

LA FAMILLE DE GERMANDRE

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649774050

La Famille de Germandre by George Sand & Augusta C. Kimball

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

GEORGE SAND & AUGUSTA C. KIMBALL

**LA FAMILLE
DE GERMANDRE**



LA

FAMILLE DE GERMANDRE

PAR
GEORGE SAND

EDITED BY
AUGUSTA C. KIMBALL
TEACHER IN THE GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL, BOSTON



GINN & COMPANY

BOSTON · NEW YORK · CHICAGO · LONDON



BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF THE AUTHOR.

THE name of George Sand is full of meaning to all who have felt the charm of her influence. It represents to us her generation, saturated with ideas and emotions, tormenting itself vaguely in the midst of apparent calm and prosperity, just before the political excitements of 1848. Her renown was at its height about the time of the revolution of that year in France. Then the world was divided with respect to her between admiration and anathema. Now that time has softened this difference of opinion, she can be judged more impartially, and at least a certain number of her works will, without doubt, remain a valued part of the classic literature of France.

Amantine Lucile Aurore Dupin was born in 1804. She was a daughter of the "people" on her mother's side; her father, Maurice Dupin, belonged to the lesser nobility. Many of her peculiarities are to be attributed to the influence of her environment in early years, to her passionate and conflicting love for her grandmother, who was full of aristocratic prejudice, and for her aggressively democratic mother. Affection for the child, Aurora, was the only possible bond of union between these two so widely different natures. Her father died when she was only four years old.

As a child she was dreamy and indolent, and she confesses that later in life it required an effort to rouse herself from

this tendency. She would sometimes fall into a long reverie, and be so lost to everything going on around her, that strangers often thought her stupid. Even her family were sometimes uneasy at this appearance of dulness, but her mother would say, "Do not be disturbed, it is not stupidity; she is ruminating."

Her little head was full of impressions that she wove into endless stories. These she acted out with her sister and Ursula, a child brought to Nohant to be a companion for her, and remaining always her faithful friend.

Aurora's mother, a woman full of poetic imagination, though untutored, had filled her mind with a strange medley of mythology and religion.

After Maurice Dupin's death, his widow remained for two or three years at Nohant, the family estate in Berry, with his mother. At the end of that time, the mother, by written agreement, gave the little Aurora up to her grandmother, who was to have full charge of her education.

The separation was made as easy as possible for the child; in the winter her grandmother took her to a pretty apartment in Paris, overlooking bright gardens, and not far from her mother's home; in summer her mother made long visits at Nohant.

Here Aurora was forced to attend with some regularity to lessons with her grandmother or her old tutor Deschartres. Outside of the time devoted to study, she delighted in entering into the life of the little peasants in the neighborhood.

Their legends and stories of the supernatural especially charmed her. This love of the country and interest in the country people, supplied the material for many of her best novels.

Her grandmother was a woman of fine intellect and warm heart, and excited the little girl's imagination by the story of her own varied life.

As time softened the grief for Maurice's death, the elder and the younger Mme. Dupin grew farther and farther apart. When Aurora was about fourteen there came a crisis. Touched by some injustice on the part of her grandmother, Aurora made up her mind to give up in future all that could separate her from her plebeian mother. She would renounce the property she was to inherit, the good manners her grandmother was trying to instil, the lessons with her tutor.

The revolt was so serious that Mme. Dupin decided to send her to the English convent in Paris, where she had spent some years in her girlhood, and which was a famous school for young ladies.

The new life soon interested Aurora, and the respite from family strife was a relief. For two years she was a leader in all the sports and all the mischievous pranks in this large school. She took special pleasure in acting in the plays that were allowed and even encouraged by the nuns; and to the end of her life never ceased taking part in, or directing, theatricals.

In the last year of her convent life, she became suddenly filled with enthusiasm for religion, and gave herself up to devotion and prayer. In one of her novels she retraces the emotions of this period of her life. This fervor did not last.

She returned to Nohant; her grandmother had become very feeble, and Aurora almost lived at her bedside for the ten months that she still lingered. Her only recreation was riding on horseback.

In these lonely rides she had ample time for meditation, and, conscious that her education had so far been very desultory, she decided to give herself up to more persistent and regular study. She threw herself into philosophy and metaphysics. Then she wearied of these and turned to the moralists and the poets.

All this time she was revolving in her mind this problem: "Should she give up the world and enter a religious life within the walls of the convent?"

The death of her grandmother overwhelmed her with grief. There was one more family struggle: Mme. Dupin, during her life, and in her will, had expressed the wish that Aurora should be under the care of her guardian, a cousin of her father. The cousin was fond of her and wished to take her into his family, but her mother resisted this plan so strenuously that Aurora yielded and accompanied her to Paris.

The mother, having naturally little self-control, and embittered by the opposition of her husband's family, had become very irritable and unreasonable; this trial, with grief over the loss of her grandmother, affected sensibly Aurora's health.

Her mother, one day, took her into the country to visit some friends, promising to return for her in a few days; which, however, finding that the change of scene was beneficial, she failed to do.

These friends were a kind, sympathetic pair, with four bright children, and Aurora soon entered with interest into their life, and became like a daughter of the family. For several months she remained with them.

Among the friends that frequently visited this family was a young man by the name of Casimir Dudevant. According to the French custom, a marriage was arranged between Aurora and this young man, because it seemed suitable, although there was no special inclination on either side.

This marriage took place in 1822, when Aurora was eighteen years old. The married pair took up their abode at Nohant, and a son and daughter were born to them; Mme. Dudevant was for a time very happy in her motherhood. But the husband and wife became so uncongenial that, after a few years, Mme. Dudevant spent some months of every

year in Paris. As her income was limited, and she was very careful not to infringe on the inheritance of her children, she was obliged to find some way of earning money.

She had often, as a pastime, written stories, but it did not at first occur to her that this was a talent to be turned to her purpose. She tried her hand at various arts, — portraits in crayon and in water color, the painting of flowers and birds on cigar-cases and snuff-boxes. But these decorations soon passed out of fashion, and Mme. Dudevant must seek some other means of support.

She began by writing, without much success, articles for the *Figaro*; that paper had been bought by Delatouche, one of a little band of friends from Berry that had gathered around her, and one toward whom, in the story of her life, she expresses much gratitude. In the same office, there was a talented young man, Jules Sandeau, whom she had also known in Berry.

Mme. Dudevant had amused herself at Nohant by writing. She says of her first attempt at a novel: "I sketched a sort of romance that never saw the light; when I read it over, I was convinced that it was not good, but that I was capable of writing one that would not be so bad."

In collaboration with Jules Sandeau she wrote for a periodical a story that appeared under the signature "Jules Sand." This was so well received that the publishers demanded and obtained from them another romance, to be brought out under the same pseudonym. After this, Jules Sandeau, recognizing the genius of his friend, refused to take the credit of the next book. Although he aided in preparing this for the press, it was signed George Sand, the publishers having insisted on retaining the last name.

From this time George Sand worked alone, and her prolific pen produced no less than eighty novels, twenty plays, and numberless articles on social, religious, and political questions.

When her daughter, Solange, was about eight years old, Mme. Dudevant was legally separated from her husband, and by the terms of the separation was allowed to keep her children. She was a passionately devoted mother, and Maurice, her son, especially, seemed to have returned her devotion. With the exception of several journeys to Italy and Switzerland, her time was henceforth principally divided between Paris and Nohant.

Her first novel was published in 1832, and after that a rapid succession of works flowed from her pen as long as she lived.

Her works may be divided into three periods. In the first romance and passion predominate. In the second we find her promulgating socialistic or democratic theories; and musical and mystical fancies as in "Consuelo" and the "Countess of Rudolstadt." After the revolution of 1848, having returned to Nohant, she found it a relief to turn her mind from the excitement and turmoil rife in Paris to the quiet scenes of the country.

She set herself to portraying the life and customs of the peasants, and produced then her best works. "François le Champi," the "Mare au Diable," and "La petite Fadette," are her masterpieces in this kind.

In 1854 she published the story of her early life, "Histoire de ma Vie," in thirteen volumes. The number sounds formidable, but the volumes are small, and the frequent digressions are as interesting as the narrative.

The best of her dramas is the "Marquis de Villemer," dramatized from her novel of the same name. But her peculiar genius made her less successful as dramatist than as story-teller; she had a wonderful gift for narration.

In her novels she does not confine herself to depicting any one class. She gives us insight into all the infinite complexity of society. With equal ease and truth she introduces us into the boudoir of the Marchioness de Villemer, or into the factory life in the Ville-Noire.