the suit for a judicial separation to a successful issue in 1836.@@1 Unlike her former lovers, he was a man of masterful will, a budge philosopher who carried her intellect by storm before he laid siege to her heart. He preached republicanism to her by the hour, and even locked her up in her bedroom to reflect on his sermons. She was but half converted, and fled before long from a republic in which art and poetry had no place. Other celebrities who\* figure in the *Lettres* under a transparent disguise are Liszt and Mme d’Agoult (known to literature as Daniel Stem), whom she met in Switzerland and entertained for some months at Nohant. Liszt, in after years when they had drifted apart, wrote of her: “ George Sand catches her butterfly and tames it in her cage by feeding it on flowers and nectar—this is the love period. Then she sticks her pin into it when it struggles—that is the congé and it always comes from her. Afterwards she vivisects it, stuffs it, and adds it to her collection of heroes for novels.” There is some truth in the satire, but it wholly misrepresents her rupture with Chopin.

To explain this we must open a new chapter of the life in which George Sand appears as the devoted mother. The letters to her daughter Solange, which have recently been published, irresistibly recall the letters of Mme de Sévigné to Mme de Grignan. Solange, who inherited all her mother’s wild blood with none of her genius, on the eve of a marriage that had been arranged with a Berrichon gentleman, ran away with Clésinger, a sculptor to whom she had sat for her bust. George Sand not only forgave the elopement and hushed up the scandal by a private marriage, but she settled the young couple in Paris and made over to them nearly one-half of her available property. Clésinger turned out a thankless scapegrace and George Sand was at last compelled to refuse to admit him to Nohant. In the domestic quarrel that ensued Solange, who was a very Vivien, got the ear of Chopin. He upbraided the mother with her hard­heartedness, and when she resented his interference he departed in a huff and they never met again.

The mention of Liszt has led us to anticipate the end of the story, and we must revert to 1836, when the acquaintance began. She was then living in Paris, a few doors from her friend Mme d’Agoult, and the two set up a common *salon* in the Hôtel de France. Here she met two men, one of whom indoctrinated her with religious mysticism, the other with advanced socialism, Lamennais and Pierre Leroux. In the case of Lamen­nais the disciple outstripped the master. She flung herself into Lamennais’s cause and wrote many unpaid articles in his organ, *Le Monde,* but they finally split on the questions of labour and of women’s rights, and she complained that Lamennais first dragged her forwards and then abused her for going too fast. The *Lettres à Marcie* (1837) are a testimony to his ennobling and spiritualizing personality. Socialism was a more lasting phase, but her natural good sense revolted at the extravagant mum­meries of Père Enfantin and she declined the office of high priestess.

It was doubtless a revulsion of feeling against the doctrinaires and in particular against the puritanic reign of Michel that made her turn to Chopin. She found the *maestro* towards the end of 1837 dispirited by a temporary eclipse of popularity and in the first stage of his fatal malady, and carried him off to winter with her in the south. How she roughed it on an island unknown to tourists is told in *Un hiver à Majorque* (1842), a book of travel that may take rank with Heine’s *Reisebilder.* In nearly all George Sand’s loves there was a strong strain of motherly feeling. Chopin was first petted by her like a spoilt darling and then nursed for years like a sick child.

During this, her second period, George Sand allowed herself to be the mouthpiece of others—“ un écho qui embellissait la voix,” as Delatouche expressed it. *Spiridion* (1838) and *Les Sept cordes de la lyre* (1840) are mystic echoes of Lamennais. *Le Compagnon du tour de France* (1841), *Les Maîtres mosaïstes*

and *Le Meunier d'Angibault* (1845), *Le Péché de M. Antoine* (1847) are all socialistic novels, though they are much more, and good in spite of the socialism. *Consuelo* (1842-1844) and its sequel *La Comtesse de Rudolstadt* (1843-1845) are *fantaisies à la Chopin,* though the stage on which they are played is the Venice of Musset. Chopin is the Prince Karol of *Lucrezia Floriani* (1847), a self-portraiture unabashed as the *Tagebuch einer Verlorenen* and innocent as *Paul et Virginie.*

An enumeration of George Sand’s novels would constitute a Homeric catalogue, and it must suffice to note only the most typical and characteristic. She contracted with Buloz to supply him with a stated amount of copy for the modest retaining fee of £160 a year, and her editor testifies that the tale of script was furnished with the punctuality of a notary. She wrote with the rapidity of Walter Scott and the regularity of Anthony Trollope. For years her custom was to retire to her desk at 10 p.m. and not to rise from it till 5 A.M. She wrote *à la diable,* starting with some central thesis to set forth or some problem to investigate, but with no predetermined plot or plan of action. Round this nucleus her characters (too often mere puppets) grouped them- selves, and the story gradually crystallized. This unmethodical method produces in her longer and more ambitious novels, in *Consuelo* for instance and its continuation, a tangled wilderness, the clue to which is lost or forgotten; but in her novelettes, when there is no change of scenery and the characters are few and simple, it results in the perfection of artistic writing, “ an art that nature makes.”

From novels of revolt and tendency novels George Sand turned at last to simple stories of rustic life, the genuine pastoral. It is here that she shows her true originality and by these she will chiefly live. George Sand by her birth and bringing-up was half a peasant herself, in M. Faguet’s phrase, “un paysan qui savait parler.” She had got to know the heart of the peasant—his superstitions, his suspiciousness and low cunning, no less than his shrewdness, his sturdy independence and his strong domestic attachments.

*Jeanne* (1844) begins the series which has been happily called the Bucolics of France. To paint a Joan of Arc who lives and dies inglorious is the theme she sets herself, and through most of the novel it is perfectly executed. The last chapters when Jeanne appears as the Velida of Mont Barbot and the Grande Pastoure are a falling off and a survival of the romanticism of her second manner. *La Mare au diable* (1846) is **a** clear-cut gem, perfect as a work of Greek art. *François le champi* and *La Petite Fadette* are of no less exquisite workmanship. *Les Maîtres sonneurs* (1853)—the favourite novel of Sir Leslie Stephen— brings the series of village novels to a close, but as closely akin to them must be mentioned the *Contes d,une grande-mère,* delight- ful fairy tales of the Talking Oak, Wings of Courage and Queen Coax, told to her grandchildren in the last years of her life.

The revolution of 1848 arrested for a while her novelistic activities. She threw herself heart and soul into the cause of the extreme republicans, composed manifestos for her friends, addressed letters to the people, and even started a newspaper. But her political ardour was short-lived; she cared little about forms of government, and, when the days of June dashed to the ground her hopes of social regeneration, she quitted once for all the field of politics and returned to her quiet country ways and her true vocation as an interpreter of nature, a spiritualizer of the commonest sights of earth and the homeh\*est household affections. In 1849 she writes from Berri to a political friend: “ You thought that I was drinking blood from the skulls of aristocrats. No, I am studying Virgil and learning Latin!”

In her latest works she went back to her earlier themes of romantic and unchartered love, but the scene is shifted from Berri, which she felt she had exhausted, to other provinces of France, and instead of passionate manifestos we have a gallery of *genre* pictures treated in the spirit of *François le champi.* “ Vous faites,” she said to her friend Honoré de Balzac, “ la comédie humaine; et moi, c’est l’églogue humaine que j’ai voulu faire.”

A word must be said of George Sand as a playwright. She

@@@1 The final settlement was concluded in 1836. Mme Dudevant was granted sole legal rights over the two children and her Paris home was restored to her. In return she made over to her husband 40,000 fr. vested in the funds.