

Interview at the Coliseum.

not give umbrage to the new Government. At the request of the Emperor of Russia, Louis XVIII. gave me authority to assume the title of Duchess of St. Leu, and confirmed me in the possession of my private property. In an audience that I obtained to thank him, he treated me with so much courtesy and kindness that I was sincerely grateful; and after having freely accepted his favors I could not think of conspiring against him.

“I heard of the landing of the Emperor only through public channels, and it gave me much more annoyance than pleasure. I knew the Emperor too well to imagine that he would have attempted such an enterprise without having certain reasons to hope for success. But the prospect of a civil war afflicted me deeply, and I was convinced that we could not escape it. The speedy arrival of the Emperor baffled all my prévisions.

“On hearing of the departure of the king, and picturing him to myself old, infirm, and forced to abandon his country again, I was sensibly touched. The idea that he might be accusing me of ingratitude and treason was insupportable to me; and, notwithstanding all the risk of such a step, I wrote to him to ex-

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culpate myself from any participation in the events which had just taken place.

“On the evening of the 20th of March, being advised of the Emperor's approach by his old minister, I presented myself at the Tuileries to await his coming. I saw him arrive, surrounded, pressed, and borne onward by a crowd of officers of all ranks. In all this tumult I could scarcely accost him. He received me coldly, said a few words to me, and appointed an interview for next day. The Emperor has always inspired me with fear, and his tone on this occasion was not calculated to reassure me. I presented myself, however, with as calm a bearing as was possible. I was introduced into his private room; and we were scarcely alone when he advanced toward me quickly, and said brusquely,

““Have you then so poorly comprehended your situation that you could renounce your name, and the rank you held from me, to accept a title given by the Bourbons?”

““My duty sire,” I replied, summoning up all my courage to answer him, “was to think of my children's future, since the abdication of your Majesty left me no longer any other to fulfill.”

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“ “Your children,” exclaimed the Emperor, “your children! Were they not my nephews before they were your sons? Have you forgotten that? Had you the right to strip them of the rank that belonged to them?” And as I looked at him, all amazed, he added, with increasing rage, “Have you not read the Code, then?”

“I avowed my ignorance, recalling to myself that he had formerly considered it reprehensible, in any woman, and especially in members of his own family, to dare to avow that they knew any thing about legislation. Then he explained to me with volubility the article in the law prohibiting any change in the state of minors, or the making of any renunciation in their name. As he talked he strode up and down the room, the windows of which were open to admit the beautiful spring sun. I followed him, trying to make him understand that, not knowing the laws, I had only thought of the interests of my children, and taken counsel of my heart. The Emperor stopped all of a sudden, and turning roughly towards me, said,

“ “Then it should have told you, Madame, that when you shared the prosperity of a fam-

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ily, you ought to know how to submit to its misfortunes.”

“At these last words I burst into tears. But at this moment our conversation was interrupted by a tremendous uproar which frightened me. The Emperor, while talking, had unconsciously approached the window looking upon the terrace of the Tuileries, which was filled with people, who, upon recognizing him, rent the air with frantic acclamations. The Emperor, accustomed to control himself, saluted the people electrified by his presence, and I hastened to dry my eyes. But they had seen my tears, without the slightest suspicion of their cause. For the next day the papers vied with each other in repeating that the Emperor had shown himself at the windows of the Tuileries, accompanied by Queen Hortense, and that the Queen was so moved by the enthusiasm manifested at the sight of her that she could scarcely restrain her tears.’

“This account,” adds Madame Récamier, “had an air of sincerity about it, which shook my previous convictions, and the regard I felt for the Queen was heightened. From that time we became firm friends. We met each other every day, sometimes at the Temple of

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Subsequent meetings.

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Vesta, sometimes at the Baths of Titus, or at the Tomb of Cecilia Metella; at others, in some one of the numerous churches of the Christian city, in the rich galleries of its palaces, or at one of the beautiful villas in its environs; and such was our punctuality, that our two carriages almost always arrived together at the appointed place.

“I found the queen a very fascinating companion. And she showed such a delicate tact in respecting the opinions she knew I held, that I could not prevent myself saying that I could only accuse her of the one fault of not being enough of a Bonapartist. Notwithstanding the species of intimacy established between us, I had always abstained from visiting her, when news arrived of the death of Eugene Beauharnais. The Queen loved her brother tenderly. I understood the grief she must feel in losing her nearest relation and the best friend she had in the world, and came quickly to a decision. I immediately went to her, and found her in the deepest affliction. The whole Bonaparte family was there, but that gave me little uneasiness. In such cases it is impossible for me to consider party interests or public opinion. I have been often blamed for this,

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Letter from Hortense.

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and probably shall be again, and I must resign myself to this censure, since I shall never cease to deserve it.”

Hortense, immediately upon receiving the tidings of the dangerous sickness of her brother, had written thus to Madame Récamier. The letter was dated,

“Rome, Friday morning, April, 1824.

“MY DEAR MADAME,—It seems to be my fate not to be able to enjoy any pleasures, diversions, or interest without the alloy of pain. I have news of my brother. He has been ill. They kindly assure me that he was better when the letter was sent, but I can not help being extremely anxious. I have a presentiment that this is his last illness, and I am far from him. I trust that God will not deprive me of the only friend left me—the best and most honorable man on earth. I am going to St. Peter's to pray. That will comfort me perhaps, for my very anxiety frightens me. One becomes weak and superstitious in grief. I can not therefore go with you to-day, but I shall be happy to see you, if you would like to join me at St. Peter's. I know that you are not afraid of the unhappy, and that

Letter from Hortense.

you bring them happiness. To wish for you now is enough to prove to you my regard for you.  
 HORTENSE."

Soon after the death of Prince Eugene, Hortense returned to Arenenberg. From that place she wrote to Madame Récamier, under date of June 10th, 1824:

"You were kind enough, Madame, to wish to hear from me. I can not say that I am well, when I have lost every thing on this earth. Meanwhile I am not in ill health. I have just had another heart-break. I have seen all my brother's things. I do not recoil from this pain, and perhaps I may find in it some consolation. This life, so full of troubles, can disturb no longer the friends for whom we mourn. He, no doubt, is happy. With your sympathies you can imagine all my feelings.

"I am at present in my retreat. The scenery is superb. In spite of the lovely sky of Italy, I still find Arenenberg very beautiful. But I must always be pursued by regrets. It is undoubtedly my fate. Last year I was so contented. I was very proud of not repining, not wishing for any thing in this world. I had a good brother, good children. To-day

Letter from Hortense.

how much need have I to repeat to myself that there are still some left to whom I am necessary!

"But I am talking a great deal about myself, and I have nothing to tell you, if it be not that you have been a great comfort to me, and that I shall always be pleased to see you again. You are among those persons to whom it is not needful to relate one's life or one's feelings. The heart is the best interpreter, and they who thus read us become necessary to us.

"I do not ask you about your plans, and nevertheless I am interested to know them. Do not be like me, who live without a future, and who expect to remain where fate puts me; for I may stay at my country-place all winter, if I can have all the rooms heated. Sometimes the wind seems to carry the house off, and the snow, I am told, is of frightful depth. But it requires little courage to surmount these obstacles. On the contrary, these great effects of nature are sometimes not without their charms. Adieu. Do not entirely forget me. Believe me, your friendship has done me good. You know what a comfort a friendly voice from one's native country is, when it comes to us in misfortune and isola-

Disgrace of Chateaubriand.

tion. Be kind enough to tell me that I am unjust if I complain too much of my destiny, and that I have still some friends left.

“HORTENSE.”

Just about this time M. de Chateaubriand, the illustrious friend of Madame Récamier, was quite insultingly dismissed from the ministry for not advocating a law of which the king approved. The disgrace of the minister created a very deep sensation. In allusion to it, Hortense wrote to Madame Récamier, from Arenenberg, Sept. 11, 1824, as follows:

“I expected to hear from you on your return from Naples, and as I have not heard, I know not where to find you. I have fancied that you were on the road to Paris, because I always imagine that we go where the heart goes, and where we can be useful to our friends. It is curious to think what a chain the affections are. Why, I myself, secluded from the world, stranger to every thing, am sorry to see so distinguished a man shut out from public life. Is it on account of the interest you have made me take in that quarter, or is it, rather, because, like a Frenchwoman, I love to see merit and superiority honored in my country?”

Letter from Hortense.

“At present I am no longer alone. I have my cousin with me, the Grand Duchess of Baden, a most accomplished person. The brilliancy of her imagination, the vivacity of her wit, the correctness of her judgment, together with the perfect balance of all her faculties, render her a charming and a remarkable woman. She enlivens my solitude and softens my profound grief. We converse in the language of our country. It is that of the heart, you know, since at Rome we understood each other so well.

I claim your promise to stop on the way at Arenenberg. It will always be to me very sweet to see you. I can not separate you from one of my greatest sorrows; which is to say that you are very dear to me, and that I shall be happy to have an opportunity to assure you of my affection. HORTENSE.”

Madame Récamier, after leaving Rome, kept up her friendly relations and correspondence with Queen Hortense.

The winter of 1829 Hortense spent with her sons in Rome. Chateaubriand was then French ambassador in that city. Upon his leaving, to return to Paris, Hortense wrote to Madame

Letter from Hortense.

Récamier the following letter, in which she alludes to his departure :

“Rome, May 10, 1829.

“DEAR MADAME,—I am not willing that one of your friends should leave the place where I am living, and where I have had the pleasure of meeting you, without carrying to you a token of my remembrance. I also wish you to convey to him my sentiments. Kindnesses show themselves in the smallest things, and are also felt by those who are the object of them, without their being equal to the expression of their feelings. But the benevolence which has been able to reach me has made me regret not being permitted to know him whom I have learned to appreciate, and who, in a foreign land, so worthily represented to me my country, at least such as I always should like to look upon her, as a friend and protectress.

“I am soon to return to my mountains, where I hope to hear from you. Do not forget me entirely. Remember that I love you, and that your friendship contributed to soothe one of the keenest sorrows of my life. These are two inseparable memories. Thus never doubt my tender love, in again assuring you of which I take such pleasure.

“HORTENSE.”

Revolution in France.

The year 1830 came. Louis Napoleon was then twenty-two years of age. An insurrection in Paris overthrew the old Bourbon dynasty, and established its modification in the throne of Louis Philippe. This revolution in France threw all Europe into commotion. All over Italy the people rose to cast off the yoke which the Allies, who had triumphed at Waterloo, had imposed upon them. The exiled members of the Bonaparte family met at Rome to decide what to do in the emergency. Hortense attended the meeting with her two sons. The eldest, Napoleon Louis, had married his cousin, the daughter of Joseph Bonaparte. Both of the young princes, with great enthusiasm, joined the patriots. Hortense was very much alarmed for the safety of her sons. She could see but little hope that the insurrection could be successful in Italy, for the “Holy Alliance” was pledged to crush it. She wrote imploringly to her children. Louis Napoleon replied,

“Your affectionate heart will understand our determination. We have contracted engagements which we can not break. Can we remain deaf to the voice of the unfortunate who call to us? We bear a name which obliges us to listen.”

Attempt of the Italian patriots.

We have not here space to describe the conflict. The Italian patriots, overwhelmed by the armies of Austria, were crushed or dispersed. The elder of the sons of Hortense, Napoleon Louis, died from the fatigue and exposure of the campaign, and was buried at Florence. The younger son, Louis Napoleon, enfeebled by sickness, was in the retreat with the vanquished patriots to Ancona, on the shores of the Adriatic. The distracted mother was hastening to her children when she heard of the death of the one, and of the sickness and perilous condition of the other. She found Louis Napoleon at Ancona, in a burning fever. The Austrians were gathering up the vanquished patriots wherever they could be found in their dispersion, and were mercilessly shooting them. Hortense was in an agony of terror. She knew that her son, if captured, would surely be shot. The Austrians were soon in possession of Ancona. They eagerly sought for the young prince, who bore a name which despots have ever feared. A price was set upon his head. The sagacity of the mother rescued the child. She made arrangements for a frail skiff to steal out from the harbor and cross the Adriatic Sea to the shores of Illyria. Deceived by this strata-

Escape of Louis Napoleon.

gem, the Austrian police had no doubt that the young prince had escaped. Their vigilance was accordingly relaxed. Hortense then took a carriage for Pisa. Her son, burning with fever and emaciated from grief and fatigue, mounted the box behind in the disguise of a footman. In this manner, exposed every moment to the danger of being arrested by the Austrian police, the anxious mother and her son traversed the whole breadth of Italy. As Louis Napoleon had, with arms in his hands, espoused the cause of the people in their struggle against Austrian despotism, he could expect no mercy, and there was no safety for him anywhere within reach of the Austrian arm.

By a law of the Bourbons, enacted in 1816, which law was re-enacted by the Government of Louis Philippe, no member of the Bonaparte family could enter France but under the penalty of death. But Napoleon I., when in power, had been very generous to the House of Orleans. Hortense, also, upon the return of Napoleon from Elba, when the Royalists were flying in terror from the kingdom, had protected and warmly befriended distinguished members of the family. Under these circumstances, distracted by the fear that her only surviving child

They seek refuge in France.

would be arrested and shot, and knowing not which way to turn for safety, the mother and the son decided, notwithstanding the menace of death suspended over them, to seek a momentary refuge, incognito, in France.

Embarking in a small vessel, still under assumed names, they safely reached Cannes. At this port Napoleon had landed sixteen years ago, in his marvellous return from Elba. The mother and son proceeded immediately to Paris, resolved to cast themselves upon the generosity of Louis Philippe. Louis Napoleon was still very sick, and needed his bed rather than the fatigues of travel. It was the intention of his mother, so soon as the health of her son was sufficiently restored, to continue their journey and cross over to England.

Hortense, in her "Mémoires," speaking of these hours of adversity's deepest gloom, writes:

"At length I arrived at the barrier of Paris. I experienced a sort of self-love in exhibiting to my son, by its most beautiful entrance, that capital, of which he could probably retain but a feeble recollection. I ordered the postillion to take us through the Boulevards to the Rue de la Paix, and to stop at the first hotel. Chance conducted us to the Hotel D'Hollande. I oc-

The vicissitudes of life.

cupied a small apartment on the third floor, *du premier*, first above the entresol. From my room I could see the Boulevard and the column in the Place Vendôme. I experienced a sort of saddened pleasure, in my isolation, in once more beholding that city which I was about to leave, perhaps forever, without speaking to a person, and without being distracted by the impression which that view made upon me."

Twenty-two years before, Hortense, in this city, had given birth to the child who was now sick and a fugitive. Austria was thirsting for his blood, and the Government of his own native land had laid upon him the ban of exile, and it was at the peril of their lives that either mother or son placed their feet upon the soil of France. And yet the birth of this prince was welcomed by salvos of artillery, and by every enthusiastic demonstration of public rejoicing, from Hamburg to Rome, and from the Pyrenees to the Danube.

Louis Napoleon was still suffering from a burning fever. A few days of repose seemed essential to the preservation of his life. Hortense immediately wrote a letter to King Louis Philippe, informing him of the arrival of herself and son, incognito, in Paris, of the circumstan-



*Obligations of Louis Philippe to Hortense.*

ces which had rendered the step necessary, and casting themselves upon his protection. Louis Philippe owed Hortense a deep debt of gratitude. He had joined the Allies in their war against France. He had come back to Paris in the rear of their batteries. By French law he was a traitor doomed to die. When Napoleon returned from Elba he fled from France in terror, again to join the Allies. He was then the Duke of Orleans. The Duchess of Orleans had slipped upon the stairs and broken her leg. She could not be moved. Both Hortense and Napoleon treated her with the greatest kindness. Of several letters which the Duchess of Orleans wrote Hortense, full of expressions of obligation and gratitude, we will quote but one.

*The Duchess of Orleans to Queen Hortense.*

“April 19, 1815.

“MADAME,—I am truly afflicted that the feeble state of my health deprives me of the opportunity of expressing to your majesty, as I could wish, my gratitude for the interest she has manifested in my situation. I am still suffering much pain, as my limb has not yet healed. But I can not defer expressing to your majesty, and to his majesty, the Emperor, to whom I beg

*The Duchess of Bourbon.*

you to be my interpreter, the gratitude I feel. I am, madame, your majesty's servant,

“LOUISE MARIE ADELAIDE DE  
BOURBON, DUCHESS D'ORLEANS.

The Emperor, in response to the solicitations of Hortense, had permitted the Duchess of Orleans to remain in Paris, and also had assured her of a pension of four hundred thousand francs (\$80,000). The Duchess of Bourbon, also, aunt of the Duke of Orleans, was permitted to remain in the city. And she, also, that she might be able to maintain the position due to her rank, received from the Emperor a pension of two hundred thousand francs (\$40,000). The Duchess of Bourbon had written to Hortense for some great favors, which Hortense obtained for her. In reply to the assurance of Hortense that she would do what she could to aid her, the duchess wrote, under date of April 29th, 1815:

“I am exceedingly grateful for your kindness, and I have full confidence in the desire which you express to aid me. I can hardly believe that the Emperor will refuse a demand which I will venture to say is so just, and particularly when it is presented by you. Believe

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Letter to Hortense.

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me, madame, that my gratitude equals the sentiments of which I beg you to receive, in advance, the most sincere attestation."

Under these circumstances Hortense could not doubt that she might venture to appeal to the magnanimity of the king.

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Embarrassments of Louis Philippe.

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## CHAPTER IX.

## LIFE AT ARENEMBERG.

IT must be confessed that the position of Louis Philippe was painful when he received the note from Hortense announcing that she and her son were in Paris. An insurrection in the streets of Paris had overthrown the throne of the Bourbons, and with it the doctrine of legitimacy. Louis Philippe had been placed upon the vacant throne, not by the voice of the French people, but by a small clique in Paris. There was danger that allied Europe would again rouse itself to restore the Bourbons. Louis Philippe could make no appeal to the masses of the people for support, for he was not the king of their choice. Should he do any thing indicative of friendship for the Bonapartes, it might exasperate all dynastic Europe; and should the French people learn that an heir of the Empire was in France, their enthusiasm might produce convulsions the end of which no one could foresee.

Thus unstably seated upon his throne, Louis