

this proud column, I will show you a picture of the past. Do you wish to see it?"

His gaze fastened on the imperial column, Louis Napoleon silently nodded assent.

Hortense went to her room, and soon returned to the balcony with a book, bound in red velvet. Often, during the quiet days of Arenenberg, the prince had seen her writing in this book, but never had Hortense yielded to his entreaties and permitted him to read any part of her memoirs. Unsolicited it was her intention to unfold before him to-day a brilliant picture; in view of the sad and desolate present, she wished to portray to him the bright and glittering past, perhaps only for the purpose of entertaining him, perhaps in order to console him with the hope that all that is passes away, and that the present would therefore also come to an end, and that which once was, again become reality for him, the heir of the emperor.

She seated herself at her son's side, on a little sofa that stood on the balcony, and, opening her book, began to read.

CHAPTER XI.

FRAGMENT FROM THE MEMOIRS OF QUEEN HORTENSE.

"THE emperor had returned from Italy. The beautiful ceremony of the distribution of the crosses of the Legion of Honor had taken place before his departure, and I had been present on the occasion; the emperor

now repaired to Boulogne, in order to make a second distribution of the order in the army on his birthday. He had made my husband general of the army of the reserve, and sent him a courier, with the request that he should come with me and our son to the camp at Boulogne. My husband did not wish to interrupt the baths he was taking at St. Amand, but he requested me to go to Boulogne, to spend a week with the emperor.

"The emperor resided at Boulogne in a little villa called *Pont de Brigue*. His sister, Caroline, and Murat, lived in another little villa near by. I lived with them, and every day we went to dine with the emperor. During two years, our troops had been concentrating in full view of England, and every one expected an attack. The camp at Boulogne was erected on the sea-side, and resembled a long and regularly-built city. Each hut had a little garden, flowers, and birds. In the middle of the camp, on an elevation, stood the emperor's tent; near by, that of Marshal Berthier. All the men-of-war on the water were drawn up in a line, only waiting the signal of departure. In the distance we could see England, and its beautiful ships that were cruising along the coast seemed to form an impenetrable barrier. This grand spectacle gave us for the first time an illustration of an unknown, hitherto not-dreamed-of power that stood opposed to us. Here every thing was calculated to excite the imagination. This boundless sea might soon transform itself into a battle-field, and swallow up the *élite* of the two greatest nations. Our troops, proud in the feeling that there were

no obstacles for them, made impatient by two years' repose, glowing with energy and bravery, already imagined themselves to have attained the opposite coast. When one considered their bravery and confidence, success seemed certain; but when the eye turned to the impenetrable forest of masts on the hostile ships, a feeling of anxiety and fear suddenly took possession of the heart. And yet nothing seemed to be wanting to the expedition but a favorable wind.

"Of all the homage that a woman can receive, military homage has in the highest degree the chivalrous character, and it is impossible not to feel flattered by it.

"There could not be any thing more delightful or imposing than the homage of which I was here the object, and it was only here that it made any impression on me.

"The emperor gave me as an escort his equerry, General DeFrance. Whenever I approached a camp division, the guard was called out and presented arms.

"I had interceded for several soldiers who were undergoing punishment for breaches of discipline, and was on this account received everywhere with the liveliest enthusiasm. The entire mounted general staff escorted my carriage, and my approach was everywhere hailed by brilliant music. It was on such an occasion that I saw for the first time the urn which a grenadier wore attached to his belt; I was told that the emperor, in order to do honor to the memory of the gallant Latour d'Auvergne,*

* Latour d'Auvergne, a descendant of the celebrated Turenne, was known and honored throughout the whole army on account of the

had caused his heart to be enclosed in a leaden casket, which he had intrusted to the oldest soldier of the regiment, commanding that his name should always be called at the roll-call, as though he were present. He who bore the heart replied: 'Dead on the field of honor.'

"One day, a breakfast was given me at the camp of Ambleteuse. I desired to go by water, and, notwithstanding a contrary wind, the admiral took me. I saw the English ships, and we passed so near them, that they might easily have captured our yacht. I also visited the Dutch fleet commanded by Admiral Versuelt, where I was received with great applause, the sailors little dreaming that I would be their queen within the space of a year.*

"On another occasion, the emperor ordered a review. The English, who felt disquieted, by the appearance of so many troops drawn up before them, approached nearer and nearer to our coasts, and even fired a few cannon-shots at us; the emperor was at the head of his French columns when they replied to these shots, and was thus placed between two fires. As we had followed him, we

lion-hearted courage which he had exhibited on so many occasions. As he invariably declined the many advancements and honors that were tendered him, Napoleon appointed him first grenadier of the army. He fell in the action at Neuburg, and the Viceroy of Italy, Eugene Beauharnais, afterward caused a monument to be erected there in his memory.

* In order to reach the harbor of Ambleteuse to which they had been assigned, the Dutch had first been compelled to do battle with the English fleet, and in this combat they had acquitted themselves with the greatest honor.

were now compelled to remain at his side. To his uncle's great joy, my son exhibited no symptom of fear whatever. But the generals trembled at seeing the emperor exposed to such danger. The ramrod of some awkward soldier might prove as dangerous as a ball. In the midst of this imposing spectacle, I was struck with astonishment at the contrast presented by the troops under different circumstances. When drawn up in line of battle, they glowed with gallantry and determination, but, in the days of repose, they resembled well-behaved children, who could amuse themselves with a flower or a bird. The most daring warrior was then often converted into the most diligent and submissive scholar.

"For the breakfast which Marshal Davoust gave me in his tent, the grenadiers had been preparing to entertain us with several songs, and came forward to sing them with the bashfulness of young girls. In the most embarrassed and timid manner, they sang a song full of the fiercest and most daring threats against England.

"From the emperor's parlor we often saw the soldiers of his guard assemble on the grass-plot before the castle; one of them would play the violin and instruct his comrades in dancing. The beginners would study the '*jétés*' and '*assemblés*' with the closest attention; the more advanced ones would execute a whole contre-dance. From behind the window-blinds we watched them with the greatest pleasure. The emperor, who often surprised us at this occupation, would laugh with us and rejoice at the innocent amusements of his soldiers.

"Was this project of a landing in England really intended? Or was it the emperor's purpose by these enormous preparations to divert attention from other points, and fix it on this one only? Even to-day this is a question which I cannot venture to decide; here, as elsewhere, I only report what I have seen.

"Madame Ney also gave me a brilliant festival at Montreuil, where her husband the marshal was in command. During the forenoon the troops were manoeuvred before me, in the evening a ball took place. But this was suddenly interrupted by the intelligence that the emperor had just embarked.

"A number of young officers, who had been present at the ball, rushed out on the road to Boulogne; I followed them with the rapidity of lightning, escorted as usual by General Defrance, who burned with impatience to be again at the emperor's side. I myself felt unutterable emotion at the prospect of witnessing so great an occurrence. I imagined myself observing the battle from the summit of the tower that stood near the emperor's tent; beholding our fleet advance and sink down into the waves, I shuddered in anticipation.

"At last I arrived. I inquired after the emperor, and learned that he had actually attended the embarkation of all his troops during the night, but that he had just returned to his villa.

"I did not see him until dinner, at which he asked Prince Joseph, who was then colonel of a regiment, whether he had believed in this pretended embarkation,

and what effect it had had on the soldiers. Joseph said that he, like all the world, had believed that a departure was really intended, and that the soldiers had doubted it so little that they had sold their watches. The emperor also often asked if the telegraph had not yet announced the approach of the French squadron; his adjutant, Lauriston, was with the squadron, and the emperor seemed only to be awaiting Lauriston's arrival and a favorable wind, in order to set sail.

"The eight days' absence accorded me by my husband had expired, and I took leave of the emperor. I journeyed through Calais and Dunkirk. I saw troops defiling before me everywhere; and with regret and fear I left this magnificent army, thinking that they might perhaps in a few days be exposed to the greatest dangers.

"At St. Amand we were every day expecting to hear of the passage of our fleet to England, when we suddenly saw the troops arriving in our neighborhood and passing on in forced marches toward the Rhine. Austria had broken the peace. We hastened at once to Paris, to see the emperor once more before his departure for Germany."*

* La Reine Hortense en Italie, France, etc., p. 278.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PILGRIM.

ON the following morning the duchess left Boulogne with her son, in order to wander on with him through the land of her youth and of her memories.

It was a sad and yet heart-stirring pilgrimage; for, although banished and nameless, she was nevertheless in her own country—she still stood on French soil. For sixteen years she had been living in a foreign land, in a land whose language was unknown to her, and whose people she could therefore not understand. Now, on this journey through France, she rejoiced once more in being able to understand the conversation of the people in the streets, and of the peasants in the fields. It was a sensation of mingled bitterness and sweetness to feel that she was not a stranger among this people, and it therefore now afforded her the greatest delight to chat with those she met, and to listen to their *naïve* and artless words.

As soon as she arrived at her hotel in any city or village in which she purposed enjoying a day's rest, Hortense would walk out into the streets on her son's arm. On one occasion she stepped into a booth, seated herself, and conversed with the people who came to the store to purchase their daily necessities; on another occasion, she accosted a child on the street, kissed it, and inquired after its parents; then, again, she would con-

verse with the peasants in the villages about their farms, and the prospects of a plentiful harvest. The *naïve*, strong, and healthy disposition of the people delighted her, and, with the smiling pride of a happy mother, she showed her son this great and beautiful family, this French people, to which they, though banished and cast off, still belonged.

In Chantilly, she showed the prince the palace of Prince Condé. The forests that stood in the neighborhood had once belonged to the queen, or rather they had been a portion of the appendage which the emperor, since the union of Holland and France, had set apart for her second son, Louis Napoleon. Hortense had never been in the vicinity, and could therefore visit the castle without fear of being recognized.

They asked the guide, who had shown them the castle and the garden, who had been the former possessor of the great forests of Chantilly.

"The step-daughter of the Emperor Napoleon, Queen Hortense," replied the man, with perfect indifference. "The people continued to speak of her here for a long time; it was said that she was wandering about in the country in disguise, but for the last few years nothing has been heard of her, and I do not know what has become of her."

"She is surely dead, the poor queen," said Hortense, with so sad a smile that her son turned pale, and his eyes filled with tears.

From Chantilly they wandered on to Ermenonville

and Morfontaine, for Hortense desired to show her son all the places she had once seen in the days of fortune with the emperor and her mother. These places now seemed as solitary and deserted as she herself was. How great the splendor that had once reigned in Ermenonville, when the emperor had visited the owner of the place in order to enjoy with him the delights of the chase! In the walks of the park, in which thousands of lamps had then shone, the grass now grew rankly; a miserable, leaky boat was now the only conveyance to the Poplar Island, sacred to the memory of Jean Jacques, on whose monument Hortense and Louis Napoleon now inscribed their names. Morfontaine appeared still more desolate; the allies had sacked it in 1815, and it had not been repaired since then. In Morfontaine, Hortense had attended a magnificent festival given by Joseph Bonaparte, then its owner, to his imperial brother.

In St. Denis there were still more sacred and beautiful remembrances for Hortense, for here was situated the great college for the daughters of high military officers, of which Hortense had been the protectress. She dared not show herself, for she well knew that she was not forgotten here; here there were many who still knew and loved her, and she could only show herself to strangers. But she nevertheless visited the church, and descended with Louis Napoleon into the vaults. Louis XVIII. alone reposed in the halls which the empire had restored for the reception of the new family of rulers, adopted by France. Alas! he who built these halls, the Emperor

Napoleon, now reposed under a weeping-willow on a desolate island in the midst of the sea, and he who had deposed him now occupied the place intended for the sarcophagus of the emperor.

While wandering through these silent and gloomy halls, Hortense thought of the day on which she had come hither with the emperor to inspect the building of the church. And that time she had been ill and suffering, and with the fullest conviction she had said to her mother that she, Queen Hortense, would be the first that would be laid to rest in the vault of St. Denis. Now, after so many years, she descended into it living, and had hardly a right to visit it.

But there was another grave, another monument to her memories, beside which Hortense desired to pray. This was the grave of the Empress Josephine, in the church at Ruelle.

With what emotions did she approach this place and kneel down beside the grave-mound! Of all that Josephine had loved, there remained only Hortense and her son, a solitary couple, who were now secretly visiting the place where Hortense's mother reposed. The number of flowers that adorned the monument proved that Josephine was at least resting in the midst of friends, who still held her memory sacred, and this was a consolation for her daughter.

From Ruelle and its consecrated grave they wandered on to Malmaison. Above all, Hortense wished to show this palace to her son! It was from this place that Na-

poleon had departed to leave France forever! Here Hortense had had the pleasure of sweetening for him, by her tender sympathy, the moment when all the world had abandoned him—the moment when he fell from the heights of renown into the abyss of misfortune. But, alas! the poor queen was not even to have the satisfaction of showing to her son the palace, sacred to so many memories that had once been her own! The present owner had given strict orders to give admission to the palace only upon presentation of permits that must be obtained of him beforehand, and, as Hortense had none, her entreaties were all in vain.

She was cruelly repelled from the threshold of the palace in which in former days she had been so joyfully received by her devoted friends and servants!

Sorrowfully, her eyes clouded with tears, she turned away and returned to her hotel, leaning on her son's arm.

In silence she seated herself at his side on the stone bench that stood before the house, and gazed at the palace in which she had spent such happy and momentous days, lost in the recollections of the past!

"It is, perhaps, natural," she murmured in a low voice, "that absence should cause those, who have the happiness to remain in their homes, to forget us. But, for those who are driven out into foreign lands, the life of the heart stands still, and the past is all to them; to the exiled the present and the future are unimportant. In France every thing has progressed, every thing is changed, I alone am left behind, with my sentiments of

unchangeable love and fidelity! Alas! how sorrowful and painful it is to be forgotten! * How—"

Suddenly she was interrupted by the tones of a piano, that resounded in her immediate vicinity. Behind the bench on which they were sitting, were the windows of the parlor of the hotel. These windows were open, and each tone of the music within could be heard with the greatest distinctness.

The playing was now interrupted by a female voice, which said: "Sing us a song, my daughter."

"What shall I sing?" asked another and more youthful voice.

"Sing the beautiful, touching song your brother brought you from Paris yesterday. The song of Delphine Gay, set to music by M. de Beauplan."

"Ah, you mean the song about Queen Hortense, who comes to Paris as a pilgrim? You are right, mamma, it is a beautiful and touching song, and I will sing it!"

And the young lady struck the keys more forcibly, and began to play the prelude.

Outside on the stone bench sat she who was once Queen Hortense, but was now the poor, solitary pilgrim. Nothing remained to her of the glorious past, but her son, who sat at her side! Hand in hand, both breathless with emotion, both pale and tearful, they listened until the young girl concluded her touching song.

* The duchess's own words. See *Voyage en Italie*, etc., p. 305.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUSION.

THIS sorrowful pilgrimage was at last at an end. Hortense was once more in her mountain-home, in the charming villa overlooking the Lake of Constance, and commanding a lovely view of the majestic lake, with its island and its surrounding cities and villages.

Honor to the Canton Thurgau, which, when all the world turned its back on the queen upon whom all the governments and destiny alike frowned—when even her nearest relatives, the Grand-duke and the Grand-duchess Stephanie of Baden, were compelled to forbid her residence in their territory—still had the courage to offer the Duchess of St. Leu an asylum, and to accord her, on the free soil of the little republic, a refuge from which the ill-will and distrust of the mighty could not drive her!

In Arenenberg, Hortense reposed from her weariness. With a bleeding breast she returned home, her heart wounded by a fearful blow, the loss of a noble and beloved son, broken in spirit, and bowed down by the coldness and cruelty of the world, which, in the cowardly fear of its egoism, had become faithless, even to the holiest and most imperishable of all religions, the religion of memory!

How many, who had once vowed love and gratitude, had abandoned her! how many, whom she had benefited had deserted her in the hour of peril!

In the generosity and kindness of her heart, she forgave them all; and, instead of nursing a feeling of bitterness, she pitied them! She had done with the outer world! Arenenberg was now her world—Arenenberg, in which her last and only happiness, her son, the heir of the imperial name, lived with her—Arenenberg, which was as a temple of memory, in which Hortense was the pious and believing priestess.

At Arenenberg Hortense wrote the sad and touching story of her journey through Italy, France, and England, which she undertook, in the heroism of maternal love, in order to rescue her son. The noblest womanhood, the most cultivated mind, the proudest and purest soul, speaks from out this book, with which Hortense has erected a monument to herself that is more imperishable than all the monuments of stone and bronze, for this monument speaks to the heart—those to the eyes only. Hortense wrote this book with her heart often interrupted by the tears that dimmed her eyes; she concludes it with a touching appeal to the French people, which it may well be permitted us to repeat here; it is as follows:

“The renewal of the law of exile, and the assimilation made between us and the Bourbons, testify to the sentiments and fears that are entertained respecting us. No friendly voice has been raised in our behalf; this indifference has doubled the bitterness of our banishment! May they, however, still be happy—those who forget! May they, above all, make France happy! This is my prayer!

“As for the people, it will, if it remembers its glory, its grandeur, and the incessant care of which it was the object, ever hold our memory dear. This is my firm conviction, and this thought is the sweetest consolation of an exile, the sweetest consolation he can take with him to the grave!” *

Hortense still lived a few years of peaceful tranquillity; far from all she loved—far also from the son who was her last hope, never dreaming that destiny had so brilliant a future in store for him, and that Louis Napoleon, whom the Bourbons had banished from France as a child, and the Orleans as a youth—that Louis Napoleon would one day be enthroned in Paris as emperor, while the Bourbons and Orleans languish in foreign lands as exiles!

In the year 1837, Hortense, the flower of the Bonapartes, died!

Wearied, at last, of misfortune, and of the exile in which she languished, she bowed her head, and went home to her great dead—home to Napoleon and Josephine!

* Voyage en Italie, etc., p. 324.

