

those," said he, "who meet me on my course—I can show them no consideration."

"You met him on his course, madame; perhaps he would have extended you a helping hand, after having reached the summit of his mountain."

"I must speak with him," said Madame de Staël; "I have been injured in his opinion."

"I think so too," replied the queen, "but you would judge him ill, if you considered him capable of hating any one. He believed you to be his enemy, and he feared you, which was something very unusual for him," added she, with a smile. "Now that he is unfortunate, you will show yourself his friend, and prove yourself to be such, and I am satisfied that he will receive you well."

"Madame de Staël also occupied herself a great deal with the young princes, but she met with worse success with them than with us. It was perhaps in order to judge of their mental capacity, that she showered unsuitable questions upon them.

"Do you love your uncle?"

"Very much, madame!"

"And will you also be as fond of war as he is?"

"Yes, if it did not cause so much misery."

"Is it true that he often made you repeat a fable commencing with the words, 'The strongest is always in the right?'"

"Madame, he often made us repeat fables, but this one not oftener than any other."

"Young Prince Napoleon, a boy of astounding mental capacity and precocious judgment, answered all these questions with the greatest composure, and, at the conclusion of this examination, turned to me and said quite audibly: 'This lady asks a great many questions. Is that what you call being intellectual?'"

"After the departure of our distinguished visitors, we all indulged in an expression of opinion concerning them, and young Prince Napoleon was the one upon whom the ladies had made the least flattering impression, but he only ventured to intimate as much in a low voice.

"I for my part had been more dazzled than gladdened by this visit. One could not avoid admiring this genius in spite of its inconsiderateness, and its wanderings, but there was nothing pleasing, nothing graceful and womanly, in Madame de Staël's manner."*

CHAPTER VI.

THE OLD AND THE NEW ERA.

THE restoration was accomplished. The allies had at last withdrawn from the kingdom, and Louis XVIII. was now the independent ruler of France. In him, in the returned members of his family, and in the emigrants who were pouring into the country from all quarters, was

* Cochelet, Mémoires sur la Reine Hortense, vol. i., pp. 429-440.

represented the old era of France, the era of despotic royal power, of brilliant manners, of intrigues, of aristocratic ideas, of ease and luxury. Opposed to them stood the France of the new era, the generation formed by Napoleon and the revolution, the new aristocracy, who possessed no other ancestors than merit and valorous deeds, an aristocracy that had nothing to relate of the *œil de bœuf* and the *petites maisons*, but an aristocracy that could tell of the battle-field and of the hospitals in which their wounds had been healed.

These two parties stood opposed to each other.

Old and young France now carried on an hourly, continuous warfare at the court of Louis XVIII., with this difference, however, that young France, hitherto ever victorious, now experienced a continuous series of reverses and humiliations. Old France was now victorious. Not victorious through its gallantry and merit, but through its past, which it endeavored to connect with the present, without considering the chasm which lay between.

True, King Louis had agreed, in the treaty of the 11th of April, that none of his subjects should be deprived of their titles and dignities; and the new dukes, princes, marshals, counts, and barons, could therefore appear at court, but they played but a sad and humiliating rôle, and they were made to feel that they were only tolerated, and not welcome.

The gentlemen who, before the revolution, had been entitled to seats in the royal equipages, still retained this

privilege, but the doors of these equipages were never opened to the gentlemen of the new Napoleonic nobility. "The ladies of the old era still retained their *tabouret*, as well as their grand and little *entrée* to the Tuileries and the Louvre, and it would have been considered very arrogant if the duchesses of the new era had made claim to similar honors."

It was the Duchess d'Angoulême who took the lead and set the Faubourg St. Germain an example of intolerance and arrogant pretensions in ignoring the empire. She was the most unrelenting enemy of the new era, born of the revolution, and of its representatives; it is true, however, that she, who was the daughter of the beheaded royal pair, and who had herself so long languished in the Temple, had been familiar with the horrors of the revolution in their saddest and most painful features. She now determined, as she could no longer punish, to at least forget this era, and to seem to be entirely oblivious of its existence.

At one of the first dinners given by the king to the allies, the Duchess d'Angoulême, who sat next to the King of Bavaria, pointed to the Grand-duke of Baden, and asked: "Is not this the prince who married a princess of Bonaparte's making? What weakness to ally one's self in such a manner with that general!"

The duchess did not or would not remember that the King of Bavaria, as well as the Emperor of Austria, who sat on her other side, and could well hear her words, had also allied themselves with General Bonaparte.

After she had again installed herself in the rooms she had formerly occupied in the Tuileries, the duchess asked old Dubois, who had formerly tuned her piano, and had retained this office under the empire, and who now showed her the new and elegant instruments provided by Josephine—she asked him: "What has become of my piano?"

This "piano" had been an old and worn-out concern, and the duchess was surprised at not finding it, as though almost thirty years had not passed since she had seen it last; as though the 10th of August, 1792, the day on which the populace demolished the Tuileries, had never been!

But the period from 1795 to 1814 was ignored on principle, and the Bourbons seemed really to have quite forgotten that more than one night lay between the last levee of King Louis XVI. and the levee of to-day of King Louis XVIII. They seemed astonished that persons they had known as children had grown up since they last saw them, and insisted on treating every one as they had done in 1789.

After the Empress Josephine's death, Count d'Artois paid a visit to Malmaison, a place that had hardly existed before the revolution, and which owed its creation to Josephine's love and taste for art.

The empress, who had a great fondness for botany, had caused magnificent greenhouses to be erected at Malmaison; in these all the plants and flowers of the world had been collected. Knowing her taste, all the princes

of Europe had sent her, in the days of her grandeur, in order to afford her a moment's gratification, the rarest exotics. The Prince Regent of England had even found means, during the war with France, to send her a number of rare West-Indian plants. In this manner her collection had become the richest and most complete in all Europe.

Count d'Artois, as above said, had come to Malmaison to view this celebrated place of sojourn of Josephine, and, while being conducted through the greenhouses, he exclaimed, as though he recognized his old flowers of 1789: "Ah, here are our plants of Trianon!"

And, like their masters the Bourbons, the emigrants had also returned to France with the same ideas with which they had fled the country. They endeavored, in all their manners, habits, and pretensions, to begin again precisely where they had left off in 1789. They had so lively an appreciation of their own merit, that they took no notice whatever of other people's, and yet their greatest merit consisted in having emigrated.

For this merit they now demanded a reward.

All of these returned emigrants demanded rewards, positions, and pensions, and considered it incomprehensible that those who were already in possession were not at once deprived of them. Intrigues were the order of the day, and in general the representatives of the old era succeeded in supplanting those of the new era in offices and pensions as well as in court honors. All the high positions in the army were filled by the marquises, dukes, and counts, of the old era, who had sewed

tapestry and picked silk in Coblenz, while the France of the new era was fighting on the battle-field, and they now began to teach the soldiers of the empire the old drill of 1780.

The etiquette of the olden time was restored, and the same luxurious and lascivious disposition prevailed among these cavaliers of the former century which had been approved in the *œil de bœuf* and in the *petites maisons* of the old era.

These old cavaliers felt contempt for the young Frenchmen of the new era on account of their pedantic morality; they scornfully regarded men who perhaps had not more than one mistress, and to whom the wife of a friend was so sacred, that they never dared to approach her with a disrespectful thought even.

These legitimist gentlemen entertained themselves chiefly with reflections over the past, and their own grandeur. In the midst of the many new things by which they were surrounded, some of which they unfortunately found it impossible to ignore, it was their sweetest relaxation to give themselves up entirely to the remembrance of the old *régime*, and when they spoke of this era, they forgot their age and debility, and were once more the young *roués* of the *œil de bœuf*.

Once in the antechamber of King Louis XVIII., while the Marquis de Chimène and the Duke de Lauraguais, two old heroes of the frivolous era, in which the boudoir and the *petites maisons* were the battle-field, and the myrtle instead of the laurel the reward of victory,

while these gentlemen were conversing of some occurrence under the old government, the Duke de Lauraguais, in order to more nearly fix the date of the occurrence of which they were speaking, remarked to the marquis, "It was in the year in which I had my *liaison* with your wife."

"Ah, yes," replied the marquis, with perfect composure, "that was in the year 1776."

Neither of the gentlemen found anything strange in this allusion to the past. The *liaison* in question had been a perfectly commonplace matter, and it would have been as ridiculous in the duke to deny it as for the marquis to have shown any indignation.

The wisest and most enlightened of all these gentlemen was their head, King Louis XVIII. himself.

He was well aware of the errors of those who surrounded him, and placed but little confidence in the representatives of the old court. But he was nevertheless powerless to withdraw himself from their influence, and after he had accorded the people the charter, in opposition to the will and opinion of the whole royal family, of his whole court and of his ministers, and had sworn to support it in spite of the opposition of "Monsieur" and the Prince de Condé, who was in the habit of calling the charter "*Mademoiselle la Constitution de 1791*," Louis withdrew to the retirement of his apartments in the Tuileries, and left his minister Blacas to attend to the little details of government, the king deeming the great ones only worthy of his attention.