scenery, which here resemble too much purple patches, does George Sand reveal her true inspiration, the artistic qualities by which she will live. No one was more conscious than George Sand herself of her strength and of her weakness. In a preface to a later edition she tells us how the novel came to be written, and, though it anticipates events, this revelation of herself may best be given here.

“ After the unexpected literary success of *Indiana* I returned to Bern in 1832 and found a pleasure in painting the scenes with which I had been familiar from a child. Ever since those early days I had felt the impulse to describe them, but as is the case with all profound emotions, whether intellectual or moral, what we most desire to realize to ourselves we are the least inclined to reveal to the world at large. This little nook of Bern, this unknown Vallée Noire, this quiet and unpretentious landscape, which must be sought to find it and loved to be admired, was the sanctuary of my first and latest reveries. For twenty-two years I have lived amongst these pollarded trees, these rutty roads, beside these tangled thickets and streams along whose banks only children and sheep can pass. All this had charms for me alone and did not deserve to be revealed to idle curiosity. Why betray the incognito of this modest country-side without historical association or picturesque sites to commend it to the antiquary or the tourist? The Vallee Noire, so it seemed to me, was part and parcel of myself, the framework in which my life was set, the native costume that I had always worn—what worlds away from the silks and satins that are suited for the public stage. If I could have foreseen what a stir my writings would make, I think I should have jealously guarded the privacy of this sanctuary where, till then, I perhaps was the only soul who had fed the artist’s visions and the poet’s dreams. But I had no such anticipation; I never gave it a thought. I was compelled to write and I wrote. I let myself be carried away by the secret charm of the air I breathed ; my native air, I might almost call it. The descriptive parts of my novel found favour. The plot provoked some lively criticism on the anti-matrimonial doctrines that I was alleged to have broached before in *Indiana.* In both novels I pointed out the dangers and pains of an ill-assorted marriage. I thought I had simply been writing a story, and discovered that I had unwittingly been preaching Saint-Simonianism. I was not then at an age for reflecting on social grievances. I was too young to do more than see and note facts, and thanks to my natural indolence and that passion for the concrete, which is at once the joy and the weakness of artists, I should perhaps always have remained at that stage if my somewhat pedantic critics had not driven me to reflect and painfully search after the ultimate causes of which till then I had only grasped the effects. But I was so shrewdly taxed with posing as a strong-minded woman and a philosopher that one fine day I said to myself, ‘What, I wonder, is philosophy?’ ”

Her liaison with Jules Sandeau, which lasted more than a year, was abruptly terminated by the discovery in their apartment on an unexpected return from Nohant of *une blanchisseuse quelconque.* For a short while she was broken hearted:—“ My heart is a cemetery!” she wrote to Sainte-Beuve. “ A necropolis,” was the comment of her discarded lover when years later the remark was repeated to him.

Her third novel, *Lélia* (1833), is in the same vein, a stronger and more outspoken diatribe against society and the marriage law. Lélia is a female Manfred, and Dumas had some reason to complain that George Sand was giving them “ du Lord Byron au kilo.”

But a new chapter in her life was now to open. In her despair she turned for comfort and counsel to Sainte-Beuve, now con- stituted her regular father confessor. This ghostly Sir Pandarus recommended new friendships, but she was hard to please. Dumas was “ trop commis-voyageur,” Jouffroy too serenely virtuous and Musset “ trop dandy.” Mérimée was tried for a week, but the cool cynic and the perfervid apostle of women’s rights proved mutually repulsive. Alfred de Musset was intro- duced, and the two natures leapt together as by elective affinity. The moral aspect has been given by Mr Swinburne in an epigram: —“ Alfred was a terrible flirt and George did not behave as a perfect gentleman.”

Towards the end of 1833 George Sand, after winning the reluctant consent of Musset’s mother, set out in the poet’s company for Italy, and in January 1834 the pair reached Venice, staying first at the Hôtel Danieli and then in lodgings. At first it was a veritable honeymoon; conversation never flagged and either found in the other his soul’s complement. But there is a limit to love-making, and George Sand, always practical,

set to work to provide the means of living. Musset, though he depended on her exertions, was first bored and then irritated at the sight of this *terrible υache à écrire,* whose pen was going for eight hours a day, and sought diversion in the cafés and other less reputable resorts of pleasure. The consequence was a nervous illness with some of the symptoms of delirium tremens, through which George Sand nursed him with tenderness and care. But with a strange want of delicacy, to use the mildest term, she made love at the same time to a young Venetian doctor whom she had called in, by name Pagello. The pair went off and found their way eventually to Paris, leaving Musset in Italy, deeply wounded in his affections, but, to do him justice, taking all the blame for the rupture on himself. George Sand soon tired of her new love, and even before she had given him his congé was dying to be on again with the old. She cut off her hair and sent it to Musset as a token of penitence, but Musset, though he still flirted with her, never quite forgave her infidelity and refused to admit her to his deathbed. Among the mass of *romans à clef* and pamphlets which the adventure produced, two only have any literary importance, Musset’s *Confessions d'un enfant du siècle* and George Sand’s *Elle et lui.* In the former woman appears as the serpent whose trail is over all; in the latter, written twenty-five years after the event, she is the ‘guardian angel abused and maltreated by men. *Lui et elle,* the rejoinder of the poet’s brother Paul de Musset, was even more a travesty of the facts with no redeeming graces of style.

It remains to trace the influence, direct or indirect, of the poet on the novelist. *Jacques* was the first outcome of the journey to Italy, and in precision and splendour of style it marks a distinct progress. The motive of this and of the succeeding novels of what may be called her second period is free (not to be confounded with promiscuous) love. The hero, who is none other than George Sand in man’s disguise, makes confession of faith:—“ I have never imposed constancy on myself. When I have felt that love was dead, I have said so without shame or remorse and have obeyed Providence that was leading me elsewhere.” And the runaway wife writes to her lover:— “ O my dear Octave, we shall never pass a night together without first kneeling down and praying for Jacques.’’ Love is a divine instinct: to love is to be virtuous; follow the dictates of your heart and you cannot go wrong—such is the doctrine that George Sand preached and practised.

In *Les Lettres d’un voyageur,* which ran in the *Revue des deux mondes* between 1834 and 1836, we have not only impres- sions of travel, but the direct impressions of men and things not distorted by the exigencies of a novel. They reveal to us the true and better side of George Sand, the loyal and devoted friend, the mother who under happier conditions might have been reputed a Roman matron. We could not choose a more perfect specimen of her style than the allegory under which she pictures the “ might have been.”

“ I care little about growing old; I care far more not to grow old alone, but I have never met the being with whom I could have chosen to live and die, or if I ever met him I knew not how to keep him. Listen to a story and weep. There was a good artist called Watelet, the best aquafortis engraver of his day. He loved Marguerite Lecomte, and taught her to engrave as well as himself. She left husband and home to go and live with him. The world condemned them ; then, as they were poor and modest, it forgot them. Forty years afterwards their retreat was discovered. In a cottage in the environs of Paris called *Le Moulin joli,* there sat at the same table an old man engraving and an old woman whom he called his *meunière* also engraving. The last design they were at work upon represented the *Moulin joli,* the house of Marguerite, with the device *Cur valte permutem Sabina divitias operosiores?* It hangs in my room over a portrait the original of which no one here has seen. For a year the person who gave me this portrait sat with me every night at a little table and lived by the same work. At daybreak we consulted together on our work for the day, and at night we supped at the same little table, chatting the while on art, on sentiment, on the future. The future broke faith with us. Pray for me, O Marguerite Lecomte !”

The Everard of the *Lettres* introduces us to a new and for the time a dominant influence on the life and writings. Michel de Bourges was the counsel whose eloquent pleadings brought