

CHAPTER II.

THE BOURBONS AND THE BONAPARTES.

THE allies hastened to consider the declaration of the senate and provisional government as the declaration of the people, and recalled to the throne of his fathers Louis XVIII., who, as Count de Lille, had so long languished in exile at Hartwell.

The Emperor of Austria kept his word; he made no resistance to the decrees of his allies, and allowed his grandson, the King of Rome, to be robbed of his inheritance, and the imperial crown to fall from his daughter's brow. The Emperor Francis was, however, as much astonished at this result as Marie Louise, for, until their entrance into Paris, the allies had flattered the Austrian emperor with the hope that the crown of France would be secured to his daughter and grandson. The emperor's astonishment at this turn of affairs was made the subject of a caricature, which, on the day of the entrance of Louis XVIII., was affixed to the same walls on which Chateaubriand's enthusiastic *brochure* concerning the Bourbons was posted. In this caricature, of which thousands of copies were sown broadcast throughout Paris, the Emperor of Austria was to be seen sitting in an elegant open carriage; the Emperor Alexander sat on the coachman's box, the Regent of England as postilion on the lead-horse, and the King of Prussia

stood up behind as a lackey. Napoleon ran along on foot at the side of the carriage, holding fast to it, and crying out to the Emperor of Austria, "Father-in-law, they have thrown me out"—"And *taken me in*," was the reply of Francis I.

The exultation of the ladies of the Faubourg St. Germain was great, now that their king was at last restored to them, and they eagerly embraced every means of showing their gratitude to the Emperor of Russia. But Alexander remained entirely unsusceptible to their homage; he even went so far as to avoid attending the entertainments given by the new king at the Tuileries, and society was shocked at seeing the emperor openly displaying his sympathy for the family of the Emperor Napoleon, and repairing to Malmaison, instead of appearing at the Tuileries.

Count Nesselrode at last conjured his friend Louise de Cochelet to inform the czar of the feeling of dismay that pervaded the Faubourg St. Germain, when he should come to Queen Hortense's maid-of-honor, as he was in the habit of doing from time to time, for the purpose of discussing the queen's interests with her.

"Sire," said she to the czar, "the Faubourg St. Germain regards your majesty's zeal in the queen's behalf with great jealousy. It has even caused Count Nesselrode much concern. 'Our emperor,' said he to me, recently, 'goes to Malmaison much too often; the high circles of society, and the diplomatic body, are already in dismay about it; it is feared that he is there subjected to

influences to which policy requires he should not be exposed.'"

"This is characteristic of my Nesselrode," replied the emperor, laughing, "he is so easily disquieted. What do I care for the Faubourg St. Germain? It speaks ill enough for these ladies that they have not made a conquest of me! I prefer the noble qualities of the soul to all outward appearances; and I find united in the Empress Josephine, in the Queen of Holland, and in Prince Eugene, all that is admirable and lovable. I am better pleased to be here with you in quiet, confidential intercourse, than with those who really demean themselves as though they were crazed, and who, instead of enjoying the triumph we have prepared for them, are only intent on destroying their enemies, and have commenced with those who formerly accorded them such generous protection; they really weary one with their extravagances.

"Frenchwomen are coquettish," said the emperor in the course of the conversation; "I came here in great fear of them, for I knew how far their amiability could extend; but their heart is undoubtedly no longer their own. I am therefore on my guard against being deceived by it, and I fancy these ladies love to please so well, that they are even angry with those who respond to the attentions which are so lavishly showered on them, with conventional politeness only."

Louise de Cochelet undertook to defend the French ladies against the emperor's attacks. She told him he should not judge of them by the manner in which they

had conducted themselves toward him, as it was but natural that the ladies should be inspired with enthusiasm for a young emperor who appeared to them in so favorable a light, and that they must necessarily, even without being coquettish, ardently desire to be noticed by him.

"But," said the emperor, with his soft, sad smile, "have these ladies only been waiting for me in order to feel their heart palpitate? I seek mind and entertainment, but I fly from all those who display a desire to exercise a control over my heart; in this I see nothing but self-love, and I hold myself aloof from such contact."

While the royalists and the ladies of the Faubourg St. Germain were lavishing attentions upon the allies, and assuring the returned king of the boundless delight of his people, this people was already beginning to grumble. The allies had now completed their task, they had restored to France its legitimate king, and they now put the finishing-touch to their work by providing in the treaty, that France should be narrowed down to the boundaries it had had before the revolution.

France was compelled to conform to the will of its vanquishers. From the weakness of the legitimists they now snatched that which they had been compelled to accord to the strength of the empire.

All of those fortified places, that had been bought with so much French blood, and that were still held by Frenchmen, were to be given up, and the great, extended France was to shrink back into the France it had been thirty years before! It was this that made the people

murmur. The Frenchmen who had left Napoleon because they had grown weary of endless wars, were, nevertheless, proud of the conquests they had made under their emperor. The surrender of these conquests wounded the national pride, and they were angry with their king for being so ready to put this shame upon France—for holding the crown of France in higher estimation than the honor of France!

It must be conceded, however, that Louis XVIII. had most bitterly felt the disgrace that attached to him in this re-establishment of France within its ancient boundaries, and he had endeavored to protest in every way against this demand of the allies. But his representative had been made to understand that if Louis XVIII. could not content himself with the France the allies were prepared to give him, he was at liberty to relinquish it to Marie Louise. The king was, therefore, compelled to yield to necessity; but he did so with bitter mortification, and while his courtiers were giving free rein to their enthusiasm for the allies, he was heard to whisper, "*Nos chers amis les ennemis!*" *

Thus embittered against the allies, it was only with great reluctance, and after a long and bitter struggle, that Louis XVIII. consented to the demands made by the allies in behalf of the family of Napoleon. But the Emperor Alexander kept his word; he defended the rights of the Queen of Holland and her children against the ill-will of the Bourbons, the dislike of the royalists, and the

* "Our dear friends the enemies!"

disinclination of the allies, alike. The family of the emperor owed it to him and to his firmness alone that the article of the treaty of the 11th of April, in which Louis XVIII. agreed "that the titles and dignities of all the members of the family of the Emperor Napoleon should be recognized, and that they should not be deprived of them," remained something more than a mere phrase.

It was only after repeated efforts that the emperor at last succeeded in obtaining for Hortense, from Louis XVIII., an estate and a title, that secured her position. King Louis finally yielded to his urgent solicitations, and conferred upon Hortense the title of Duchess of St. Leu, and made her estate, St. Leu, a duchy.

But this was done with the greatest reluctance, and only under the pressure of the king's obligations to the allies, who had given him his throne; and these obligations the Bourbons would have forgotten as willingly as the whole period of the revolution and of the empire.

For the Bourbons seemed but to have awakened from a long sleep, and were not a little surprised to find that the world had progressed in the meanwhile.

According to their ideas, every thing must have remained standing at the point where they had left it twenty years before; and they were at least determined to ignore all that had happened in the interval. King Louis therefore signed his first act as in "the nineteenth" year of his reign, and endeavored in all things to keep up a semblance of the continuation of his reign since the year 1789. Hence, the letters-patent in which King

Louis appointed Hortense Duchess of St. Leu were drawn up in a manner offensive to the queen, for they contained the following: "The king appoints Mademoiselle Hortense de Beauharnais Duchess of St. Leu."

The queen refused to accept this title, under the circumstances, and rejected the letters-patent. It was not until the czar had angrily demanded it, that M. de Blacas, the king's premier, consented to draw up the letters-patent in a different style. They read: "The king appoints Hortense Eugénie, included in the treaty of the 11th of April, Duchess of St. Leu." This was, to be sure, merely a negative and disguised recognition of the former rank of the queen; but it was, at least no longer a degradation to accept it.

The Viceroy of Italy, the noble Eugene—who was universally beloved, and who had come to Paris, at the express wish of the czar, to secure his future—occasioned the Bourbons quite as much annoyance and perplexity.

The king could not refuse to recognize the brave hero of the empire and the son-in-law of the King of Bavaria, who was one of the allies; and, as Eugene desired an audience of the king, it was accorded him at once.

But how was he to be received? With what title was Napoleon's step-son, the Viceroy of Italy, to be addressed? It would have been altogether too ridiculous to repeat the absurdity contained in Hortense's letters-patent, and call Eugene "Viscount de Beauharnais;" but to accord him the royal title would have compromised the

dignity of the legitimate dynasty. A brilliant solution of this difficult question suggested itself to King Louis. When the Duke d'Aumont conducted Prince Eugene to the royal presence, the king advanced, with a cordial smile, and saluted him with the words, "M. Marshal of France, I am happy to see you."

Eugene, who was on the point of making his salutation, remained silent, and looked over his shoulder to see whom the king was speaking with. Louis XVIII. smiled, and continued: "You, my dear sir, are a marshal of France. I appoint you to this dignity."

"Sire," said Eugene, bowing profoundly, "I am much obliged to your majesty for your kind intentions, but the misfortune of the rank to which destiny has called me will not allow me to accept the high title with which you honor me. I thank you very much, but I must decline it."*

The king's stratagem had thus come to grief, and Eugene left the royal presence with flying colors. He was not under the necessity of accepting benefits from the King of France, for his step-father, the King of Bavaria, made Eugene a prince of the royal house of Bavaria, and created for him the duchy of Leuchtenberg. Hither Eugene retired, and lived there, surrounded by his wife and children, in peace and tranquillity, until death tore him from the arms of his sorrowing family, in the year 1824.

* Mémoires d'une Femme de Qualité, vol. i., p. 267.