

and composed by herself, which, though I had often admired them; never previously struck me as being so expressive and graceful as they now proved to be.

"I know not that I ever encountered a person with so fine a tact or so quick an apprehension as the Duchess of St. Leu. These give her the power of rapidly forming an appreciation of those with whom she comes in contact, and of suiting the subjects of conversation to their tastes and comprehensions. Thus, with the grave she is serious, with the lively gay, and with the scientific she only permits just a sufficient extent of her *savoir* to be revealed to encourage the development of theirs.

"She is, in fact, all things to all men, without losing a single portion of her own natural character; a peculiarity of which seems to be the desire, as well as the power, of sending all away who approach her satisfied with themselves and delighted with her. Yet there is no unworthy concession of opinions made, or tacit acquiescence yielded, to conciliate popularity. She assents to or dissents from the sentiments of others with a mildness and good sense which gratifies those with whom she coincides, or disarms those from whom she differs."

CHAPTER VIII.

PEACEFUL DAYS, YET SAD.

AS the spring of the year 1816 opened upon Europe, Hortense was found residing undisturbed, with her son, Louis Napoleon, in their secluded home upon the shores of Lake Constance. The Allies seemed no longer disposed to disturb her. Still, she had many indications that she was narrowly watched. She was much cheered by a visit which she made to her brother at Berg, on the Wurmsee, where she was received with that warmth of affection which her wounded heart so deeply craved. Her health being still very frail, she, by the advice of her physicians, spent the heat of summer at the baths of Geiss, among the mountains of Appenzell. Her son, Louis Napoleon, was constantly with her. Nearly the whole attention of the mother was devoted to his education.

She had the general superintendence of all his studies, teaching him herself drawing and dancing, often listening to his recitations and

Watchfulness of the Allies.

guiding his reading. Her own highly-cultivated mind enabled her to do this to great advantage. The young prince read aloud to his mother in the evenings, the selections being regulated in accordance with his studies in geography or history. Saturday Hortense devoted the entire day to her son, reviewing all the reading and studies of the week. In addition to the Abbé Bertrand, another teacher was employed, M. Lebas, a young professor of much distinction from the Normal School of Paris.

Thus the summer and autumn of 1816 passed tranquilly away. But the eagle eye of the Bourbons was continually upon Hortense. They watched every movement she made, she could not leave her home, or receive a visit from any distinguished stranger, without exciting their alarm. Their uneasiness at length became so great that, early in the year 1817, the Duke of Baden received peremptory orders that he must immediately expel Hortense and her child from his territory. The Bourbons could not allow such dangerous personages to dwell so near the frontiers of France. Hortense was a feeble, heart-broken woman. Her child was but eight years of age. But they

The retreat of Arenenberg.

were representatives of the Empire. And the Bourbons were ever terror-stricken lest the French people should rise in insurrection, and demand the restoration of that Empire, of which foreign armies had robbed them.

In the extreme north-eastern portion of Switzerland, on the southern shores of the Lake of Constance, there was the small Swiss canton of Thurgovia. The gallant magistrates of the canton informed Hortense that if she wished to establish herself in their country, she should be protected by both the magistrates and the people. The ex-queen had occasionally entered the canton in her drives, and had observed with admiration a modest but very beautiful chateau called Arenenberg, very picturesquely located on the borders of the lake. She purchased the estate for about sixty thousand francs. This became a very delightful summer residence, though in winter it presented a bleak exposure, swept by piercing winds. Until the death of Hortense, Arenenberg continued to be her favorite place of residence.

To add to this transient gleam of happiness, there was now a partial reconciliation between Hortense and her husband; and, to the unspeakable joy of the mother and Louis Napole-

The princes enter college.

on, they enjoyed a visit of several months from Napoleon Louis. It is not easy to imagine the happiness which this reunion created, after a separation of nearly three years.

The judicious mother now thought it important that her sons should enjoy the advantages of a more public education than that which they had been receiving from private tutors at home. She accordingly took them both to Augsburg, in Bavaria, where they entered the celebrated college of that city. Hortense engaged a handsome residence there, that she might still be with her sons, whom she loved so tenderly. A French gentleman of distinction, travelling in that region, had the honor of an introduction to her, and gives the following account of his visit :

“Returning to France in 1819, after a long residence in Russia, I stopped at Augsburg, where the Duchess of St. Leu was then a resident. I had hitherto only known her by report. Some Russian officers, who had accompanied the Emperor Alexander to Malmaison in 1814, had spoken to me of Hortense with so much enthusiasm, that for the first few moments it appeared as if I saw her again after a long absence, and as if I owed my kind recep-

Loveliness of Hortense.

tion to the ties of ancient friendship. Every thing about her is in exact harmony with the angelic expression of her face, her conversation, demeanor, and the sweetness of her voice and disposition.

“When she speaks of an affecting incident, the language becomes more touching through the depths of her sensibility. She lends so much life to every scene, that the auditor becomes witness of the transaction. Her powers of instructing and delighting are almost magical; and her artless fascination leaves on every heart those deep traces which even time can never efface.

“She introduced me to her private circle, which consisted of the two children and their tutors, some old officers of her household, two female friends of her infancy, and that living monument of conjugal devotion, Count Lavallette.* The conversation soon became general.

* Count Lavallette was one of the devoted friends of Napoleon, who had long served in the armies of the Empire. For the welcome he gave Napoleon on his return from Elba he was doomed, by the Bourbons, to death. While preparations were being made for his execution, his wife and daughter, with her governess, were permitted to visit him. Very adroitly he escaped in his wife's clothes, she remaining in his place. Irritated by this escape, the Government held his wife a prisoner until she became a confirmed lunatic.

Letter from a visitor.

They questioned me about the Ukraine, where I long had resided, and Greece and Turkey, through which I had lately travelled.

"In return, they spoke of Bavaria, St. Leu, the Lake of Constance, and, by degrees, of events deriving their chief interest from the important parts played by the narrators themselves. We dined at five. I afterwards accompanied the duchess into the garden, and, in the few moments then enjoyed of intimate conversation, I saw that no past praises had ever been exaggerated. How admirable were her feelings when she recalled the death of her mother, and in her tragic recital of the death of Madame Broc.

"But when she spoke of her children, her friends, and the fine arts, her whole figure seemed to glow with the ardor of her imagination. Goodness of heart was displayed in every feature, and gave additional value to her other estimable qualities. In describing her present situation it was impossible to avoid mentioning her beloved France.

"'You are returning,' said she, 'to your native country;' and the last word was pronounced with a heartfelt sigh. I had been an exile from my cradle, yet my own eager anx-

Letter from a visitor.

ety to revisit a birth-place scarcely remembered, enabled me to estimate her grief at the thoughts of an eternal separation. She spoke of the measures adopted for her banishment with that true resignation which mourns but never murmurs. After two hours of similar conversation, it was impossible to decide which was the most admirable, her heart, her good sense, or her imagination.

"We returned to the drawing-room at eight, where tea was served. The duchess observed that this was a habit learned in Holland, 'though you are not to suppose,' she added, with a slight blush, 'that it is preserved as a remembrance of days so brilliant, but now already so distant. Tea is the drink of cold climates, and I have scarcely changed my temperature.'

"Numerous visitors came from the neighborhood, and some even from Munich. She may, indeed, regard this attention with a feeling of proud gratification. It is based upon esteem alone, and is far more honorable than the tiresome adulation of sycophants while at St. Cloud or the Hague. In the course of the evening we looked through a suite of rooms containing, besides a few master-pieces of the

different schools, a large collection of precious curiosities. Many of these elegant trifles had once belonged to her mother; and nearly every one was associated with the remembrance of some distinguished personage or celebrated event. Indeed, her museum might almost be called an abridgment of contemporary history. Music was the next amusement; and the duchess sang, accompanying herself with the same correct taste which inspires her compositions. She had just finished the series of drawings intended to illustrate her collection of *romances*. How could I avoid praising that happy talent which thus personifies thought? The next day I received that beautiful collection as a remembrance.

“I took my leave at midnight, perhaps without even the hope of another meeting. I left her as the traveller parts from the flowers of the desert, to which he can never hope to return. But, wherever time, accident, or destiny may place me, the remembrance of that day will remain indelibly imprinted alike on my memory and heart. It is pleasing to pay homage to the fallen greatness of one like Hortense, who joins the rare gift of talents to the charms of the tenderest sensibility.”



HORTENSE AT ARENENBERG.

The residence of Hortense in Augsburg was in a mansion, since called Pappenheim Palace, in Holy Cross Street. After the graduation of her children, Hortense, with Louis Napoleon, spent most of their time at Arenenberg, interspersed with visits to Rome and Florence. The beautiful chateau was situated upon a swell of land, with green lawns and a thick growth of forest trees, through which there were enchanting views of the mountain and of the lake. The spacious grounds were embellished with the highest artistic skill, with terraces, trellis-work woodbines, and rare exotics.

"The views," writes an English visitor, "which were in some places afforded through the woods, and in others, by their rapid descent, carried over them, were broken in a manner which represented them doubly beautiful. From one peep you caught the small vine-clad island of Reichman, with its cottage gleams trembling upon the twilighted lake. From another you had a noble reach of the Rhine, going forth from its brief resting-place to battle its way down the Falls of Schaffhausen; and beyond it the eye reposed upon the distant outline of the Black Forest, melting

Pleasant neighbors.

warmly in the west. In a third direction you saw the vapory steeples of Constance, apparently sinking in the waters which almost surrounded them; and far away you distinguish the little coast villages, like fading constellations, glimmering fainter and fainter, till land and lake and sky were blended together in obscurity."

Not far distant was the imposing chateau of Wolfberg, which had been purchased by General Parguin, a young French officer of the Empire of much distinction. He had married Mademoiselle Cochelet, and became one of the most intimate friends of Louis Napoleon.

Prince Eugene had also built him a house in the vicinity, that he might be near his sister and share her solitude. Just as the house was finished, and before he moved into it, Eugene died. This was another crushing blow to the heart of Hortense. She was in Rome at the time, and we shall have occasion to refer to the event again.

Hortense, in her retirement, was no less a queen than when the diadem was upon her brow. Though at the farthest possible remove from all aristocratic pride, her superior mind, her extraordinary attainments, and her queen-

An evening scene.

ly grace and dignity, invested her with no less influence over the hearts of her friends than she enjoyed in her days of regal power. A visitor at Wolfberg, in the following language, describes a call which Hortense made upon Madame Parguin and her guests at the chateau:

"One fine evening, as we were all distributed about the lawn at Wolfberg, there was an alarm that Hortense was coming to visit Madame Parguin. As I saw her winding slowly up the hill, with all her company, in three little summer carriages, the elegance of the cavalcade, in scenes where elegance was so rare, was exceedingly striking.

"The appearance of Hortense was such as could not fail to excite admiration and kind feeling. Her countenance was full of talent, blended with the mild expression of a perfect gentlewoman. Her figure, though not beyond the middle height, was of a mould altogether majestic. She lamented that she had not sooner known of the purposed length of our stay in that part of Switzerland, as, having conceived that we were merely passing a few days, she had been unwilling to occupy our time. She then spoke of her regret at not

Theatric entertainments.

being able to entertain us according to her wishes. And, finally, she told us that she had in agitation some little theatricals which, if we could bear with such trifles, we should do her pleasure in attending. All this was said with simple and winning eloquence."

The room for this little theatric entertainment was in a small building, beautifully decorated, near the house. Many distinguished guests were present; many from Constance; so that the apartment was crowded to its utmost capacity. There were two short plays enacted. In one Hortense took a leading part in scenes of trial and sorrow, in which her peculiar powers were admirably displayed. Even making all suitable allowance for the politeness due from guests to their host, it is evident that Hortense possessed dramatic talent of a very high order.

From the theatre the guests returned to the chateau, where preparations had been made for dancing. In the intervals between the dances there was singing, accompanied by the piano. "Here, again," writes one of the guests, "Hortense was perfectly at home. She sang several songs, of which I afterwards found her to be the unacknowledged composer. Among

Taste and culture.

these was the beautiful air, *Partant pour la Syrie*, which will be a fair guaranty that I do not say too much for the rest."

At the close of the evening, as the guests began to depart, the remainder were dispersed through the suite of rooms, admiring the various objects of curiosity and of beauty with which they are decorated. There were some beautiful paintings, and several pieces of exquisite statuary. Upon the tables there were engravings, drawing-books, and works of *belles-lettres*.

"I chanced," writes the visitor from whom we have above quoted, "to place my hand upon a splendid album, and had the further good-fortune to seat myself beside a beautiful young *dame de compagnie* of the duchess, who gave me the history of all the treasures I found therein. Whatever I found most remarkable was still the work of Hortense. Of a series of small portraits, sketched by her in colors, the likeness of those of which I had seen the subjects would have struck me, though turned upside down. She had the same power and the same affectionate feeling for fixing the remembrance of places likewise.

"The landscapes which she had loved in for-

bidden France, even the apartments which she had inhabited, were executed in a manner that put to shame the best amateur performances I had ever seen. There was a minute attention to fidelity in them, too, which a recollection of her present circumstances could not fail to bring home to the spectator's heart.

"I know not when my interest would have cooled in this mansion of taste and talent. Towards morning I was obliged to take my leave; and I doubt if there were any individual who returned home by that bright moonlight, without feeling that Hortense had been born some century and a half too late. For an age of bigots and turncoats she, indeed, seemed unsuited. In that of true poetry and trusty cavaliers, she would have been the subject of the best rhymes and rencontres in romantic France.

"After this I saw her frequently, both at her own house and at Wolfberg, and I never found any thing to destroy the impression which I received on my introduction. Independently of the interest attached to herself, she had always in her company some person who had made a noise in the world, and had become an object of curiosity. At one time it was a distinguished painter or poet; again, it was a battered soldier,

who preferred resting in retirement to the imputation of changing his politics for advancement; then a grand duke or duchess who had undergone as many vicissitudes as herself; and, finally, the widow of the unfortunate Marshal Ney.

"There was something in the last of these characters, particularly when associated with Hortense, more interesting than all the others. She was a handsome, but grave and silent woman, and still clad in mourning for her husband, whose death, so connected with the banishment of the duchess, could not fail to render them deeply sympathetic in each other's fortunes. The amusements provided for all this company consisted of such as I have mentioned—expeditions to various beautiful spots in the neighborhood, and music parties on the water. The last of these used sometimes to have a peculiarly romantic effect; for on *fête* days the young peasant girls, all glittering in their golden tinsel bonnets, would push off with their sweethearts, like mad things, in whatever boats they could find upon the beach. I have seen them paddling their little fleet round the duchess's boat with all the curiosity of savages round a man-of-war.