

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."\*

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\* 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 necessaries; 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!