

3 ST EDMUND'S TERRACE

REGENT'S PARK, N.W.

16 Feb. / 2.

Dear Sir,

I have received your letter about Dumas.

It is perfectly true that my Brother took the greatest delight in reading Dumas, & I think it may be said that he seriously considered him a great writer. My belief is that, if he had been asked "Whom do you regard as the greatest novelist that ever existed - in those qualities wh. are most essential for novel-writing?" - he wd have replied "Dumas." Of course he wd at the same time have been conscious that Walter Scott, as a precursor of Dumas, had to some extent loved him as a pattern.

About "Le Chapeau de Sauvagine"

I am not quite sure that my Brother ever read it. I myself read it some 2 or 3 years before my Brother's death, & liked it extremely: & I remember having spoken to him about it, with the result (if I am not mistaken) of finding that he did not know it. Also one very serious consideration is that, according to D. himself, this tale was not in the least his own work, but the work of G. de Chevillat.

As to marginal notes written by my Brother in his D. books, I question whether there are any of any importance. After his death the larger number of the D. volumes in his possession, all unbound, were sold. I however retained many, & have read in them from time to time, but I don't remember (nor do I now see on a cursory inspection) any such notes.

If a question were raised as to particular novels by D. ~~of~~ especially admired

by my Brother, I could mention - Monte Christo, Trois Mousquetaires, Bragdonne, Père Olifus, Ingénieur des Quarante-cinq - I think also La Tulipe Noire. Olympie de Clèves (wh. I regard with predilection) I think he had not read. He was likewise vastly amused with Dumas's Mémoires.

In my early years - say 1846-7 - my Brother & I knew more of D. as a dramatist than novelist. Don Juan de Marana was our favourite: next might come Antony & Caligula. Then we used to laugh over, for its amusing travesty of English manners & customs.

As to "any published opinion" of my Brother on Dumas, you would find something in a book published by Elliot Stock in 1883 - "Oliver Madge Brown", by J. H. Ingram - see p. 149. There might be something in Hall Caine's "Recollections of D. G. Rossetti" (Stock); but I question it, as Caine did not then know anything of French litera-

ture. There may be something elsewhere as well, but I don't just now recollect it.

If there is any other point on this matter that you w^d like to raise, I will readily attend to it.

Very faithfully yours,

Wm. M. Rosetti.