two lines to tell him that you are well and that you don't forget him.

LV. TO GEORGE SAND

I am worried at not having news from you, dear master. What has become of you? When shall I see you?

My trip to Nohant has fallen through. The reason is this: my mother had a little stroke a week ago. There is nothing left of it, but it might come on again. She is anxious for me, and I am going to hurry back to Croisset. If she is doing well towards the month of August, and I am not worried, it is not necessary to tell you that I shall rush headlong towards your home.

As regards news, Sainte-Beuve seems to me very ill, and Bouilhet has just been appointed librarian at Rouen.

Since the rumours of war have quieted down, people seem to me a little less foolish. My nausea caused by the public cowardice is decreasing.

I went twice to the Exposition; it is amazing. There are splendid and extraordinary things there. But man is made to swallow the infinite. One would have to know all sciences and all arts in order to be interested in everything that one sees on the Champ de Mars. Never mind; someone who had three entire months to himself, and went every morning to take notes, would save himself in consequence much reading and many journeys.

One feels oneself there very far from Paris, in a new and ugly world, an enormous world which is perhaps the world of the future. The first time that I lunched there, I thought all the time of America, and I wanted to speak like a negro.

LVI. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croisset
Nohant, 9 May, 1867

Dear friend of my heart,

I am well, I am at work, I am finishing Cadio. It is warm, I am alive, I am calm and sad, I hardly know why. In this existence so even, so tranquil, and so gentle as I have here, I am in an element that weakens me morally while strengthening me physically; and I fall into melancholies of honey and roses which are none the less melancholy. It seems to me that all those I love forget me, and that it is justice, because I live a selfish life having nothing to do for any one of them.

I have lived with tremendous attachments which overwhelmed me, which exceeded my strength and which I often used to curse. And it happens that having nothing more to carry them on with, I am bored by being well. If the human race went on very well or very ill, one would reattach oneself to a general interest, would live with an idea, wise or foolish. But you see where we are now, you who storm so fiercely against cowards. That disappears, you say? But only to recommence! What kind of a society is it that becomes paralyzed in the midst of its expansions, because tomorrow can bring a storm? The thought of danger has never produced such demoralizations. Have we

declined to such an extent that it is necessary to beg us to eat, telling us at the same time that nothing will happen to disturb our digestion? Yes, it is silly, it is shameful. Is it the result of prosperity, and does civilization involve this sickly and cowardly selfishness?

My optimism has had a rude jolt of late. I worked up a joy, a courage at the idea of seeing you here. It was like a cure that I carefully contrived, but you are worried about your dear, old mother, and certainly I can not protest.

Well, if, before your departure from Paris, I can finish Cadio, to which I am bound under pain of having nothing wherewith to pay for my tobacco and my shoes, I shall go with Maurice to embrace you. If not, I shall hope for you about the middle of the summer. My children, quite unhappy by this delay, beg to hope for you also, and we hope it so much the more because it would be a good sign for the dear mother.

Maurice has plunged again into Natural History; he wants to perfect himself in the MICROS; I learn on the rebound. When I shall have fixed in my head the name and the appearance of two or three thousand imperceptible varieties, I shall be well advanced, don't you think so? Well, these studies are veritable OCTOPUSES, which entwine about you and which open to you I don't know what infinity. You ask if it is the destiny of man to DRINK THE INFINITE; my heavens, yes, don't doubt it, it is his destiny, since it is his dream and his passion.

Inventing is absorbing also; but what fatigue afterwards! How empty and worn out intellectually one feels, when one has scribbled for weeks and months about that animal with two legs which has the only right to be represented in novels! I see Maurice quite refreshed and rejuvenated when he returns from his beasts and his pebbles, and if I aspire to come out from my misery, it is to bury myself also in studies, which in the speech of the Philistines, are not of any use. Still it is worth more than to say mass and to ring the bell for the adoration of the Creator.

Is it true what you tell me of G----? Is it possible? I can not believe it. Is there in the atmosphere which the earth engenders nowadays, a gas, laughing or otherwise, which suddenly seizes the brain, and carries it on to commit extravagances, as there was under the first revolution a maddening fluid which inspired one to commit cruelties? We have fallen from the Hell of Dante into that of Scarron.

Of what are you thinking, good head and good heart, in the midst of this bacchanal? You are wrathful, oh very well, I like that better than if you were laughing at it; but when you are calmer and when you reflect?

Must one find some fashion of accepting the honor, the duty, and the fatigue of living? As for me, I revert to the idea of an everlasting journey through worlds more amusing, but it would be necessary to go there quickly and change continually. The life that one fears so much to lose is always too long for those who understand quickly what they see. Everything repeats itself and goes over and over again in it.

I assure you that there is only one pleasure: learning what one does not know, and one happiness: loving the exceptions. Therefore I love you and I embrace you tenderly.

Your old troubadour G. Sand

I am anxious about Sainte-Beuve. What a loss that would be! I am content if Bouilhet is content. Is it really a good position?

LVII. TO GEORGE SAND
Paris, Friday morning

I am returning to my mother next Monday, dear master. I have little hope of seeing you before then!

But when you are in Paris, what is to prevent you from pushing on to Croisset where everyone, including myself, adores you? Sainte-Beuve has finally consented to see a specialist and to be seriously treated. And he is better anyway. His morale is improving.

Bouilhet's position gives him four thousand francs a year and lodging. He now need not think of earning his living, which is a real luxury.

No one talks of the war any more, they don't talk of anything.

The Exposition alone is what "everybody is thinking about," and the cabmen exasperate the bourgeois.

They were beautiful (the bourgeois) during the strike of the tailors. One would have said that SOCIETY was going to pieces.

Axiom: Hatred of the bourgeois is the beginning of virtue. But I include in the word bourgeois, the bourgeois in blouses as well the bourgeois in coats.

It is we and we alone, that is to say the literary men, who are the people, or to say it better: the tradition of humanity.

Yes, I am susceptible to disinterested angers and I love you all the more for loving me for that. Stupidity and injustice make me roar,--and I HOWL in my corner against a lot of things "that do not concern me."

How sad it is not to live together, dear master, I admired you before I knew you. From the day I saw your lovely and kind face, I loved you. There you are.--And I embrace you warmly.

Your old

Gustave Flaubert

I shall have the package of pamphlets about faience sent to the rue des Feuillantines. A good handshake to Maurice. A kiss on the four cheeks of Mademoiselle Aurore.

LVIII. TO GEORGE SAND

I stayed thirty-six hours in Paris at the beginning of this week, in order to be present at the Tuileries ball. Without any exaggeration, it was splendid. Paris on the whole turns to the colossal. It is becoming foolish and unrestrained. Perhaps we are returning to the ancient Orient. It seems to me that idols will come out of the earth. We are menaced with a Babylon.

Why not? The INDIVIDUAL has been so denied by democracy that he will abase himself to a complete effacement, as under the great theocratic despotisms.

The Tsar of Russia displeased me profoundly; I found him a rustic. On a parallel with Monsieur Floquet who cries without any danger: "Long live Poland!" We have chic people who have had themselves registered at the Elysee. Oh! what a fine epoch!

My novel goes piano. The further I get on the more difficulties arise. What a heavy cart of sandstone to drag along! And you pity yourself for a labor that lasts six months!

I have enough more for two years, at least (OF MINE). How the devil do you find the connection between your ideas? It is that that delays me. Moreover this book demands tiresome researches. For instance on Monday; I was at the Jockey Club, at the Cafe Anglais, and at a lawyer's in turn. Do you like Victor Hugo's preface to the Paris-Guide? Not very much, do you? Hugo's philosophy seems to me always vague.

I was carried away with delight, a week ago, at an encampment of Gypsies who had established at Rouen. This is the third time that I have seen them and always with a new pleasure. The great thing is that they excite the hatred of the bourgeois, although they are as inoffensive as sheep.

I appeared very badly before the crowd because I gave them a few sous, and I heard some fine words a la Prudhomme. That hatred springs from something very profound and complex. One finds it among all orderly people.

It is the hatred that one feels for the bedouin, for the heretic, the philosopher, the solitary, the poet; and there is a fear in that hate. I, who am always for the minority, am exasperated by it. It is true that many things exasperate me. On the day that I am no longer outraged, I shall fall flat as the marionette from which one withdraws the support of the stick.

Thus, THE STAKE that has supported me this winter, is the indignation that I had against our great national historian, M. Thiers, who had reached the condition of a demi-god, and the pamphlet Trochu, and the everlasting Changarnier coming back over the water. God be thanked that the Exposition has delivered us momentarily from these GREAT MEN.

LIX. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croisset
Nohant, 30 May, 1867

Here you are at home, old friend of my heart, and I and Maurice must go to embrace you. If you are still buried in work, we shall only come and go. It is so near to Paris, that you must not hesitate to tell us. I have finished Cadio, hurray! I have only to POLISH it a little. It is like an illness, carrying this great affair for so long in one's HEAD. I have been so interrupted by real illnesses that I have had great trouble in setting to work again at it. But I am wonderfully well since the fine weather and I am going to take a bath of botany.

Maurice will take one of entomology. He walks three leagues with a friend of like energy in order to hunt in a great plain for an animal which has to be looked at with a magnifying glass. That is happiness! That is being really infatuated. My gloom has disappeared in making Cadio; at present I am only fifteen years old, and everything to me appears for the best in the best possible of worlds. That will last as long as it can. These are the intervals of innocence in which forgetfulness of evil compensates for the inexperience of the golden age.

How is your dear mother? She is fortunate to have you again near her! And the novel? Good heavens! it must get on! Are you walking a little? Are you more reasonable?

The other day, some people not at all stupid were here who spoke highly of Madame Bovary, but with less zest of Salammbo. Lina got into a white heat, not being willing that those wretches should make the slightest objection to it; Maurice had to calm her, and moreover he criticised the work very well, as an artist and as a scholar; so well that the recalcitrants laid down their arms. I should like to have written what he said. He speaks little and often badly; but that time he succeeded extraordinarily well.

I shall then not say adieu, but au revoir, as soon as possible. I love you much, much, my dear old fellow, you know it. My ideal would be to live a long life with a good and great heart like yours. But then, one would want never to die, and when one is really OLD, like me, one must hold oneself ready for anything.

I embrace you tenderly, so does Maurice. Aurore is the sweetest and the most ridiculous person. Her father makes her drink while he says: Dominus vobiscum! then she drinks and answers: Amen! How she is getting on! What a marvel is the development of a little child! No one has ever written about that. Followed day by day, it would be precious in every respect. It is one of those things that we all see without noticing.

Adieu again; think of your old troubadour who thinks unceasingly of you.

G. Sand

LX. TO Gustave Flaubert
Nohant, 14 June, 1867

Dear friend of my heart, I leave with my son and his wife the 20th of the month to stay two weeks in Paris, perhaps more if the revival of Villemer delays me longer. Therefore your dear good mother, whom I do not want to miss, has all the time she needs to go to see her daughters. I shall wait in Paris until you tell me if she has returned, or rather, if I make you a real visit, you shall tell me the time that suits you best.

My intention, for the moment, was quite simply to go to pass an hour with you, and Lina was tempted to accompany me; I should have shown her Rouen, and then we should have embraced you in time to return in the evening to Paris; for the dear little one has always her ear and her heart listening when she is away from Aurore, and her holidays are marked by a continual uneasiness which I quite understand. Aurore is a treasure of gentleness which absorbs us all. If it can be arranged, we shall then go on the run to grasp your hands. If it can not, I shall go alone later when your heart says so, and, if you are going south, I shall put it off until everything can be arranged without disturbing whatever may be the plans of your mother or yourself. I am very free. So, don't disturb yourself, and arrange your summer without bothering about me.

I have thirty-six plans also, but I don't incline to any one; what amuses me is what seizes me and takes me off suddenly. It is with a journey as with a novel: those who travel are those who command. Only when one is in Paris, Rouen is not a journey, and I shall always be ready when I am there, to respond to your call. I am a little remorseful to take whole days from your work, I who am never bored with loafing, and whom you could leave for whole hours under a tree, or before two lighted logs, with the assurance that I should find there something interesting. I know so well how to live OUTSIDE OF MYSELF! It hasn't always been like that. I also was young and subject to indignations. It is over!

Since I have dipped into real nature, I have found there an order, a system, a calmness of cycles which is lacking in mankind, but which man can, up to a certain point, assimilate when he is not too directly at odds with the difficulties of his own life. When these difficulties return he must endeavor to avoid them; but if he has drunk the cup of the eternally true, he does not get too excited for or against the ephemeral and relative truth.

But why do I say this to you? Because it comes to my pen-point; for in considering it carefully, your state of overexcitement is probably truer, or at least more fertile and more human than my SENILE tranquillity. I would not like to make you as I am, even if by a magical operation I could. I should not be interested in myself if I had the honor to meet myself. I should say that one troubadour is enough to manage and I should send the other to Chaillot.

A propos of gypsies, do you know that there are gypsies of the sea? I discovered in the outskirts of Tamaris, among the furthest rocks, great boats well sheltered, with women and children, a coast settlement, very restricted, very tanned; fishing for food without trading; speaking a language that the people of the country do not understand; living only in these great boats stranded on the sand, when the storms troubled them in their rocky coves; intermarrying, inoffensive and sombre, timid or savage; not answering when any one

speaks to them. I don't even know what to call them. The name that I have been told has escaped me but I could get some one to tell me again. Naturally the country people hate them and that they have no religion; if that is so they ought to be superior to us. I ventured all alone among them. "Good day, sirs." Response, a slight bend of the head. I looked at their encampment, no one moved. It seemed as if they did not see me. I asked them if my curiosity annoyed them. A shrug of the shoulders as if to say, "What do we care?" I spoke to a young man who was mending the meshes in a net very cleverly; I showed him a piece of five francs in gold. He looked the other way. I showed him one in silver. He deigned to look at it. "Do you want it?" He bent his head on his work. I put it near him, he did not move. I went away, he followed me with his eyes. When he thought that I could not see him any longer, he took the piece and went to talk with a group. I don't know what happened. I fancy that they put it in the common exchequer. I began botanizing at some distance within sight to see if they would come to ask me something or to thank me. No one moved. I returned as if by chance towards them; the same silence, the same indifference. An hour later, was at the top of the cliff, and I asked the coast-guard who those people were who spoke neither French, nor Italian, nor patois. He told me their name, which I have not remembered.

He thought that they were Moors, left on the coast since the time of the great invasions from Provence, and perhaps he is not mistaken. He told me that he had seen me among them from his watch tower, and that I was wrong, for they were a people capable of anything; but when I asked him what harm they did he confessed to me that they had done none. They lived by their fishing and above all on the things cast up by the sea which they knew how to gather up before the most alert. They were an object of perfect scorn. Why? Always the same story. He who does not do as all the world does can only do evil.

If you go into the country, you might perhaps meet them at the end of the Brusq. But they are birds of passage, and there are years when they do not appear at all. I have not even seen the Paris Guide. They owe me a copy, however; for I gave something to it without receiving payment. It is because of that no doubt that they have forgotten me.

To conclude, I shall be in Paris from the 20th of June to the 5th of July. Send me a word always to 97 rue des Feuillantines. I shall stay perhaps longer, but I don't know. I embrace you tenderly, my splendid old fellow. Walk a little, I beg of you. I don't fear anything for the novel; but I fear for the nervous system taking too much the place of the muscular system. I am very well, except for thunder bolts, when I fall on my bed for forty-eight hours and don't want any one to speak to me. But it is rare and if I do not relent so that they can nurse me, I get up perfectly cured.

Maurice's love. Entomology has taken possession of him this year; he discovers marvels. Embrace your mother for me, and take good care of her. I love you with all my heart.

G. Sand

LXI. To GUSTAVE FLATUBERT

Nohant, 24 July, 1867

Dear good friend, I spent three weeks in Paris with my children, hoping to see you arriving or to receive a line from you which would tell me to come and embrace you. But you were HEAD OVER HEELS and I respect these crises of work; I know them! Here am I back again in old Nohant, and Maurice at Nerac terminating by a compromise the law-suit which keeps him from his inheritance. His agreeable father stole about three hundred thousand francs from his children in order to please his cook; happily, although Monsieur used to lead this edifying life, I used to work and did not cut into my capital. I have nothing, but I shall leave the daily bread assured.

They write me that Villemer goes well. Little Aurore is as pretty as anything and does a thousand gracious tricks. My daughter Lina is always my real daughter The OTHER is well and is beautiful, that is all that I ask of her.

I am working again; but I am not strong. I am paying for my energy and activity in Paris. That does not make any difference, I am not angry against life, I love you with all my heart. I see, when I am gloomy, your kind face, and I feel the radiant power of your goodness. You are a charm in the Indian summer of my sweet and pure friendships, without egoisms, and without deceptions in consequence.

Think of me sometimes, work well and call me when you are ready to loaf. If you are not ready, never mind. If your heart told you to come here, there would be feasting and joy in the family. I saw Sainte-Beuve, I am content and proud of him.

Good night, friend of my heart. I embrace you as well as your mother.

G. Sand

LXII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Paris
Nohant, 6 August, 1867

When I see how hard my old friend has to work in order to write a novel, it discourages my facility, and I tell myself that I write BOTCHED literature. I have finished Cadio; it has been in Buloz' hands a long time. I am writing another thing,[Footnote: Mademoiselle Merquem.] but I don't see it yet very clearly; what can one do without sun and without heat? I ought to be in Paris now, to see the Exposition again at my leisure, and to take your mother to walk with you; but I really must work, since I have only that to live on. And then the children; that Aurore is a wonder. You really must see her, perhaps I shall not see her long, If I don't think I am destined to grow very old; I must lose no time in loving!

Yes, you are right, it is that that sustains me. This hypocritical fit has a rough disillusionment in store for it, and one will lose nothing by waiting. On the contrary, one will gain. You will see that, you who are old though still quite young. You are my son's age. You will laugh together when you see this heap of rubbish collapse.

You must not be a Norman, you must come and see us for several days, you will make us happy; and it will restore the blood in my veins and the joy in my heart.

Love your old troubadour always and talk to him of Paris; a few words when you have the time.

Outline a scene for Nohant with four or five characters, we shall enjoy it. We embrace you and summon you.

G. Sand

LXIII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croisset
Nohant, 18 August, 1867

Where are you, my dear old fellow? If by chance you should be in Paris, during the first few days of September, let us try to see each other. I shall stay there three days and I shall return here. But I do not hope to meet you there. You ought to be in some lovely country, far from Paris and from its dust. I do not know even if my letter will reach you. Never mind, if you can give news of yourself, do so. I am in despair. I have lost suddenly, without even knowing that he was ill, my poor dear, old friend, Rollinat, an angel of goodness, of courage, of devotion. It is a heavy blow for me. If you were here you would give me courage; but my poor children are as overwhelmed as I am. We adored him, all the countryside adored him.

Keep well, and think sometimes of your absent friends. We embrace you affectionately. The little one is very well, she is charming.

LXIV. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Paris
Nohant, August, 1867

I bless you, my dear old fellow, for the kind thought that you had of coming; but you were right not to travel while you were ill. Ah! my God, I dream of nothing but illness and unhappiness: take care of yourself, my old comrade. I shall go to see you if I can pull myself together; for, since this new dagger-thrust, I am feeble and crushed and I have a sort of fever. I shall write you a line from Paris. If you are prevented, you must answer me by telegram. You know that with me there is no need of explanation: I know every hindrance in life and I never blame the hearts that I know.--I wish that, right away, if you have a moment to write, you would tell me where I should go for three days to see the coast of Normandy without striking the neighborhood where "THE WORLD" goes. In order to go on with my novel, I must see a countryside near the Channel, that all the world has not talked about, and where there are real natives at home, peasants, fisherfolk, a real village in a corner of the rocks. If you are in the mood we will go there together. If not, don't bother about me. I go everywhere and I am not disturbed by anything. You told me that the population of the coasts was the best in the country, and that there were real dyed-in-the-wool simple-hearted men there. It would be good to see their faces, their clothes, their houses, and their horizons. That is enough for what I want to do, I need only accessories; I hardly want to describe; SEEING it is

enough in order not to make a false stroke. How is your mother? Have you been able to take her to walk and to distract her a little? Embrace her for me as I embrace you.

G. Sand

Maurice embraces you; I shall go to Paris without him: he is drawn on the jury for the 2 September till...no one knows. It is a tiresome task. Aurore is very cunning with her arms, she offers them to you to kiss; her hands are marvels and they are incredibly clever for her age.

Au revoir, then, if I can only pull myself out of the state I am now in. Insomnia is the devil; in the daytime one makes a lot of effort not to sadden others. At night one falls back on oneself.

LXV. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croisset
Nohant, 10 September, 1867

Dear old fellow,

I am worried at not having news of you since that illness of which you spoke. Are you well again? Yes, we shall go to see the rollers and the beaches next month if you like, if your heart prompts you. The novel goes on apace; but I shall besprinkle it with local color afterwards.

While waiting, I am still here, stuck up to my chin in the river every day, and regaining my strength entirely in this cold and shady stream which I adore, and where I have passed so many hours of my life reviving myself after too long sessions in company with my ink-well. I go definitely to Paris, the 16th; the 17th at one o'clock, I leave for Rouen and Jumieges, where my friend Madame Lebarbier de Tinan awaits me at the house of M. Lepel-Cointet, the landowner; I shall stay there the 18th so as to return to Paris the 19th. Will it be inconvenient if I come to see you? I am sick with longing to do so; but I am so absolutely forced to spend the evening of the 19th in Paris that I do not know if I shall have the time. You must tell me. I can get a word from you the 16th in Paris, 97 rue des Feuillantines. I shall not be alone; I have as a travelling companion a charming young literary woman, Juliette Lamber. If you were lovely, lovely, you would walk to Jumieges the 19th. We would return together so that I could be in Paris at six o'clock in the evening at the latest. But if you are even a little bit ill still, or are PLUNGED in ink, pretend that I have said nothing, and prepare to see us next month. As for the WINTER walk on the Norman coast, that gives me a cold in my back, I who plan to go to the Gulf of Juan at that time.

I have been sick over the death of my friend Rollinat. My body is cured, but my soul! I should have to stay a week with you to refresh myself in your affectionate strength; for cold and purely philosophical courage to me, is like cauterizing a wooden leg.

I embrace you and I love you (also your mother). Maurice also, what French! One is happy to forget it, it is a tiresome thing.

Your troubadour

G. Sand

LXVI. TO GEORGE SAND

Dear master,

What, no news?

But you will answer me since I ask you a service. I read this in my notes: "National of 1841. Bad treatments inflicted on Barbes, kicks on his breast, dragged by the beard and hair in order to put him in an in-pace. Consultation of lawyers signed: E. Arago, Favre, Berryer, to complain of these abominations."

Find out from him if all that is true; I shall be obliged.

LXVII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croisset
Paris, Tuesday, 1st October, 1867

Dear friend, you shall have your information. I asked Peyrat last evening, I am writing today to Barbes who will answer directly to you.

Where do you think I have come from? From Normandy. A charming opportunity took me there six days ago. I had been enchanted with Jumieges. This time I saw Etretat, Yport, the prettiest of all the villages, Fecamp, Saint-Valery, which I knew, and Dieppe, which dazzled me; the environs, the chateau d'Arques, Limes, what a country! And I went back and forth twice within two steps of Croisset and I sent you some big kisses; always ready to return with you to the seaside or to talk with you at your house when you are free. If I had been alone, I should have bought an old guitar and should have sung a ballad under your mother's window. But I could not take a large family to you.

I am returning to Nohant and I embrace you with all my heart.

G. Sand

I think that the Bois-Dore is going well, but I don't know anything about it. I have a way of my own of being in Paris, namely, being at the seaside, which does not keep me informed of what is going on. But I gathered gentians in the long grass of the immense Roman fort of Limes where I had quite a STUNNING view of the sea. I walked out like an old horse, but I am returning quite frisky.

LXVIII. TO GEORGE SAND

At last, at last, I have news of you, dear master, and good news, which is doubly agreeable.

I am planning to return to my home in the country with Madame Sand, and my mother hopes that will be the case. What do you say? For, with all that goes on, we never see each other, confound it!

As for my moving, it is not that I lack the desire of being free to move about. But I should be lost if I stirred before I finish my novel. Your friend is a man of wax; everything gets imprinted on him, is encrusted on him, penetrates him. If I should visit you, I should think of nothing but you and yours, your house, your country, the appearance of the people I had met, etc. I require great efforts to gather myself together; I always tend to scatter myself. That is why, dear adored master, I deprive myself of going to sit down to dream aloud in your house. But, in the summer or autumn of 1869, you shall see what a fine commercial traveller I am, once let loose to the open air. I am abject, I warn you.

As to news, there is a quiet once more since the Kerveguen incident has died its beautiful death. Was it not a farce? and silly?

Sainte-Beuve is preparing a lecture on the press law. He is better, decidedly. I dined Tuesday with Renan. He was marvellously witty and eloquent, and artistic! as I have never seen him. Have you read his new book? His preface causes talk. My poor Theo worries me. I do not think him strong.

LXIX. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Paris
Nohant, 12 October, 1867

I have sent your letter to Barbes; it is fine and splendid, as you are. I know that the worthy man will be glad of it. But as for me, I want to throw myself out of the window; for my children are unwilling to hear of my leaving so soon. Yes, it is horrid to have seen your house four times without going to see you. But I am cautious to the point of fear. To be sure the idea of summoning you to Rouen for twenty minutes did occur to me. But you are not, as I am, on tiptoe, all ready to start off. You live in your dressing gown, the great enemy of liberty and activity. To force you to dress, to go out, perhaps in the middle of an absorbing chapter, and only to see someone who does not know how to say anything quickly, and who, the more he is content, the stupider he is,--I did not dare to. Here I am obliged to finish something which drags along, and before the final touch I shall probably go to Normandy. I should like to go by the Seine to Honfleur. It will be next month, if the cold does not make me ill, and I shall try this time to carry you away in passing. If not, I shall see you at least, and then I shall go to Provence.

Ah! if I could only take you there! And if you could, if you would, during the second week in October when you are going to be free, come to see me here! You promised, and my children would be so happy if you would! But you don't love us enough for that, scoundrel that you are! You think that you have a lot of better friends: you are very much mistaken; it is always one's best friends whom one neglects or ignores.

Come, a little courage; you can leave Paris at a quarter past nine in the morning, and get to Chateauroux at four, there you would find

my carriage and be here at six for dinner. It is not bad, and once here, we all laugh together like good-natured bears; no one dresses; there is no ceremony, and we all love one another very much. Say yes!

I embrace you. And I too have been bored at not seeing you, FOR A YEAR.

Your old troubadour

LXX. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croisset
Nohant, 27 October, 1867

I have just made a resume in a few pages of my impressions as a landscape painter, gathered in Normandy: it has not much importance, but I was able to quote three lines from Salammbo, which seemed to me to depict the country better than all my phrases, and which had always struck me as a stroke from a master brush. In turning over the pages to find these lines, I naturally reread almost all, and I remain convinced that it is one of the most beautiful books that have been made since they began to make books.

I am well, and I am working quickly and much, so as to live on my INCOME this winter in the South. But what will be the delights of Cannes and where will be the heart to engage in them? My spirits are in mourning while thinking that at this hour people arc fighting for the pope. Ah! ISIDORE! [Footnote: Name applied to Napoleon III.]

I have tried in vain this month to go again to see ma Normandie, that is to say, my great, dear heart's friend. My children have threatened me with death if I leave them so soon. Just at present friends are coming. You are the only one who does not talk of coming on. Yet, that would be so fine! Next month I shall move heaven and earth to find you wherever you are, and meanwhile I love you tremendously. And you. Your work? your mother's health? I am worried at not having news of you.

G. Sand

LXXI. TO GEORGE SAND
1st November, 1867

Dear master,

I was as much ashamed as touched, last evening, when I received your "very nice" letter. I am a wretch not to have answered the first one. How did that happen? For I am usually prompt.

My work does not go very well. I hope that I shall finish my second part in February. But in order to have it all finished in two years, I must not budge from my arm-chair till then. That is why I am not going to Nohant. A week of recreation means three months of revery for me. I should do nothing but think of you, of yours in Berry, of all that I saw. My unfortunate spirit would navigate in strange waters. I have so little resistance.

I do not hide the pleasure that your little word about SALAMMBO gives me. That old book needs to be relieved from a few inversions, there are too many repetitions of ALORS, MAIS and ET. The labor is too evident.

As for the one I am doing, I am afraid that the idea is defective, an irremediable fault; will such weak characters be interesting? Great effects are reached only through simple means, through positive passions. But I don't see simplicity anywhere in the modern world.

A sad world! How deplorable and how lamentably grotesque are affairs in Italy! All these orders, counter-orders of counter-orders of the counter-orders! The earth is a very inferior planet, decidedly.

You did not tell me if you were satisfied with the revivals at the Odeon. When shall you go south? And where shall you go in the south?

A week from today, that is to say, from the 7th to the 10th of November, I shall be in Paris, because I have to go sauntering in Auteuil in order to discover certain little nooks. What would be nice would be for us to come back to Croisset together. You know very well that I am very angry at you for your two last trips in Normandy.

Then, I shall see you soon? No joking? I embrace you as I love you, dear master, that is to say, very tenderly.

Here is a bit that I send to your dear son, a lover of this sort of fluff:

"One evening, expected by Hortense,
Having his eyes fixed on the clock,
And feeling his heart beat with eager throbs,
Young Alfred dried up with impatience."
(Memoires de l'Academie de Saint-Quentin.)

LXXII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Nohant, 5 December, 1867

Your old troubadour is no good, I admit it. He has been working like an ox to have the money to go away with this winter to the gulf of Juan, and at the moment of leaving he would like to stay behind. He is worried at leaving his children and the little Aurore, but he suffers with the cold, he fears anemia, and he thinks he is doing his duty in going to find a land which the snow does not render impracticable, and a sky under which one can breathe without having dagger-thrusts in one's lungs.

So you see.

He has thought of you, probably much more than you think of him; for he has stupid and easy work, and his thoughts run elsewhere very far from him, and from his task, when his hand is weary of writing. As for you, you work for truth, and you become absorbed, and you have not heard my spirit, which more than once has TAPPED at your study

door to say to you: "It is I." Or else you have said: "It is a spirit tapping let him go to the devil!"

Aren't you coming to Paris? I am going there between the 15th and the 20th. I shall stay there only a few days, and then flee to Cannes. Will you be there? God grant it! On the whole I am pretty well; I am furious with you for not wanting to come to Nohant; I won't reproach you for I don't know how. I have scribbled a lot; my children are always good and kind to me in every sense of the word. Aurore is a love.

We have RAVED politically; now we try not to think of it any more and to have patience. We often speak of you and we love you. Your old troubadour especially who embraces you with all his heart, and begs to be remembered to your good mother.

G. Sand

LXXIII. TO GEORGE SAND

Wednesday night

Dear master, dear friend of the good God, "let us talk a little of Dozenval," let us roar at M. Thiers! Can a more triumphant imbecile, a more abject dabster, a more stercoraceous bourgeois be found! No, nothing can give the idea of the puking with which this old diplomatic idiot inspires me in piling up his stupidity on the dung-hill of bourgeoisie! Is it possible to treat philosophy, religion, peoples, liberty, the past and future, history, and natural history, everything and more yet, with an incoherence more inept and more childish! He seems to me as everlasting as mediocrity! He overwhelms me!

But the fine thing is the brave national guards whom he stuffed in 1848, who are beginning to applaud him again! What infinite madness! That proves that everything consists of temperament. Prostitutes,--like France,--always have a weakness for old buffoons.

Furthermore, I shall try in the third part of my novel (when I reach the reaction that followed the days of June) to insert a panegyric about him a propos of his book: De la propriete, and I hope that he will be pleased with me.

What form should one take to express occasionally one's opinion on the things of this world, without the risk of passing later for an imbecile? It is a tough problem. It seems to me that the best thing is simply to depict the things which exasperate one. To dissect is to take vengeance. Well! it is not he with whom I am angry, nor with the others but with OURS.

If they had paid more attention to the education of the SUPERIOR classes, delaying till later the agricultural meetings; in short, if the head had been put above the stomach, should we have been likely to be where we are now?

I have just read, this week, Buchez' Preface to his Histoire parlementaire. Many inanities which burden us today come from that among other things.

And now, it is not good of you to say that I do not think of "my old Troubadour"; of whom then, do I think? perhaps of my wretched book? but that is more difficult and less agreeable.

How long do you stay at Cannes?

After Cannes shan't you return to Paris? I shall be their towards the end of January.

In order to finish my book in the spring of 1869, I must not give myself a week of holiday; that is why I do not go to Nohant. It is always the story of the Amazons. In order to draw the bow better they crushed their breast. It is a fine method after all.

Adieu, dear master, write to me, won't you?

I embrace you tenderly.

LXXIV. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croisset
Nohant, 31 December, 1867

I don't agree with you at all that it is necessary to destroy the breast to draw a bow. I have quite a contrary belief which I follow, and I think that it is good for many others, probably for the majority. I have just developed my idea on that subject in a novel which has been sent to the Revue and will appear after About's. I think that the artist ought to live according to his nature as much as possible. To him who loves struggle, warfare; to him who loves women, love; to an old fellow like me who loves nature, travel and flowers, rocks, fine landscapes, children also, the family, all that stirs the emotions, that combats moral anemia.

I think that art always needs a palette overflowing with soft or striking colors according to the subject of the picture; the artist is an instrument on which everything ought to play before he plays on others; but all that is perhaps not applicable to a mind like yours which has acquired much and now has only to digest. I shall insist on one point only, that the physical being is necessary to the moral being and that I fear for you some day a deterioration of health which will force you to suspend your work and let it grow cold.

Well, you are coming to Paris the beginning of January and we shall see each other; for I shall not go until after the New Year. My children have made me promise to spend that day with them, and I could not resist, in spite of the great necessity of moving. They are so sweet! Maurice has an inexhaustible gaiety and invention. He has made for his marionette theatre, marvelous scenery, properties, and machinery and the plays which they give in that ravishing box are incredibly fantastic.

The last one was called 1870. One sees in it, Isidore with Antonelli commanding the brigands of Calabria, trying to regain his throne and to re-establish the papacy. Everything is in the future; at the end the widow Euphemia marries the Grand Turk, the only remaining sovereign. It is true that he is a former DEMOCRAT and is recognized

as none other than the great tumbler Coquenbois when unmasked. These plays last till two o'clock in the morning and we are crazy on coming out of them. We sup till five o'clock. There is a performance twice a week, and the rest of the time they make the properties, and the play continues with the same characters, going through the most incredible adventures.

The public is composed of eight or ten young people, my three great nephews, and sons of my old friends. They get excited to the point of yelling. Aurore is not admitted; the plays are not suited to her age. As for me, I am so amused that I become exhausted. I am sure that you would be madly amused by it also; for there is a splendid fire and abandon in these improvisations; and the characters done by Maurice have the appearance of living beings, of a burlesque life that is real and impossible at the same time; it seems like a dream. That is how I have been living for the ten days that I have not been working.

Maurice gives me this recreation in my intervals of repose that coincide with his. He brings to it as much ardor and passion as to his science. He has a truly charming nature and one never gets bored with him. His wife is also charming, quite large just now, always moving, busying herself with everything, lying down on the sofa twenty times a day, getting up to run after her child, her cook, her husband, who demands a lot of things for his theatre, coming back to lie down again; crying out that she feels ill and bursting into shrieks of laughter at a fly that circles about; sewing layettes, reading the papers with fervor, reading novels which make her weep; weeping also at the marionettes when there is a little sentiment, for there is some of that too. In short a personality and a type: she sings ravishingly, she gets angry, she gets tender, she makes succulent dainties TO SURPRISE US WITH, and every day of our vacation there is a little fete which she organizes.

Little Aurore promises to be very sweet and calm, understanding in a marvelous manner what is said to her and YIELDING TO REASON at two years of age. It is very extraordinary and I have never seen it before. It would be disquieting if one did not feel a great serenity in that little brain.

But how I am gossiping with you! Does all this amuse you? I should like this chatty letter to substitute for one of those suppers of ours which I too regret, and which would be so good here with you, if you were not a stick-in-the-mud, who won't let yourself be dragged away to LIFE FOR LIFE'S SAKE. Ah! when one is on a vacation, how work, logic, reason seem strange CONTRASTS! One asks whether one can ever return to that ball and chain.

I tenderly embrace you, my dear old fellow, and Maurice thinks your letter so fine that he is going to put the phrases and words at once in the mouth of his first philosopher. He bids me embrace you for him.

Madame Juliette Lambert [Footnote: Afterwards, Madame Edmond Adam.] is really charming; you would like her a great deal, and then you have it 18 degrees above zero down there, and here we are in the snow. It is severe; moreover, I rarely go out, and my dog himself doesn't want to go out. He is not the least amazing member of society. When he is called Badinguet, he lies on the ground ashamed

and despairing, and sulks all the evening.

LXXV. TO GEORGE SAND
1st January, 1868

It is unkind to sadden me with the recital of the amusements at Nohant, since I cannot share them. I need so much time to do so little that I have not a minute to lose (or gain), if I want to finish my dull old book by the summer of 1869.

I did not say it was necessary to suppress the heart, but to restrain it, alas! As for the regime that I follow which is contrary to the laws of hygiene, I did not begin yesterday. I am accustomed to it. I have, nevertheless, a fairly seasoned sense of fatigue, and it is time that my second part was finished, after which I shall go to Paris. That will be about the end of the month. You don't tell me when you return from Cannes.

My rage against M. Thiers is not yet calmed, on the contrary! It idealizes itself and increases.

LXXVI. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Nohant, 12 January, 1868

No, it is not silly to embrace each other on New Year's day: on the contrary, it is good and it is nice. I thank you for having thought of it and I kiss you on your beautiful big eyes. Maurice embraces you also. I am housed here by the snow and the cold, and my trip is postponed. We amuse ourselves madly at home so as to forget that we are prisoners, and I am prolonging my holidays in a ridiculous fashion. Not an iota of work from morning till night. What luck if you could say as much!--But what a fine winter, don't you think so? Isn't it lovely, the moonlight on the trees covered with snow? Do you look at that at night while you are working?--If you are going to Paris the end of the month, I shall still have a chance to meet you.

From far, or from near, dear old fellow, I think of you and I love you from the depth of my old heart which does not know the flight of years.

G. Sand

My love to your mother always. I imagine that she is in Rouen during this severe cold.

LXXVII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Paris, 10 May, 1868

Yes, friend of my heart, am I not in the midst of terrible things; that poor little Madame Lambert [Footnote: Madame Eugene Lambert, the wife of the artist] is severely threatened.

I saw M. Depaul today. One must be prepared for anything!--If the crisis is passed or delayed, for there is question of bringing on the event, I shall be happy to spend two days with my old troubadour, whom I love tenderly.

G. Sand.

LXXVIII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Paris, 11 May, 1868

If you were to be at home Wednesday evening, I should go to chat an hour alone with you after dinner in your quarters. I despair somewhat of going to Croisset; it is tomorrow that that they decide the fate of my poor friend.

A word of response, and above all do not change any plan. Whether I see you or not, I know that two old troubadours love each other devotedly!

G. Sand Monday evening.

LXXIX. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Paris, 17 May, 1868

I have a little respite, since they are not going to bring on the confinement. I hope to go to spend two days at that dear Croisset. But then don't go on Thursday, I am giving a dinner for the prince [Footnote: Prince Jerome Napoleon.] at Magny's and I told him that I would detain you by force. Say yes, at once. I embrace you and I love you.

G. Sand

LXXX. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

I shall not go with you to Croisset, for you must sleep, and we talk too much. But on Sunday or Monday if you still wish it; only I forbid you to inconvenience yourself. I know Rouen, I know that there are carriages at the railway station and that one goes straight to your house without any trouble.

I shall probably go in the evening.

Embrace your dear mamma for me, I shall be happy to her again.

G. Sand

If those days do not suit you, a word, and I shall communicate with you again. Have the kindness to put the address on the ENCLOSED letter and to put it in the mail.

LXXXI. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Paris, 21 Thursday--May, 1868

I see that the day trains are very slow, I shall make a great effort and shall leave at eight o'clock Sunday, so as to lunch with you; if it is too late don't wait for me, I lunch on two eggs made into an omelet or shirred, and a cup of coffee. Or dine on a little chicken or some veal and vegetables.

In giving up trying to eat REAL MEAT, I have found again a strong stomach. I drink cider with enthusiasm, no more champagne! At Nohant, I live on sour wine and galette, and since I am not trying any more to THOROUGHLY NOURISH myself, no more anemia; believe then in the logic of physicians!

In short you must not bother any more about me than about the cat and not even so much. Tell your little mother, just that. Then I shall see you at last, all I want to for two days. Do you know that you are INACCESSIBLE in Paris? Poor old fellow, did you finally sleep like a dormouse in your cabin? I would like to give you a little of my sleep that nothing, not even a cannon, can disturb.

But I have had bad dreams for two weeks about my poor Esther, and now at last, here are Depaul, Tarnier, Gueniaux and Nelaton who told us yesterday that she will deliver easily and very well, and that the child has every reason to be superb. I breathe again, I am born anew, and I am going to embrace you so hard that you will be scandalised. I shall see you on Sunday then, and don't inconvenience yourself.

G. Sand

LXXXII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT Paris, 26 May, 1868

Arrived while dozing. Dined with your delightful and charming friend Du Camp. We talked of you, only of you and your mother, and we said a hundred times that we loved you. I am going to sleep so as to be ready to move tomorrow morning.

I am charmingly located on the Luxembourg garden.

I embrace you, mother and son, with all my heart which is entirely yours.

G. Sand Tuesday evening, rue Gay-Lussac, 5.

LXXXIII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT Paris, 28 May, 1868

My little friend gave birth this morning after two hours of labor, to a boy who seemed dead but whom they handled so well that he is very much alive and very lovely this evening. The mother is very well, what luck!

But what a sight! It was something to see. I am very tired, but very content and tell you so because you love me.

G. Sand

Thursday evening. I leave Tuesday for Nohant.

LXXXIV. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croisset
Nohant, 21 June, 1868

Here I am again, BOTHERING you for M. Du Camp's address which you never gave me, although you forwarded a letter for me to him, and from WHOM I never thought of asking for it when I dined with him in Paris. I have just read his Forces Perdues; I promised to tell him my opinion and I am keeping my word. Write the address, then give it to the postman and thank you.

There you are alone at odds with the sun in your charming villa!

Why am I not the...river which cradles you with its sweet MURMURING and which brings you freshness in your den! I would chat discreetly with you between two pages of your novel, and I would make that fantastic grating of the chain [Footnote: The chain of the tug-boat going up or coming down the Seine.] which you detest, but whose oddity does not displease me, keep still. I love everything that makes up a milieu, the rolling of the carriages and the noise of the workmen in Paris, the cries of a thousand birds in the country, the movement of the ships on the waters; I love also absolute, profound silence, and in short, I love everything that is around me, no matter where I am; it is AUDITORY IDIOCY, a new variety. It is true that I choose my milieu and don't go to the Senate nor to other disagreeable places.

Everything is going on well at our house, my troubadour. The children are beautiful, we adore them; it is warm, I adore that. It is always the same old story that I have to tell you and I love you as the best of friends and comrades. You see that is not new. I have a good and strong impression of what you read to me; it seemed to me so beautiful that it must be good. As for me, I am not sticking to anything. Idling is my dominant passion. That will pass, what does not pass, is my friendship for you.

G. Sand

Our affectionate regards.

LXXXV. TO GEORGE SAND
Croisset, Sunday, 5 July, 1868

I have sawed wood hard for six weeks. The patriots won't forgive me for this book, nor the reactionaries either! What do I care! I write things as I feel them, that is to say, as I think they are. Is it foolish of me? But it seems to me that our unhappiness comes exclusively from people of our class. I find an enormous amount of Christianity in Socialism. There are two notes which are now on my table.

"This system (his) is not a system of disorder, for it has its source in the Gospels, and from this divine source, hatred, warfare, the clashing of every interest, CAN NOT PROCEED! for the doctrine formulated from the Gospel, is a doctrine of peace, union and love." (L. Blanc).

"I shall even dare to advance the statement that together with the respect for the Sabbath, the last spark of poetic fire has been extinguished in the soul of our rhymesters. It has been said that without religion, there is no poetry!" (Proudhon).

A propos of that, I beg of you, dear master, to read at the end of his book on the observance of the Sabbath, a love-story entitled, I think, Marie et Maxime. One must know that to have an idea of the style of les Penseurs. It should be placed on a level with Le Voyage en Bretagne by the great Veuillot, in Ca et La. That does not prevent us from having friends who are great admirers of these two gentlemen.

When I am old, I shall write criticism; that will console me, for I often choke with suppressed opinions. No one understands better than I do, the indignation of the great Boileau against bad taste: "The senseless things which I hear at the Academy hasten my end." There was a man!

Every time now that I hear the chain of the steam-boats, I think of you, and the noise irritates me less, when I say to myself that it pleases you. What moonlight there is tonight on the river!

LXXXVI. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croisset

Nohant, 31 July, 1868

I am writing to you at Croisset in any case, because I doubt if you are in Paris during this Toledo-like heat; unless the shade of Fontainebleau has kept you. What a lovely forest, isn't it? but it is especially so in winter, without leaves, with its fresh moss, which has chic. Did you see the sand of Arbonne? There is a little Sahara there which ought to be lovely now.

We are very happy here. Every day a bath in a stream that is always cold and shady; in the daytime four hours of work, in the evening, recreation, and the life of Punch and Judy. A TRAVELLING THEATRICAL COMPANY came to us; it was part of a company from the Odeon, among whom were several old friends to whom we gave supper at La Chatre, two successive nights with all their friends, after the play;-- songs, laughter, with champagne frappe, till three o'clock in the morning to the great scandal of the bourgeois, who would have committed any crime to have been there. There was a very comic Norman, a real Norman, who sang real peasant songs to us, in the real language. Do you know that they have quite a Gallic wit and mischief? They contain a mine of master-pieces of genre. That made me love Normandy still more. You may know that comedian. His name is Freville. It is he who is charged in the repertory with the parts of the dull valets, and with being kicked from behind. He is detestable, impossible, but out of the theatre, he is as charming as can be. Such is fate!

We have had some delightful guests at our house, and we have had a joyous time without prejudice to the Lettres d'un Voyageur in the Revue, or to botanical excursions in some very surprising wild places. The little girls are the loveliest thing about it all. Gabrielle is a big lamb, sleeping and laughing all day; Aurore, more spiritual, with eyes of velvet and fire, talking at thirty months as others do at five years, and adorable in everything. They are keeping her back so that she shall not get ahead too fast.

You worry me when you tell me that your book will blame the patriots for everything that goes wrong. Is that really so? and then the victims! it is quite enough to be undone by one's own fault without having one's own foolishness thrown in one's teeth. Have pity! There are so many fine spirits among them just the same! Christianity has been a fad and I confess that in every age it is a lure when one sees only the tender side of it; it wins the heart. One has to consider the evil it does in order to get rid of it. But I am not surprised that a generous heart like Louis Blanc dreamed of seeing it purified and restored to his ideal. I also had that illusion; but as soon as one takes a step in this past, one sees that it can not be revived, and I am sure that now Louis Blanc smiles at his dream. One should think of that also.

One must remind oneself that all those who had intelligence have progressed tremendously during the last twenty years and that it would not be generous to reproach them with what they probably reproach themselves.

As for Proudhon, I never thought him sincere. He is a rhetorician of GENIUS, as they say. But I don't understand him. He is a specimen of perpetual antithesis, without solution. He affects one like one of the old Sophists whom Socrates made fun of.

I am trusting you for GENEROUS sentiments. One can say a word more or less without wounding, one can use the lash without hurting, if the hand is gentle in its strength. You are so kind that you cannot be cruel.

Shall I go to Croisset this autumn? I begin to fear not, and to fear that Cadio is not being rehearsed. But I shall try to escape from Paris even if only for one day.

My children send you their regards. Ah! Heavens! there was a fine quarrel about Salammbo; some one whom you do not know, went so far as not to like it, Maurice called him BOURGEOIS, and to settle the affair, little Lina, who is high tempered, declared that her husband was wrong to use such a word, for he ought to have said IMBECILE. There you are. I am well as a Turk. I love you and I embrace you.

Your old Troubadour,

G. Sand

LXXXVII. TO GEORGE SAND

Dieppe, Monday

But indeed, dear master, I was in Paris during that tropical heat

(trop picole, as the governor of the chateau of Versailles says), and I perspired greatly. I went twice to Fontainebleau, and the second time by your advice, saw the sands of Arboronne. It is so beautiful that it made me almost dizzy.

I went also to Saint-Gratien. Now I am at Dieppe, and Wednesday I shall be in Croisset, not to stir from there for a long time, the novel must progress.

Yesterday I saw Dumas: we talked of you, of course, and as I shall see him tomorrow we shall talk again of you.

I expressed myself badly if I said that my book "will blame the patriots for everything that goes wrong." I do not recognize that I have the right to blame anyone. I do not even think that the novelist ought to express his own opinion on the things of this world. He can communicate it, but I do not like him to say it. (That is a part of my art of poetry.) I limit myself, then, to declaring things as they appear to me, to expressing what seems to me to be true. And the devil take the consequences; rich or poor, victors or vanquished, I admit none of all that. I want neither love, nor hate, nor pity, nor anger. As for sympathy, that is different; one never has enough of that. The reactionaries, besides, must be less spared than the others, for they seem to be more criminal.

Is it not time to make justice a part of art? The impartiality of painting would then reach the majesty of the law,--and the precision of science!

Well, as I have absolute confidence in your great mind, when my third part is finished, I shall read it to you, and if there is in my work, something that seems MEAN to you, I will remove it.

But I am convinced beforehand that you will object to nothing.

As for allusions to individuals, there is not a shadow of them.

Prince Napoleon, whom I saw at his sister's Thursday, asked for news of you and praised Maurice. Princess Matilde told me that she thought you "charming," which made me like her better than ever.

How will the rehearsals of Cadio prevent you from coming to see your poor old friend this autumn? It is not impossible. I know Freville. He is an excellent and very cultivated man.

LXXXVIII. TO GEORGE SAND

Croisset, Wednesday evening, 9 September, 1868

Is this the way to behave, dear master? Here it is nearly two months since you have written to your old troubadour! you in Paris, in Nohant, or elsewhere? They say that Cadio is now being rehearsed at the Porte Saint-Martin (so you have fallen out with Chilly?) They say that Thuillier will make her re-appearance in your play. (But I thought she was dying). And when are they to play this Cadio? Are you content? etc., etc.

I live absolutely like an oyster. My novel is the rock to which I

attach myself, and I don't know anything that goes on in the world.

I do not even read, or rather I have not read La Lanterne! Rochefort bores me, between ourselves. It takes courage to venture to say even hesitatingly, that possibly he is not the first writer of the century. O Velches! Velches! as M. de Voltaire would sigh (or roar)! But a propos of the said Rochefort, have they been somewhat imbecilic? What poor people!

And Sainte-Beuve? Do you see him? As for me, I am working furiously. I have just written a description of the forest of Fontainebleau that made me want to hang myself from one of its trees. As I was interrupted for three weeks, I am having terrible trouble in getting back to work. I am like the camels, which can't be stopped when they are in motion, nor started when they are resting. It will take me a year to finish the book. After that I shall abandon the bourgeois definitely. He is too difficult and on the whole too ugly. It will be high time to do something beautiful and that I like.

What would please me well for the moment, would be to embrace you. When will that be? Till then, a thousand affectionate thoughts.

LXXXIX. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croisset
Paris, 10 September, 1868

Just at present, dear friend, there is a truce to my correspondence. On all sides I am reproached, WRONGLY, for not answering letters. I wrote you from Nohant about two weeks ago that I was going to Paris, on business about Cadio:--and now, I am returning to Nohant tomorrow at dawn to see my Aurore. I have written during the last week, four acts of the play, and my task is finished until the end of the rehearsals which will be looked after by my friend and collaborator, Paul Meurice. All his care does not prevent the working out of the first part from being a horrible bungle. One needs to see the putting-on of a play in order to understand that, and if one is not armed with humor and inner zest for the study of human nature in the actual individuals whom the fiction is to mask, there is much to rage about. But I don't rage any more, I laugh; I know too much of all that to get excited about it, and I shall tell you some fine stories about it when we meet.

However, as I am an optimist just the same, I look at the good side of things and people; but the truth is that everything is bad and everything is good in this world.

Poor Thuillier has not sparkling health; but she hopes to carry the burden of the work once more. She needs to earn her living, she is cruelly poor. I told you in my lost letter that Sylvanie [Footnote: Madame Arnould-Plessy.] had been several days at Nohant. She is more beautiful than ever and quite well again after a terrible illness.

Would you believe that I have not seen Sainte-Beuve? That I have had only the time here to sleep a little, and to eat in a hurry? It is just that. I have not heard anyone whatsoever talked about outside of the theatre and of the players. I have had mad desires to abandon everything and to go to surprise you for a couple of hours; but I

have not been a day without being kept at FORCED LABOR.

I shall return here the end of the month, and when they play Cadio, I shall beg you to spend twenty-four hours here for me. Will you do it? Yes, you are too good a troubadour to refuse me. I embrace you with all my heart, and your mother too. I am happy that she is well.

G. Sand

XC. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Nohant, 18 September, 1868

It will be, I think, the 8th or 10th of October. The management announces it for the 26th of September. But that seems impossible to everyone. Nothing is ready; I shall be advised, I shall advise you. I have come to spend the days of respite that my very conscientious and very devoted collaborator allows me. I am taking up again a novel on the THEATRE, the first part of which I had left on my desk, and I plunge every day in a little icy torrent which tumbles me about and makes me sleep like a top. How comfortable one is here with these two little children who laugh and chatter from morning till night like birds, and how foolish it is to go to compose and to put on MADE UP THINGS when the reality is so easy and so fine! But one gets accustomed to regarding all that as a military order, and goes to the front without asking oneself if it means wounds or death. Do you think that that bothers me? No, I assure you; but it does not amuse me either. I go straight ahead, stupid as a cabbage and patient as a Berrichon. Nothing is interesting in my life except OTHER PEOPLE. Seeing you soon in Paris will be more of a pleasure than my business will be an annoyance to me. Your novel interests me more than all mine. Impersonality, a sort of idiocy which is peculiar to me, is making a noticeable progress. If I were not well, I should think that it was a malady. If my old heart did not become each day more loving, I should think it was egotism; in short, I don't know what it is, and there you are. I have had trouble recently. I told you of it in the letter which you did not receive. A person whom you know, whom I love greatly, Celimene, [Footnote: Madame Arnould-Plessy.] has become a religious enthusiast, oh! indeed, an ecstatic, mystic, molinistic religious enthusiast, I don't know what, imbecile! I have exceeded my limits. I have raged, I have said the hardest things to her, I have laughed at her. Nothing made any difference, it was all the same to her. Father Hyacinthe replaces for her every friendship, every good opinion; can you understand that? Her very noble mind, a real intelligence, a worthy character! and there you are! Thuillier is also religious, but without being changed; she does not like priests, she does not believe in the devil, she is a heretic without knowing it. Maurice and Lina are furious against THE OTHER. They don't like her at all. As for me, it gives me much sorrow not to love her any more.

We love you, we embrace you.

I thank you for coming to see Cadio.

G. Sand

XCI. TO GEORGE SAND

Does that astonish you, dear master? Oh well! it doesn't me! I told you so but you would not believe me.

I am sorry for you. For it is sad to see the friends one loves change. This replacement of one soul by another, in a body that remains the same as it was, is a distressing sight. One feels oneself betrayed! I have experienced it, and more than once.

But then, what idea have you of women, O, you who are of the third sex? Are they not, as Proudhon said, "the desolation of the Just"? Since when could they do without delusions? After love, devotion; it is in the natural order of things. Dorine has no more men, she takes the good God. That is all.

The people who have no need of the supernatural, are rare. Philosophy will always be the lot of the aristocrats. However much you fatten human cattle, giving them straw as high as their bellies, and even gilding their stable, they will remain brutes, no matter what one says. All the advance that one can hope for, is to make the brute a little less wicked. But as for elevating the ideas of the mass, giving it a larger and therefore a less human conception of God, I have my doubts.

I am reading now an honest book (written by one of my friends, a magistrate), on the Revolution in the Department of Eure. It is full of extracts from writings of the bourgeois of the time, simple citizens of the small towns. Indeed I assure you that there is now very little of that strength! They were literary and fine, full of good sense, of ideas, and of generosity.

Neo-catholicism on the one hand, and Socialism on the other, have stultified France. Everything moves between the Immaculate Conception and the dinner pails of the working people.

I told you that I did not flatter the democrats in my book. But I assure you that the conservatives are not spared. I am now writing three pages on the abominations of the national guard in June, 1848, which will cause me to be looked at favorably by the bourgeois. I am rubbing their noses in their own dirt as much as I can. But you don't give me any details about Cadio. Who are the actors, etc.? I mistrust your novel about the theatre. You like those people too much! Have you known any well who love their art? What a quantity of artists there are who are only bourgeois gone astray!

We shall see each other in three weeks at the latest. I shall be very glad of it and I embrace you.

And the censorship? I really hope for you that it will make some blunders. Besides, I should be distressed if it was wanting in its usual habits.

Have you read this in the paper? "Victor Hugo and Rochefort, the greatest writers of the age." If Badinguet now is not avenged, it is because he is hard to please in the matter of punishments.

XCII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

The halcyons skim over the water and are common every where. The name is pretty and sufficiently well known.

I embrace you.

Your troubadour.

Paris, Friday evening, 28 August or 4 September, 1868. In October, yes, I will try!

XCIII. TO GEORGE SAND
Saturday evening

I received your two notes, dear master. You send me "halcyon" to replace the word, "dragonfly." Georges Pouchet suggested gerre of the lakes (genus, Gerris). Well! neither the one nor the other suits me, because they do not immediately make a picture for the ignorant reader.

Must I then describe that little creature? But that would retard the movement! That would fill up all the landscape I shall put "insects with large feet" or "long insects." That would be clear and short.

Few books have gripped me more than Cadio, and I share entirely Maxime's [Footnote: Maxime Du Camp.] admiration.

I should have told you of it sooner if my mother and my niece had not taken my copy. At last, this evening, they gave it back to me; it is here on my table, and I am turning the pages as I write you.

In the first place, it seems to me as if IT OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN THE WAY IT IS! It is plain, it gets you and thrills you. How many people must be like Saint-Gueltas, like Count de Sauvieres, like Rebec! and even like Henri, although the models are rarer. As for the character of Cadio, which is more of an invention than the others, what I like best in him is his ferocious anger. In it is the special truth of the character. Humanity turned to fury, the guillotine become mystic, life only a sort of bloody dream, that is what must take place in such heads. I think you have one Shakespearean scene: that of the delegate to the Convention with his two secretaries, is of an incredible strength. It makes one cry out! There is one also which struck me very much at the first reading: the scene where Saint-Gueltas and Henri each have the pistols in their pockets: and many others. What a fine page (I open by chance) is page 161!

In the play won't you have to give a longer role to the wife of the good Saint-Gueltas? The play ought not to be very hard to cut. It is only a question of condensing and shortening it. If it is played, I'll guarantee a terrific success. But the censorship?

Well, you have written a masterpiece, that's true! and a very amusing one. My mother thinks it recalls to her stories that she heard while a child. A propos of Vendee, did you know that her

paternal grandfather was, after M. Lescure, the head of the Vendee army? The aforesaid head was named M. Fleuriot d'Argentan. I am not any the prouder for that; besides the thing is doubtful, for my grandfather, a violent republican, hid his political antecedents.

My mother is going in a few days to Dieppe, to her grandchild's. I shall be alone a good part of the summer, and I plan to grub.

"I labor much and shun the world.
It is not at balls that the future is founded."
(Camilla Doucet.)

But my everlasting novel bores me sometimes in an incredible manner! These tiny details are stupid to bother with! Why annoy oneself about such a miserable subject?

I would write you at length about Cadio; but it is late and my eyes are smarting.

So, thank you, very kindly, my dear master.

XCIV. To M. GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croissset
Paris, end of September, 1868

Dear friend,

It is for Saturday next, 3rd October. I am at the theatre every evening from six o'clock till two in the morning. They talk of putting mattresses behind the scenes for the actors who are not in front. As for me, as used to wakefulness as you are, I experience no fatigue; but I should be very much bored if I had not the resource that one has always, of thinking of other things. I am sufficiently accustomed to it to be writing another play while they are rehearsing, and there is something quite exciting in these great dark rooms where mysterious characters move, talking in low tones, in unexpected costumes; nothing is more like a dream, unless one imagines a conspiracy of patients escaped from Bicetre.

I don't at all know what the performance will be. If one did not know the prodigies of harmony and of vim which occur at the last moment, one would judge it all impossible, with thirty-five or forty speaking actors of whom only five or six speak well. One spends hours over the exits and entrances of the characters in blue or white blouses who are to be the soldiers or the peasants, but who, meanwhile perform incomprehensible manoeuvres. Still the dream. One has to be a madman to put on these things. And the frenzy of the actors, pale and worn out, who drag themselves to their place yawning, and suddenly start like crazy people to declaim their tirade; continually the assembling of insane people.

The censorship has left us alone as regards the manuscript; tomorrow these gentlemen will inspect the costumes, which perhaps will frighten them.

I left my dear world very quiet at Nohant. If Cadio succeeds, it will be a little DOT for Aurore; that is all my ambition. If it does not succeed, I shall have to begin over again, that is all.

I shall see you. Then, in any case, that will be a happy day. Come to see me the night before, if you arrive the night before, or even the same day. Come to dine with me the night before or the same day; I am at home from one o'clock to five. Thank you; I embrace you and I love you.

G. Sand

XCV. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Paris, 5 October, 1868

Dear good friend, I recommend again to your good offices, my friend Despruneaux, so that you will again do what you can to be of use to him in a very just suit which has already been judged in his favor.

Yours,

G. Sand

XCVI. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Nohant, 15 October, 1868

Here I am "ter hum" where, after having hugged my children and my grandchildren, I slept thirty-six hours at one stretch. You must believe that I was tired and did not notice it. I am waking from that animal-hibernation and you are the first person to whom I want to write. I did not thank you enough for coming to Paris for my sake, you who go about so little: and I did not see you enough either; when I knew that you had supped with Plauchut, [Footnote: Edmond Plauchut, a writer and a friend of George Sand.] I was angry at having stayed to take care of my sickly Thuillier, to whom I was of no use, and who was not particularly pleased about it. Artists are spoiled children and the best are great egoists. You say that I like them too well; I like them as I like the woods and the fields, everything, every one that I know a little and that I study continually. I make my life in the midst of all that, and as I like my life I like all that nourishes it and renews it. They do me a lot of ill turns which I see, but which I no longer feel. I know that there are thorns in the hedges, but that does not prevent me from putting out my hands and finding flowers there. If all are not beautiful, all are interesting. The day you took me to the Abbey of Saint-Georges I found the scrofularia borealis, a very rare plant in France. I was enchanted; there was much...in the neighborhood where I gathered it. Such is life!

And if one does not take life like that, one cannot take it in any way, and then how can one endure it? I find it amusing and interesting, and since I accept EVERYTHING, I am so much happier and more enthusiastic when I meet the beautiful and the good. If I did not have a great knowledge of the species, I should not have quickly understood you, or known you or loved you. I can have an enormous indulgence, perhaps banal, for I have had to practice it so much; but appreciation is quite another thing, and I do not think that it is entirely worn out in your old troubadour's mind.

I found my children still very good and very tender, my two little grandchildren still pretty and sweet. This morning I dreamed, and I woke up saying this strange sentence: "There is always a youthful great first part in the drama of life. First part in mine: Aurore." The fact is that it is impossible not to idolize that little one. She is so perfect in intelligence and goodness, that she seems to me like a dream.

You also, without knowing it, YOU ARE A DREAM ... like that. Plauchut saw you once, and he adored you. That proves that he is not stupid. When he left me in Paris, he told me to remember him to you.

I left Cadio in doubt between good and average receipts. The cabal against the new management relaxed after the second day. The press was half favorable, half hostile. The good weather is against it. The hateful performance of Roger is also against it. So that we don't know yet if we shall make money or not. As for me, when money comes, I say, "So much the better," without excitement, and if it does not come, I say, "So much the worse," without any chagrin. Money not being the aim, ought not to be the preoccupation. It is, moreover, not the real proof of success, since so many vapid or poor things make money.

Here I am with another play already underway, so as to keep my hand in. I have a novel also on the stocks, on the STROLLING PLAYERS. I have studied them a good deal this time without learning anything new. I already had the plot. It is not complicated and is very logical.

I embrace you tenderly as well as your little mother. Give me some sign of life. Does the novel get on?

G. Sand

XCVII. TO GEORGE SAND
Saturday evening

I am remorseful for not having answered at length your last letter, my dear master. You told me of the "ill turns" that people did you. Did you think that I did not know it? I confess to you even (between ourselves), that I was hurt on account of them more because of my good taste, than because of my affection for you. I did not think that several of your friends were warm enough towards you. "My God! my God! how mean literary men are!" A bit out of the correspondence of the first Napoleon. What a nice bit, eh? Doesn't it seem to you that they belittle him too much?

The infinite stupidity of the masses makes me indulgent to individualities, however odious they may be. I have just gulped down the first six volumes of Buchez and Roux. The clearest thing I got out of them is an immense disgust for the French. My Heavens! Have we always been bunglers in this fair land of ours? Not a liberal idea which has not been unpopular, not a just thing that has not caused scandal, not a great man who has not been mobbed or knifed! "The history of the human mind is the history of human folly!" as says M. de Voltaire.

And I am convinced more and more of this truth: the doctrine of grace has so thoroughly permeated us that the sense of justice has disappeared. What terrified me so in the history of '48 has quite naturally its origins in the Revolution, which had not liberated itself from the middle ages, no matter what they say. I have re-discovered in Marat entire fragments of Proudhon (sic) and I wager that they would be found again in the preachers of the League.

What is the measure that the most advanced proposed after Varennes? Dictatorship and military dictatorship. They close the churches, but they raise temples, etc.

I assure you that I am becoming stupid with the Revolution. It is a gulf which draws me in.

However, I work at my novel like a lot of oxen. I hope on New Year's Day not to have over a hundred pages more to write, that is to say, still six good months of work. I shall go to Paris as late as possible. My winter is to pass in complete solitude, good way of making life run along rapidly.

XCVIII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, in Paris
Nohant, 20 November, 1868

You say to me, "When shall we see each other?" About the 15th of December, we are baptizing here our two little girls as Protestants. It is Maurice's idea; he was married before the pastor, and does not want the persecution and influence of the Catholic church about his children. Our friend Napoleon is the godfather of Aurore, and I am the godmother. My nephew is the godfather of the other. All that takes place just among ourselves, in the family. You must come, Maurice wants you to, and if you say no, you will disappoint him greatly. You shall bring your novel, and in a free moment, you shall read it to me; it will do you good to read it to one who listens well. One gets a perspective and judges one's work better. I know that. Say yes to your old troubadour, he will be EXCEEDINGLY GRATEFUL to you for it.

I embrace you six times if you say yes.

G. Sand

XCIX. TO GEORGE SAND
Tuesday

Dear master,

You cannot imagine the sorrow you give me! In spite of the longing I have, I answer "no." Yet I am distracted with my desire to say "yes." It makes me seem like a gentleman who cannot be disturbed, which is very silly. But I know myself: if I go to your house at Nohant, I shall have a month of dreaming about my trip. Real pictures will replace in my brain the fictitious pictures which I compose with great difficulty. All my house of cards will topple

over.

Three weeks ago because I was foolish enough to accept an invitation to dinner at a country place nearby, I lost four days (sic). What would it be on leaving Nohant? You do not understand that, you strong Being! I think that you will be a little vexed with your old troubadour for not coming to the baptism of the two darlings of his friend Maurice? The dear master must write to me if I am wrong, and to give me the news!

Here is mine! I work immoderately and am absolutely ENCHANTED by the prospect of the end which begins to be visible.

So that it may arrive more quickly, I have made the resolution to live here all winter, probably until the end of March. Even admitting that everything goes perfectly, I shall not have finished all before the end of May. I don't know anything that goes on and I read nothing, except a little of the French Revolution, after my meals, to aid digestion. I have lost my former good habit of reading every day in Latin. Therefore I don't know a word of it any more! I shall polish it up again when I am freed from my odious bourgeois, and I am nowhere near it.

My only excitement consists in going to dine on Sundays at Rouen with my mother. I leave at six o'clock, and I am home at ten. Such is my life.

Did I tell you that I had a visit from Tourgueneff? How you would love him!

Sainte-Beuve gets along. Anyway, I shall see him next week when I am in Paris for two days, to get necessary information What is the information about? The national guard!!!

Listen to this: le Figaro not knowing with what to fill its columns, has had the idea of saying that my novel tells the life of Chancellor Pasquier. Thereupon, fear of the aforesaid family, which wrote to another part of the same family living in Rouen, which latter has been to find a lawyer from whom my brother received a visit, so that ... in short, I was very stupid not to "get some benefit from the opportunity." Isn't it a fine piece of idiocy, eh?

C. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, AT CEOISSET
Nohant, 21 December, 1868

Certainly, I am cross with you and angry with you, not from unreasonableness nor from selfishness, but on the contrary, because we were joyous and HILARIOUS and you would not distract yourself and amuse yourself with us. If it was to amuse yourself elsewhere, you would be pardoned in advance; but it was to shut yourself up, to get all heated up, and besides for a work which you curse, and which--wishing to do and being obliged to do anyhow,--you ought to be able to do at your ease and without becoming too absorbed in it.

You tell me that you are like that. There is nothing more to say; but one may well be distressed at having an adored friend, a captive in chains far away, whom one may not free. It is perhaps a little

coquettish on your part, so as to make yourself pitied and loved the more. I, who have not buried myself alive in literature, have laughed and lived a great deal during these holidays, but always thinking of you and talking of you with our friend of the Palais Royal, [Footnote: Jerome Napoleon.] who would have been happy to see you and who loves you and appreciates you a great deal. Tourgueneff has been more fortunate than we, since he was able to snatch you from your ink-well. I know him personally very little, but I know his work by heart. What talent! and how original and polished! I think that the foreigners do better than we do. They do not pose, while we either put on airs or grovel: the Frenchman has no longer a social milieu, he has no longer an intellectual milieu.

I except you, you who live a life of exception, and I except myself, because of the foundation of careless unconventionally which was bestowed upon me; but I, I do not know how to be "careful" and to polish, and I love life too much, and I am amused too much by the mustard and all that is not the real "dinner," to ever be a litterateur. I have had flashes of it, but they have not lasted. Existence where one ignores completely one's "moi" is so good, and life where one does not play a role is such a pretty performance to watch and to listen to! When I have to give of myself, I live with courage and resolution, but I am no longer amused.

You, oh! fanatical troubadour, I suspect you of amusing yourself at your profession more than at anything in the world. In spite of what you say about it, art could well be your sole passion, and your shutting yourself up, at which I mourn like the silly that I am, your state of pleasure. If it is like that then, so much the better, but acknowledge it to console me.

I am going to leave you in order to dress the marionettes, for the plays and the laughter have been resumed with the bad weather, and that will keep us busy for a part of the winter, I fancy. Behold! here I am, the imbecile that you love, and that you call MASTER. A fine master who likes to amuse himself better than to work!

Scorn me profoundly, but love me still. Lina tells me to tell you that you are not much, and Maurice is furious too; but we love you in spite of ourselves and embrace you just the same. Our friend Plauchut wants to be remembered to you; he adores you too.

Yours, you huge ingrate,

G. Sand

I had read the hoax of le Figaro and had laughed at it. It turns out to have assumed grotesque proportions. As for me, they gave me a grandson instead of two granddaughters, and a Catholic baptism instead of a Protestant. That does not make any difference. One really has to lie a little to divert oneself.

CI. TO GEORGE SAND
Saint Sylvester's night, one o'clock, 1869

Why should I not begin the year of 1869 in wishing to you and to yours "Happy New Year and many of them"? It is rococo, but it

pleases me. Now, let us talk.

No, I don't get into a heat, for I have never been better. They thought me, in Paris, "fresh as a young girl," and those people who don't know my life attributed that appearance of health to the air of the country. That is what conventional ideas are. Every one has his system. For my part, when I am not hungry, the only thing I can eat is dry bread. And the most indigestible food, such as apples in sour cider, and bacon, are what cure me of the stomach-ache. And so on. A man who has no common sense ought not to try to live according to common-sense rules.

As for my frenzy for work, I will compare it to an attack of herpes. I scratch myself while I cry. It is both a pleasure and a torture at the same time. And I am doing nothing that I want to! For one does not choose one's subjects, they force themselves on one. Shall I ever find mine? Will an idea fall from Heaven suitable to my temperament? Can I write a book to which I shall give myself heart and soul? It seems to me in my moments of vanity, that I am beginning to catch a glimpse of what a novel ought to be. But I still have three or four of them to write before that one (which is, moreover, very vague), and at the rate I am going, if I write these three or four, that will be the most I can do. I am like M. Prudhomme, who thinks that the most beautiful church would be one which had at the same time the spire of Strasbourg, the colonnade of Saint Peter's, the portico of the Parthenon, etc. I have contradictory ideals. Thence embarrassment, hesitation, impotence.

As to whether the "claustration" to which I condemn myself may be a "state of joy," no. But what can I do? To get drunk with ink is more worth while than to get drunk with brandy. The muse, cross-grained as she is, gives less trouble than a woman. I cannot harmonize the one with the other. I must choose. My choice was made a long time ago. There remains the matter of the senses. They have always been my servants. Even at the time of my earliest youth, I did exactly as I wanted with them. I have reached my fiftieth year, and it is not their ardor that troubles me.

This regime is not amusing, I agree to that. There are moments of empty and horrible boredom. But they become more and more rare in proportion as one grows older. In short, LIVING seems to me a business for which I was not made, and yet...!

I stayed in Paris for three days, which I made use of in hunting up information, and in doing errands about my book. I was so worn out last Friday, that I went to bed at seven o'clock in the evening. Such are my mad orgies at the capital.

I found the Goncourts in a frenzied (sic) admiration over a book entitled Histoire de ma vie by George Sand. Which proves more good taste than learning on their part. They even wanted to write to you to express all their admiration. (In return I found ***** stupid. He compares Feydeau to Chateaubriand, admires very much the Lepreux de la cite d'Aoste, finds Don Quichotte tedious, etc.).

Do you notice how rare literary sense is? The knowledge of language, archeology, history, etc., all that should be useful however! Well! well! not at all! The so-called enlightened people are becoming more and more incompetent in the matter of art. Even what art means

escapes them. The glosses for them are more important than the text. They pay more attention to the crutches than to the legs themselves.

CII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
1st January, 1869

It is one o'clock, I have just embraced my children. I am tired from having spent the night in making a complete costume for a large doll for Aurore; but I don't want to turn in without embracing you also, my great friend, and my dear, big child. May '69 be easy for you, and may it see the end of your novel. May you keep well and be always yourself! I don't know anything better, and I love you.

G. Sand

I have not the address of the Goncourts. Will you put the enclosed answer in the mail?

CIII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croissset
Nohant, 17 January, 1869

The individual named George Sand is well: he is enjoying the marvelous winter which reigns in Berry, gathering flowers, noting interesting botanical anomalies, making dresses and mantles for his daughter-in-law, costumes for the marionettes, cutting out scenery, dressing dolls, reading music, but above all spending hours with the little Aurore who is a marvelous child. There is not a more tranquil or a happier individual in his domestic life than this old troubadour retired from business, who sings from time to time his little song to the moon, without caring much whether he sings well or ill, provided he sings the motif that runs in his head, and who, the rest of the time, idles deliciously. It has not always been as nice as this. He had the folly to be young; but as he did no evil nor knew evil passions, nor lived for vanity, he is happy enough to be peaceful and to amuse himself with everything.

This pale character has the great pleasure of loving you with all his heart, and of not passing a day without thinking of the other old troubadour, confined in his solitude of a frenzied artist, disdainful of all the pleasures of this world, enemy of the magnifying glass and of its attractions. We are, I think, the two most different workers that exist; but since we like each other that way, it is all right. The reason each of us thinks of the other at the same hour, is because each of us has a need of his opposite; we complete ourselves, in identifying ourselves at times with what is not ourselves.

I told you, I think, that I had written a play on returning from Paris. They liked it; but I don't want them to play it in the spring, and the end of the winter is filled up, unless the play they are rehearsing fails. As I do not know how to WISH my colleagues ill luck, I am in no hurry and my manuscript is on the shelf. I have the time. I am writing my little annual novel, when I have one or two hours a day to get to work on it; I am not sorry to be prevented from thinking of it. That develops it. Always before going to sleep,

I have an agreeable quarter of an hour to continue it in my head; there you have it.

I know nothing, nothing at all of the Sainte-Beuve incident. I get a dozen newspapers, whose wrappers I respect to such an extent that without Lina, who tells me the chief news from time to time, I would not know if Isidore were still among us.

Sainte-Beuve is very high tempered, and, as regards opinions, so perfectly skeptical, that I should never be astonished at anything he did, in one sense or the other. He was not always like that, at least not so much so. I have known him to be more credulous and more republican than I was then. He was thin and pale, and gentle; how people change! His talent, his knowledge, his mind have increased enormously, but I used to like his character better. Just the same, there is still much good in him. There is still love and reverence for letters--and he will be the last of the critics. Criticism rightly so-called, will disappear. Perhaps there is no longer any reason for its existence. What do you think about it?

It appears that you are studying the boor (pignouf). As for me, I avoid him. I know him too well. I love the Berrichon peasant who is not, who never is, a boor, even when he is of no great account; the word pignouf has its depths; it was created exclusively for the bourgeois, wasn't it? Ninety out of a hundred provincial middle-class women are boorish (pignouf lardes) to a high degree, even with pretty faces that ought to give evidence of delicate instincts. One is surprised to find a basis of gross self-sufficiency in these false ladies. Where is the woman now? She is becoming a freak in society.

Good night, my troubadour: I love you, and I embrace you warmly; Maurice also.

G. Sand

CIV. TO GEORGE SAND
Croisset, Tuesday, 2 February, 1869

My dear master,

You see in your troubadour a worn-out man. I have spent a week in Paris, looking up wearisome information (from seven to nine hours in fiacres every day, which is a fine way to make money out of literature). Oh, well!

I have just reread my outline. All that I have still to write horrifies me, or rather disgusts me, so that I want to vomit. It is always so, when I get to work. It is then that I am bored, bored, bored! But this time exceeds all others. That is why I dread so much interruptions in the daily grind. I could not do otherwise, however. I dragged about at funerals at Pere-Lachaise, in the valley of Montmorency, through shops of religious objects, etc.

In short, I have enough material for four or five months now. What a big "Hooray" I shall utter, when it is finished, and when I am not in the midst of remaking the bourgeois! It is high time that I

enjoyed life.

I saw Sainte-Beuve and the Princess Mathilde, and I know thoroughly the story of their break, which seems to me irrevocable. Sainte-Beuve was outraged against Dalloz and has gone to le Temps. The princess begged him not to do anything about it. He did not listen to her. That is all. My opinion on it, if you wish to know it, is this. The first wrong was done by the princess, who was hasty; but the second and the worst was by pere Beuve, who did not behave as a courteous man. If one has a friend, a rather good fellow, and that friend has given one thirty thousand francs a year income, one owes him some consideration. It seems to me that in Sainte-Beuve's place I should have said, "That displeases you, let us talk no more about it." He lacked manners and poise. What disgusted me a little, between ourselves, was the way he praised the emperor to me! yes, he praised Badinguet, to me!--And we were alone!

The princess had taken the thing too seriously from the beginning. I wrote to her, saying that Sainte-Beuve was right; he, I am sure, found me rather cold. It was then, in order to justify himself to me, that he made these protestations of isidorian love, which humiliated me a little; for it was as if he took me for a complete imbecile.

I think that he is preparing for a funeral like Beranger's, and that Hugo's popularity makes him jealous. Why write for the papers, when one can make books, and when one is not perishing of hunger? He's no sage, Sainte-Beuve. Not like you!

Your strength charms me and amazes me. I mean the strength of your entire being, not only that of your brain.

You speak of criticism in your last letter to me, telling me that it will soon disappear. I think, on the contrary, that it is, at most, only at its dawning. They are on a different tack from before, but nothing more. At the time of La Harpe, they were grammarians; at the time of Sainte-Beuve and of Taine, they are historians. When will they be artists, only artists, but really artists? Where do you know a criticism? Who is there who is anxious about the work in itself, in an intense way? They analyze very keenly the setting in which it was written, and the causes that produced it; but the UNCONSCIOUS poetic expression? Where it comes from? its composition, its style? the point of view of the author? Never.

That criticism would require great imagination and great sympathy. I mean a faculty of enthusiasm that is always ready, and then TASTE, a rare quality, even among the best, so much so that one does not talk about it any longer.

What irritates me every day, is to see a master-piece and a disgrace put on the same level. They exalt the little, and they lower the great, nothing is more imbecile nor more immoral.

At Pere-Lachaise I was seized with a profound and sorrowful disgust for humanity. You can not imagine the fetichism of the tombs. The real Parisian is more of an idolater than a negro is! It made me long to lie down in one of the graves.

And the PROGRESSIVES think that there is nothing better than to

rehabilitate Robespierre! Note Hamel's book! If the Republic returned they would bless the liberty poles out of policy and believing that measure strong.

When shall I see you? I plan to be in Paris from Easter to the end of May, This spring I shall go to see you at Nohant, I swear it.

CV. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Nohant, 11 February, 1869

While you are running around to get material for your novel, I am inventing all sorts of pretexts not to write mine. I let myself be distracted by guilty fancies, something I am reading fascinates me and I set myself to scribbling on paper that will be left in my desk and bring me no return. That has amused me, or rather that has compelled me, for it would be in vain for me to struggle against these caprices; they interrupt me and force me...you see that I have not the strength of mind that you think.

As for our masculine friend, he is ungrateful, while our feminine friend is too exacting. You were right; they are both wrong and it is not their fault, it is the social machinery which insists on it. The kind of recognition, that is to say, submission that she exacts, depends on a tradition that the present time still profits by (there lies the evil); but does not accept any longer as a duty. The notions of the obliged are changed, those of the obliger ought to change also. It must be said that one does not buy moral liberty by any kindness,--and as for him, he should have foreseen that he would be considered enchained. The simplest thing would have been not to care about having thirty thousand francs a year. It is so easy to do without it. Let him extricate himself. They won't entangle us in it: we aren't so foolish!

You say very good things about criticism. But in order to do as you say, there must be artists, and the artist is too much occupied with his own work, to forget himself in estimating that of others.

Heavens, what fine weather! Don't you enjoy it, at least from your window? I'll wager that the tulip tree is in bud. Here, the peaches and the apricots are in flower. It is said that they will be ruined; that does not stop them from being pretty and not tormenting themselves about it.

We have had our family carnival: my niece, my grandchildren, etc. We all put on fancy dress; it is not difficult here, one only has to go to the wardrobe and one comes down again as Cassandra, Scapin, Mezzetin, Figaro, Basile, etc., all that is very pretty. The pearl was Lolo as a little Louis XIII in crimson satin, trimmed with white satin fringed and laced with silver. I spent three days in making this costume, which was very chic; it was so pretty and so funny on that little girl of three years, that we were all amazed in looking at her.

Then we played charades, had supper, and frolicked till daylight. You see that banished to a desert, we keep up a good deal of vitality. And that I delay all I can, the trip to Paris and the chapter of business. If you were there, I would not need to be

urged. But you are going there the end of March if and I can not afford to wait till then. To conclude, you swear to come this summer and we count on it absolutely. Sooner than not have you come I shall go to drag you here by the hair. I embrace you most warmly on this good hope.

G. Sand

CVI. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croissset
Nohant, 24 February, 1869

I am all alone at Nohant as you are all alone at Croisset. Maurice and Lina have gone to Milan, to see Calamatta who is dangerously ill. Should they have the misfortune to lose him, they will have to go to Rome to settle his estate, an irksome task added to a sorrow, it is always like that. That sudden separation was sad, my poor Lina weeping at leaving her daughters and weeping at not being with her father. They left me the care of the children whom I rarely leave and who only let me work when they sleep; but I am happier at having this care on my shoulders to console me. I have, every day, in two hours news from Milan by telegram. The patient is better; my children are only as far as Turin today and do not know yet what I know. How this telegraph changes one's idea of life, and when the formalities and formulas are still more simplified, how full existence will be of facts and how free from uncertainties.

Aurore, who lives on adorations in the lap of her father and mother and who weeps every day when I am away, has not asked a single time where they are. She plays and laughs, then she stops; her great eyes stare, she says: MY FATHER? another time she says: MAMMA? I distract her, she thinks no more of it, and then she begins again. They are very mysterious, children! They think without understanding. Only one sad word is needed to bring out their sorrow. She carries it unconsciously. She looks in my eyes to see if I am sad or anxious; I laugh and she laughs, I think that we must keep her sensitiveness asleep as long as possible, and that she never would weep for me if they did not speak of me.

What is your advice, you who have brought up an intelligent and charming niece? Is it wise to make them loving and affectionate early? I thought so formerly: I was afraid when I saw Maurice too impressionable and Solange too much the opposite, and resisting affection. I would like little ones to be shown only the sweet and the good of life, until the time when reason can help them to accept or to fight the bad. What do you say?

I embrace you and ask you to tell me when you are going to Paris, my trip is delayed as my children may be absent a month; I shall be able, perhaps, to meet you in Paris.

Your old solitary,

G. Sand

What an admirable definition I rediscover with surprise in the fatalist Pascal!

"Nature acts progressively, itus et reditus. It goes on and returns, then it goes still further, then half as far, then further than ever." [Footnote: George Sand had copied this and fastened it over her work table at Nohant.]

What a way of speaking, eh? How the language turns, is twisted, made supple, is condensed under this grandiose "hand."

CVII. TO GEORGE SAND
Tuesday night

What do I say about it, dear master? Should one excite or repress the sensitiveness of children? It seems to me that one should not have any set rule about it. It is according as they have a tendency to too much or too little. Moreover, the basis isn't changed. There are tender natures and hard natures, irremediably so. And then the same sight, the same lesson can produce opposite effects. Could anything have hardened me more than having been brought up in a hospital and having played, as a child, in a dissecting amphitheatre? But no one is more sensitive than I am to physical suffering. It is true that I am the son of an extremely humane man, sensitive in the true meaning of the word. The sight of a suffering dog made tears come to his eyes. He did his surgical operations none the less well, and he invented some dreadful ones.

"Show little ones only the sweet and the good of life until the time when reason can help them to accept or to fight the bad." Such is not my opinion. For then something terrible, an infinite disenchantment is bound to be produced in their hearts. And then, how could reason form itself, if it does not apply itself (or if one does not apply it daily) to distinguish good from evil? Life ought to be a continual education; one must learn everything--from talking to dying.

You tell me very true things about the unconsciousness of children. He who could read clearly in these little brains would grasp in them the roots of the human race, the origin of the gods, the sap which produces actions later on, etc. A negro who talks to his idol, and a child who talks to her doll seem to me close together.

The child and the savage (the primitive) do not distinguish the real from the fantastic. I remember very clearly that at five or six years of age I wanted to "send my heart" to a little girl with whom I was in love (I mean my material heart). I could see it in the middle of straw, in a basket, an oyster basket.

But no one has been so far as you in these analyses. There are some infinitely profound pages about it in the Histoire de ma vie. What I say is true, since minds quite opposite to yours have been amazed at them. For instance, the Goncourts.

The good Tourgueneff ought to be in Paris at the end of March. What would be fine, would be for us all three to dine together.

I am thinking again of Sainte-Beuve. Without doubt one can get along without thirty thousand francs a year. But there is something easier yet: that is, when one has them, not to launch into abuse, every

week, in the papers. Why doesn't he write books, since he is rich and has talent?

I am just now reading Don Quichotte again. What a tremendous old book! Is there any more beautiful?

CVIII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Nohant, 7 March, 1869

Still alone with my grandchildren; my nephews and friends come to spend two out of every three days with me, but I miss Maurice and Lina. Poor Calamatta is at the last gasp.

Give me the address of the Goncourts, you have never given it to me. Shall I never know it? My letter is still waiting there for them.

I love you and embrace you. I love you much, much, and I embrace you very warmly.

G. Sand

CIX. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Nohant, 12 March, 1869

Poor Calamatta died the 9th, my children are coming back. My Lina must be distressed. I have news from them only by telegraph. From Milan here in an hour and a half. But there are no details, and I am anxious. I embrace you tenderly,

G. Sand

Thank you for the address.

CX. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croissset
Nohant, 2 April, 1869

Dear friend of my heart, here we are once more calm again. My children returned to me very exhausted. Aurore has been a little ill. Lina's mother has come to get into touch with her about their affairs. She is a loyal and excellent woman, very artistic, and very amiable. I too have had a bad cold, but everything is getting better now, and our charming little girls console their little mother. If it were less bad weather, and I had a less bad cold, I would go at once to Paris, for I want to see you there. How long do you stay there? Tell me quickly.

I shall be very glad to renew my acquaintance with Tourgueneff, whom I knew a little without having read him, and whom I have since read with a whole-hearted admiration. You seem to me to love him a great deal; then I love him too, and I wish when your novel is finished, that you would bring him to our house. Maurice also knows him and appreciates him greatly, he who likes whatever does not resemble anything else.

I am working at my novel about TRAVELING ACTORS [Footnote: Pierre qui roule.] like a convict. I am trying to have it amusing and to explain art; it is a new form for me and amuses me. Perhaps it will not have any success. The taste of the day is for marquises and courtesans; but what difference does that make?--You must find me a title, which is a resume of that idea: THE MODERN ROMAN COMIQUE.

My children send you affectionate greetings; your old troubadour embraces his old troubadour.

G. Sand

Answer quickly how long you expect to stay in Paris. You say that you are paying bills and that you are vexed. If you have need of quibus, I have at the moment a few sous I can lend you. You know that you offered once to lend me some. If I had been in a hole I would have accepted. Give all my regards to Maxime Du Camp and thank him for not forgetting me.

CXI. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Nohant, 17 April, 1869

I am well, I am finishing (today, I hope) my modern Roman comique which will be called I don't know what. I am a little tired, for I have done a lot of other things. But I am going to Paris in eight or ten days to rest, to embrace you, to talk of you, of your work, to forget mine, God be thanked! and to love you as always very much and very tenderly.

G. Sand

Regards from Maurice and his wife.

CXII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Monday, 26 April, 1869

I arrived last night, I am running around like a rat, but every day at 6 o'clock one is sure of finding me at Magny's, and the first day that you are free, come to dine with your old troubadour who loves you and embraces you.

Send word ahead to me, however, so that by an exceptional chance, I do not have the ill luck to miss you.

Monday.

CXIII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Thursday evening, 29 April, 1869

I am back from Palaiseau and I find your letter. Saturday I am not sure of being free; I have to read my play with Chilly on account of some objections of detail, and I had told you so. But I see him

tomorrow evening, and I shall try to get him to give me another day. I shall write you then, tomorrow evening, Friday, and if he frees me, I shall go to your house about three o'clock on Saturday so that we can read before and after dinner; I dine on a little fish, a chicken wing, an ice and a cup of coffee, never anything else, by which means my stomach keeps well. If I am kept by Chilly, we shall postpone till next week after Friday.

I sold Palaiseau today to a master shoemaker who has a LEATHER plaster on his right eye, and who calls the sumachs of the garden, the schumakre.

Then Saturday morning you shall have word from your old comrade.

G. Sand

CXIV. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
30 April, 1869

No way of going out today. This slavery to one's profession is horrid, isn't it? Between now and Friday I shall write to you so that we can again settle on a day. I embrace you, my old beloved troubadour.

G. Sand

CXV. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
3 May, 1869

They are encroaching upon my time more and more. All my days are full until and including next Sunday.--Tell me quickly if you want me Monday, a week from today--or if it is another day. Let us fix it for it is a fact that I don't really know whom to listen to.

Your troubadour who does not want THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS to continue!

G. Sand

Monday.

CXVI. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Paris, 4 May, 1869

On Monday then, and if I have an hour free I shall try to embrace my troubadour before that. But don't disturb yourself, I know very well that one does nothing here that one would like to do. Anyway, on Monday between three and four, clear out your windpipe so as to read me a part before dinner.

G. Sand

Tues. evening.

CXVII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Sunday, 9 May, 1869

Tomorrow, your reverence, I shall go to dine at your house. I shall be at home every day at five o'clock, but you might meet some guys whom you dislike. You would much better come to Magny's where you would find me alone, or with Plauchut, or with friends who are also yours.

I embrace you. I received today the letter which you wrote to me at Nohant.

G. Sand

CXVIII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Paris, 18 May, 1869

I saw Levy today, I tested him at first; I saw that he would not give up his contract at any price. I then said to him many good things about the book and made the remark that he had gotten it very cheap. But he said to me, if the book is in two volumes, it will be 20,000 francs, that is agreed. So I suppose that you will have two volumes, won't you?

However, I persisted and he said to me: If the book is a success, I shall not begrudge two or three thousand francs more. I said that you would not demand anything, that it was not your way of acting, but that for MY PART, I should insist for you without your knowledge, and he left me saying: Be easy, I don't say no. Should the book succeed I will make the author profit by it.

That is all that I have been able to do now, but I will take it up again at the proper time and place. Leave that to me, I will return your contract. What day next week will you dine with me at Magny's? I am a little weary.

You would be very kind to come to read at my house, we should be alone and one evening will be enough for the rest. Set the day, and AT SIX THIRTY if that does not bother you. My stomach is beginning to suffer a little from Paris habits. Your troubadour who loves you,

G. Sand

The rest of the week will finish up Palaiseau, but Sunday if you like, I am free. Answer if you want Sunday at Magny's at half past six.

CXIX. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

Then Monday, I count on you, at half past six; but as I am going to Palaiseau, I may be a few minutes late or early. The first one at Magny's must wait for the other. I am looking forward with pleasure to hearing THE REST. Don't forget the manuscript.

Your troubadour Thursday evening, 20 May, 1869.

CXX. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT Paris, 29 May, 1869

Yes, Monday, my dear good friend, I count on you and I embrace you.

G. Sand

I am off for Palaiseau AND IT IS TEN O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING!

CXXI. TO GEORGE SAND

My prophecy is fulfilled; My friend X----has gained only ridicule with his candidacy. That serves him right. When a man of style debases himself to practical life, he loses caste and should be punished. And then, is it a question of politics, now! The citizens who are excited for or against the Empire or the Republic seem to me as useful as those who discuss efficacious or efficient grace. Politics are as dead as theology! They have had three hundred years of existence, that is quite enough.

Just now I am lost in the Church Fathers. As for my novel l'Education sentimentale, I am paying no more attention to it, God be thanked! It is recopied. Other hands have gone over it. So, the thing is no longer mine. It does not exist any longer, good night. I have taken up again my old hobby of Saint Antoine. I have reread my notes, I am making another new plan and I am devouring the ecclesiastical memoirs of the Nain de Tillemont. I hope to succeed in finding a logical connection (and therefore a dramatic interest) between the different hallucinations of the Saint. This extravagant setting pleases me and I am absorbed in it, there you are!

My poor Bouilhet bothers me. He is in such a nervous state that they have advised him to take a little trip to the south of France. He is overwhelmed by an unconquerable melancholy. Isn't it queer! He who was so gay, formerly!

My Heavens! What a beautiful and farcical thing is the life of the desert Fathers! But without doubt they were all Buddhists. That is a stylish problem to work at, and its solution would be more important than the election of an academician. Oh! ye men of little faith! Long live Saint Polycarp!

Fangeat, who has reappeared recently, is the citizen who, on the 25th day of February, 1848, demanded the death of Louis-Philippe "without a trial." That is the way one serves the cause of progress.

CXXII. TO GEORGE SAND

What a good and charming letter was yours, adored master! There is no one but you! upon my word of honor! I am ending by believing it. A wind of stupidity and folly is now blowing over the world. Those

who stand up firm and straight against it are rare.

This is what I meant when I wrote that the times of politics were over. In the 18th century the chief business was diplomacy. "The secrecy of the cabinets" really existed. The peoples still were sufficiently amenable to be separated and to be combined. That order of things seems to me to have said its last word in 1815. Since then, one has hardly done anything except dispute about the external form that it is fitting to give the fantastic and odious being called the State.

Experience proves (it seems to me) that no form contains the best in itself; orleanism, republic, empire do not mean anything anymore, since the most contradictory ideas can enter into each one of these pigeon holes. All the flags have been so soiled with blood and with filth that it is time not to have any at all. Down with words! No more symbols nor fetiches! The great moral of this reign will be to prove that universal suffrage is as senseless as the divine right although a little less odions!

The question is then out of place. One is concerned no longer with dreaming of the best form of government, since all are equal, but with making science prevail. That is the most important. The rest will follow inevitably. Purely intellectual men have rendered more service to the human race than all the Saint Vincent de Pauls in the world! And politics will be an everlasting folly so long as it is not subordinate to science. The government of a country ought to be a section of the Institute, and the last section of all.

Before concerning yourself with relief funds, and even with agriculture, send to all the villages in France, Robert Houdins to work miracles! The greatest crime of Isidore is the wretched condition in which he leaves our beautiful country. Dixi. I admire Maurice's occupations and his healthy life. But I am not capable of imitating him. Nature, far from fortifying me, drains my strength. When I lie on the grass I feel as if I am already under the earth and that the roots of green things are beginning to grow in my belly. Your troubadour is naturally an unhealthy man. I do not like the country except when travelling, because then the independence of my individuality causes me to rise above the knowledge of my nothingness.

CXXIII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Nohant, 6 August, 1869

Well, dear good friend, here it is August, and you have promised to come. We don't forget it, we count on it, we dream of it, and we talk of it every day. You were to take a trip to the seashore first if I am not mistaken. You must need to shake up your gloom. That does not dispel it, but it does force it to live with us and not be too oppressive. I have thought a great deal about you lately, I would have hastened to see you if I had not thought I should find you surrounded by older and better friends than I am. I wrote you at the same time that you wrote me, our letters crossed.

Come to see us, my dear old friend, I shall not go to Paris this month, I do not want to miss you. My children will be happy to spoil

you and to try to distract you. We all love you, and I love you PASSIONATELY, as you know.

CXXIV. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Nohant, 14 August, 1869

Your change of plans distresses us, dear friend, but we do not dare to complain in the face of your anxieties and sorrows. We ought to wish you to do what would distract you the most, and take the least out of you. I am in hopes of finding you in Paris, as you are staying there some time and I always have business there. But it is so hard to see friends in Paris and one is so overwhelmed by so many tedious duties! Well, it is a real sorrow to me not to have to expect you any more at our house, where each one of us would have tried to love you better than the others and where you would have been at home; sad when you wanted to be, busy if you liked. I resign myself on condition that you will be better off somewhere else and that you will make it good to us when you can.

Have you at least arranged your affairs with Levy? Is he paying you for two volumes? I would like you to have something on which to live independently and as master of your time. Here there is repose for the mind in the midst of the exuberant activities of Maurice, and of his brave little wife who sets herself to love all he loves and to help him eagerly in all he undertakes. As for me, I have the appearance of incarnate idleness in the midst of this hard work. I botanize and I bathe in a little icy torrent. I teach my servant to read, I correct proof and I am well. That is my life and nothing bores me in this world where I think that AS FAR AS I AM CONCERNED all is for the best. But I am afraid of becoming more of a bore than I used to be. People don't like such as I am very much. We are too inoffensive. However, love me still a little, for I feel by the disappointment of not seeing you, that it would have gone hard with me if you had meant to break your word.

And I embrace you tenderly, dear old friend.

G. Sand

CXXV. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Thursday

I know nothing either of Chilly or la petite Fadette. In a few days I am going to make a tour of Normandy. I shall go through Paris. If you want to come around with me,--oh! but no, you don't travel about; well, we shall see each other in passing. I have certainly earned a little holiday. I have worked like a beast of burden. I need too to see some blue, but the blue of the sea will do, and you would like the blue of the artistic and literary firmament over our heads. Bah! that doesn't exist. Everything is prose, flat prose in the environment in which mankind has settled itself. It is only in isolating oneself a little that one can find in oneself the normal being again.

I am resuming my letter interrupted for two days by my wounded hand

which inconveniences me a good deal. I am not going to Normandy at all, my Lamberts whom I was going to see in Yport came back to Paris and my business calls me there too. I shall then see you next week probably, and I shall embrace you as if you were my dear big child. Why can't I put the rosy, tanned face of Aurore in the place of mine! She is not what you would call pretty, but she is adorable and so quick in comprehending that we all are astonished. She is as amusing in her chatter as a person,--who might be amusing. So I am going to be forced to start thinking about my business! It is the one thing of which I have a horror and which really troubles my serenity. You must console me by joking with me a little when you have the time.

I shall see you soon, have courage in the sickening work of proof-reading. As for me I hurry over it quickly and badly, but you must not do as I do.

My children send you their love and your troubadour loves you.

G. Sand

Saturday evening

I have just received news from the Odeon. They are at work putting on my play and do not speak of anything else.

CXXVI. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Paris, 6 September, 1869

They wrote me yesterday to come because they wanted me at the Opera-Comique. Here I am rue Gay-Lussac. When shall we meet? Tell me. All my days, are still free.

I embrace you.

G. Sand

CXXVII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Paris, 8 September, 1869

I send you back your handkerchief which you left in the carriage. It is surely tomorrow THURSDAY that we dine together? I have written to the big Marchal to come to Magny's too.

Your troubadour

G. Sand

Wednesday morning.

CXXVIII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Paris, Tuesday, 5 October, 1869

Where are you now, my dear troubadour? I am still writing to you at the boulevard du Temple, but perhaps you have taken possession of your delightful lodgings. I don't know the address although I have seen the house, the situation and the view.--I have been twice in the Ardennes and in a week or ten days, if Lina or Maurice does not come to Paris, as they have a slight desire to do, I shall leave again for Nohant.

We must then meet and see each other. Here am I a little sfogata (eased) from my need for travel, and enchanted with what I have seen. Tell me what day except tomorrow, Wednesday, you can give me for dinner at Magny's or elsewhere with or without Plauchut, with whomever you wish provided I see you and embrace you.

Your old comrade who loves you.

G. Sand

CXXIX. TO GEORGE SAND

Dear good adored master,

I have wanted for several days to write you a long letter in which I should tell you all that I have felt for a month. It is funny. I have passed through different and strange states. But I have neither the time nor the repose of mind to gather myself together enough.

Don't be disturbed about your troubadour. He will always have "his independence and his liberty" because he will always do as he has always done. He has left everything rather than submit to any obligation whatsoever, and then, with age, one's needs lessen. I suffer no longer from not living in the Alhambra.

What would do me good now, would be to throw myself furiously into Saint-Antoine, but I have not even the time to read.

Listen to this: in the very beginning, your play was to come after Aisse; then it was agreed that it should come BEFORE. Now Chilly and Duquesnel want it to come after, simply and solely "to profit by the occasion," to profit by my poor Bouilhet's death. They will give you a "sort of compensation." Well, I am the owner and the master of Aisse just as if I were the author, and I do not want that. You understand, I do not want you to inconvenience yourself in anything.

You think that I am as sweet as a lamb! Undeceive yourself, and act as if Aisse had never existed; and above all no sensitiveness? That would offend me. Between simple friends, one needs manners and politenesses; but between you and me, that would not seem at all suitable; we do not owe each other anything at all except to love each other.

I think that the directors of the Odeon will regret Bouilhet in every way. I shall be less easy than he was at rehearsals. I should very much like to read Aisse to you so as to talk a little about it; some of the actors whom they propose are, to my way of thinking, impossible. It is hard to have to do with uneducated people.

CXXX. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Wednesday evening, 13 October, 1869

Our poor friend is not to be buried till the day after tomorrow, they will let me know where and when we ought to be there, I shall tell you by telegram.

I have seen the directors twice. It was agreed this morning with Duquesnel that they should make an attempt with de la T(our) Saint-Y(bars). I yielded my turn to Aisse. I was not to come till March. I went back there this evening, Chilly IS UNWILLING, and Duquesnel, better informed than this morning, regards the step as useless and harmful. I then quoted my contract, my right. What a fine thing, the theatre! M. Saint-Ybars' contract antedates mine. They had thought le Batard would last two weeks and it will last forty days longer. Then La Tour Saint-Ybars precedes us [Footnote: This refers to l'Affranchi.] and I can not give up my turn to Aisse without being postponed till next year, which I'll do if you want me to; but it would do me a good deal of harm, for I have gotten into debt with the Revue and I must refill my purse.--Are directors rascals in all that? No, but incompetents who are always afraid of not having enough plays, and accept too many, foreseeing that they will have failures.--When they are successful, if the authors contracted for are ANGRY they have to go to court. I have no taste for disputes and the scandals of the side-scenes and the newspapers; and neither have you. What would be the result? Inadequate compensation and a deal of uproar for nothing. One needs patience in any event, I have it, and I tell you again if you are really upset at this delay, I am ready to sacrifice myself.

With this I embrace you and I love you.

G. Sand

CXXXI. TO GEORGE SAND
14 October, 1869

Dear master,

No! no sacrifices! so much the worse! If I did not look at Bouilhet's affairs as mine absolutely, I should have at once accepted your proposition. But: (1) it is my affair, (2) the dead must not hurt the living.

But I am angry at these gentlemen, I do not hide it from you, for not having said anything to us about Latour Saint-Ybars. For the aforesaid Latour was engaged a long time ago. Why did we not know anything about him?

In short, let Chilly write me the letter on which we agreed Wednesday, and let there be no more discussion about it.

It seems to me that your play can be given the 15th of December, if l'Affranchi begins about the 20th of November. Two and a half months are about fifty performances; if you go beyond that, Aisse will not

be presented till next year.

Then, it is agreed, since we can not suppress Latour Saint-Ybars; you shall go after him and Aisse next, if I think it suitable.

We shall meet Saturday at poor Sainte-Beuve's funeral. How the little band diminishes! How the few survivors of the Medusa's raft are disappearing!

A thousand affectionate greetings.

CXXXII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Paris, 20 or 21 October, 1869

Impossible, dear old beloved. Brebant is too far, I have so little time. And then I have made an engagement with Marchal and Berton at Magny's to say farewell. If you can come, I shall be very happy and on the other hand if it is going to make you ill, don't come, I know very well that you love me and shall not be angry with you about anything.

G. Sand

CXXXIII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croisset
Nohant, 15 Nov., 1869

What has become of you, my dear old beloved troubadour? are you correcting proof like a galley slave, up to the last minute? For the last two days they have been announcing your book FOR TOMORROW. I am looking for it with impatience, for you are not going to forget me, are you? You will be praised and condemned; you expect that. You are too truly superior not to arouse envy and you don't care, do you? Nor I either for you. You have the strength to be stimulated by what discourages others. There will certainly be a rumpus; your subject will be quite opportune in this time of REVOLUTIONISTS. The good progressives, the true democrats will approve of you. The idiots will be furious, and you will say: "Come weal, come woe!" I am also correcting proof of Pierre qui roule and I have half finished a new novel which will not make much of a stir; that is all that I ask for at the moment. I work alternately on MY novel, the one that I like, and on the one that the Revue does not dislike as much, but which I like very little. It is arranged that way; I don't know if I am making a mistake. Perhaps those which I like are the worst. But I have stopped worrying about myself, so far as I have ever done so. Life has always taken me out of myself, and so it will to the end. My heart is always affected to the detriment of my head. At present it is my little children who devour all my intellect; Aurore is a jewel, a nature before which I bow in admiration; will it last like that?

You are going to spend the winter in Paris, and I, I don't know when I shall go. The success of le Batard continues; but I am not impatient, you have promised to come as soon as you are free, at Christmas at the very latest, to keep revel with us. I think only of that, and if you break your word we shall be in despair here. With

this I embrace you with a full heart as I love you.

G. Sand

CXXXIV. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Paris
Nohant, 30 November, 1869

Dear friend of my heart, I wanted to reread your book [Footnote: l'Education sentimentale.]; my daughter-in-law has read it too, and some of my young people, all readers in earnest and of the first rank and not stupid at all. We are all of the same opinion, that it is a beautiful book, equal in strength to the best ones of Balzac and truer, that is to say more faithful to the truth from one end to the other.

One needs the great art, the exquisite form and the severity of your work to do without flowers of fancy. However, you throw poetry with a full hand on your picture, whether your characters understand it or not. Rosanette at Fontainebleau does not know on what grass she walks and nevertheless she is poetic.

All that issues from a master's hand, and your place is well won for always. Live then as calmly as possible in order to last a long time and to produce a great deal.

I have seen two short articles which did not seem to me to rebel against your success; but I hardly know what is going on, politics seems to me to absorb everything.

Keep me posted. If they did not do justice to you I should be angry and should say what I think. It is my right.

I don't know exactly when, but during the month, I shall go without doubt to embrace you and to get you, if I can pry you loose from Paris. My children still count on it, and all of us send you our praises and our affectionate greetings.

Yours, your old troubadour

G. Sand

CXXXV. TO GEORGE SAND

Dear good master,

Your old troubadour is vehemently slandered by the papers. Read the Constitutionnel of last Monday, the Gaulois of this morning, it is blunt and plain. They call me idiotic and common. Barbey d'Aurevilly's article (Constitutionnel) is a model of this character, and the good Sarcey's, although less violent, is in no way behind it. These gentlemen object in the name of morality and the Ideal! I have also been annihilated in le Figaro and in Paris, by Cesana and Duranty. I most profoundly don't care a fig! but that does not make me any the less astonished by so much hatred and bad faith.

La Tribune, le Pays and l'Opinion nationale on the other hand have highly praised me...As for the friends, the persons who received a copy adorned by my hand, they have been afraid of compromising themselves and have talked to me of
other things. The brave are few. The book is selling very well nevertheless, in spite of politics, and Levy appears satisfied.

I know that the bourgeois of Rouen are furious with me "because of pere Roque and the cancan at the Tuileries." They think that one ought to prevent the publication of books like that (textual), that I lend a hand to the Reds, that I am capable of inflaming revolutionary passions, etc., etc. In short, I have received very few laurels, up to now, and no rose leaf hurts me.

I told you, didn't I, that I was working over the fairy play? I am doing now a description of the races and I have cut out all that seemed to me hackneyed. Raphael Felix didn't seem to me eager to become acquainted with it. Problem!

All the papers cite as a proof of my depravity, the episode of the Turkish woman, which they misrepresent, naturally; and Sarcey compares me to Marquis de Sade, whom he confesses he has not read!

All that does not upset me at all. But I wonder what use there is in printing my book?

CXXXVI. TO GEORGE SAND
Tuesday, 4 o'clock, 7 December, 1869

Dear master,

Your old troubadour is being jumped on in an unheard of manner. Those people who have read my novel are afraid to talk to me of it lest they compromise themselves or out of pity for me. The more indulgent declare I have made only pictures and that both composition and plan are quite lacking.

Saint-Victor, who puffs the books of Arsene Houssaye, won't write articles on mine, finding it too bad. There you are. Theo is away, and no one, absolutely no one takes my defense.

Another story: yesterday Raphael and Michel Levy listened to the reading of the fairy play. Applause, enthusiasm. I saw the moment during the reading in which the contract was going to be signed. Raphael so well understood the play that he gave me two or three EXCELLENT criticisms. I found him in other ways a charming boy. He asked me until Saturday to give me a definite answer. Then a little while ago, a letter (very polite) from the aforesaid Raphael in which he declares that the fairy play would entail expenses that would be too much for him.

Ditched again. I must look elsewhere. Nothing new at the Odeon.

Sarcey has published a second article against me.

Barbey d'Aurevilly claims that I dirty a stream by washing myself in

it (sic). All that does not bother me at all.

CXXXVII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Thursday, two o'clock in the morning, December 9, 1869

My comrade, it is finished, the article shall go tomorrow. I address it to whom? Answer by telegram. I have a mind to send it to Girardin. But perhaps you have a better idea, I really don't know the importance and the credit of the various papers. Send me a suitable name and ADDRESS by telegram; I have Girardin's.

I am not content with my prose, I have had the fever and a sort of sprain for two days. But we must make haste. I embrace you.

G. Sand

CXXXVIII. TO GEORGE SAND
10 December, Friday, 10 o'clock in the evening, 1869

Dear master, good as good bread,

I have just sent you by telegraph this message: "To Girardin." La Liberte will publish your article, at once. What do you think of my friend Saint-Victor, who has refused to write an article about it because he finds "the book bad"? you have not such a conscience as that, have you?

I continue to be rolled in the mud. La Gironde calls me Prudhomme. That seems new to me.

How shall I thank you? I feel the need of saying affectionate things to you. I have so many in my heart that not one comes to the tips of my fingers. What a splendid woman you are and what a splendid man! To say nothing of all the other things!

CXXXIX. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Nohant, Friday to Saturday during the night, 10 to 11 December, 1869

I have rewritten my article [Footnote: The article, Sur l'Education sentimentale, de Flaubert, was printed in the Questions d'art et de litterature, Calmann-Levy, p. 415.] today and this evening, I am better, it is clearer. I am expecting your telegram tomorrow. If you do not put your veto on it, I shall send the article to Ulbach, who begins his paper the 15th of this month; he wrote to me this morning to beg me urgently for any article I would send him. I think this first number will be widely read, and it would be good publicity. Michel Levy would be a better judge than we as to what is the best to do: consult him.

You seem astonished at the ill will. You are too simple. You do not know how original your book is, and how many personal feelings must be offended by the force it contains. You think you are doing things that will pass as a letter in the mail; ah! well, yes!

I have insisted on the PLAN of your book; that is what they understand the least and it is what is the most important. I tried to show the ordinary people how they should read; for it is the ordinary people who make successes. The clever ones don't like the successes of others. I don't pay attention to the malicious; it would honor them too much.

G. S.

My mother has your telegram and is sending her manuscript to Girardin.

4 o'clock in the afternoon.

Lina

CXL. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, in Paris
Nohant, 14 December, 1869

I do not see my article coming out, but others are appearing which are bad and unjust. One's enemies are always better served than one's friends. And then, when one frog begins to croak, all the others follow suit. After a certain reverence has been violated every one tries to see who can best jump on the shoulders of the statue; it is always like that. You are undergoing the disadvantages of having a style that is not yet familiar through repetition, and all are making idiots of themselves so as not to see it.

ABSOLUTE IMPERSONALITY is debatable, and I do not accept it ABSOLUTELY; but I wonder that Saint-Victor who has preached it so much and has criticised my plays because they were not IMPERSONAL, should abandon you instead of defending you. Criticism is in a sad way; too much theory!

Don't be troubled by all that and keep straight on. Don't attempt a system, obey your inspiration.

What fine weather, at least with us, and we are getting ready for our Christmas festivals with the family at home. I told Plauchut to try to carry you off; we are expecting him. If you can't come with him, come at least for the Christmas Eve revels and to escape from Paris on New Year's day; it is so boring there then!

Lina charges me to say to you that you are authorized to wear your wrapper and slippers continually. There are no ladies, no strangers. In short you will make us very happy and you have promised for a long time.

I embrace you and I am still more angry than you at these attacks, but I am not overcome, and if I had you here we should stimulate each other so well that you would start off again at once on the other leg to write a new novel.

I embrace you.

Your old troubadour,

G. Sand

CXLI. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, in Paris
Nohant, 17 December, 1869

Plauchut writes us that YOU PROMISE to come the 24th. Do come the 23d in the evening, so as to be rested for the night of the 24th to the 25th and join in our Christmas Eve revels. Otherwise you will arrive from Paris tired and sleepy and our follies will not amuse you. You are coming to the house of children, I warn you, and as you are kind and affectionate, you love children. Did Plauchut tell you to bring a wrapper and slippers, for we do not want to sentence you to dressing up? I add that I am counting on your bringing some manuscript. The FAIRY PLAY re-done, Saint-Antoine, whatever you have finished. I hope indeed that you are in the mood for work. Critics are a challenge that stimulates.

Poor Saint-Rene Taillandier is as asininely pedantic as the Revue. Aren't they prudish in that set? I am in a pet with Girardin. I know very well that I am not strong in letters; I am not sufficiently cultivated for these gentlemen; but the good public reads me and listens to me all the same.

If you did not come, we should be unhappy and you would be a big ingrate. Do you want me to send a carriage for you to Chateauroux on the 23d at four o'clock? I am afraid that you may be uncomfortable in that stage-coach which makes the run, and it is so easy to spare you two and a half hours of discomfort!

We embrace you full of hope. I am working like an ox so as to have my novel finished and not to have to think of it a minute when you are here.

G. Sand

CXLII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Nohant, 19 December, 1869

So women are in it too? Come, forget that persecution here, at a hundred thousand leagues from Parisian and literary life, or rather come be glad of it, for these great slatings are the sure proof of great worth. Tell yourself indeed that those who have not gone through that are GOOD FOR THE ACADEMY.

Our letters crossed. I begged you and I beg you again not to come Christmas Eve, but the night before so as to join in the revels the next night, the Eve, that is to say, the 24th. This is the program: we dine promptly at six o'clock, we have the Christmas tree and the marionettes for the children, so, that they can go to bed at nine o'clock. After that we chatter, and sup at midnight. But the diligence gets here at the earliest at half past six, and we should not dine till seven o'clock, which would make impossible the great joy of our little ones who would be kept up too late. So you must start Thursday 23d at nine o'clock in the morning, so that everyone

may be perfectly comfortable, so that everyone may have time to embrace everyone else, and so that no one may be interrupted in the joy of your arrival on account of the imperious and silly darlings.

You must stay with us a very long time, a very long time, we shall have some more follies for New Year's day, and for Twelfth Night. This is a crazy happy house and it is the time of holiday after work. I am finishing tonight my year's task. Seeing you, dear old well-beloved friend, would be my recompense: do not refuse me.

G. Sand

Plauchut is hunting today with the prince, and perhaps will not return till Tuesday. I am writing him to wait for you till Thursday, you will be less bored on the way. I have just written to Girardin to complain.

CXLIII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
31 December, 1869

We hoped to have a word from you this morning. This sudden cold is so severe, I dreaded it for your trip. We know you got to Chateauroux all right. But did you find a compartment, and didn't you suffer on the way? Reassure us.

We were so happy to have you with us that we should be distressed if you had to suffer for this WINTER escapade. All goes well here and all of us adore one another. It is New Year's Eve. We send your share of the kisses that we are giving one another.

G. Sand

CXLIV. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croissset
Nohant, 9 January, 1870

I have had so much proof to correct that I am stupefied with it. I needed that to console me for your departure, troubadour of my heart, and for another departure also, that of my drudge of a Plauchmar--and still another departure, that of my grand-nephew Edme, my favorite, the one who played the marionettes with Maurice. He has passed his examinations for collector and goes to Pithiviers--unless by pull, we could get him as substitute at La Chatre.

Do you know M. Roy, the head of the management of the domains? If by chance the princess knew him and would be willing to say a word to him in favor of young Simonnet? I should be happy to owe her this joy for his family and this economy for his mother who is poor. It appears that it is very easy to obtain and that no rule opposes it. But one must HAVE PULL; a word to the princess, a line from M. Roy and our tears would change to joy.

That child is very dear to me. He is so loving and so good! They had hard work to bring him up, he was always ill, always dandled on the knees and always gentle and sweet. He has a great deal of intelligence and he works well at La Chatre, where his chief the

collector adores him and mourns for him also. Well, do what you can, if you can do anything at all.

They continue to damn your book. That doesn't prevent it from being a fine and good book. Justice will come later, JUSTICE IS ALWAYS DONE. Apparently it did not come at the right moment, or rather it came too soon. It has demonstrated too well the disorder that reigns in people's minds. It has rubbed the open wound, people recognize themselves too well in it.

Everyone adores you here and our consciences are too pure to be upset at the truth: we talk of you every day. Yesterday, Lina said to me that she admired very much all you do, but that she preferred Salammbo to your modern descriptions. If you had been in a corner, this is what you would have heard from her, from me, and from THE OTHERS:

"He is taller and larger than the average person. His mind is like him, beyond ordinary proportions. In that he is like Victor Hugo, at least as much as like Balzac, but he has the taste and discernment that Hugo lacks, and he is an artist which Balzac was not.--Is he then more than both? Chi lo sa?--He hasn't let himself out yet. The enormous volume of his brain troubles him. He doesn't know if he is a poet or a realist; and the fact that he is both, hinders him.--He must get straightened out in his different lines of effort. He sees everything and wants to grasp everything at once.--He is not the cut of the public that wants to eat in little mouthfuls, whom large pieces choke. But the public will go to him, just the same, when it understands.--It will even go rather quickly if the author CONDESCENDS to be willing to be quite understood.--For that, perhaps there will have to be asked some concessions to the indolence of its mind. One ought to reflect before daring to give this advice."

That sums up what we said. It is not useless to know the opinion of good people and of young people. The youngest say that l'Education sentimentale made them sad. They did not come across themselves in it, they who have not yet lived; but they have illusions and they say: "Why does this man, so good, so kind, so gay, so simple, so sympathetic, wish to discourage us from living?" What they say is poorly reasoned out, but as it is instinctive, perhaps it ought to be taken into account.

Aurore talks of you and still cradles her baby in her lap; Gabrielle calls Punch, HER LITTLE ONE, and will not eat her dinner unless he is opposite her. They are our continual idols, these brats.

Yesterday, I received, after your letter of the day before, a letter from Berton, who thinks that they will not play l'Affranchi longer than the 18th or the 20th. Wait for me, since you can delay your departure a little. It is too bad weather to go to Croisset; it is always an effort for me to leave my dear nest to go to attend to my miserable profession; but the effort is less when I hope to find you in Paris.

I embrace you for myself and for all my brood.

G. Sand

CXLV. TO GEORGE SAND
Wednesday afternoon.

Dear master,

Your commission was done yesterday at one o'clock. The princess in my presence took some notes on what you wanted, in order to look after it at once. She seemed to me very glad to do you a service.

People talk of nothing but the death of Noir! The general sentiment is fear, nothing else!

Into what miserable ways we are plunged! There is so much imbecility in the air that one gets ferocious. I am less indignant than disgusted! What do you think of these gentlemen who come to confer armed with pistols and sword canes! And of this person, of this prince, who lives in the midst of an arsenal and makes use of it? Pretty! Pretty!

What a sweet letter you wrote me day before yesterday! But your friendship blinds you, dear good master. I do not belong to the tribe you mention. I am acquainted with myself, I know what I lack! And I am enormously lacking.

In losing my poor Bouilhet, I lost my midwife, it was he who saw into my thought more clearly than I did myself. His death has left a void that I notice more each day. What is the use of making concessions? Why force oneself? I am quite resolved, on the contrary, to write in future for my personal satisfaction, and without any constraint. Come what may!

CXLVI. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Nohant, 15 January, 1870

L'Affranchi is for Tuesday. I am working hurriedly to finish my corrections and I leave Tuesday morning. Come to dine with me at Magny's at six o'clock. Can you? If not, am I to keep a seat for you in my box? A word during the day of Tuesday, to my lodgings. You won't be forced to swallow down the entire performance if it bores you.

I love you and I embrace you for myself and for my brood. Thank you for Edme.

G. Sand

CXLVII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Paris, 19 January, 1870

Dear friend of my heart, I did not see you in the theatre. The play applauded and hissed, more applauded than hissed. Barton very beautiful, Sarah very pretty, but no interest in the characters and too many second-rate actors, not good.--I do not think that it is a success.

I am better. Yet I am not bold enough to go to your house Saturday and to return from such a distance in this severe cold. I saw Theo this evening, I told him to come to dine with us both on Saturday at Magny's. Do say yes, it is I who invite you, and we shall have a quiet private room. After that we will smoke at my place.

Plauchut would not be able to go to you. He was invited to the prince's.

A word if it is NO. Nothing if it is yes. So I don't want you to write to me. I saw Tourgueneff and I told him all that I think of him. He was as surprised as a child. We spoke ill of you.

Wednesday evening.

CXLVIII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
The 5th or the 6th February, 1870

(On the back of a letter from Edme Simonnet)

I don't see you, you come to the Odeon and when they tell me that you are there, I hurry and don't find you. Do set a day then when you will come to eat a chop with me. Your old exhausted troubadour who loves you.

CXLIX. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Paris, 15 February, 1870

My troubadour, we are two old rattle traps. As for me, I have had a bad attack of bronchitis and I am just out of bed. Now I am recovered but not yet out of my room. I hope to resume my work at the Odeon in a couple of days.

Do get well, don't go out, at least unless the thaw is not very bad. My play is for the 22d. [Footnote: This refers to L'Autre.] I hope very much to see you on that day. And meanwhile, I kiss you and I love you,

G. Sand

Tuesday evening

CL. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Sunday evening, 20th February, 1870

I went out today for the first time, I am better without being well. I am anxious at not having news about that reading of the fairy play. Are you satisfied? Did they understand? L'Autre will take place on Thursday, or Friday at the latest.

Will your nephew and niece go to the gallery or the balcony seats? Impossible to have a box. If yes, a word and I will send these seats

out of my allotment--which, as usual, will not be grand.

Your old troubadour.

CLI. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Paris, February, 1870

It is for Friday. Then I am disposing of the two seats that I intended for your niece.

If you have a moment free, and come to the Odeon that night, you will find me in the manager's box, proscenium, ground floor. I am heavy-hearted about all you tell me. Here you are again in gloom, sorrow and chagrin. Poor dear friend! Let us continue to hope that you will save your patient, but you are ill too, and I am very anxious about you, I was quite overwhelmed by it this evening, when I got your note, and I have no more heart for anything.

A word when you can, to give me news.

G. Sand

CLII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Paris, 2d March, 1870

Poor dear friend, your troubles distress me, you have too many blows in quick succession, and I am going away Saturday morning leaving you in the midst of all these sorrows! Do you want to come to Nohant with me, for a change of air, even if only for two or three days? I have a compartment, we should be alone and my carriage is waiting for me at Chateauroux. You could be sad without constraint at our house, we also have mourning in the family. A change of lodging, of faces, of habits, sometimes does physical good. One does not forget one's sorrow, but one forces one's body to endure it.

I embrace you with all my soul. A word and I expect you. Wednesday evening.

CLIII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Nohant, 11 March, 1870

How are you, my poor child? I am glad to be here in the midst of my darling family, but I am unhappy all the same at having left you melancholy, ill and upset. Send me news, a word at least, and be assured that we all are unhappy over your troubles and sufferings.

G. Sand

CLIV. TO GEORGE SAND
17 March, 1870

Dear master,

I received a telegram yesterday evening from Madame Cornu containing these words: "Come to me, urgent business." I therefore hurried to her today, and here is the story.

The Empress maintains that you made some very unkind allusions to her in the last number of the Revue! "What about me, whom all the world is attacking now! I should not have believed that! and I wanted to have her nominated for the Academy! But what have I done to her? etc., etc." In short, she is distressed, and the Emperor too! He is not indignant but prostrated (sic). [Footnote: Malgre tout, Calmann-Levy, 1870.]

Madame Cornu explained to her that she was mistaken and that you had not intended to make any allusion to her.

Hereupon a theory of the manner in which novels are written.

--Oh well, then, let her write in the papers that she did not intend to wound me.

--But she will not do that, I answered.

--Write to her to tell you so.

--I will not allow myself to take that step.

--But I would like to know the truth, however! Do you know someone who...then Madame Cornu mentioned me.

--Oh, don't say that I spoke to you of it!

Such is the dialogue that Madame Cornu reported to me.

She wants you to write me a letter in which you tell me that the Empress was not used by you as a model. I shall send that letter to Madame Cornu who will have it given to the Empress.

I think that story stupid and those people are very sensitive! Much worse things than that are told to us.

Now dear master of the good God, you must do exactly what you please.

The Empress has always been very kind to me and I should not be sorry to do her a favor. I have read the famous passage. I see nothing in it to hurt her. But women's brains are so queer!

I am very tired in mine (my brain) or rather it is very low for the moment! However hard I work, it doesn't go! Everything irritates me and hurts me; and since I restrain myself before people, I give way from time to time to floods of tears when it seems to me as if I should burst. At last I am experiencing an entirely new sensation: the approach of old age. The shadow invades me, as Victor Hugo would say.

Madame Cornu has spoken to me enthusiastically of a letter you wrote her on a method of teaching.

CLV. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croissset
Nohant, 17 March, 1870

I won't have it, you are not getting old. Not in the crabbed and MISANTHROPIC sense. On the contrary, when one is good, one becomes better, and, as you are already better than most others, you ought to become exquisite.

You are boasting, moreover, when you undertake to be angry against everyone and everything. You could not. You are weak before sorrow, like all affectionate people. The strong are those who do not love. You will never be strong, and that is so much the better. You must not live alone any more; when strength returns you must really live and not shut it up for yourself alone.

For my part, I am hoping that you will be reborn with the springtime. Today we have rain which relaxes, tomorrow we shall have the animating sun. We are all just getting over illnesses, our children had very bad colds, Maurice quite upset by lameness with a cold, I taken again by chills and anemia: I am very patient and I prevent the others as much as I can from being impatient, there is everything in that; impatience with evil always doubles the evil. When shall we be WISE as the ancients understood it? That, in substance, meant being PATIENT, nothing else. Come, dear troubadour, you must be a little patient, to begin with, and then you can get accustomed to it; if we do not work on ourselves, how can we hope to be always in shape to work on others?

Well, in the midst of all that, don't forget that we love you and that the hurt you give yourself hurts us too.

I shall go to see you and to shake you as soon as I have regained my feet and my will, which are both backward; I am waiting, I know that they will return.

Affectionate greetings from all our invalids. Punch has lost only his fiddle and he is still smiling and well gilded. Lolo's baby has had misfortunes, but its clothes dress other dolls. As for me, I can flap only one wing, but I kiss you and I love you.

G. Sand

CLVI. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, in Paris
Nohant, 19 March, 1870

I know, my friend, that you are very devoted to her. I know that she [Footnote: Letter written about the rumour current, that George Sand had meant to depict the Empress in one of the chief characters of her novel, Malgre tout; the letter was sent by Flaubert to Madame Cornu, god-child of Queen Hortense, and foster-sister of Napoleon III.] is very kind to unfortunates who have been recommended to her; that is all that I know of her private life. I have never had any revelation nor document about her, NOT A WORD, NOT A DEED, which would authorize me to depict her. So I have drawn only a figure of

fancy, I swear it, and those who pretended to recognize her in a satire would be, in any case, bad servants and bad friends.

But I don't write satires: I am ignorant even of the meaning of the word. I don't write PORTRAITS either; it is not my style. I invent. The public, who does not know in what invention consists, thinks it sees everywhere models. It is mistaken and it degrades art.

This is my SINCERE answer, I have only enough time to mail it.

G. Sand

CLVII. To MADAME HORTENSE CORNU

Your devotion was alarmed wrongly, dear madame, I was sure of it! Here is the answer that came to me by return mail.

People in society, I reiterate, see allusions where there are none. When I did Madame Bovary I was asked many times: "Is it Madame X. whom you meant to depict?" and I received letters from perfectly unknown people, among others one from a gentleman in Rheims who congratulated me on HAVING AVENGED HIM! (against a faithless one).

Every pharmacist in Seine-Inferieure recognizing himself in Homais, wanted to come to my house to box my ears. But the best (I discovered it five years later) is that there was then in Africa the wife of an army doctor named Madame Bovaries who was like Madame Bovary, a name I had invented by altering that of Bouvaret.

The first sentence of our friend Maury in talking to me about l'Education sentimentale was this: "Did you know X, an Italian, a professor of mathematics? Your Senecal is his physical and moral portrait! Everything is exact even to the cut of his hair!"

Others assert that I meant to depict in Arnoux, Bernard Latte (the former editor), whom I have never seen, etc., etc.

All that is to tell you, dear madame, that the public is mistaken in attributing to us intentions which we do not have.

I was very sure that Madame Sand had not intended to make any portrait; (1) because of her loftiness of mind, her taste, her reverence for art, and (2) because of her character, her feeling for the conventions--and also FOR JUSTICE.
I even think, between ourselves, that this accusation has hurt her a little. The papers roll us in the dirt every day without our ever answering them, we whose business it is, however, to wield the pen, and they think that in order to MAKE AN EFFECT, to be applauded, we are going to attack such and such a one.

Oh! no! not so humble! our ambition is higher, and our courtesy greater.--When one thinks highly of one's mind one does not choose the necessary means to please the crowd. You understand me, don't you?

But enough of this. I shall come to see you one of these days. Looking forward to that with pleasure, dear madame, I kiss your

hands and am entirely yours,

Gustave Flaubert

Sunday evening.

CLVIII. TO GEORGE SAND
March, 1870

Dear master,

I have just sent your letter (for which I thank you) to Madame Cornu, enclosing it in a letter from your troubadour, in which I permitted myself to give bluntly my conception of things.

The two letters will be placed under the eyes of the LADY and will teach her a little about aesthetics.

I saw l'Autre last evening, and I wept several times. It did me good, really! How tender and exalting it is! What a charming work and how they love the author! I missed you. I wanted to give you a kiss like a little child. My oppressed heart is easier, thank you. I think that it will get better! There were a lot of people there. Berton and his son were recalled twice.

CLIX. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Nohant, 3 April, 1870

Your old troubadour has passed through cruel anguish, Maurice has been seriously, dangerously ill.[Footnote: With diptheria.] Favre, MY OWN doctor, the only one in whom I have confidence, hastened to us in time. After that Lolo had violent attacks of fever, other terrors! At last our savior went off this morning leaving us almost tranquil and our invalids went out to walk in the garden for the first time.--But they still want a great deal of care and oversight, and I shall not leave them for two or three weeks. If then you are awaiting me in Paris, and the sun calls you elsewhere, have no regret about it. I shall try to go to see you in Croisset from Paris between the dawn and the dusk sometime.

At least tell me how you are, what you are doing, if you are on your feet in every way.

My invalids and my well ones send you their affectionate regards, and I kiss you as I love you; it is not little.

G. Sand

My friend Favre has quite a FANCY for you and wants to know you. He is not a physician who seeks practice, he only practices for his friends, and he is offended if they want to pay him. YOUR PERSONALITY interests him, that is all, and I have promised to present him to you, if you are willing. He is something more than a physician, I don't know what exactly, A SEEKER--after what?--EVERYTHING. He is amusing, original and interesting to the utmost

degree. You must tell me if you want to see him, otherwise I shall manage for him not to think of it any more. Answer about this matter.

CLX. TO GEORGE SAND
Monday morning, 11 o'clock

I felt that something unpleasant had happened to you, because I had just written to you for news when your letter was brought to me this morning. I fished mine back from the porter; here is a second one.

Poor dear master! How uneasy you must have been and Madame Maurice also. You do not tell me what he had (Maurice). In a few days before the end of the week, write to confirm to me that everything has turned out well. The trouble lies, I think, with the abominable winter from which we are emerging! One hears of nothing but illnesses and funerals! My poor servant is still at the Dubois hospital, and I am distressed when I go to see him. For two months now he has been confined to his bed suffering horribly.

As for me, I am better. I have read prodigiously. I have overworked, but now I am almost on my feet again. The mass of gloom that I have in the depths of my heart is a little larger, that is all. But, in a little while, I hope that it will not be noticed. I spend my days in the library of the Institute. The Arsenal library lends me books that I read in the evening, and I begin again the next day. I shall return home to Croisset the first of May. But I shall see you before then. Everything will get right again with the sun.

The lovely lady in question made to me, for you, the most proper excuses, asserting to me that "she never had any intention of insulting genius."

Certainly, I shall be glad to meet M. Favre; since he is a friend of yours I shall like him.

CLXI. TO GEORGE SAND
Tuesday morning

Dear master,

It is not staying in Paris that wears me out, but the series of misfortunes that I have had during the last eight months! I am not working too much, for what would become of me without work? However, it is very hard for me to be reasonable. I am overwhelmed by a black melancholy, which returns a propos of everything and nothing, many times a day. Then, it passes and it begins again. Perhaps it is because it is too long since I have written anything. Nervous reservoirs are exhausted. As soon as I am at Croisset, I shall begin the article about my poor Bouilhet, a painful and sad task which I am in a hurry to finish, so as to set to work at Saint-Antoine. As that is an extravagant subject, I hope it will divert me.

I have seen your physician, M. Favre, who seemed to me very strange

and a little mad, between ourselves. He ought to like me for I let him talk all the time. There are high lights in his talk, things which sparkle for a moment, then one sees not a ray.

CLXII. TO GEORGE SAND
Paris, Thursday

M. X.----sent me news of you on Saturday: so now I know that everything is going well with you, and that you have no more uneasiness, dear master. But you, personally, how are you? The two weeks are almost up, and I do not see you coming.

My mood continues not to be sportive. I am still given up to abominable readings, but it is time that I stopped for I am beginning to be disgusted with my subject.

Are you reading Taine's powerful book? I have gobbled it down, the first volume with infinite pleasure. In fifty years perhaps that will be the philosophy that will be taught in the colleges.

And the preface to the Idees de M. Aubray?

How I long to see you and to jabber with you!

CLXIII. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
Nohant, 16 April, 1870

What ought I to say to Levy so that he will take the first steps? Tell me again how things are, for my memory is poor. You had sold him one volume for ten thousand;--there are two, he himself told me that that would be twenty thousand. What has he paid you up to now? What words did you exchange at the time of this payment?

Answer, and I act.

Things are going better and better here, the little ones well again, Maurice recovering nicely, I tired from having watched so much and from watching yet, for he has to drink and wash out his mouth during the night, and I am the only one in the house who has the faculty of keeping awake. But I am not ill, and I work a little now and then while loafing about. As soon as I can leave, I shall go to Paris. If you are still there, it will be A PIECE OF GOOD LUCK, but I do not dare to wish you to prolong your slavery there, for I can see that you are still ill and that you are working too hard.

Croisset will cure you if you consent to take care of yourself.

I embrace you tenderly for myself and for all the family which adores you.

G. Sand

CLXIV. TO GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, at Croisset

Nohant, 20 May, 1870

It is a very long time since I have had news of my old troubadour. You must be in Croisset. If it is as warm there as it is here, you must be suffering; here it is 34 degrees in the shade, and in the night, 24. Maurice has had a bad relapse of sore throat, without membranes this time, and without danger. But the inflammation was so bad that for three days he could hardly swallow even a little water and wine. Bouillon did not go down. At last this excessive heat has cured him, it suits us all here, for Lina went to Paris this morning vigorous and strong. Maurice gardens all day. The children are gay and get prettier while you look at them. As for me, I am not accomplishing anything; I have too much to do taking care of and watching my boy, and now that the little mother is away, the little children absorb me. I work, however, planning and dreaming. That will be so much done when I can scribble.

I am still ON MY FEET, as Doctor Favre says. No old age yet, or rather normal old age, the calmness ... OF VIRTUE, that thing that people ridicule, and that I mention in mockery, but that corresponds by an emphatic and silly word, to a condition of forced inoffensiveness, without merit in consequence, but agreeable and good to experience. It is a question of rendering it useful to art when one believes in that, to the family and to friendship when one cares for that; I don't dare to say how very simple and primitive I am in this respect. It is the fashion to ridicule it, but let them. I do not want to change.

There is my SPRING examination of my conscience, so as not to think all summer about anything except what is not myself.

Come, you, your health first? And this sadness, this discontent that Paris has left with you, is it forgotten? Are there no longer any painful external circumstances? You have been too much shaken also. Two of your dearest friends gone one after the other. There are periods in life when destiny is ferocious to us. You are too young to concentrate on the idea of REGAINING your affections in a better world, or in this world made better. So you must, at your age (and at mine I still try to), become more attached to what remains. You wrote that to me when I lost Rollinat, my double in this life, the veritable friend whose feeling for the differences between the sexes had never hurt our pure affection, even when we were young. He was my Bouilhet and more than that; for to my heart's intimacy was joined a religious reverence fo